



September 15, 2023

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**Re: In the Matter of the Proposed Amendments to Rules Governing K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies, *Minnesota Rules* 3501.3501; Repeal of Rules 3501.1300-1345; Revisor's I.D. Number R-4733**

Dear Librarian:

The Minnesota Department of Education intends to adopt rules about Social Studies Academic Standards. We plan to publish a Dual Notice of Hearing in the September 25, 2023 State Register.

The Department has prepared a Statement of Need and Reasonableness. As required by Minnesota Statutes, sections 14.131 and 14.23, the Department is sending the Library an electronic copy of the Statement of Need and Reasonableness prior to mailing our Notice of Intent to Adopt Rules.

If you have questions, please contact me at [Catherine.Rogers@state.mn.us](mailto:Catherine.Rogers@state.mn.us).

Yours very truly,

*Catherine Rogers*

Catherine Rogers  
Rulemaking Coordinator

Enclosure: Statement of Need and Reasonableness



## Statement of Need and Reasonableness (SONAR)

In the Matter of Proposed Permanent Rules Related to Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies, Minnesota Rules 3501.1350; Repeal of Rules, parts 3501.1300, 3501.1305, 3501.1310, 3501.1315, 3501.1320, 3501.1325, 3501.1330, 3501.1335, 3501.1340, and 3501.1345; Revisor’s ID Number 4733

**Division of Academic Standards, Instruction, and Assessment**

July, 2023

### General Information:

1. Availability: The State Register notice, this Statement of Need and Reasonableness (SONAR), and the proposed rule will be available during the public comment period on the MDE’s K–12 Academic Standards Social Studies rulemaking webpage. Previous versions of the rule are available at: (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/status/>)
2. Agency contact for information, documents, or alternative formats: Upon request, this Statement of Need and Reasonableness can be made available in an alternative format, such as large print, braille, or audio. To make a request, contact Catherine Rogers, Attorney, Minnesota Department of Education, 400 NE Stinson Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55413; telephone 651-582-8359; email [Catherine.Rogers@state.mn.us](mailto:Catherine.Rogers@state.mn.us); or use your preferred telecommunications relay service.
3. How to read a Minnesota Statute citation: Minn. Stat., section 999.09, subd. 9(f)(1)(ii)(A) is read as Minnesota Statute, section 999.09, subdivision 9, paragraph (f), clause (1), item (ii), subitem (A).
4. How to read a Minnesota Rule citation: Minn. R. 9999.0909, subp. 9(B)(3)(b)(i) is read as Minnesota Rule, chapter 9999, part 0909, subpart 9, item B, subitem (3), unit (b), subunit (i).

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## Introduction

### The Importance of Social Studies Education for All Students

Social studies education is central to building the foundational skills students need to live in a twenty-first century democracy. The largest professional association in the country devoted solely to social studies education, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), defines social studies as “the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence.” NCSS further defines the role of social studies education as being “to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.”<sup>1</sup>

The importance of a citizenry educated in what we now recognize as social studies has been acknowledged throughout American history. During the Constitutional Convention in 1787, Benjamin Franklin allegedly told a passerby that the Framers had produced “a republic...if you can keep it,” pointing to the ever-present reality that maintenance of a republican form of government is an ongoing project, never fully complete.<sup>2</sup> Franklin’s contemporary, James Madison, tied this directly to the education of citizens in a democracy, saying, “the advancement and diffusion of knowledge...is the only guardian of true liberty.”<sup>3</sup>

As Black Americans built educational opportunities for themselves and their children after the end of slavery, they too acknowledged the central role education plays in civic life. While advocating for the National Training School for Girls, educator Nannie Helen Borroughs described the goal of education as “to give training of head, hand, and heart, and develop a definite and active social interest.”<sup>4</sup> By the early twentieth century, an integrated notion of social studies had taken its place in the American school curriculum, after its introduction in a 1916 report of the National Education Association’s Committee on Social Studies. Education experts of the time supported the introduction of an integrated social studies curriculum “with the purpose of advancing social improvement and democratic citizenship by providing young people with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active participation in society.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “About National Council for the Social Studies,” National Council for the Social Studies, Accessed February 8, 2023, <https://www.socialstudies.org/about>.

<sup>2</sup> James McHenry, Diary, September 18, 1787, Manuscript, James McHenry Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (63.02.00) {Digital ID# us0063\_02p1}).

<sup>3</sup> “From James Madison to George Thompson, 30 June 1825,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/04-03-02-0562>. [Original source: *The Papers of James Madison*, Retirement Series, vol. 3, *1 March 1823–24 February 1826*, ed. David B. Mattern, J. C. A. Stagg, Mary Parke Johnson, and Katherine E. Harbury. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016, pp. 545–546.]

<sup>4</sup> Gerda Lerner, *Black Women in White America* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 134.

<sup>5</sup> Wayne E. Ross. 2020, “History and Social Studies Curriculum,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education* (July 30, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1062>.

Social studies education is our modern society's mechanism for educating citizens who can "keep" their republic. It is our way of teaching young people how to live in a democratic society and make decisions that support the common good through engagement in civil society. Today, social scientists of all kinds increasingly recognize the need to be more inclusive and reflective of all members of society, especially those who have been historically excluded from the narrative and actively erased from the fields that comprise social studies. Minnesota statute recognizes that among these underrepresented groups, the inclusion of the eleven Tribal Nations who share geography with Minnesota deserves specific incorporation throughout the curriculum.<sup>6</sup>

The following underscore the need for students to have a solid foundation in social studies:

- National Security

National security is bolstered through social studies education. Michele Anciaux Aoki wrote in a report for the U.S. House Education Committee that our ability to deal with issues such as terrorism and nuclear proliferation, as well as other issues of national security rests upon our ability to cooperate globally in resolving challenges that cross borders.<sup>7</sup> U.S. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch described the urgency of civic education for national security, noting that when "only about a third of young Americans think it's important to live in a democracy...that is a national security concern."<sup>8</sup>

- Economic Stability

Globalization has led to a demand for an internationally competent workforce. U.S. trade continues to expand, and with it, U.S. employment. Today, more than 41 million U.S. jobs depend on international trade. That means that more than one in five jobs are linked to the import and export of goods and services.<sup>9</sup> The National Academy of Sciences has warned that "a pervasive lack of knowledge about foreign cultures and foreign languages threatens the security of the United States, as well as its ability to

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<sup>6</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd.4 (a).

<sup>7</sup> *Report to house Education Committee, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong. (2004)* (statement of Michele Anciaux Aoki), [https://www.internationaldwa.org/coalition/reports/house\\_ed\\_20041201.htm](https://www.internationaldwa.org/coalition/reports/house_ed_20041201.htm)).

<sup>8</sup> Suzanne Spaulding, Sonia Sotomayor, Neil Gorsuch, and Jamil Jaffer, "Civics as a National Security Imperative: A Conversation with U.S. Supreme Court Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Neil M. Gorsuch," CSIS Events, March 25, 2021, <https://www.csis.org/events/civics-national-security-imperative-conversation-us-supreme-court-justices-sonia-sotomayor>.

<sup>9</sup> Laura M. Baughman, and Joseph Francois, "Trade and American Jobs the Impact of Trade on U.S. and State-Level Employment: 2022 Update," Business Roundtable, February, 2022, <https://www.businessroundtable.org/trade-and-american-jobs-the-impact-of-trade-on-us-and-state-level-employment-2022-update>.

compete in the global market place and [to] produce an informed citizenry.”<sup>10</sup> As a result, in order for students to be prepared for jobs linked to global trade, and other new jobs, they must possess understanding of the key economic, geographic, historical, civic, and cultural principles that drive nations and their peoples. It is likely their future jobs will require them to collaborate on international work teams, manage employees from other cultures and countries, and communicate with colleagues and clients abroad.<sup>11</sup> Economic stability is also deeply tied to political stability, as “typically, GDP is highest in countries that have the most stable political systems.”<sup>12</sup>

- Civic Engagement

According to the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), “Advocates of citizenship education cross the political spectrum, but they are bound by a common belief that our democratic republic will not sustain unless students are aware of their changing cultural and physical environments; know the past; read, write, and think deeply; and act in ways that promote the common good.”<sup>13</sup> The internet has fundamentally changed the way citizens interact in a democracy and how they obtain information. Schools need to adapt to help students navigate this change. A Stanford University study of civic online reasoning demonstrated that students nationally, across grade levels, are unprepared to evaluate online resources. In the study, students in middle school could not discern between news articles and sponsored content, and high school students struggled to identify biases in websites created by lobbyist groups. Across all the reasoning skills tested, in no category did the majority of students achieve beyond a basic level.<sup>14</sup> Addressing concerns about this gap, Thomas Riddle of the Roper Mountain Science Center wrote, “Twenty-first century learners have at their disposal more information than at any time in history. Teaching them how to effectively sort and interpret this information is more critical than

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<sup>10</sup> National Research Council, *International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America's Future* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2007), <https://doi.org/10.17226/11841>.

<sup>11</sup> National Research Council, *International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America's Future* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2007), <https://doi.org/10.17226/11841>.

<sup>12</sup> David A Moss, “The Business Case for Civics Education,” U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, *College, Career and Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K–12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (Silver Springs, MD: NCSS, 2013), <https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/c3-framework-for-social-studies-rev0617.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Joel Breakstone, Mark Smith, Sam Wineburg, Arnie Rapaport, Carleton Jill, Marshall Garland, and Anna Rosefsky Saavedra, “Students’ Civic Online Reasoning: A National Portrait,” *SSRN Electronic Journal* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3816075>.

ever.”<sup>15</sup> This challenge is critical to the project of democracy in the twenty-first century, because “disinformation is exacerbating partisan divides and eroding public faith in American institutions, threatening the core of American democracy.”<sup>16</sup> It is necessary for schools to support students in the development of the critical thinking skills central to civic education.

Students who have a strong social studies education are engaged in civic life as adults. Students who possess more civic knowledge and skills have been found to be more likely to vote as adults.<sup>17</sup> They are more likely to engage with the political process beyond voting, with participatory actions like writing letters to government officials becoming more likely with increased civic knowledge.<sup>18</sup> Within Minnesota, the eleven Tribal Nations have their own sovereign governmental systems, which presents an opportunity for deepening student understanding of government, and civic participation. Given the goal of social studies education centers civic participation and skills, “incorporating Indigenous history and social issues is essential to equitably fostering civic participation and social justice among all students.”<sup>19</sup> Civic participation in Minnesota requires understanding of all of the governments within Minnesota, and understanding of Tribal Sovereignty is essential to this understanding.

- Increasing Diversity

Today’s students are being prepared for an increasingly diverse world. According to the Brookings Institute, “In 2019, for the first time, more than half of the nation’s population under age 16 identified as a racial or ethnic minority. Among this group, Latino or Hispanic and Black residents together

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas Riddle, “If Students Fail History, Does It Matter?,” Edutopia, August 26, 2011, <https://www.edutopia.org/groups/social-studies/71635>.

<sup>16</sup> “Disinformation,” American Security Project, Accessed February 8, 2023, <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/public-diplomacy-and-strategic-communication/disinformation/>.

<sup>17</sup> Judith Torney-Purta and Jo-Ann Amadeo, “A Cross-National Analysis of Political and Civic Involvement among Adolescents,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 36, no. 2 (2003): pp. 269–274, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1049096503002208>.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Gould, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Peter Levine, Ted McConnell, and David B. Smith, eds, *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* (Philadelphia: Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, 2011), [ccny\\_grantee\\_2011\\_guardian.pdf \(carnegie.org\)](https://www.carnegie.org/files/2011_guardian.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Rachel Talbert, “Here’s How Indigenous Curriculum Can Help Students Thrive,” Newsroom, Teachers College, Columbia University, November 9, 2022, <https://www.tc.columbia.edu/articles/2022/november/heres-how-indigenous-curriculum-can-help-students-thrive/>.

comprised nearly 40% of the population.”<sup>20</sup> Minnesota is following these national demographic trends. According to the Minnesota State Demographic Center, “Minnesota’s Black or African American population grew by 36% between 2010 and 2018, the Asian population grew by 32%, and the Hispanic or Latin(x) population grew by 24%.<sup>21</sup> Through social studies, students learn that differences and similarities of cultures around the world are attributable to their diverse origins and histories and interactions with other cultures throughout time.

- Career Readiness

The Association of American Colleges and Universities commissioned a study in 2015 in which employers deem several specific skills as vital for career success. The skills most highly valued by employers were: written and oral communication, teamwork, ethical decision making, critical thinking, cultural literacy, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world settings.<sup>22</sup> These are the skills a strong social studies education provides. Preparing students for the 21st century cannot be accomplished without a strong emphasis on the social studies. According to “Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools,” a 2011 report published by the Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, a strong link exists between civic learning and the current and future needs of the workforce. The report states, “There is considerable overlap between the skills acquired as part of civic learning and the skills required in employment.”<sup>23</sup> According to The Business Case for Civics Education, “Students receiving high-quality civic learning score higher on a broad range of twenty-first-century

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<sup>20</sup> Rachel Talbert, “Here’s How Indigenous Curriculum Can Help Students Thrive,” Newsroom, Teachers College, Columbia University, November 9, 2022, <https://www.tc.columbia.edu/articles/2022/november/heres-how-indigenous-curriculum-can-help-students-thrive/>.

<sup>21</sup> William H. Frey, “The Nation Is Diversifying Even Faster than Predicted, according to New Census Data,” Brookings, July 1, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/new-census-data-shows-the-nation-is-diversifying-even-faster-than-predicted/>.

<sup>22</sup> “Data by Topic: Age, Race & Ethnicity / MN State Demographic Center,” MN State Demographic Center, 2018, <https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/age-race-ethnicity/>.

