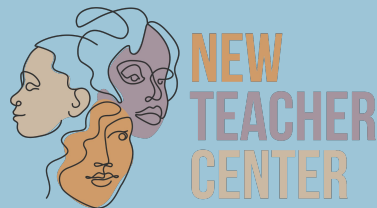


PUBLIC SCHOOLS of  
**BROOKLINE**



**April 25, 2023**

# Public Schools of Brookline Social Studies Review



# Meet your Presenters



**Mark Healy**  
Senior Director,  
Programs and  
Partnerships



**Emily Whitmore**  
Senior Program  
Consultant

# Mission

NTC works to disrupt the predictability of educational inequities for systemically underserved students by accelerating educator effectiveness.

# Vision

We believe that every student, from preschool through high school, deserves an excellent and equitable education that empowers them to reach their full potential in classrooms, communities, and beyond.

# PUBLIC SCHOOLS of **BROOKLINE**

## **About**

The Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) serves approximately 7,000 students in Kindergarten to grade 12. PSB operates eight elementary (K-8) schools and one high school in the Town of Brookline, Massachusetts.

## **Mission**

The PSB mission is to ensure that every student develops the skills and knowledge to pursue a productive and fulfilling life, to participate thoughtfully in a democracy, and succeed in a diverse and evolving global society.

# Agenda

- › **Introduction**
- › **Methodology**
- › **Findings and Recommendations**
- › **Summary**



# Successful RtI Builds from Strong Tier 1 Instruction



Last time New Teacher Center joined you, we focused on our RTI and CST review.

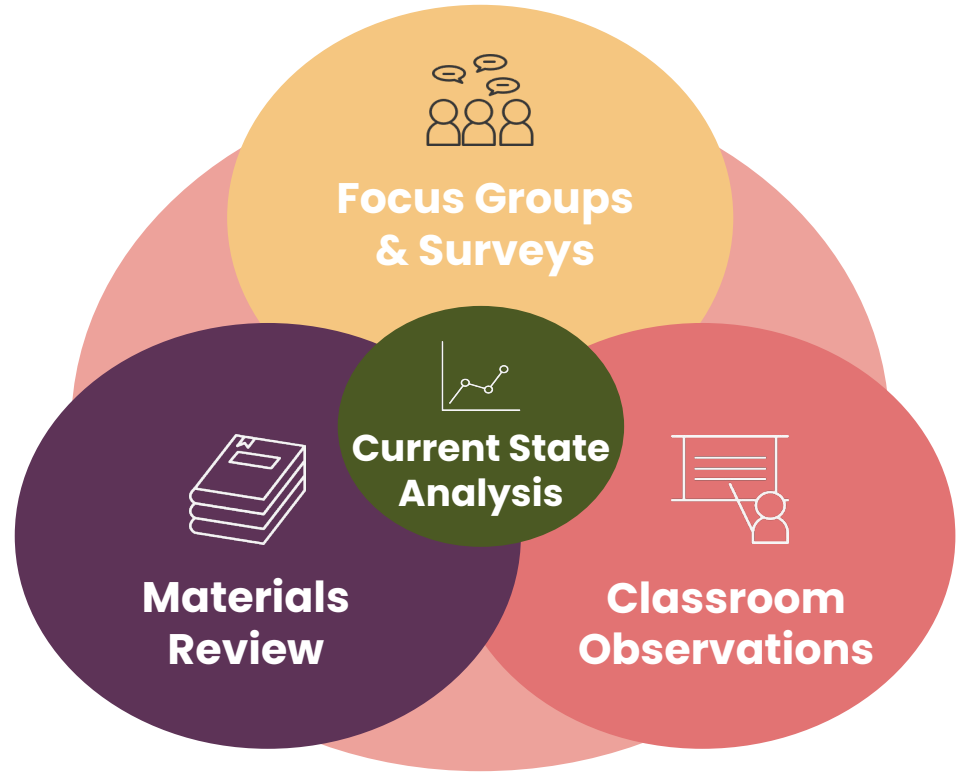
# Introduction



NTC partnered with Public Schools of Brookline (PBS) during Summer 2022 to **review the current state of Social Studies instruction and culturally responsive pedagogy** across the district. Additionally we explored **how students and families in METCO experience the existing instruction in comparison to the experiences of Brookline resident students** of all backgrounds. Over five days, NTC visited 35 classrooms in nine schools, reviewed instructional materials being used in classrooms, held focus groups with students, teachers, and community members from across the district, surveyed educators and families, and reviewed and analyzed student assessment and attendance data.

