

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, NURSING AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

The Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership presents

Elementary Social Studies Curriculum in Alliance Districts:
Actions that Support Successful Implementation

Friday, March 25th
9:30 – 11:00 AM

[Zoom Link](#)

Zoom Meeting ID: 870 0947 0201

Passcode: DOCEDD#2

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Dissertation Defense by
Jennifer Murrihy

This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study explored active implementation of the 2015 Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Frameworks in Connecticut Alliance districts. Survey results described effective implementation, effective practices, and enabling context of elementary social studies. Findings which resulted in positive outcomes were compared with publicly available Smarter Balanced data. Qualitative data from curriculum leaders who were from successful districts examined efforts to create a usable innovation (Blase & Fixsen, 2018). The quantitative results identified statistically significant correlation between active implementation and socially significant outcomes. Successful districts described extensive, teacher-centered efforts to create a shared understanding of elementary inquiry and authentic opportunities for writing within a humanities block. Systems and structures were in place to sustain implementation, including analysis of academic and observational data. Individuals reporting fewer positive outcomes revealed challenges including leadership structures and lack of clarity about content and pacing.

This research yields insights on how to implement robust, high quality social studies instruction at the elementary levels in high needs school districts and inform policy at the local and state levels.

Jennifer Murrihy is currently an Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum of Instruction for East Haven Public Schools in East Haven, CT. She holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Elementary Education, and a master's degree in Arts in Education from Saint Michael's College. Jennifer completed advanced graduate study in curriculum and instruction at University of New England and completed a 6th year degree in Educational Leadership at Quinnipiac University. She holds a Connecticut administrator certification, and teacher certificates in grades K-6 and 7-12 Social Studies. She served on the team for the writing of the 2015 Connecticut Secondary and Elementary Social Studies Frameworks. Jennifer is a member of the Board of the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies, and was named the Gilder Lehrman Connecticut History Teacher of the Year in 2015.