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Gould, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Peter Levine, Ted McConnell, and David B. Smith, eds, *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* (Philadelphia: Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, 2011), [ccny\\_grantee\\_2011\\_guardian.pdf](https://www.carnegie.org/ccny_grantee_2011_guardian.pdf) (carnegie.org).

competencies than those without.”<sup>24</sup> In addition to promoting participation in civic life, successful employees have “strong soft skills, including the ability to work with others.”<sup>25</sup>

- Academic Success

Education in the discipline of social studies is essential for students’ academic success. It has a significant benefit for students’ reading and comprehension skills. Students who have social studies included in their curriculum score higher on reading tests.<sup>26</sup> A study from Marzano in 2004 found that 55.43% of words that students need to know for K–12 academic success are social studies content words.<sup>27</sup> Beyond vocabulary, “students’ reading comprehension depends heavily on their background knowledge about the world—knowledge that comes largely from learning about science and social studies topics.”<sup>28</sup> Social studies, and especially ethnic studies, increases student engagement in learning. In reviewing the efficacy of ethnic studies programs, Christine Sleeter and Miguel Zavala found that students who participated in ethnic studies courses were able to “develop a sense of empowerment and self-efficacy...as well as a life commitment to diversity and multiculturalism.” In the same review, the authors note that a study in San Francisco found that participants in ethnic studies courses saw

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<sup>24</sup> U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, *The Business Case for Civic Education* (Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, November 7, 2019), <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/reports/business-case-civics-education>.

<sup>25</sup> Valerie Strauss, “The Surprising Thing Google Learned about Its Employees — and What It Means for Today’s Students,” *The Washington Post*, April 5, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/12/20/the-surprising-thing-google-learned-about-its-employees-and-what-it-means-for-todays-students/>.

<sup>26</sup> Nell K Duke, and Meghan K Block, “Improving Reading in the Primary Grades,” *The Future of Children*, 22(2), 55–72, 2012, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23317411>.

<sup>27</sup> Robert J. Marzano, “Marzano Program for Building Academic Vocabulary: Preliminary Report of the 2004-2005 Evaluation Study,” Marzano Research Laboratory (Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory, 2005), <https://eric.ed.gov/?q=background+knowledge+marzano&id=ED539812>.

<sup>28</sup> Susan Pimentel, “Why Doesn’t Every Teacher Know the Research on Reading Instruction?” *Education Week* (October 27, 2018), <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-why-doesnt-every-teacher-know-the-research-on-reading-instruction/2018/10>; Donna R. Recht, and Lauren Leslie, “Effect of prior knowledge on good and poor readers’ memory of text,” *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80, no. 1 (1988): 16–20, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.80.1.16>.

significant increases across a number of academic measurements, including attendance, GPA, and credit attainment.<sup>29</sup>

## Minnesota Social Studies Standards

Public school students in Minnesota, at a minimum, are expected to master knowledge and skills in four social studies disciplines: citizenship and government, economics, geography, and history (U.S. and world).<sup>30</sup>

Consistent with that requirement, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) specifically lists Civics and Government, Economics, Geography, and History.<sup>31</sup>

The 2011 Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies utilized the social studies education research and model standards that existed at that time. Periodic standards review helps ensure continuous improvement of academic standards in order to provide well-rounded instruction and meet the educational needs of all students. Review of the standards also reflects continued academic research related to learning and instructional practice and is responsive to the changing needs of society. A goal of the standards review is to ensure that concepts and skills identified in the academic standards build on one another and provide a learning progression to prepare students for the challenges they will face in their K–12 and postsecondary endeavors. The proposed 2021 Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies incorporate the leading research and developments from the last ten years.

## What are Standards?

Minnesota frames expectations for student learning in public schools according to K–12 academic standards and supporting benchmarks. Academic standards are summary descriptions of student learning in a content area.<sup>32</sup> They are broad descriptions of major concepts and skills that are repeated at multiple grade levels because they represent the “big picture.” Supporting benchmarks represent the learning that is to be mastered by the end of a particular grade (in grades K–8) or grade band (in grades 9–12) in order to complete part of an academic standard.<sup>33</sup> Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.023 states, “Schools must offer and students must achieve all benchmarks for an academic standard to satisfactorily complete that state standard.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Christine Sleeter, “The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research Review,” National Education Association Research Department (Washington, D.C.: NEA Research, 2011), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED521869.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd.1 (4).

<sup>31</sup> Scott D. Jones and Emily Workman, *Education Commission of the States Special Report: ESSA’s Well-Rounded Education* (Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, June 2016), <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/ESSAs-Well-Rounded-Education-1.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.018.

<sup>33</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.018, subd. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.023.

Academic standards are important because they help:

- Prepare students for success in careers, college, and civic life.
- Support a well-rounded education for all: they describe the knowledge and skills that all students across the state should learn.
- Define credit requirements for graduation.
- Guide school districts' adoption and design of curricula.
- Describe how learning progresses from kindergarten to high school.

By statute, Minnesota academic standards cannot require a specific teaching methodology or curriculum.<sup>35</sup> Districts, schools, and educators make curriculum and instruction decisions to support the teaching and student mastery of standards. Further, standards are not limiting and students may benefit from opportunities for additional challenge.

A standards-based system for academic achievement has positive implications and significant benefits for both instruction and accountability. This approach shifts the traditional focus from educational *input*, such as number of school days or credit hours, to educational output: student achievement of the academic standards. A system that is “standards-based,” therefore, shines a spotlight on the primary purpose of school: student learning.

An approach based on academic standards establishes high-quality expectations for what Minnesota students should know and be able to do in each content area. This approach provides a foundation for improving student achievement, while still allowing local districts to determine the curriculum, instructional methods, assessment tools and learning environments that will best help their students achieve the standards. A standards-based education system helps ensure that there are common baseline education expectations for all students.

## Overview of Current Social Studies Education Research

A report on trends in social studies standards prepared for the Colorado Department of Education notes, “there is a history of almost three decades of national and individual state efforts to develop, implement, measure, and refine K–12 social studies standards.”<sup>36</sup> These standards include both national frameworks, like the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies from 1994, the 2013 C3 Framework, and the Educating for American Democracy Initiative.

In all of the disciplines of social studies, research in at least the last two decades has reflected an effort to move K–12 classrooms away from rote memorization and an understanding of social studies as a set of discrete facts that can be “known” towards the unique disciplinary practices of each of the social sciences, centered on student inquiry. The National Council for the Social Studies says that a full social studies curriculum is “integrative, addressing the totality of human experience over time and space, connecting with the past, linked

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<sup>35</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 2(b).

<sup>36</sup> Beth Ratway and Edgagement, “Trends in Social Studies Standards - Colorado Department of Education,” *A Scan in the Landscape and Analysis of the Colorado Academic Standards for Social Studies* (2021), <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cosocialstudies/benchreport>.

to the present, and looking ahead to the future.”<sup>37</sup> As such, inquiry that is inclusive of the various disciplines is essential for student experience.

Inquiry in civics education is centered on the skills students need to be participatory members of a democratic society. Through civics, students cultivate the “critical capacity of the democratic mind...to embrace contradictory ideas.”<sup>38</sup> In 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms, this need to engage in meaning making from multiple perspectives is even more essential, especially in teaching students media literacy.<sup>39</sup> Engagement in public life requires “the ability to gather and interpret information, speak and listen, engage in dialogue about differences, resolve conflicts, reach agreements, collaborate with peers, understand formal government, and advocate for change.”<sup>40</sup> By incorporating the Inquiry Arc into civics classrooms, civic education shifts from “rote memorization of knowledge about the branches of government into participatory inquiry in which students pursue scholarly readings and remedies to self-identified community issues.”<sup>41</sup>

In geography, inquiry incorporates real-world tools such as GPS and GIS and encourages students to explore the world broadly. Geographic inquiry emphasizes creative thinking, which helps students access “global awareness that includes familiarity with different cultures, beliefs, and lifestyles in order to understand and address global issues.”<sup>42</sup> Geographic inquiry helps students develop interdisciplinary connections with the other social sciences by integrating skills in data analysis found in economics, and involvement in local and global communities,

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<sup>37</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, “A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies,” *Social Education* 80, no. 3 (2016): p. 180–182, <https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/80/03/vision-powerful-teaching-and-learning-social-studies>.

<sup>38</sup> Michael Hartoonian, Richard Van Scotter, and William E. White, “An Idea Called America,” *Social Education* 71, no. 5 (September 2007): p. 243–247, <https://www.socialstudies.org/idea-called-america>.

<sup>39</sup> “State Policy Menu,” Our Work, *CivXNow: A Project of iCivics*, Accessed February 9, 2023, <https://civxnow.org/our-work/state-policy/state-policy-menu/>.

<sup>40</sup> Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, *Civic Skills and Federal Policy* (2010), [http://www.civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Civic-Skills-and-Federal-Policy\\_final.pdf](http://www.civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Civic-Skills-and-Federal-Policy_final.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> James Anderson, Megan Bang, Bryan Mckinley, Jones Brayboy, Kris Gutiérrez, Deborah Hicks, Li-Ching Ho, et al., “Agency and Resilience in the Face of Challenge as Civic Action: Lessons Learned from across Ethnic Communities,” in *Educating for Civic Reasoning and Discourse*, ed. Carol D. Lee, Gregory White, Dian Dong (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Education), 157–243, <https://naeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Chapter-4.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> Paul Nagel, “Geography: The Essential Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Social Education* 72, no. 7 (2008): p. 354–358, [https://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/publications/articles/se\\_7207354.pdf](https://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/publications/articles/se_7207354.pdf).

emphasized in civics. Students with strong geographic inquiry skills are “equipped to make better choices for themselves and others based on the data and their study.”<sup>43</sup>

Historical thinking is an umbrella term to describe the complex processes historians undertake when constructing historical narratives from documentary evidence. The skills of historical thinking make up the disciplinary literacies, or ways of reading and constructing knowledge, unique to the study of history. Sam Wineburg, of the Stanford History Education Group, defined historical thinking skills in contrast to traditional methods based on data and observations from novice-expert studies in document reading he conducted with secondary students and professional historians.<sup>44</sup> Wineburg states, “Traditional history instruction constitutes a form of information, not a form of knowledge. Students might master an agreed-upon narrative, but they lacked any way of evaluating it, of deciding whether it, or any other narrative, was compelling or true.”<sup>45</sup>

Further research has helped solidify a set of ideas and patterns of thinking that can be used in classrooms to develop historical thinking in students. Historical thinking skills are investigatory and centered on source work. The process of inquiry is essential to a strong understanding of history because inquiry allows students to see that “history” is the construction of a narrative, and the narrative is the product.<sup>46</sup>

## National Standards/Frameworks

An overview of the National Landscape provided context to the standards committee for updating the 2011 Minnesota K–12 Standards in Social Studies.

This section begins with overviews/summaries of key national frameworks and standards in social studies that have been released since 2011 as well as an overview of the current frameworks for national assessments.

### The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has two reference documents intended to offer guidance in the creation of state-level social studies standards.

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework was a collaboration of leading organizations in social studies and its individual disciplines, state education organizations, social studies experts, curriculum specialists, teachers, and scholars from across the nation. It is centered on inquiry as a guiding principle for social studies education; specifically, the framework introduces the concept of an Inquiry Arc. This focuses on a set of

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<sup>43</sup> ESRI, “Geographic Inquiry: Thinking Geographically,” *ESRI Schools and Libraries Program* (2003), <https://www.esri.com/content/dam/esrisites/sitecore-archive/Files/Pdfs/industries/k-12/pdfs/geoginquiry.pdf>.

<sup>44</sup> Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 64–75.

<sup>45</sup> Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 41.

<sup>46</sup> Bruce VanSledright, “What Does It Mean to Think Historically...and How Do You Teach It?” *Social Education*, 68, No. 3 (April 2004): 230, [https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/68/3/what-does-it-mean-think-historically-and-how-do-you-teach-it?nocache=TRUE&check\\_logged\\_in=1](https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/68/3/what-does-it-mean-think-historically-and-how-do-you-teach-it?nocache=TRUE&check_logged_in=1).

interconnected ideas that act as the underlying structure for the framework’s four guiding dimensions, and emphasizes concepts and practices that students need to analyze, explain, and argue about topics in our social world. The four dimensions are (1) developing questions and planning inquiries, (2) applying disciplinary tools and concepts, (3) evaluating sources and using evidence, and (4) communicating conclusions and taking informed action.

The framework also outlines a set of College, Career, and Civic Readiness Indicators to be achieved by the end of Grade 12. Each of these indicators has an associated K–12 pathway for how students could reach proficiency in that particular skill or concept by the end of grades 2, 5, 8, and 12. Representing a shift away from standards that list a set of content students are expected to know the design and structure of the C3 Framework is deeply rooted in decades of research on how children and adolescents learn. The framework does not include details about curriculum or instructional content but instead focuses on the underlying concepts and skills of robust social studies education.

Further, this framework focuses only on the four federally defined core social studies areas of civics, economics, geography, and history. Additional behavioral and social science disciplines (e.g., anthropology, psychology, sociology, ethnic studies) align well to the framework, but are not included in its main body, as they are most often taught solely at the high school level.

The NCSS National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies are an updated framework originally published in 1994. The framework is designed to aid in curriculum design and develop a robust social studies curriculum. The curriculum standards are organized around ten thematic strands designed to be woven throughout a social studies program from prekindergarten through Grade 12 and to support the implementation of content standards. The themes are: (1) culture; (2) time, continuity, and change; (3) people, places, and environments; (4) individual development and identity; (5) individuals, groups, and institutions; (6) power, authority, and governance; (7) production, distribution, and consumption; (8) science, technology, and society; (9) global connections; and (10) civic ideals and practices.<sup>47</sup>

## **Discipline Specific National Standards/Frameworks and Assessments**

While the NCSS standards provide a framework for multiple social studies disciplines, there are a number of national standards frameworks focused on individual social studies disciplines, which have been created by professional organizations, universities, and standards-writing projects.

Each of the four federally defined core social studies disciplines also has a corresponding framework and assessment designed by the National Assessment Governing Board for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which are designed to measure the knowledge and skills critical to each of the disciplines. For each grade assessed by NAEP (4, 8, and 12), there are three achievement levels: basic, proficient, and advanced. Students achieving the basic level demonstrate partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade assessed. Students achieving the proficient level demonstrate

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<sup>47</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, *College, Career and Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K–12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (Silver Springs, MD: NCSS, 2013), <https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/c3-framework-for-social-studies-rev0617.pdf>.

solid academic performance, showing competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter. Students achieving the advanced level demonstrate superior performance at each grade assessed. Minnesota standards should align with expectations at the proficient level or higher in order to adequately prepare students for college and careers.

