

GROTON-DUNSTABLE

REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

344/346 Main Street • P.O. Box 727 • Groton, Massachusetts 01450
978-448-6155 • www.gdrsd.org

Steven M. Silverman
Principal

Mark W. Branco
Dina M. Mancini
Assistant Principals

May 8, 2009

Dear Parents of Seventh Grade Students:

We'd like to take a moment to provide you with information about the coming change from U. S. History I to World History I in our Social Studies curriculum in the eighth grade. At their meeting on April 1, 2009, the GDRSD School Committee approved a curriculum change from Pathway 3 to Pathway 1 in the state frameworks.

<u>New Curriculum Pathway:</u> (Change effective on September 1, 2009)	Prior Curriculum Pathway:
Pathway 1 Grade 8: World History I, 500-1800 Grade 9: World History II, 1800-2001 Grade 10: U.S. History I, 1763-1877 Grade 11: U.S. History II, 1877-2001 Grade 12 electives: U.S. Government and Economics	Pathway 3 Grade 8: U.S. History I, 1763-1877 Grade 9: World History I, 500-1800 Grade 10: World History II, 1800-2001 Grade 11: U.S. History II, 1877-2001 Grade 12 electives: U.S. Government and Economics

As you compare these Curriculum Pathways from the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework, notice that each pathway provides for the same course content but places the U. S. History I course in a different year.

Here at GDMS, the Social Studies teachers on our 8th Grade Team have been hard at work in a process of preparing for a smooth transition to this new World History I curriculum. This work began in June of 2008 as the Learning Standards for World History 1 were reviewed and materials were gathered for a thorough textbook selection process. The team then worked for two release days in December '08 and January '09 as they narrowed down their choices from a field of eight texts and came to a unanimous agreement. Their choice, *History Alive! The*

Medieval World and Beyond, was given approval by our School Committee on April 1, 2009. The team feels that this text, published by the Teacher's Curriculum Institute in Palo Alto, California, addresses the needs of our students well. The text covers almost all of the state WHI learning standards well and, page for page, 95% of the content of this text is on standards. Complementing our schools teaching philosophy, TCI places an emphasis on student interaction with History by providing multiple points of entry and a variety of learning modalities. While it is very important to our process, textbook selection is just a part of the work involved in developing our new curriculum. The text will not be our curriculum. It will support it.

Over the coming months, the eighth grade team of Social Studies teachers will continue their efforts to develop a comprehensive World History I curriculum that will provide rich learning experiences for our students next year. Included in this process is an effort to make adjustments to activities throughout the year in order to support curriculum connections. We will be developing and revising our plans for projects, field trips, and any other activities which are related to History curriculum content. One of these annual events, of course, is our annual eighth grade trip to Washington D. C. There are a number of resources in the District of Columbia including the museums of the Smithsonian Institute which will provide World History curriculum enrichment during the DC Trip.

We hope that this letter has helped to clarify the changes that are coming for eighth grade Social Studies. If you have any questions or concerns about this change in our curriculum, please feel welcome to contact us at your convenience.

Thank You,

Steven M. Silverman
Principal

Adam C. Snodgrass
Curriculum Leader
Middle School Social Studies