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## District to review schools' social studies curricula

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### *Lack of middle school American history, civics and economics to be addressed*

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SHOREVIEW — After years on the back burner, a comprehensive social studies curricular review is scheduled for the coming years at all Mounds View District schools.

The aim of the assessment is to examine the kindergarten through 12th grade curriculum, assess strengths and needs and make changes in order to comprehensively align all grade levels, said a report headed by RoAnne Elliot, district director of curriculum and instruction.

"A comprehensive review has not been done in a long time," Elliot said. "There has been work done in social studies programs, but not up and down the entire K through 12."

Elliot said reviews of this kind take a couple of years for study and evaluation by specially formed "K-12" committees consisting of teachers, parents and district officials. After that period, district officials will likely bring major recommendations in front of the Mounds View School Board for approval. K-12 committee officials plan for a full implementation by the 2010-2011 school year.

According to Elliot's report, the review will examine seven areas of the curriculum, including student performance, learner outcomes, curriculum structure and materials.

One of the bigger issues discussed at the Mounds View School Board's March 10 meeting was middle school curriculum structure. Currently, no American history, civics or economics classes are included. Chippewa Middle School social studies teacher Peggy Bienat plans to implement American history for half of the seventh-grade year for starters.

Otherwise, Elliot said, the biggest issue is getting all of the elementary teachers and programs coordinated.

"Every school is doing its own program," Elliot said about the elementary schools. "Coordination comes apart when nothing is in place."

Contact teachers are being tagged at each school in the district to help in the review. Teachers include Richard Rosivach at Irondale High School, Kay Schaffer at Mounds View High School, Bienat at Chippewa Middle School and Sharon Kjellberg at Turtle Lake Elementary. The teachers will convene in meetings to share findings, something not regularly done, Elliot said.

"We are gathering and pulling these people from various schools together to share notes," she said. "The representatives will go back to their schools and make sure the information is decimated. A big part of the job for the representatives of each building is communication."

Elliot said the social studies review was delayed partly because of comprehensive reviews in other core curriculum. The district has reviewed literacy and mathematics more recently than social studies, she said.

"To do well in social studies, kids have to have good literacy skills," Elliot said.

Future committee plans include summer curriculum assessments and continued meetings.

In other news, the board unanimously approved budget assumptions for the 2009-10 school year. In the assumptions, the district cut \$1.5 million; \$623,930 of that money came from teacher reductions due to declining enrollment and increased class sizes. Also, about half of the \$821,744 from classroom-external cuts came from reductions in administrative central office staff, said District Director of Finance Carole Nielsen.

Although the district budget assumptions are balanced for 2009-10, Nielsen said the board should continue to look forward over the next few years: The 2010-11 budget is projected to have a shortfall of almost \$7 million with increasing deficits in following years, according to future assumptions.

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