## **Civics**

### ***Educating for American Democracy Roadmap***

Released in March 2021, the Educating for American Democracy (EAD) Roadmap is an inquiry-based K–12 framework that outlines major themes, questions, and key concepts for the integration of history and civics education. The roadmap contains seven themes across four grade bands (K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12) that center on civic participation; institutional/social change; human history in a political context; place of individuals in a global context; contemporary debates/civic agency; government; and geographic, social, economic, and political landscape. The EAD includes Ethnic Studies or diverse perspectives in the content. EAD also includes a set of Design Challenges, which are issues or dilemmas that educators may face when engaging with EAD content themes.<sup>48</sup>

Five design challenges span the seven themes: (1) motivating agency, sustaining the republic; (2) America’s plural yet shared story; (3) simultaneously celebrating and critiquing compromise; (4) civic honesty, reflective patriotism; and (5) balancing the concrete and the abstract. Each of these design challenges includes questions for educators to consider (e.g., “How can we help students pursue civic action that is authentic, responsible, and informed?”) and is associated with a particular theme.

### ***Center for Civic Education Standards***

A set of Voluntary National Standards for Civics and Government, developed by The Center for Civic Education for students in kindergarten through grade 12, these content standards specify what students’ knowledge and proficiencies should be as they complete grades 4, 8, and 12. The Civic Education Standards have content standards that focus on students’ civic knowledge, proficiencies, and skills, as well as performance standards that outline criteria for students’ levels of achievement.<sup>49</sup>

### ***The NAEP Civics Assessment Framework***

The NAEP Civics Assessment Framework is centered on five enduring questions: (1) What are civic life, politics, and government? (2) What are the foundations of the American political system? (3) How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy? (4) What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs? and (5) What are the roles of citizens in American Democracy? These questions are drawn from the National Standards for Civics and

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<sup>48</sup> *Educating for American Democracy, Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy* (2021), <https://www.educatingforamericandemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Roadmap-to-Educating-for-American-Democracy.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> *National Standards for Civics and Government* (Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education, 1994), <https://www.civiced.org/standards>.

Government and are meant to identify the skills and dispositions “students need to become informed and responsible citizens.”<sup>50</sup>

## Economics

### *The Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics*

First published in 1997 and updated in 2010 by the Council for Economic Education, the Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics consist of 20 content standards for grades 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12. These standards are designed to help students develop economic thinking and problem-solving skills to prepare them to be wise consumers, investors, and savers. Each standard includes a set of benchmarks, which are divided into achievement levels for grades 4, 8, and 12. Assessments, including the National Assessment of Educational Progress for Economics, align well with the content found in these standards.<sup>51</sup>

### *The NAEP Economics Assessment Framework*

The economics component of the NAEP assessment, most recently administered in 2012, seeks to assess grade 12 students’ understanding and knowledge proficiency in the workings of domestic and international economics. It is an assessment of economic literacy, which the framework defines as “an understanding of the fundamental constraints imposed by limited resources, the resulting choices people have to make, and the tradeoffs they face; how economies work, and how people function within them; the benefits and costs of economic interaction and the interdependence among people and nations” as well as “skills that allow people to function effectively as consumers, producers, savers, investors, and responsible citizens.”<sup>52</sup>

## Geography

### *The National Geography Standards*

The National Geography Standards were developed by the Geography Education National Implementation Project. They are designed to encourage students to become geographically informed through knowledge and mastery of factual knowledge, mental maps and tools, and ways of thinking. There are 18 standards grouped by

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<sup>50</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment Governing Board, *Civics Framework for the 2018 National Assessment of Educational Progress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2018), <https://www.nagb.gov/content/dam/nagb/en/documents/publications/frameworks/civics/2018-civics-framework.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> Council for Economic Education, *Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics, Second Edition* (New York, 2010), <https://www.councilforeconed.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/voluntary-national-content-standards-2010.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment Governing Board, *Economics Framework for the 2012 National Assessment of Educational Progress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2012), <https://www.nagb.gov/content/dam/nagb/en/documents/publications/frameworks/economics/2012-economics-framework.pdf>.

six themes: (1) the world in spatial terms, (2) places and regions, (3) physical systems, (4) human systems, (5) environment and society, and (6) the uses of geography.<sup>53</sup>

### ***The NAEP Geography Assessment Framework***

The NAEP Geography Assessment framework “attempts to capture the range of geography content and thinking skills that students should possess as they progress through school.” The framework defines geography as a way of thinking that “encompasses the spatial analysis of the properties of Earth’s surface...[and] presents a framework for addressing local, regional, national and global questions.” The NAEP framework emphasizes the skills of geographic inquiry, in order to encourage students to “analyze things geographically.” It is structured around three content areas: (1) Space and Place, (2) Environment and Society, and (3) Spatial Dynamics and Connections.<sup>54</sup>

## **History**

### ***National Standards for History***

First published in 1996, the National Standards for History were developed with input from history teachers, supervisors, state social studies specialists, chief state school officers, academic historians, and civic and public interest groups. These standards focus on students’ historical thinking skills (e.g., ability to evaluate evidence and construct sound historical arguments or perspectives) and historical understandings (i.e., what students should know about the history of their nation and the world). Further, the National Standards for History contain standards for U.S. history, with ten periodized eras, and world history, with nine periodized eras. Although these standards provide an outline of appropriate grade levels for study of each of the standards, when the eras should be studied should be under local or state control.<sup>55</sup>

### ***NAEP U.S. History Assessment Framework***

The NAEP U.S. History assessment seeks to assess students’ historical thinking skills, including “critical examination of evidence, thoughtful consideration of conflicting claims, and careful weighing of facts and hypotheses.” The framework is designed to encourage students to engage in historical inquiry that “provides experience in the kind of reasoned and informed decision-making that should characterize each citizen’s participation in our American democracy.” It is organized into four central themes: (1) Change and Continuity in American Democracy: Ideas, Institutions, Events, Key Figures, and Controversies, (2) The Gathering and

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<sup>53</sup> Geography Education National Implementation Project, “National Geography Standards Index,” *National Geographic Society* (1994), <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/standards/national-geography-standards/>.

<sup>54</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment Governing Board, *Geography Framework for the 2018 National Assessment of Educational Progress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2018), <https://www.nagb.gov/content/dam/nagb/en/documents/publications/frameworks/geography/2018-geography-framework.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> “National Standards for History Standards,” *UCLA History Public History Initiative* (2021), <https://phi.history.ucla.edu/nchs/history-standards/>.

Interactions of Peoples, Cultures, and Ideas, (3) Economic and Technological Changes and Their Relationship to Society, Ideas, and the Environment, and (4) The Changing Role of America in the World.

## State Social Studies Standards Trends

**Table 1: Use of the C3 Framework by State as of June 1, 2021<sup>56</sup>**

Level of alignment of state standards to C3 Framework (# of states in level)	Category Description	Number of States	States in Each Category
N/A (N=11)	States that have not undergone comprehensive social studies standards revision since the publication of the C3 Framework.	5	New Mexico (2009), Pennsylvania (2009), Alabama (2010), Florida (adopted in 2014, but prepared earlier)
	States that are currently undergoing social studies standards revision and have not formally adopted new standards as of June 1, 2021.	6*	New Hampshire (2006), *Washington, D.C. (2006), Rhode Island (2008, 2012), Virginia (2015), Minnesota (Draft 2021), Montana (Draft 2021)
Level 1 (n=8)	States that do not cite the C3 Framework in social studies standards or in any accompanying documents, including works cited/references.	8	Alaska (2016), Georgia (2016), Idaho (2016), Delaware (2018), Ohio (2018), Texas (2018), Wyoming (2018), Indiana (2020)
Level 2 (N= 16)	States that cited the C3 Framework as one of the documents consulted in a standards writing and adoption process.	2	Mississippi (2018), Maine (2019)
	States that endorsed the use of the C3 Framework by presenting it as complementary resource for implementing their social studies standards.	2	California (2016), New York (2016)
	States that excerpted one or more ideas (e.g., questions, taking informed action) from the C3 Framework.	12	South Dakota (2015), Missouri (2016), Utah (2016), Tennessee (2017), Oregon (2018), Nebraska (2019), North Dakota (2019), Oklahoma (2019), Washington (2019), Colorado (2020), Kansas (2020), South Carolina (2020)
Level 3 (N=16)	States that framed their social studies document with a version of the C3 Framework's Inquiry Arc.	4	West Virginia (2016), Massachusetts (2018), Maryland (2020), New Jersey (2020).
	States that modeled their social studies standards on the C3 Framework by differentiating and integrating the Inquiry Arc at grade-band/level.	11	Arkansas (2014), Connecticut (2015), Illinois (2016), Iowa (2017), Hawaii (2018), Nevada (2018), Wisconsin (2018), Arizona (2019), Kentucky (2019), Michigan (2019), North Carolina (2021)
	States that adopted the C3 Framework as their social studies standards.	1	Vermont (2017)

States are listed by year of the most recent standards adoption, then listed alphabetically.

<sup>56</sup> Ryan New, Kathy Swan, John Lee, and S.G. Grant, "The State of Social Studies Standards: What is the Impact of the C3 Framework?" *Social Education*, 85, no. 4 (2021): 239–246, <https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/85/4/state-social-studies-standards-what-impact-c3-framework>.

## The History of Academic Standards in Minnesota

Minnesota's history with standards-based initiatives spans about 25 years. Public schools in the state implemented state academic standards for the first time in 1997 with the state-mandated Profile of Learning. The development of the Profile standards was spurred, in part, by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) 1994 re-authorization. The ESEA re-authorization required the establishment of statewide academic standards in core content areas. Minnesota has state standards in arts, science, language arts, social studies, mathematics, and physical education as well as locally developed standards in health, career and technical education, and world languages.<sup>57</sup> In 2003, the Minnesota Legislature repealed and replaced the Profile of Learning with required state academic standards in mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies. This new state law also required state or locally developed academic standards in the arts and locally developed standards in vocational and technical education and world languages.<sup>58</sup> The Legislature required academic standards in order to maintain Minnesota's commitment to rigorous educational expectations for all students as well as to comply with the 2001 re-authorization of the ESEA, now widely known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.<sup>59</sup> In 2004, the Minnesota Legislature adopted legislation that required districts to develop local standards in health and physical education.<sup>60</sup> In 2016, the Legislature required state standards for physical education beginning in the 2018–2019 school year.<sup>61</sup>

Minnesota state law also requires supporting benchmarks for academic standards in core content areas in grades K–12.<sup>62</sup> Academic standards describe the expectations in learning that all students must satisfy to meet state requirements for credit and graduation.<sup>63</sup> The benchmarks supplement the academic standards and provide details about “the academic knowledge and skills that schools must offer and students must achieve to satisfactorily complete” the standards.<sup>64</sup> Essentially, the benchmarks set forth grade-level specifics for the learning described by the standards.

In 2006, the Minnesota Legislature added a requirement that certain supplemental concepts and skills must be embedded in academic standards in all content areas. This law requires that Minnesota's academic standards be revised to include technology and information literacy standards and college readiness skills and knowledge in Minn. Stat., section 120B.023, subd. 2 (2006) and 2006 Minnesota Laws, chapter 263, article 2, section 3.<sup>65</sup> The following year, in 2007, the Legislature added a requirement that standards must also include the contributions

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<sup>57</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021 (2003); and Minn. Stat., section 120B.022, subd. (1).

<sup>58</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021 (2003); and Minn. Stat., section 120B.022, subd. (1).

<sup>59</sup> No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Pub. L. 107–110 (2002).

<sup>60</sup> 2004 Minnesota Laws, chapter 294, article 2, section 2.

<sup>61</sup> 2016 Minnesota Laws, chapter 189, article 25, section 4.

<sup>62</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 1(6).

<sup>63</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.02.

<sup>64</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.023, subd. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.023, subd. 2 (2006); 2006 Minnesota Laws, chapter 263, article 2, section 3.

of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities in Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 1 and 2007 Minnesota Laws, chapter 146, article 2, section 3.<sup>66</sup> With the addition of these new elements, the Legislature required all existing academic standards to be reviewed and revised beginning in the 2008–2009 school year. The Legislature further required that students satisfy the revised standards, which incorporated the new requirements beginning in the 2011–12 school year.

Since the implementation of the 2009 science standards in the 2011–2012 school year, the Legislature has worked to provide systemic structure to the standards review and revision process to allow for regular review and revision of the academic standards and the related benchmarks in all content areas. In addition, the Minnesota legislature has demonstrated a commitment to establishing, reviewing, and revising rigorous academic standards for Minnesota’s public school students by providing the commissioner of education with general rulemaking authority for the review and revision of academic standards along with a specific timeline for doing so.<sup>67</sup> The revision schedule allows the standards in each subject to be periodically updated to reflect new knowledge in the discipline and enhanced understandings about how students learn. It also provides an opportunity for new legislative requirements to be reflected in the standards. This systemic structure ensures that local education agencies understand the duration of the academic standards rules and the process in which they may engage to provide input and guidance. In 2013, the Minnesota Legislature removed set implementation dates from state statute and gave the authority for the implementation timeline of revised standards to be determined as part of the rulemaking process.<sup>68</sup> This change allows for implementation timelines that are more appropriate for each content area instead of requiring the same implementation timeline for each subject.

The following chart illustrates the amendments made to Minnesota Statutes, sections 120B.023 and 120B.021, between 2012 and 2021, as well as any existing statements regarding the Legislature’s intent. The history of these statutes makes clear the Legislature intended the commissioner to have ongoing rulemaking authority in the academic standards content areas.

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<sup>66</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 1; 2007 Minnesota Laws, chapter 146, article 2, section 3.

<sup>67</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd 4.

<sup>68</sup> 2013 Minnesota Laws, chapter 116, article 2, section 120B.02, subd.2.