# Methodology

**In this diagnostic process, we collected the following types of data:**





# Instructional Practice Guides

**Core Action 1**  
The lesson is focused on the grade-level content and course standards and texts(s) for Social Studies

**Core Action 2**  
The lesson is focused on questions and tasks specific to the texts and artifacts and addresses the analytical thinking required by the grade-level standards.

**Core Action 3**  
All students were provided opportunities to engage in the work of the lesson.

NEW

# Classroom Observations

## Equitable and Culturally Responsive Learning Experiences



### Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric

*"Using the cultural characteristic, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively."*  
Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*

Core Action 4: The lesson is inclusive and reflects an equitable and culturally responsive learning experience.	Fully, Somewhat, Not at all
a. Rituals and routines are affirming, purposeful, and promote both community and independence.	F S N
b. There is evidence of mutual respect and healthy boundaries among students and between students and teachers.	F S N
c. The lesson is inclusive and affirming of a variety of identities including but not limited to racial, class, sexual, religious, gender identity, and immigrant status and when applicable presents different points of view on the same event or experience, especially points of view from marginalized people/communities.	F S N
d. The lesson addresses issues of equity and power by centering issues of equity, power, race, identity, and/or thinking about systems and policies.	F S N
e. A wide range of student responses are validated, given varying student experiences and perspectives.	F S N
f. The lesson allows for students to interrogate the presented information.	F S N
g. Students have agency to make choices in their classroom experience and opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.	F S N
Overall, is the lesson inclusive and does it reflect a culturally responsive learning experience?	F S N

**Core Action 4**  
**The lesson is**  
**inclusive and reflects**  
**an equitable and**  
**culturally responsive**  
**learning experience.**

# Materials Review

## 6-8th Grade

District Created Rainbow  
Scope & Sequence  
Documents

McGraw Hill Digital  
Textbooks

## 9-12th Grade

Teacher-Created  
Materials

### 6th Grade World Geography and Ancient Civilizations I 2022-2023 Academic Year

[Course Syllabus](#)  
[Scope and Sequence](#)  
[SkillsBookmark](#)  
[7th Grade Course](#)

#### Overview of Units of Study

Unit	Duration of Unit
Unit: Introduction	10 Days

**Grading Expectations:**

- Evidence based arguments for your stance
- Logical counterarguments to opposite stance
- Design that accurately reflects Toussaint's life and legacy

**Note:** Your final product will be assessed using a Standards-Based Grading rubric posted to more categories. You will be able to complete the reassessment contract and resubmit to improve those categories only.

**Simón Bolívar Biography**  
G Block  
Objective: Research the life and accomplishments of Simón Bolívar  
Prompt: How should Simón Bolívar be remembered by history?

Monday 10/4 @ 1:55 pm (65 min)		
1. Logistics & Announcements	Communal (10 min)	
2. ABC-Clio Introduction	Communal (20 min)	
3. SB Research - Day 1 (ABC-Clio)	Independent (35 min)	
Wednesday 10/6 @ 2:05 pm (55 min)		
4. Gale & Encyclopedia Britannica Introduction	Communal (20 min)	
5. SB Research - Day 2 (Gale & Encyclopedia Britannica)	Independent (35 min)	
Thursday 10/7 @ 1:45 pm (70 min)		
6. SB Research - Day 3 (Gale & Britannica)	Independent (50 min)	
7. Simón Bolívar Thesis Statements	Independent (20 min)	Mon 10/9 9:30 am

### SOCIAL STUDIES

The Social Studies program at Brookline High School has two fundamental goals: to prepare young people to live in a democratic society and interdependent world and to enable students to define themselves on the basis of a broad knowledge and deep understanding of human history and society. The program provides all students with opportunity to study areas of special interest. The curriculum teaches them to explore, analyze and seek meaning in history to understand themselves as both the inheritors and creators of culture and to facilitate the achievement of social science literacy and the mastery of learning and thinking skills.

