

## What are Core Essential Questions?

Essential Questions are the questions that teachers use with their students to help focus their instruction on a particular topic. The purpose of creating a **core** set of essential questions, as we have for Social Studies, is to further develop a coherent, sensible flow of learning over time, *that balances the need for continuity and the need for flexibility*. The ANESU Social Studies Curriculum Committee and the ANESU Administrative Team believe that a core of essential questions that we all agree to use will help to create that continuity within schools, and across the schools of this school district. We believe that this kind of continuity is key to helping us ensure that all students succeed. If we all use some common essential questions, it will help kids make connections and to see a logical progression in their learning experiences. This kind of continuity is particularly helpful as students from our five different elementary schools transition into our single middle/high school.

The ANESU Social Studies Committee chose these questions based on the following criteria:

- they embody the key enduring understandings of the discipline
- they build on each other over time
- they are developmentally appropriate
- they are do-able
- they align, for the most part, with the ANESU Social Studies Power Standards

We have tried to keep the list short. We have tried to include questions that really represent the most important big ideas that we agree we want all students to be able to understand in social studies.