**Table 2: Legislative Changes 2012–2021**

Legislative Session	Legislative Changes	Purpose of Change and Evidence of Legislative Intent
2012	<p><a href="#">House and Senate Passed SF 1656</a> (Proposed 2012 Minnesota Laws, Senate File 1656. Vetoed by Governor Dayton, May 2012. See <a href="#">Governor Dayton’s Veto Letter to Senator Fischbach, dated May 4, 2012</a>; Minnesota Senate Journal, p. 6999 (May 7, 2012), available at <a href="https://www.senate.mn/journals/gotopage.php?session=ls87&amp;number=6999">https://www.senate.mn/journals/gotopage.php?session=ls87&amp;number=6999</a>.) but this language was vetoed by then-Governor Dayton:</p> <p>Minn. Stat., section 120B.023<sup>69</sup></p> <p>Subd. 2. Revisions and reviews required.</p> <p><u>The commissioner must revise and align the state's academic standards and graduation requirements, consistent with the review cycle established in this subdivision and the requirements of chapter 14, but may proceed to finally adopt revised and realigned academic standards and graduation requirements in rule only after legislation is enacted directing the commissioner to adopt the academic standards or graduation requirements in rule.</u><sup>70</sup></p>	<p><b>Changes Proposed:</b> Language prop to require specific legislative authorization.</p> <p><b>Vetoed by Governor Dayton on May 4, 2012</b>, stating, “This bill would seriously undermine the existing standards review and revision process. Under current law, the process seeks to maximize the input of people with content knowledge and teaching expertise, as well as various stakeholders, while providing multiple opportunities for public input and opinion. It would be very difficult to recruit highly qualified people to serve on the standards committee if they knew the Legislature would then review, approve, or change the standards they worked so diligently to create. I am also concerned about the additional delays this bill would force upon standards development and implementation timelines, which could cause losses of federal funding and additional costs to school districts. Applications for federal funds typically require a state to commit to a standards and assessment revision timeline. Districts align their curriculum adoption calendars to the state’s standard schedule under Minn. Stat. 120B.023. The timeline is very tight. Adding an additional review process could considerably lengthen the amount of time it would take to develop the standards, which in turn would make it difficult for districts to align, purchase, or create new curriculum to train their teachers and to implement the standards. Finally, this bill would disrupt the efficient functioning of state government, by assigning a role to the Legislative Branch, which is the responsibility of the Executive Branch. Academic standards are numerous and detailed. They can take a year or more to discuss, consider, and review by the committee of experts, including teachers, academics, and business leaders. The process culminates in a detailed administrative rulemaking process that provides further opportunities for input by everyone concerned about the outcome. It would be non-productive at best, and counter-productive at worst, to overlay a legislative review process on top of this process, which has been carefully designed and fine-tuned by legislators and administrations from both parties.”<sup>71</sup></p> <p><b>MDE Comment:</b> The governor was necessarily concerned about imposing a second layer of legislative review over the commissioner’s detailed standards process.</p>

<sup>69</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.023.

<sup>70</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.023, subd. 2 (2012).

<sup>71</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 1; 2007 Minnesota Laws, chapter 146, article 2, section 3.

Legislative Session	Legislative Changes	Purpose of Change and Evidence of Legislative Intent
2013	<p><a href="#">House, Senate, and Governor’s office passed and signed into law H.F. 630. Minnesota 2013 Laws, chapter 116, article 2, section 3</a>“Minn. Stat 120B.023<sup>72</sup></p> <p><b>Subd. 2.</b> Revisions and reviews required.</p> <p>(a) The commissioner of education must revise and appropriately embed technology and information literacy standards consistent with recommendations from school media specialists into the state’s academic standards and graduation requirements and implement a <del>review</del> <u>ten-year cycle for to review and revise</u> state academic standards and related benchmarks, consistent with this subdivision. During each <u>ten-year review and revision</u> cycle, the commissioner also must examine the alignment of each required academic standard and related benchmark with the knowledge and skills students need for <u>career and</u> college readiness and advanced work in the particular subject area. <u>The commissioner must include the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities as related to the academic standards during the review and revision of the required academic standards.</u></p> <p>(c) <del>The commissioner in the 2007-2008 school year must revise and align the state’s academic standards and high school graduation requirements in the arts to require that students satisfactorily complete the revised arts standards beginning in the 2010-2011 school year.</del> The commissioner must implement a review of the academic standards and related benchmarks in arts beginning in the 2016–2017 school year.”<sup>73</sup></p>	<p><b>Relevant Changes Made:</b> Minn. Stat., section 120B.023 amended to provide both review and revision (revision was new) on a 10-year cycle for all content areas, and to move away from fixed content area implementation dates. The change also moved graduation requirements to Minn. Stat., section 120B.024, to focus this section on standards revision and review. The amendments moved the concept of “revision” from the individual content areas to the general opening paragraph (which applies to all content areas), and set 10-year timelines for review of each content area.</p> <p><b>MDE Comment:</b> The Legislature gave the Department flexibility to set implementation dates for each content area as part of the rulemaking process. The ten-year cycle – which includes both review and revision -- also eliminated the need for the commissioner to come back to the Legislature to seek specific authority for standards rulemaking. The Legislature anticipated that the commissioner would conduct content area rulemaking during the years set forth in the updated timelines.</p>

<sup>72</sup> Minn. Stat. 120B.023.

<sup>73</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.023, subd. 2 (2013).

Legislative Session	Legislative Changes	Purpose of Change and Evidence of Legislative Intent
2014	<p><a href="#">House, Senate, and Governor’s office passed and signed into law H.F. 2397</a> (2014 Minnesota Laws, chapter 272, article 3, section 3). Minn. Stat., section 120B.021<sup>74</sup></p> <p><b>Subd. 4.</b> Revisions and reviews required.</p> <p>(a)The commissioner of education must revise and appropriately embed technology and information literacy standards consistent with recommendations from school media specialists into the state’s academic standards and graduation requirements and implement a ten-year cycle to review and, <i>consistent with the review, revise state academic standards and related benchmarks, consistent with this subdivision.</i> During each ten-year review and revision cycle, the commissioner also must examine the alignment of each required academic standard and related benchmark with the knowledge and skills students need for career and college readiness and advanced work in the particular subject area. The commissioner must include the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities as related to the academic standards during the review and revision of the required academic standards.</p> <p>...(c) The commissioner must implement a review of the academic standards and related benchmarks in arts beginning in the 2016–2017 school year <u>and every ten years thereafter.</u><sup>75</sup> (emphasis added)</p>	<p><b>Changes Made:</b> This amendment moved the required standards revision and review from Minn. Stat., section 120B.023 to Minn. Stat., section 120B.021. It also clarified that any revisions must be consistent with the accompanying review and specified an ongoing ten-year cycle for review for arts (and all other) standards.</p> <p><b>MDE Comment:</b> This amendment makes clear that the Legislature contemplated both review and revision as part of the ten-year cycle. Consistent with the governor’s veto concerns in 2012, the Legislature did not intend for the commissioner to go to the effort of conducting a thorough review of the standards without having the authority to then revise the standards through the rulemaking process.</p>
2016	<p><a href="#">House, Senate and Governor’s office passed and signed into law H.F.2749</a> (2016 Minnesota Laws, chapter 189, article 25, section 4). “Minn. Stat., section 120B.021<sup>76</sup></p> <p>Subd. 4. Revisions and reviews required.</p> <p>(c) The commissioner must implement a review of the academic standards and related benchmarks in arts beginning in the <del>2016-2017</del> <u>2017-2018</u> school year and every ten years thereafter.”<sup>77</sup></p>	<p><b>Changes Made:</b> Added a requirement for the development of art standards, thus delaying each of the content standards reviews by one year.</p> <p><b>MDE Comment:</b> This change did not affect the general scope of the commissioner’s ongoing rulemaking authority. It just adjusted the rulemaking timeline to the appropriate and reasonable academic school year.</p>

<sup>74</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021.

<sup>75</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 4 (2014).

<sup>76</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021.

<sup>77</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 4 (2016).

## History of Social Studies Academic Standards and Social Studies Education Requirements in Minnesota

In 2004, following the repeal of the Profile of Learning, the commissioner submitted proposed standards in science and social studies to the Legislature, and the Legislature approved the standards in both subjects. Full implementation of the science and social studies standards in all schools was scheduled for the 2005–06 school year. Schools continued to implement the 2004 social studies standards until they were revised in the 2010–11 school year. In addition to approving the science and social studies standards, the 2004 Legislature also passed a requirement for districts to develop local standards in health and physical education.<sup>78</sup>

Legislation passed in 2006 requires that Minnesota’s academic standards be revised to reflect an increased level of rigor that prepares students with the knowledge and skills needed for success in college and the skilled workplace. This legislation also establishes requirements for revising state academic standards in each subject and directs the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to revise these state academic standards.<sup>79</sup>

The K–12 Minnesota Standards in Social Studies were last revised during the 2010–11 school year, with all schools implementing and all students satisfactorily completing the revised standards no later than the 2013–14 school year. These standards were adopted into rule on May 6, 2013.

In 2015, the graduation requirements were further revised to clarify the role of the standards in the graduation requirements.<sup>80</sup>

In addition to the Civics Test Questions Requirement for students enrolled in Minnesota public schools, there are two kinds of requirements Minnesota’s public-school students must complete for graduation. Students must satisfactorily complete all state academic standards, or local academic standards where state standards do not apply, and satisfactorily complete the state credit requirements.<sup>81</sup> For social studies, the two requirements are:

Minn. Stat. section 120B.021 (2022) Required Academic Standards<sup>82</sup>

Subdivision 1. Required academic standards. (a) The following subjects for statewide accountability:

(4) social studies, including history, geography, economics, and government and citizenship that includes civics consistent with section [120B.02, subdivision 3](#).<sup>83</sup>[Required knowledge and understanding of civics].

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<sup>78</sup> 2004 Minnesota Laws, chapter 294, article 2, section 2.

<sup>79</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.023, subd. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Minnesota Session Laws 2015, 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session, H.F No. 1.

<sup>81</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021; Minn. Stat., section 120B.024.

<sup>82</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021.

<sup>83</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.02, subd. 3.

The legislature passed the civics requirement in 2016.<sup>84</sup>

Schools must offer and students must achieve all benchmarks for a standard to satisfactorily complete that state standard.<sup>85</sup>

Local school boards may grant a rigorous course of study waiver for a student who satisfactorily completes a rigorous course that meets or exceeds the corresponding academic standards required by law for high school graduation in Minnesota.

Minn. Stat. Section 120B.021 Required Academic Standards

Subdivision 1. Required academic standards. (a) The following subjects for statewide accountability:

(4) social studies, including history, geography, economics, and government and citizenship that includes civics consistent with section 120B.02, subdivision 3. [Required knowledge and understanding of civics].

The legislature passed the civics requirement in 2016.

Schools must offer and students must achieve all benchmarks for a standard to satisfactorily complete that state standard.<sup>86</sup>

Local school boards may grant a rigorous course of study waiver for a student who satisfactorily completes a rigorous course that meets or exceeds the corresponding academic standards required by law for high school graduation in Minnesota.

[Minn. Stat. 2022, 120B.024](#),<sup>87</sup> **Credits.**

Subdivision 1. Graduation requirements. (a) Students beginning 9th grade in the 2011–2012 school year and later must successfully complete the following high school level credits for graduation: (The Minnesota graduation requirements specify what a graduating student should know and be able to do to be career and college ready. The standards and benchmarks in earlier grades prepare students to meet the graduation requirements.)

(5) three and one-half credits of social studies, encompassing at least United States history, geography, government and citizenship, world history, and economics sufficient to satisfy all of the academic standards in social studies.

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<sup>84</sup> Minnesota Session Laws 2016, H.F. No. 2749.

<sup>85</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 1(a).

<sup>86</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.023, subd. 1(a).

<sup>87</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.024.

A one-half credit of economics taught in a school's agriculture education or business department may fulfill a one-half credit in social studies if the credit is sufficient to satisfy all of the academic standards in economics.<sup>88</sup>

The Minnesota legislature formally encourages school districts to offer a course for credit in government and citizenship to 11th or 12th grade students.<sup>89</sup>

Minnesota Statute 120B.02 states that students must satisfactorily complete, as determined by the school district, state credit requirements under 120B.024.

"Credit" means the determination by the local school district that a student has successfully completed an academic year of study or mastered the applicable subject matter.<sup>90</sup>

## **The Role of Quality Standard and Benchmark Statements**

Minnesota Statutes defines the terms "academic standard" and "benchmark." "Academic Standard" is defined as "a summary description of student learning in a required content area under section 120B.021 or elective content area under section 120B.022."<sup>91</sup> The term "benchmark" is defined as "specific knowledge or skill that a student must master to complete part of an academic standard by the end of the grade level or grade band."<sup>92</sup>

The academic standards are the rule language that is proposed and adopted through the formal rulemaking process. The benchmarks, according to Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.023, subdivision 1, "supplement (the) required state academic standards." High school career and college-ready benchmarks may cover more than one grade. Schools must offer and students must achieve all benchmarks for an academic standard to satisfactorily complete that state standard.<sup>93</sup>

Minnesota's academic standards identify the knowledge and skills that all students must achieve in a content area by the end of a grade level or grade band. This can be thought of as the "what" students must learn. Standards guide instruction and assessment, but are substantive enough to require more than one class period to be taught, and are broad enough to allow for educator decisions on instructional and assessment practices.

Educators make the decisions on the "how" to deliver instruction on the standards. Curriculum is the resources and plans that educators need to present the content to students. By statute Minnesota academic standards do not require a specific curriculum. Districts, schools, and educators make curriculum and instruction decisions to

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<sup>88</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.024, subd. 2(a).

<sup>89</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.024, subd.1(b).

<sup>90</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.018.

<sup>91</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.018, subd. 2.

<sup>92</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.018, subd. 3.

<sup>93</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.023.

support the teaching and student mastery of standards.<sup>94</sup> Further, standards are not limiting and students may benefit from opportunities for additional challenge.<sup>95</sup>

School districts determine, at the local level, how their students will meet the standards and benchmarks by developing courses and curriculum and choosing teaching methods.