To accomplish these goals, the Social Studies Department has designed the following course of study. The freshman, sophomore and junior year courses are required, and the senior year is elective. Most students take Social Studies for four years.

**Freshmen are required to take World History I: Identity, Status, and Power**

**Sophomores continue the study of World History I: The Modern Era or in Global Studies**  
World History II: The Modern Era - Honor  
World History II: The Modern Era - Honors  
Global Studies or Global Studies Honor

**Juniors are required to study United States History on one of three levels:**  
United States History - Honor or American Studies - Honor  
United States History - Honors  
United States History - Advanced Placement

**English Learners study United States History at the level appropriate to their ELL placement:**  
United States History I - English Learners, levels I and II  
United States History II - English Learners, level III

**The Social Studies Department offers the following Options courses.**  
(See course descriptions for pre-requisites.)

Full Year	One Semester
- Global Leadership Academy	- Asian-American Studies (S2)
- Legal Studies and Internship	- Philosophy (S1)
- Psychology	- Economics (S1)
- Racial Awareness Seminar	- Gender in Society (S2)
- Seminar in African-American Studies	
- Social Justice Leadership Program	
- AP Human Geography	
- AP American Government	



# Focus Groups

## Students:

- ❖ High School  
Brookline Residents
- ❖ Middle School  
Brookline Residents
- ❖ High School METCO
- ❖ Middle School  
METCO

## Teachers:

- ❖ Middle School
- ❖ High School

## Community:

- ❖ Brookline  
Resident  
Families
- ❖ METCO Families
- ❖ METCO Staff

# Family and Educator Surveys

## Family Survey:

242 parents and  
caregiver responses

4% of family  
responses indicated  
METCO

## Educator Survey:

27 responses from  
Social Studies staff at  
middle and high  
schools

**Social Studies Instructional Review**

# Key Findings + Recommendations



# Overview of Findings

## Finding #1

School and classroom communities are *generally* welcoming and support the sense of adequate learning taking place.

## Finding #2

Curricular materials provide guidance but are incomplete.

## Finding #3

Enacted lessons are not meeting the standards of rigor or cultural responsiveness.

## Finding #4

The experiences of METCO students are varied and other identifying factors provide more insight into student success.

## Finding #5

Time for professional learning is limited.

## Finding #1

**School and classroom communities are generally welcoming and support the sense of adequate learning taking place.**





# Welcoming Environment: Observation and Family Survey Data

## Family Survey

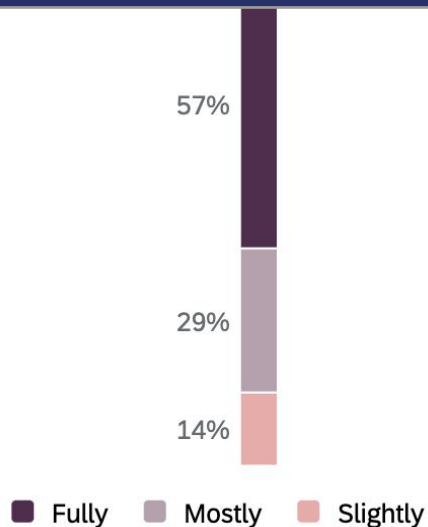
84% of families indicate that they feel welcome at their children's school.

87% of families indicate that their children feel welcome at their school.