It is up to individual school districts to determine course offerings, which academic standards are addressed within each course, and how much credit is given for each course.

Curriculum includes lessons and instructional practices teachers use; activities, assignments, and projects students engage in; books, materials, and videos used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning. Curriculum also includes the specific topics, names, dates, and places an educator uses to teach the standards.

**Table 3: The Relationship between State Standards and Local Curriculum**

Source	Responsibility	Product	Definition
State of Minnesota	Sets the destination for learning	Academic Standards	A summary of student learning in a content area.
State of Minnesota	Sets the destination for learning	Benchmarks	Specific knowledge or skills a student must master (by the end of a grade level or grade band) to complete part of an academic standard.
School districts and educators	Determine how students will reach that destination	Curriculum and Instruction	Programs, plans, and methods for providing students with learning experiences that lead to expected knowledge and skills. Includes teacher and student materials and resources.
School districts and educators	Determine how students will reach that destination	Local Assessment	Tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document a student’s progress toward and achievement of learning described in the standards and benchmarks.

<sup>94</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 2(b).

<sup>95</sup> “Academic Standards (K–12): Frequently Asked Questions,” Academic Standards (K–12), Minnesota Department of Education, accessed February 8, 2023, <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/stds/>.

## Statutory evidence for the role of state benchmarks and standards and the local control of curriculum.

Academic standards must:<sup>96</sup>

- be consistent with the Constitutions of the United States and the state of Minnesota.<sup>97</sup>
- be clear, concise, objective, measurable, and grade-level appropriate.<sup>98</sup>
- not require a specific teaching methodology or curriculum.<sup>99</sup>
- be aligned with the knowledge and skills needed for career and college readiness and advanced work in the particular subject area.<sup>100</sup>
- appropriately embed technology and information literacy standards.<sup>101</sup>
- include the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities as they relate to the academic standards.<sup>102</sup>

State action regarding standards must evidence consideration of school district autonomy.<sup>103</sup>

“The commissioner shall not prescribe in rule or otherwise the delivery system, classroom assessments, or form of instruction that school sites must use.”<sup>104</sup>

The Minnesota legislature formally encourages school districts to offer a course for credit in government and citizenship to 11th or 12th grade students.<sup>105</sup>

### Criteria for Standards Review

The department has criteria for quality standard and benchmark statements in all content areas. MDE developed the criteria in 2003 to provide guidance to standards review committees regarding important qualities of standards and benchmarks to ensure that the standards and benchmarks are ultimately clear, consistent, and useable. These criteria are reviewed prior to each standards revision cycle and are used by all content standards committees to promote coherence and consistency. These criteria apply to both the standards and benchmarks because the commissioner must supplement required state academic standards with

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<sup>96</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021.

<sup>97</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd.2 (b).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd.2 (b).

<sup>100</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd.4 (a).

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.02, subd.1(b).

<sup>104</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.02, subd.1(a).

<sup>105</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.024, subd.1(b).

grade-level benchmarks.<sup>106</sup> The department’s quality criteria for standards and benchmarks was adapted from *Creating Aligned Standards and Assessment Systems* by Stanley Rabinowitz, Ed Roeber, Cheryl Schroeder, and Jan Sheinker.<sup>107</sup> The criteria for quality standard and benchmark statements in all academic content areas are:

- The standards should reflect a developmental progression, meaning that they provide a clear sense of increased knowledge and sophistication of skills from one grade level to the next.
- Standards should be useful for defining and supporting good instruction.
- All standards and benchmarks should be able to be assessed at the classroom or district level (e.g., paper and pencil tests, projects, teacher observations, and other classroom-based assessments). Standards and benchmarks should have verbs that indicate assessable action. If an anchor standard approach is utilized, only the benchmarks, rather than the standards and benchmarks, should be assessable at the classroom or district level.
- Standards and benchmarks should be an appropriate “grain size”: Standards should be specific enough to provide direction for assessment and to guide curriculum, but broad enough to capture the “big ideas” (i.e., the major concepts and essential skills) and to allow for a variety of curriculum approaches. Each benchmark should be limited to one concept or skill and the concept or skill should be substantive enough to require more than one class period to teach it.
- The knowledge and skills of the content should be reflected in a manageable number of standards and benchmarks.
- There should be consistency in the “grain size” of standards and benchmarks.
- There should be consistent use of terminology within a content area.

## **Overview and Organization of 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies**

The 2011 Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies are organized into disciplinary strands, substrands, standards, and benchmarks.

The broadest level of organization at each grade level is represented by strands. The strands in the 2011 standards are based on the four social studies disciplines identified in state statute and are presented in alphabetical order: (1) Citizenship and Government, (2) Economics, (3) Geography, and (4) History (U.S. and World). Although the standards in this document are organized by discipline, they may be delivered in an interdisciplinary context.

The content for each strand is organized into several categories or substrands that contain ten to 23 standards.

The first substrand in each strand indicates key skills or processes that, in most cases, should be applied to the content in other benchmarks rather than taught as a standalone item.

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<sup>106</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd.4.

<sup>107</sup> Stanley Rabinowitz, Ed Roeber, Cheryl Schroeder, and Jan Sheinker, *Creating Aligned Standards and Assessment Systems* (The Council of Chief State School Officers, January, 2006), <https://studylib.net/doc/18079491/creating-aligned-standards-and-assessments>.

Each strand contains one to nine standards, which are summary descriptions of student learning in a required or elective content area or broad descriptions of major concepts and skills. As standards represent “the big picture,” they are repeated at multiple grade levels.

Each standard is prefaced with the statement “the student will understand that...,” which is followed by a general statement or summary description of what the student should learn in a specific discipline. With the exception of history, each standard describes an important disciplinary concept. In history, the standards characterize an era in either U.S. or world history.

Each standard is composed of one or more grade-level benchmarks, which are the specific knowledge or skills that a student must master to complete part of an academic standard by the end of the grade level or grade band. The “skills” benchmarks were designed to be repeated multiple times throughout the school year, while the “content” benchmarks were designed with a “grain size” of approximately three days of instruction time.

Many of the benchmarks include examples that clarify the meaning of the benchmark or indicate the level of student understanding. The examples may suggest learning activities or instructional topics. They are not intended to be directives for curriculum or a comprehensive fulfillment of the benchmarks.

The 2010 English Language Arts standards included Literacy in History/Social Studies standards that public-school students in grades 6–12 must complete.<sup>108</sup> In the 2020 ELA Review, this section was removed in favor of integrating ELA concepts into Social Studies and Science.

The minimum high school credit requirement for statewide social studies accountability is 3.5 credits. Although local school districts determine courses and credits, the 2011 Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies provide approximately one year of content for a survey of United States history, a year for a survey of world history, and a half-year each for geography, government and citizenship, and economics.<sup>109</sup>

“Credit” means the determination by the local school district that a student has successfully completed an academic year of study or mastered the applicable subject matter.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> State of Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Education, *Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts* (Minnesota, 2010), p. 80–90, <https://standards.education.mn.gov/sds/mnsds/index.htm>.

<sup>109</sup> State of Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Education, *Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies* (Minnesota, 2011), [https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET\\_FILE&dDocName=042018&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary](https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=042018&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary).

<sup>110</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.018.

## Rationale for Repealing and Replacing the Current K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies

There are several important reasons to revise the state’s current social studies standards, including the need to do the following:

- Meet federal and state mandates;
- Clarify statewide graduation requirements;
- Provide guidance for curriculum improvement efforts; and
- Encourage best practices in social studies education.

At the federal level, ESSA re-establishes that a well-rounded education includes a wide range of academic subjects including Civics and government, Economics, Geography, and History. ESSA also allows states to add “any other subject, as determined by the State or local educational agency, with the purpose of providing all students access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience.”<sup>111</sup>

Since the standards provide the foundation for the state’s educational accountability system, it is important to revise them periodically to reflect the most important knowledge and skills.

Minnesota state law provides additional reasons for revising the 2011 standards in social studies. According to the schedule set forth in state statute, the commissioner must review and revise the state social studies standards during the 2020–2021 school year. The revised standards must be aligned with the knowledge and skills needed for college and work readiness and technology and information literacy. The revised standards also must “include the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities.”

In addition to meeting federal and state mandates, the 2011 standards need to be revised to serve other purposes. The standards define the state’s expectations of what students should know and be able to do in social studies. As such, the standards have implications for graduation requirements and curriculum development.

Since the standards are the basic component around which schools plan K–12 curriculum and instruction, they must be reviewed and revised on a periodic basis to ensure that they reflect current research in best practices. The knowledge and skills in standards should be compared against those found in model standards documents from other states and national content organizations and content measured in national assessments. Current standards also should be reviewed for the degree to which they reflect “quality” attributes.

The 2011 Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies utilized the social studies education research and model standards that existed at that time. Periodic standards review helps ensure continuous improvement in meeting the well-rounded educational needs of all students and ensures that the concepts and skills students are expected to learn continue to prepare students for the challenges they will face in their K–12 and

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<sup>111</sup> Scott D. Jones, and Emily Workman, *Education Commission of the States Special Report: ESSA’s Well-Rounded Education* (Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, June 2016), <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/ESSAs-Well-Rounded-Education-1.pdf>.

postsecondary endeavors, reflect continued academic research related to learning and instructional practice, and are responsive to changing needs of society. The proposed 2021 Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies incorporate the leading research and developments from the last ten years.

## **Review and Revision Process for the Minnesota 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies**

Minnesota Statutes section 120B.021 specifies that “The commissioner must implement a review of the academic standards and related benchmarks in social studies beginning in the 2020–21 school year and every ten years thereafter.”<sup>112</sup> The review and revision process for the proposed Minnesota 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies occurred from September 2020 to September 2021. On November 15, 2021, the standards committee’s final draft (“Draft 3”) was released for rulemaking by the Commissioner of Education. This section of the SONAR describes the process that was used to review and revise the 2011 Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies and related benchmarks. It explains the role and work of the standards committee, public feedback that was utilized, and the Minnesota statutory requirements.

The review of the 2011 Minnesota Academic Standards in Social Studies was an opportunity to examine data about the implementation of the standards, explore recent research on social studies education, and engage critical stakeholders. Based on this review, the 2011 standards were carefully revised to better meet the needs of Minnesota’s students to prepare Minnesota’s learners for success in careers, college, and civic life.

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<sup>112</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021 subd. 4(f).

The following table provides a brief timeline of the process that MDE undertook in this review:

**Table 4: Timeline of Standards Review Process**

Event	Date
Draft 1	November 30, 2020
Feedback on Draft 1	Public comment in December 2020–January 2021, series of five virtual Town Halls held in December 2020
Draft 2	July 30, 2021
Feedback on Draft 2	Public comment in July–August 2021, targeted feedback meetings with community groups/organizations August 11–13, 2021
Draft 3	November 15, 2021
Feedback on Draft 3	Public comment in November 2021–January 2022, TNEC provided feedback on September 17, 2021, expert review invited in November 2021
Commissioner Approved Draft	December 27, 2022

### Development of the Assumptions to Guide the 2011 Standards Review

Prior to the March 2020 application period for the standards review committee, Minnesota Department of Education leadership wrote a set of *Guiding Assumptions* for the standards committee that would support the formal standard review by defining the parameters of the standards committee’s work. Applicants to the standards review committee agreed to adhere to these Assumptions that include statutory requirements. The Assumptions were approved by the Commissioner of Education.

Assumptions based on Minnesota Statutes include the following:

- The standards and benchmarks should be aligned with the knowledge and skills needed for college readiness and advanced work.<sup>113</sup>
- The revised standards “must include the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities as they relate to the academic standards.”<sup>114</sup>
- A standards review committee will be formed that represents the following stakeholders: stakeholders in social studies, including those in the disciplines of history, geography, economics, government and citizenship; parents of school-age children and members of the public throughout the state; teachers throughout the state currently licensed and providing instruction, including social studies teachers;

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<sup>113</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 4(a).

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

licensed elementary and secondary school principals throughout the state currently administering a school site; currently serving members of local school boards and charter school boards throughout the state; faculty teaching core subjects at postsecondary institutions in Minnesota; and representatives of the Minnesota business community.<sup>115</sup> The standards committee will seek public input through town hall meetings, focus groups, and electronic surveys.

- The revised 2011 standards must identify the learning that is to be mastered by all students by the end of each grade level in grades K–8, and by the end of grade band 9–12.<sup>116</sup>
- K–12 standards will be identified in each of the core social studies disciplines. At the high school level, students must earn 3.5 social studies credits.<sup>117</sup> Therefore, the amount of content specified in the revised standards will not exceed what can be reasonably taught in three and a half years of social studies courses.
- The standards and benchmarks must “be clear, concise, objective, measurable, and grade-level appropriate” as well as “not require a specific teaching methodology or curriculum.”<sup>118</sup>
- Technology and information literacy standards must be embedded into the standards areas.<sup>119</sup> This will include standards from sources such as the Information and Technology Educators of Minnesota (ITEM) and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

#### Other Assumptions:

- The standards must be grounded in current research. The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K–12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History will be used in revising the standards.
- The standards committee will study exemplary standards from other states and national organizations as well as state and national assessment frameworks and data.
- The revised standards will include literacy in social studies and personal finance and/or financial literacy.
- The standards will be coherently aligned with those of other K–12 content areas and the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs), Minnesota’s early learning standards.
- The committee will receive feedback directly from the Tribal Nations Education Committee throughout the process.
- The revised standards must represent diverse points of view, experiences, and approaches to problem solving and use language that promotes culturally sustaining learning.
- This will include standards from sources such as the Computer Science Teachers Association Framework and Standards.
- The committee must take into account:
  - Designing standards that ensure opportunities for students to demonstrate an understanding of ideas, concepts, theories, and principles from the social studies disciplines by using them to interpret and explain specific, concrete information or events.

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<sup>115</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021 subd. 2.

<sup>116</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.023, subd. 1(a).

<sup>117</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.024, subd. 1.

<sup>118</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 2.

<sup>119</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 4(a).

- Designing standards that represent diverse points of view, experiences, and approaches to problem solving.
- Designing standards using language that promotes culturally sustaining learning and that reflect students’ cultural backgrounds.
- Designing standards that provide students with multiple ways of demonstrating competence in social studies.

## 2023 Legislative Session

During the 2023 Legislative Session, several pieces of legislation related to social studies were passed by the state legislature.

- **Citizenship and Government:** The new legislation requires two significant changes in citizenship and government.
  - The credit requirements for social studies were changed to include “credit for a course in government and citizenship in either grade 11 or 12 for students beginning grade 9 in the 2024–2025 school year and after or an advanced placement, international baccalaureate, or other rigorous course on government and citizenship.”
  - The legislature repealed the civics test requirement.
- **Ethnic Studies:** A number of changes related to Ethnic Studies courses, standards, and requirements were passed.
  - “Starting in the 2026–27 school year, a district or charter high school must offer an ethnic studies course,” and that course “may fulfill a social studies, language arts, arts, math, or science credit if the course meets the applicable state academic standards.”
  - Beginning in the 2027–28 school year, “school districts and charter schools must provide ethnic studies instruction in elementary schools and middle schools,” and “ethnic studies instruction must meet statewide ethnic studies academic standards.”
  - During revision of academic standards, “the commissioner must embed ethnic studies as related to the academic standards.”
  - The legislation also included the establishment of a working group on Ethnic Studies, which will “advise the commissioner of education on an ethnic studies framework and resources necessary to implement ethnic studies requirements.”
- **Holocaust and Genocide Working Group:** The legislation established a working group on the Holocaust, genocide of Indigenous Peoples, and other genocide education, which will “advise the commissioner of education and develop resources necessary to implement requirements for education on the Holocaust, genocide of Indigenous Peoples, and other genocides” in alignment with academic standards in social studies.
- **Personal Finance:** New legislation passed requiring a personal finance course for graduation. This requirement is fully separate from the three and a half credits in social studies required by statute, but has some content overlap with the economics anchor standard on personal finance.

## The Social Studies Standards Review Committee

MDE solicited applications from the public who wished to be considered for the standards committee from March through June 2020. Extensions were made to the original deadline of April 15 in order to accommodate for disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the Minnesota Department of Education made a request to the Tribal Nations Education Committee (TNEC) for TNEC representation on the standards committee.

According to [Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.021, subdivision 2](#), the Commissioner “must consider advice from” stakeholders in social studies, including (those in) the disciplines of history, geography, economics, government and citizenship; parents of school-age children and members of the public throughout the state; teachers throughout the state currently licensed and providing instruction, including social studies teachers; licensed elementary and secondary school principals throughout the state currently administering a school site; currently serving members of local school boards and charter school boards throughout the state; faculty teaching core subjects at postsecondary institutions in Minnesota; and representatives of the Minnesota business community.<sup>120</sup> In July 2020, the commissioner formed a standards committee. The makeup of the standards committee represented regional diversity, racial diversity, and diversity in sizes and types (urban, suburban, rural) of schools that members taught in or administered. The committee represented parents, licensed educators, school and district administrators, post-secondary educators, and business representatives. The committee included content teachers in the core social studies disciplines with expertise across all developmental levels (K–12). Standards committee members also had expertise with Ethnic Studies, Social Studies Methods, Career and Technical Education, Personal Finance/Financial Literacy, American Indian Education, and non-profit organizations. Some of the committee members had experience with state-level social studies work and some were award-winning social studies teachers. Short biographies of the members of the committee were posted to the MDE website.<sup>121</sup>

Four co-chairs were named by the Commissioner of Education. Co-chairs represented K–12 schools and post-secondary institutions in the disciplines identified in statute, had background in standards review, and reflected the government-to-government relationship with MDE’s Tribal partners.

Staff from the Minnesota Department of Education facilitated the work of the standards committee in collaboration with committee co-chairs. During the review process in early 2021, an external facilitator was brought in to assist in organizing the meetings.

The standards committee worked from September 2020 through September 2021, during an unprecedented interruption to in-person learning worldwide due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The full standards committee met 11 times during the year to review feedback and provide direction to the writing teams. Most members of the committee also served on one or more of the committee’s technical writing teams. The writing teams also met between regular full committee meetings to revise drafts according to direction provided by the committee.

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<sup>120</sup> Minn. Stat., 120B.021, subd. 2.

<sup>121</sup> “2020–21 Minnesota Social Studies Standards Committee,” Academic Standards (K–12): Social Studies, Minnesota Department of Education, accessed February 8, 2023, [https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET\\_FILE&dDocName=MDE033262&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary](https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE033262&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary).

Standards committee members persevered through challenges and disruptions related to the pandemic and social issues including, but not limited to, the following:

- Changes to nature of school—Schools in Minnesota were operating in multiple modes of instruction, including in-person, hybrid or fully remote.
- Changes to teaching expectations—Teachers on the standards committee switched between hybrid, virtual, and in-person modes of instruction.
- Race-based tensions in Minnesota and the nation—George Floyd was killed during this standard review, and the public outcry followed.
- National political tensions—The 2020 presidential election took place during this standards review, as did the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol.
- Challenges with conducting public meetings virtually—There were both technical issues with virtual public meetings and evolving options for public engagement with the standards committee meetings.

While it was evident that these challenges complicated the review process because they impacted committee members, it also important to understand that the events of the time period of this review impacted public perceptions about social studies, which then impacted public feedback on the drafts of the standards.

## **Role of Research and Data**

MDE provided the standards committee with a variety of resources to consult during the review and revision process, including national standards documents and reports on social studies education, standards from other states, and comments submitted by the public. A summary of this research appears in an earlier section, but is repeated here in a chart format. Resources in the chart were provided to all members of the social studies committee. The chart notes several possible uses of the research: (1) Use in gap analysis, (2) Use as a general reference by workgroups throughout the process, and (3) Use as a reference during an ethnic studies panel presentation on November 16, 2020. Individuals presenting at the panel are also noted in the chart.

**Table 5: Materials Used by Standards Review Committee**

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
<a href="#">C3 Framework</a> <sup>122</sup>	<p>Developed by more than 20 states and 15 national social studies organizations, the C3 Framework provides states with an outline for revising their existing social studies standards. This framework is centered on inquiry as a guiding principle for social studies education; specifically, this framework introduces the concept of an Inquiry Arc. The Inquiry Arc focuses on a set of interconnected ideas that act as the underlying structure for the framework’s four guiding dimensions and emphasizes concepts and practices that students need to analyze, explain, and argue about topics in our social world. The guiding dimensions include: (1) developing questions and planning inquiries, (2) applying disciplinary tools and concepts, (3) evaluating sources and using evidence, and (4) communicating conclusions and taking informed action. These dimensions and their associated subcategories guide the organization of foundational content and skills for a social studies program. Alongside each dimension and subsection, this framework outlines a set of College, Career, and Civic Readiness Indicators to be achieved by the end of Grade 12. Each of these indicators has an associated K–12 pathway for how students could reach proficiency in that particular skill or concept by the end of grades 2, 5, 8, and 12.</p> <p>The C3 Framework was designed as a resource for states during the standards revision and upgrading process. It does not include details about curriculum or instructional content but instead focuses on the underlying concepts and skills of robust social studies education. Further, this framework is designed as a K–12 framework and, therefore, does not represent additional behavioral and social science disciplines (e.g., anthropology, psychology, sociology, etc.) outside of civics, economics, geography, and history because additional behavioral and social science disciplines are most often taught solely at the high school level. Finally, this framework also does not specifically address the needs of children with different levels of ability. States, districts, and teachers should consider ways of adjusting and scaffolding this framework to suit the needs of all learners. More than one-third of states have used the C3 Framework as a guide for their social studies standards.</p>	<p>Used in gap analysis;</p> <p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>
<a href="#">NJ</a> <sup>123</sup>	<p>New Jersey revises its social studies standards every five years and adopted its current standards in 2020. The current iteration of standards is organized by grade bands: Grades K–2, Grades 3–5, Grades 6–8, and Grades 9–12. There are four disciplinary concepts that are carried throughout each grade band, including Civics, government, and human rights;</p>	<p>Used in gap analysis;</p> <p>Referenced by</p>

<sup>122</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, *College, Career and Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K–12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (Silver Springs, MD: NCSS, 2013), <https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/c3-framework-for-social-studies-rev0617.pdf>.

<sup>123</sup> State of New Jersey, Department of Education, *New Jersey Student Learning Standards- Social Studies* (New Jersey, 2020), <https://www.nj.gov/education/cccs/2020/2020%20NJSLS-SS.pdf>.

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
	<p>Geography, people, and the environment; Economics, innovation, and technology; and History, culture, and perspectives. Each disciplinary concept has different focuses, such as global interconnections, civic mindedness, economic ways of thinking, and understanding perspectives. There are also seven social studies practices, which are the skills that individuals in social sciences use on a regular basis. These practices include: (1) development questions and planning inquiry, (2) gathering and evaluating success, (3) seeking diverse perspectives, (4) developing claims and using evidence, (5) presenting arguments and explanations, (6) engaging in civil discourse and critiquing conclusions, and (7) taking informed action. The standards are made up of a set of core ideas and associated performance expectations to be met by the end of each grade band, further organized by each disciplinary concept.</p>	workgroup(s)
<a href="#">KY<sup>124</sup></a>	<p>Kentucky adopted its current set of social studies standards in 2018 and began implementation of the standards in the 2019–2020 school year. These standards were written by grade level for grades K–8 and are discipline-specific in high school (i.e., civics, economics, geography, and history). Across grade levels, the standards are organized around four inquiry practices—questioning, investigating, using evidence, and communicating conclusions—that are included throughout the grade-level standards. These inquiry practices develop the skills necessary to acquire knowledge and competency in each of the four disciplines: civics, economics, geography, and history. The standards are further grouped by these disciplinary strands across the grades. Within each disciplinary strand, there is a set of disciplinary concepts, or broad ideas that enable students to understand the language of that specific discipline, and disciplinary practices, or the skills students should learn and apply across disciplines. For example, the role and responsibilities of a citizen is a disciplinary concept for civics.<sup>125</sup></p>	<p>Used in gap analysis; Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>

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<sup>124</sup> Commonwealth of Kentucky, Kentucky Department of Education, *Kentucky Academic Standards: Social Studies* (Kentucky, April 2019), [https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/standards/kyacadstand/Documents/Kentucky\\_Academic\\_Standards\\_for\\_Social\\_Studies\\_2019.pdf](https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/standards/kyacadstand/Documents/Kentucky_Academic_Standards_for_Social_Studies_2019.pdf).

<sup>125</sup> Beth Ratway, and Edgagement, “Trends in Social Studies Standards: A Scan in the Landscape and Analysis of the Colorado Academic Standards for Social Studies” (Colorado: Colorado Department of Education, 2021), <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cosocialstudies/benchreport>.

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
IA <sup>126</sup>	<p>The latest set of social studies standards in Iowa were adopted in 2017. The Iowa social studies standards are organized by different themes or topics for grades K–8 (e.g., spaces and places, rights and responsibilities, and contemporary global studies) and are organized by course in grades 9–12, including behavioral sciences, civics and government, economics, financial literacy, geography, U.S. history, and world history. Each grade level includes a set of inquiry and content standards, and, for each set of inquiry and content standards, there is a set of anchor standards. Throughout the civics, government and financial literacy standards, there are indicators of how these standards align with the 21st century skills standards.</p>	<p>Used in gap analysis; Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>
OK <sup>127</sup>	<p>On February 28, 2019, the Oklahoma State Board of Education adopted the Oklahoma Academic Standards for the Social Studies, Pre-K–12 as the new Social Studies curriculum standards framework for Oklahoma’s schools. The framework sets forth a challenging and focused course of study and is designed to lay the groundwork for citizenship development.</p>	<p>Used in gap analysis; Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>
CO <sup>128</sup>	<p>Created by Coloradans for Colorado students, the Colorado Academic Standards provide a grade-by-grade road map to help ensure students are successful in college, careers, and life. Standards are different from curricula. Standards are broad learning goals articulating what students should know, understand and be able to do at a given time. A curriculum is an organized plan of instruction, comprised of a sequence of instructional units, that engages students in mastering the standards.</p> <p>The Colorado Academic Standards aim to improve what students learn and how they learn in 12 content areas while emphasizing critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, collaboration and communication as essential skills for life in the 21st century. The social studies standards were revised and then approved by the State Board of Education in November 2022, and districts will be expected to implement them by the fall of 2024. The social studies standards are organized into five separate disciplines: history, geography, economics, civics, and personal financial literacy.</p>	<p>Used in gap analysis; Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>

<sup>126</sup> State of Iowa, Iowa Department of Education, *K–12 Iowa Core in Social Studies* (Iowa, 2017), [https://educateiowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/k-12\\_socialstudies\\_508.pdf](https://educateiowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/k-12_socialstudies_508.pdf).

<sup>127</sup> State of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State Department of Education, *Oklahoma Academic Standards for Social Studies* (Oklahoma, 2019), <https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/Oklahoma%20Academic%20Standards%20for%20Social%20Studies%208.26.19.pdf>.

<sup>128</sup> State of Colorado, Colorado Department of Education, *Colorado Academic Standards: Social Studies* (Colorado, 2020), <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cosocialstudies/2020cas-ss-p12>.