*"I love that the staff is so committed to my sons academic success and they take the time to understand him and his learning style."*

## Classroom Observations

**CA4B: 86% of observed classrooms demonstrated evidence of mutual respect and healthy boundaries among students and between teachers.**



## Student Focus Group Responses:

***"How connected do you feel to the teachers and adults in your school?"***

**"I feel really connected to my teachers and that's why I'm doing well!"**

**7th Grade METCO Student**

**"I love my teachers. Um... I love some of my teachers. I had a biology teacher who took time to get to know me personally, who took time to discuss and address racist incidents in the school when they came up (for example, use of N word)"**

**11th Grade METCO Student**

**"I feel very connected. Known them for a long time. Anyone in my grade feels connected and part of the community."**

**8th Grade Brookline Resident**

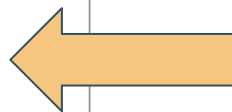
# Perception of Adequate Learning: *Educator Survey Data*

**Materials are aligned to the grade level content standards and regularly provide all students, including those who read, write, speak, or listen above or below grade level, or who are multilingual learners with extensive opportunities to work with and meet grade-level standards.**

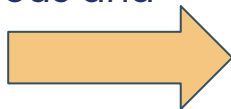


Strongly agree   Somewhat agree   Neither agree nor disagree  
Somewhat disagree   Strongly disagree

72% of educators believe materials are aligned to the grade level content standards.



81% of educators believe texts are appropriately rigorous and complex.



**Texts are worthy of students' time and attention: texts are of quality and are rigorous, containing rich academic language, meeting appropriate complexity criteria for each grade.**



Strongly agree   Somewhat agree   Neither agree nor disagree  
Somewhat disagree

## Finding 2

**Curricular materials provide guidance but are incomplete.**



# 80%

*of teachers indicate that they rely on external sources to support their daily instructional planning.*

## Incomplete Materials/Content : *Educator Survey Data*

Where do you obtain the content for your daily instruction?

“For inspiration, I often look to the books I'm reading/have read, current news stories, and documentaries I've viewed. For the primary source documents, some are from books that I own, many are from online databases like Gilder Lehrman. I often use American Experience or Independent documentary film clips.”

## **Recommendation #1**

Develop an instructional framework that provides a vision for excellent social studies instruction, common language and expectations, and the structures to support the district-wide implementation.

## Recommendation #2

Adopt a high-quality inquiry-based curriculum for core secondary social studies courses or continue to strengthen the current scope and sequence documents.



## Finding #3

Enacted lessons are not meeting  
the *standards of rigor* or cultural  
responsiveness.



# Standards of Rigor



# Grade-Level Content and Texts

- **Alignment of Instructional Materials (Teacher Survey)**
  - 41% of teachers agree instructional materials are vertically aligned to standards
  - 46% of teachers agree that materials are horizontally aligned to standards
- **Text-Centered Lessons (Classroom Observation)**
  - 61% of Middle School classrooms and 41% of High School classrooms spent the majority of the lesson reading, writing, and/or speaking about a text/primary source.

# Grade-Level Content and Texts

- **Educator Perceptions (Teacher Survey)**
  - 81% of teachers believe that the embedded texts are complex.
- **Appropriately Complex Texts in Use (Classroom Observation)**

C1.3 - The text(s) and artifact(s) are appropriately complex		
■	Fully	34%
■	Mostly	6%
■	Slightly	14%
■	Not at all	14%
■	Not observed	31%

## **Recommendation #3**

Provide ongoing professional learning around methods of inquiry, unpacking complex sources, and promoting academic discourse.

# Culturally Responsive Pedagogy



# Culturally Responsive Instruction

**Overall, is the lesson inclusive and does it reflect a culturally responsive learning experience?**

<b>Learning Experience</b>	<b>Middle School</b>	<b>High School</b>
Fully	17%	6%
Mostly	11%	35%
Slightly	50%	35%
Not at all	22%	18%
Not observed	0%	6%

# Culturally Responsive Instruction

- **Teacher Beliefs**

- 41% of teachers strongly agree and 41% of teachers agree that instructional materials center issues of equity, race, power and identity

- **Observed Teacher Practice**

- Only 14% of classrooms observed were fully centered issues of equity and power and 11% of classrooms observed were mostly centered issues of equity and power



## **Recommendation #4**

Build teacher and leader understanding of high-leverage culturally responsive instructional practices that lead to success for students across all skill levels in Tier 1 instruction.