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
UT <sup>129</sup>	The Utah Standards for Social Studies reflect the content, concepts, and skills considered essential for all students. The newly revised secondary social studies standards were adopted in the December 2016 Utah State Board of Education (USBE) meeting.	Used in gap analysis;  Referenced by workgroup(s)
IL <sup>130</sup>	Adopted in 2016, the Illinois social sciences standards were required to be fully implemented by the 2017–2018 school year. The standards focus on civic mindedness, historical thinking, economic decision making, geographic reasoning, and psychological and sociological intellect across the disciplines and grade levels. The standards fall into inquiry skills and disciplinary concepts. Illinois has three overarching inquiry standards and associated skills across the grades K–12, including development questions and planning inquiries, evaluating sources and using evidence, and communicating conclusions and taking informed action. The K–12 disciplinary concepts are divided into four core disciplines, including civics, geography, economics and financial literacy, and history. The Illinois standards are a departure from the C3 Framework. They are designed with grade-specific standards for kindergarten through fifth grade and are written by grade bands for grades 6–8 and 9–12. For grades 6–8, the standards are banded by complexity, from less complex to more complex. In high school, the standards are organized around typical courses—history, civics, geography, and economics—with additional supplemental course standards for psychology, sociology, and anthropology.	Referenced by workgroup(s) along with Illinois Democracy Schools Self-Assessment Indicators (McCormick Foundation)

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<sup>129</sup> State of Utah, Utah Board of Education, *Utah Core Standards for Social Studies* (Utah, 2016), <https://schools.utah.gov/curr/socialstudies>.

<sup>130</sup> State of Illinois, Illinois State Board of Education, *Illinois Social Science Standards* (Illinois, 2016), <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/K-12-SS-Standards.pdf>.

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
<p>Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools (2011)<sup>131</sup></p> <p>Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning (2016)<sup>132</sup></p>	<p>This guidebook addresses each of the six proven practices and includes resources to support the development of each. It also provides examples of schools that have implemented successful programs.</p> <p>The original six proven practices, as described in the “Guardian of Democracy” report, are listed below as numbers one through six. A report from a 2017 convening, “The Republic is (Still) at Risk,” adds four practices to the original six, which are numbered seven through 10:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Classroom instruction in civics, government, history, law, economics, and geography</li> <li>2. Discussion of current events</li> <li>3. Service learning</li> <li>4. Extracurricular activities</li> <li>5. Student participation in school governance</li> <li>6. Simulations of democratic processes and procedures</li> <li>7. News media literacy</li> <li>8. Action civics</li> <li>9. Social-emotional learning (SEL)</li> <li>10. School climate reform</li> <li>11. Notably, these 10 practices include dimensions of education that occur both inside and outside of the classroom. Two of the original proven practices, extracurricular activities and participation in school governance (four and five, respectively), focus on activities that take place at school but outside of formal classroom instruction. Two of the four new practices, SEL and school climate reform (nine and ten, respectively), focus on promoting a healthy, safe school environment that fosters learning and respectful engagement with peers.</li> </ol> <p>A clear message from this framework is that building a knowledge base is necessary but insufficient to equip students to participate in democratic society. Or, put differently, interactive and participatory components of a civics education are not optional, supplemental, or “extra” aspects of civics education that are nice to have. Rather, interactive and participatory practices are core components of a high-quality civics’ education.<sup>133</sup></p>	<p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p> <p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p> <p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>

<sup>131</sup> Jonathan Gould, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Peter Levine, Ted McConnell, and David B. Smith, eds, *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* (Philadelphia: Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, 2011), [https://media.carnegie.org/filer\\_public/ab/dd/abdda62e-6e84-47a4-a043-348d2f2085ae/ccny\\_grantee\\_2011\\_guardian.pdf](https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/ab/dd/abdda62e-6e84-47a4-a043-348d2f2085ae/ccny_grantee_2011_guardian.pdf).

<sup>132</sup> Lisa Guilfoile and Brady Delander, *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning* (Education Commission of the States, 2014), <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/10/48/11048.pdf>.

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
Educating for Civic Reasoning and Discourse <sup>134</sup>	The aim of the report is to better prepare students to examine and discuss complex civic, political, and social issues by ensuring that the curricula, pedagogy, and learning environments that they experience are informed by the best available evidence and practice.	Referenced by workgroup(s)
<a href="#">EAD Framework</a> <sup>135</sup>	Released in March 2021, the Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy is a K–12 inquiry-based framework that outlines major themes, questions, and key concepts for the integration of history and civics education. The roadmap contains seven themes across four grade bands (K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12) that center on civic participation; institutional/social change; human history in a political context; place of individuals in a global context; contemporary debates/civic agency; government; and geographic, social, economic, and political landscape. Each theme has history and civic thematic questions and key concepts, along with design challenges and corresponding questions. The five overarching design challenges indicate the issues educators may face when working with the content themes.	Referenced by workgroup(s)

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<sup>133</sup> Michael Hansen, Elizabeth Levesque, Jon Valant, and Diana Quintero, “2018 Brown Center Report on American Education: An Inventory of State Civics Requirements,” *Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, June 27, 2018), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/2018-brown-center-report-on-american-education-an-inventory-of-state-civics-requirements/>.

<sup>134</sup> Carol D. Lee, Gregory White, & Dian Dong (Eds.), “Executive Summary,” *Educating for Civic Reasoning and Discourse* (Committee on Civic Reasoning and Discourse, Washington, DC, National Academy of Education, 2021), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED611952.pdf>; Carol D. Lee, Gregory White, & Dian Dong (Eds.), *Educating for Civic Reasoning and Discourse* (Committee on Civic Reasoning and Discourse, Washington, DC, National Academy of Education, 2021), <https://naeducation.org/civic-reasoning-and-discourse/>.

<sup>135</sup> *Educating for American Democracy, Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy* (2021), <https://www.educatingforamericandemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Roadmap-to-Educating-for-American-Democracy.pdf>.

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
<p>SC<sup>136</sup></p>	<p>In 2019, South Carolina adopted the South Carolina Social Studies College- and Career-Ready Standards. These standards are organized by the following grade bands: Grades K–3, 4–5, 6–8, and high school. In grades K–8, the standards are further organized by topics, including history, economics, geography, and civics and government. Within each broader topic, one standard is listed to indicate the most important expectation for student learning. Each standard includes an enduring understanding statement, which is a specific statement integrating the content skill and is based on big ideas as well as an indicator. Standards also include themes that are the concepts central to social studies thinking and allow students to draw connections across content in a variety of ways. In high school, the standards are organized by required courses and selected electives. A set of social studies literacy skills for the twenty-first century accompany the social studies standards, and outline, by grade level, the tools, strategies, and perspectives necessary for social studies understanding.</p>	<p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>
<p>Thomas B. Fordham Institute (June 2021) – State of State Standards for Civics and U.S. History in 2021. Washington D.C.<sup>137</sup></p>	<p>Thomas B. Fordham Institute will release a new analysis that examines state standards for civics and U.S. History. The in-depth standards reviews were conducted by a bipartisan team of veteran educators and subject-matter experts with deep knowledge of content standards in their respective fields, who evaluated state standards’ content, rigor, organization, and clarity.</p> <p>The final report, <i>The State of State Standards for Civics and U.S. History in 2021</i>, includes individual ratings for all fifty states and D.C., as well as recommendations for ensuring all students have access to a rich and balanced civics and U.S. history education. <b>Ten states, including Minnesota, were rated “good” in both subjects, although targeted revisions are recommended.</b></p>	<p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>

<sup>136</sup> State of South Carolina, South Carolina Department of Education, *South Carolina Social Studies College and Career Ready Standards* (South Carolina, 2019), <https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards-learning/social-studies/standards/2019-south-carolina-social-studies-college-and-career-ready-standards/>.

<sup>137</sup> Jeremy A. Stern, Alison E. Brody, Jose A. Gregory, Stephen Griffith, and Jonathan Pulvers, *The State of State Standards for Civics and U.S. History in 2021* (Washington D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2021), <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/research/state-state-standards-civics-and-us-history-2021>.

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
WA <sup>138</sup>	<p>Washington developed five sets of learning standards for social studies (last revised in 2019), including civics, economics, geography, and history, with one overarching set for social studies skills. Each set of learning standards outlines research, reasoning, and analytical skills that students should be able to apply across each of these disciplines. The standards are organized by grade band (K–5, 6–8, and 9–12) and provide a grade-by-grade sequence of concepts, regional areas, and chronological periods. The C3 Framework is incorporated throughout these standards by including enduring understandings, or key concepts that are organized by the focus of study, and sample questions, which are open-ended questions designed to encourage inquiry. Throughout the standards, there are also specific references to Since Time Immemorial curriculum and tribal sovereignty in Washington state to ensure alignment with this specific curriculum.</p>	<p>Referenced by Ethnic Studies Panel in November</p> <p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>
Oregon <sup>139</sup>	<p>Every seven years, social science standards are adopted by the State Board of Education. In 2018, Oregon adopted Social Science Standards identifying grade-level standards for civics, geography, economics, financial literacy, history, historical thinking, and social science analysis. The 2018 standards also co-identified selected standards as multicultural. The <a href="#">2018 standards are the current required standards</a> for use by school districts through the 2025 school year.</p> <p>In February of 2021, the State Board of Education adopted new social science standards integrating ethnic studies into each of the social science domains and removed the co-identified multi-cultural standards. School districts may implement the <a href="#">2021 Social Science Standards</a> beginning in March 2021. School districts are not required to implement the new standards until the 2026–2027 school year.</p> <p>The 2021 Social Science Standards reflect a shift in content best addressed through pedagogical methods that create a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students to study and discuss issues of discrimination, equity, racism, and prejudice.</p>	<p>Referenced by Ethnic Studies Panel in November</p> <p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>

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<sup>138</sup> State of Washington, Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Washington State K–12 Learning Standards for Social Studies* (Washington, 2019), [https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/socialstudies/standards/OSPI\\_SocStudies\\_Standards\\_2019.pdf](https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/socialstudies/standards/OSPI_SocStudies_Standards_2019.pdf).

<sup>139</sup> State of Oregon, Oregon Department of Education, *2021 Social Science Standards Integrated with Ethnic Studies* (Oregon, 2021), [https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/socialsciences/Documents/2021%20Social%20Science%20Standards%20Integrated%20with%20Ethnic%20Studies%20\(3-2-2021\).pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/socialsciences/Documents/2021%20Social%20Science%20Standards%20Integrated%20with%20Ethnic%20Studies%20(3-2-2021).pdf).

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
Nevada <sup>140</sup>	<p>Social studies education is the foundation of our republic, providing all students with the foundation in democratic principles and civic responsibility necessary to create an enlightened, inclusive, and innovative nation. The standards require a student-centered approach to social studies in which critical thinking and inquiry are the focus, rather than rote memorization of facts. These standards reflect an instructional shift that enhances education for every student in an increasingly complex society. Social studies educators are responsible for giving students the tools they need to be successful once they leave the classroom and for shaping the civic and social consciousness of the future leaders of our country. To achieve both, less focus is needed on the recall of information and more on the development of a growth mindset and a natural curiosity. The aim is to create lifelong learners who are equipped with skills and knowledge to shape our nation’s democratic institutions and respond to the challenges of the future. These standards are vertically aligned with the intention of building inquiry skills and civic dispositions of students year by year, from Kindergarten through grade 12.</p>	<p>Referenced by Ethnic Studies Panel in November Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>
AZ <sup>141</sup>	<p>Arizona last adopted social studies standards in 2018 for history, political science, geography, and economics, with the goal of full implementation during the 2020–2021 school year (i.e., two-year implementation timeline). Arizona provides standards by grade bands (i.e., K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12). Each elementary and middle school grade level (but not high school) has a storyline and content focus for the year. The standards are organized under four disciplines: civics, economics, geography, and history. Within each of these disciplines are four to five core concepts, or anchor standards. In addition, four anchor standards apply to the disciplinary skills and practices that students should be able to apply to any historical era, context, or discipline.</p>	<p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>

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<sup>140</sup> State of Nevada, State of Nevada Department of Education, *Nevada Academic Content Standards for Social Studies* (Nevada, 2018),  
[https://doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/nde.doe.nv.gov/content/Standards\\_Instructional\\_Support/Nevada\\_Academic\\_Standards/Social\\_Studies/NVACSforSocialStudies.pdf](https://doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/nde.doe.nv.gov/content/Standards_Instructional_Support/Nevada_Academic_Standards/Social_Studies/NVACSforSocialStudies.pdf).

<sup>141</sup> State of Arizona, Arizona Department of Education, *Arizona History and Social Science Standards* (Arizona, 2019),  
[https://www.azed.gov/sites/default/files/2019/02/2018%20History%20and%20Social%20Science%20Standards%20\\_Update8.23.19.pdf?id=5c76b4ed1dcb2512fcd012fd](https://www.azed.gov/sites/default/files/2019/02/2018%20History%20and%20Social%20Science%20Standards%20_Update8.23.19.pdf?id=5c76b4ed1dcb2512fcd012fd).

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
<a href="#">HI</a> <sup>142</sup>	Hawaii last adopted social studies standards in 2018, with a three-year implementation plan beginning in the 2019–2020 school year. Informed by the C3 Framework, the standards include three types: anchor standards, inquiry standards, and content standards. The anchor standards remain constant throughout each grade and course and align closely to the four dimensions of the C3 Framework. The inquiry standards define key social studies skills and are distributed by grade band (i.e., K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12). The content standards are grade specific for grades K–5 and are course specific for grades 6–12, including world history (grade 6), U.S. history (grade 8), history of Hawaiian Kingdom, modern history of Hawai’i, Pacific Island studies, participation in democracy, U.S. history and government, and world history and culture.	Referenced by workgroup(s)
<a href="#">Teaching Hard History (K-5)</a> <sup>143</sup>	Published by Teaching Tolerance, a Southern Poverty Law Center project, the Teaching Hard History: A K–5 Framework for Teaching American Slavery is an expansion of the 2018 Teaching Hard History: A Framework for Teaching American Slavery specifically geared toward elementary school teachers and students. The framework is meant to provide developmentally appropriate strategies and texts for elementary students on slavery, related to past, current, and future considerations. The framework is divided into lower and upper elementary grade-bands (i.e., K–2 and 3–5). Each grade band is structured by Essential Knowledge of what students should know and/or understand (10 in K–2 and 20 in 3–5). Under each Essential Knowledge are additional concepts or ideas students should know, along with guidance for how teachers can teach these concepts.	Referenced by workgroup(s)

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<sup>142</sup> State of Hawai’i, Hawai’i State Department of Education, *Subject Matter Standards: Social Studies-Hawai’i Core Standards for Social Studies* (Hawai’i, 2018),

<https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/StudentLearning/Pages/standards.aspx>.