## Finding #4

The experiences of METCO students are varied and other identifying factors provide more insight into student success.



# The METCO Experience: Student Focus Group Data

**Do you think there is mutual respect and healthy boundaries among students and between students and teachers?**

“One teacher in addressing the use of the N word kept using the N word while describing her discomfort.”

“METCO students have more discipline and consequences for our actions. Other kids get away with things. The advisors are good, and as METCO there’s an image to uphold.”

“I was in gym class in middle school. This one white kid looked like he didn’t know where he wanted to sit, so teacher told him to sit next to me. He said, ‘I don’t want to sit next to people with her color skin.’ We went about gym class after that, though parents did come to the school.”

# The METCO Experience: Family Focus Group Data

**How do you feel about the METCO experience?**

"My son is in 8th grade, his experience has been fantastic. He started in K and we weren't sure, maybe he would try it for a year, he loved it from day one. He has friends, he feels like it's great."

"I noticed that my middle school would treat METCO kids and children of color differently. They put them down and made them not want to be in school. METCO kids were not in the honors class, and they could have been there if they were given the support in middle school. Maybe METCO could offer academic support, like algebra day or chemistry day in the metco room, so it could be more than a social place. More support for students who didn't get that support in MS"

## Recommendation #5

Analyze student success based on intersectionality of demographic, cultural, socioeconomic, and functional needs of all students, particularly those attending school through the METCO program, in order to identify and address areas of inequity.

## Finding #5

Time for professional learning  
is limited.



# Content Specific Professional Learning: Educator Survey

"I would like to have more content specific learning opportunities that focus on culturally responsive teaching in a history classroom rather than piecing together different workshops to boost my own personal knowledge."

"I would like more time to talk to my colleagues about the curriculum itself and to have more history-focused learning opportunities. I understand conversations around grading and de-leveling work towards this goal, but I think the subject matter we teach and how we teach it is MOST important."

# Differentiated Professional Learning: Educator Survey

"... we keep having equity trainings that feel very basic. Some educators definitely still need basic levels of reminders, skill building, etc. However, I think a lot of us are craving more next steps and increased levels of equity training so that we can continue our growth to becoming a more equitable school."

"We do not receive professional development. I am teaching something that I never learned. I wish we had access to modified primary sources for units we are expected to teach (ancient Japan and Korea, specifically)."



# Building Capacity for Diverse and Inclusive Instruction

## Educator Survey

“This is an area that we need most, in my opinion. It's hard for teachers to just teach about more identities in a responsible and informed way. We, like our students, need to learn and keep up with our fast changing world. We often have to seek professional development opportunities ourselves to gain new content knowledge, which IS a part of our jobs. At the same time, it would be helpful if we got resources from work as well where we can gain content specific professional development. Or at least some tools & support on how we can gain content knowledge in a collective and productive way.”

## Social Studies Instructional Review

# Summary



# Overview of Findings

## Finding #1

School and classroom communities are *generally* welcoming and support the sense of adequate learning taking place.

## Finding #2

Curricular materials provide guidance but are incomplete.

## Finding #3

Enacted lessons are not meeting the standards of rigor or cultural responsiveness.

## Finding #4

The experiences of METCO students are varied and other identifying factors provide more insight into student success.

## Finding #5

Time for professional learning is limited.

# Recommendations

1. Develop an instructional framework that provides a vision for excellent social studies instruction, common language and expectations, and the structures to support the district-wide implementation.
2. Adopt a high-quality inquiry-based curriculum for core secondary social studies courses or continue to strengthen the current scope and sequence documents.
3. Provide ongoing professional learning around methods of inquiry, unpacking complex sources, and promoting academic discourse.
4. Build teacher and leader understanding of high-leverage culturally responsive instructional practices that lead to success for students across all skill levels in Tier 1 instruction.
5. Analyze student success based on the intersectionality of demographic, cultural, socioeconomic, and functional needs of all students, particularly those attending school through the METCO program, in order to identify and address areas of inequity.

# Questions?