<sup>143</sup> Kate Shuster, Hasan Jefferies, Meredith L. McCoy, Margaret Newell, Sarah B. Shear, Christina Snyder, and Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, *Teaching Hard History: A K–5 Framework for Teaching American Slavery* (Montgomery: Southern Poverty Law Center, 2019),

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/TT-2007-Teaching-Hard-History-K-5-Framework.pdf>.

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
<a href="#">BC</a> <sup>144</sup>	<p>The British Columbia social studies for K–9 are guided by communication, thinking and personal, and social core competencies. Each grade level has a singular area of learning focus, such as Canadian Issues and Governance at grade 5. Big Ideas, Curricular Competencies (what students should be able to do), and Content (what students should know) outline each area of learning. Additional elaborations on the Curricular Competencies and Content are provided to include key questions, sample topics, and sample activities for educators.</p>	<p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>
<a href="#">Social Justice Standards</a> <sup>145</sup>	<p>The Social Justice Standards: The Teaching Tolerance Anti-Bias Framework by Teaching Tolerance is a K–12 roadmap for anti-bias education. The document contains age-appropriate (K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12) anchor standards with associated learning outcomes divided into four domains: identity, diversity, justice, and action. Each domain, broken down into anchor standards, indicates what students should or will be able to do (e.g., “Students will respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding and connection”). Anchor standards are paired with specific grade-level outcomes. For each domain, an anti-bias scenario is also included to model anti-bias attitudes and behaviors in the classroom.</p>	<p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>

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<sup>144</sup> British Columbia, British Columbia Ministry of Education, *Areas of Learning: Social Studies* (British Columbia, 2016), [https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/curriculum/social-studies/en\\_social-studies\\_k-9\\_elab.pdf](https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/curriculum/social-studies/en_social-studies_k-9_elab.pdf).

<sup>145</sup> Emily Chiariello, Julie Olsen Edwards, Natalie Owen, Thom Ronk, and Sara Wicht, *Social Justice Standards: The Teaching Tolerance Anti-Bias Framework* (Montgomery: Southern Poverty Law Center, 2018), <https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/TT-Social-Justice-Standards-Anti-bias-framework-2020.pdf>.

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction: <a href="#">North Dakota Native American Essential Understandings</a> <sup>146</sup>	In the spring of 2015, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction brought together tribal Elders from across North Dakota to share stories, memories, songs and wisdom in order to develop the North Dakota Native American Essential Understandings to guide the learning of both Native and non-Native students across the state. Similar Essential Understandings have been developed and are being used in several other states already, and more are making plans to begin a similar process. Many tribal Elders have had input into these understandings, and it is hoped that the NDNAEU themselves will open up many more additional opportunities for tribal Elders and Educational Leaders to impact ND classroom practice with important tribal stories, songs and cultural perspectives.	Referenced by workgroup(s)
<a href="#">NCSS National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies</a> <sup>147</sup>	<p>First published in 1994, the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies have been widely used for social studies curriculum development and alignment. This framework is designed for use by educators, parents, and policymakers to aid in curriculum design and develop a robust social studies curriculum to prepare the next generation of informed and active citizens.</p> <p>These curriculum standards are organized around 10 thematic strands, including: (1) culture, (2) time, continuity, and change, (3) people, places, and environments, (4) individual development and identity, (5) individuals, groups, and institutions, (6) power, authority, and governance, (7) production, distribution, and consumption, (8) science, technology, and society, (9) global connections, and (10) civic ideals and practices. These themes are designed to be woven throughout a social studies program from prekindergarten through grade 12 and to support the implementation of content standards. The NCSS (National Council for the Social Studies) framework also provides learning expectations to illustrate what students' knowledge proficiencies should be at each level of the curriculum (i.e., early years, middle school, and high school). The learning expectations also provide the rationale as to why each theme is important for students to study.</p>	Referenced by workgroup(s)

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<sup>146</sup> State of North Dakota, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, *North Dakota Native American Essential Understandings* (North Dakota, 2015),  
<https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/Indian%20Education/NDEssentialUnderstandingslg.pdf>.

<sup>147</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment* (Brentwood, MD: NCSS Publications, 2010).

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
<a href="#">In Ethnic Studies Standards</a> <sup>148</sup>	<p>Approved in 2018, the Indiana Academic Standards for Ethnic Studies outline what students should know, understand, and do based on four content standards: (1) cultural self-awareness, (2) cultural histories within the U.S. context and abroad, (3) contemporary lived experiences and cultural practices, and (4) historical and contemporary contributions. Each of these content strands are linked to academic standards such as “Students investigate how ethnic or racial group(s) and society address systemic oppressions through social movements, local, community, national, global advocacy, and individual champions.” The Ethnic Studies course is specific to high school and is available as an elective. The purpose is to broaden students’ perspectives and knowledge of ethnic and racial groups in the U.S., allowing for flexibility in whether the course focuses on a specific ethnic or racial group or multiple for comparison. Guiding principles for Literacy in History/Social Studies are included with six key areas for integrating reading and writing skills: (1) Key Ideas and Textual Support, (2) Structural Elements and Organization, (3) Synthesis and Connection of Ideas, (4) Writing Genres; (5) Writing Process; and (6) Research Process.</p>	<p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>
<p>Wisconsin Standards for Personal Financial Literacy<sup>149</sup></p>	<p>Personal financial literacy education is the focus on teaching students the ability to understand, evaluate, and communicate information about money and financial services. This learning includes the selection of appropriate financial options, the ability to plan for the future, and the capability to respond to life events and their effect on personal finances. The Wisconsin Standards for Personal Financial Literacy (the standards) are divided into six strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Mindset</li> <li>• Education and Employment</li> <li>• Money Management</li> <li>• Saving and Investing</li> <li>• Credit and Debt</li> <li>• Risk Management and Insurance</li> </ul> <p>Each of these six strands is an important component to the whole of financial literacy. Topics of study could include things such as: verbal vs. written contracts, the true cost of interest, goal setting, protection from loss, insurance, spending habits, bankruptcy, sources of credit, and investment options.</p>	<p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>

<sup>148</sup> State of Indiana, Indiana Department of Education, *Indiana Academic Standards Ethnic Studies* (Indiana, 2020), <https://www.in.gov/doe/files/ethnic-studies-standards-2020.pdf>

<sup>149</sup> State of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, *Wisconsin Standards for Personal Financial Literacy: Draft for Public Comment* (Wisconsin, 2020), <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/standards/New%20pdfs/PFLStandards1.0.pdf#:~:text=The%20Wisconsin%20Standards%20for%20Personal%20Financial%20Literacy%20outline,and%20performance%20indicators%20which%20progress%20across%20the%20grade%20bands>.

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
<a href="#">Native Knowledge 360</a> <sup>150</sup>	<p>The <i>Native Knowledge 360°</i> is an initiative spearheaded by The Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in collaboration with Native communities and educators to provide educators and students with a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of Native knowledge and perspectives through the museum’s collections, scholarships, live programming, and diverse Native voices. Subsequently, NMAI has developed classroom resources including digital inquiry lessons, interactives, teaching posters, videos, and other primary and secondary materials representing Native perspectives with the purpose of elevating the various stories of Native America. The materials are aligned to various standards, including the C3 Framework, Common Core Standards, and other STEM and arts-related standards.</p> <p>The <i>Native Knowledge 360°</i> also provides a framework for essential understandings about American Indians. There are 10 essential understandings with associated key concepts. The essential understandings are: (1) American Indian Cultures, (2) Time, Continuity, and Change, (3) People, Places, and Environments, (4) Individual Development and Identity, (5) Individuals, Groups, and Institutions, (6) Power, Authority, and Governance, (7) Production, Distribution, and Consumption, (8) Science, Technology, and Society, (9) Global Connections, and (10) Civic Ideals and Practices. Each essential understanding represents a core idea that 21st-century students should know in studying American Indian communities. The key concepts for each understanding represent important overarching knowledge aspects, such as “Not all American Indians today are citizens of their tribes” and “Today, Native identity is shaped by many complex social, political, historical, and cultural factors.”</p>	Referenced by workgroup(s)

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<sup>150</sup> Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, *Native Knowledge 360°: Framework for Essential Understandings about American Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian), <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/pdf/NMAI-Essential-Understandings.pdf>.

Resource	Summary	Use by Committee
<a href="#">Rethinking Ethnic Studies</a> <sup>151</sup>	<p>A collection of essays and lesson plans that provides an overview of what “ethnic studies” means. The works are based on a holistic Ethnic Studies Framework that follows four main principles: (1) “all human beings have holistic, ancestral, precolonial roots,” (2) “for many students of color, colonization, enslavement, and forced diaspora attempted to eliminate and replace their ancestral legacies with a Eurocentric, colonial model of themselves,” (3) “This Eurocentric, colonial model has been normalized for all students, translating to a superficial historical literacy and decontextualized relationship to history today and negatively impacting academic identity for students of color in particular,” and (4) “In order for colonized students to initiate a process of regeneration, revitalization, restoration, and decolonization, they must honestly study this historical process as an act of empowerment and social justice.” Language is also investigated in relation to Ethnic Studies through new terminology and the use of more academic and intellectual language and its relationship with power dynamics.</p>	<p>Referenced by workgroup(s)</p>

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<sup>151</sup> R. Tolteka Cuahtin, Miguel Zavala, Christine Sleeter, and Wayne Au, eds., *Rethinking Ethnic Studies* (Rethinking Schools, January 29, 2019).

## Role of Feedback and Expert Reviews

To support the development of the proposed 2021 rules, the department solicited feedback on the drafts of the proposed Minnesota social studies academic standards in multiple ways.

The department invited the public to submit feedback on the 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies and suggestions for revising the standards through an online process from January 29 through February 28, 2020. The deadline was extended through March 2 so that the standards could be highlighted at the Minnesota Council for the Social Studies statewide conference. The feedback was collected and submitted to the standards committee for consideration.

The public was invited to submit online feedback via a survey following the release of the first, second, and third drafts of the proposed standards and their supporting benchmarks. The public could also send in comments via email and mail and could also call in to MDE. The invitation was distributed via MDE’s website, the Superintendent’s mailing and other listservs, and it was distributed by the social studies education organizations.

The first draft of the proposed 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies was developed September through November of 2020. MDE sought feedback for a first draft in December of 2020 and January of 2021. The public was invited to ask questions and submit comments on the first draft at five virtual town hall meetings hosted by MDE Director of Academic Standards and Instructional Effectiveness and MDE staff. The meetings were held in December of 2020.

The second draft was developed January through July of 2021. Feedback on the second draft of the proposed rules was collected in July and August of 2021 and subsequently shared with the standards committee.

The third draft was created and reviewed by the standards committee in August and September of 2021, considering the research, data, and feedback provided throughout the process.

Feedback from Tribal Nations Education Committee members was given at a meeting on September 17, 2021.

Expert review is a process to ensure that the standards have had all current and relevant research and considerations included, not to “approve” the draft. With that context, the experts, while overall supportive of the draft, provided critique and feedback as well as context for providing support for implementation. While primarily focused on the proposed standards, expert reviews sometimes include comments that do not pertain directly to the standards review process, including identifying needs for additional resources for implementation, such as examples to help unpack the benchmarks as well as professional development and high-quality instructional materials needed to meet the requirements

The Department sought expert review of the third draft by professionals who have established national reputations for their expertise in a particular discipline or topic area, including experts in history, geography, economics, citizenship and government, and ethnic studies, during November 2021.

Expert reviewers noted that the standards were consistent with research and thinking within the field of social science. On the History standards, expert reviewers noted they “maintain appropriate levels of rigor to prepare students for advanced work in history, as well as college and career success.” Commenting on citizenship and

government standards the expert said they were “rigorous and attend to the latest thinking in the fields.” Reviews also praised the centering of performance-based standards, but noted concern about the coverage and balance in the geography standards. The economics review primarily focused on technical changes needed to make standards and benchmarks better aligned with disciplinary language used by economists, and on the need for examples to help guide teachers who are often less comfortable with economics than with other social science disciplines taught at the K–12 level.

The expert reviewers also consistently noted the strong shift towards the incorporation of disciplinary and inquiry literacies outlined in the C3 Framework, including:

- the application of civic values and democratic principles,
- the use of deliberative processes,
- perspective-taking,
- economic reasoning and the use of economic data,
- spatial reasoning,
- the use of geographic data,
- analysis of cause and effect,
- classification and identification of purpose and perspective of historical sources,
- questioning,
- selection and evaluation of sources,
- the construction, adaptation, and presentation of arguments and explanations (including making claims and use of evidence),
- the critique of arguments and explanations,
- the analysis of social problems, and
- taking of informed action.

Additionally, 32 faculty members from the University of Minnesota’s Department of History submitted a letter offering their expert feedback. They emphasized the alignment of the approach represented by the standards with their “expectations as educators in the History Department at the University of Minnesota.” Specifically, they noted their agreement with the active, inquiry-based approach represented by the standards, writing, “rather than focusing simply on reiterating content...students who study U.S. and World History using an inquiry lens will be better prepared for college—both in terms of retaining knowledge, and in their development of historical thinking skills.” They also broadly voiced their support for the Ethnic Studies standards, which they noted, “complement and support historical thinking skills...[and] will help to deepen and support students’ understanding of history.”

## **First Draft of the Proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies**

The initial work to develop the first draft of the proposed 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies occurred between September and November of 2020. MDE sought feedback for a first draft in December of 2020 and January of 2021. The standards committee met twice, in September and October 2020, prior to creating the first draft of the Social Studies Standards.

For the September 16 and October 22, 2020, standards committee meetings, the committee members determined areas of strength and improvement for Minnesota’s social studies standards by analyzing feedback

from state survey data and standards from other states compared with current Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards for Social Studies and the C3 Framework and began the process of revising standards.

During the September full standards committee meeting, an emerging vision of College, Career and Civic Readiness (CCCR) in social studies was developed.

During the October full committee meeting, the committee was tasked with developing recommendations for the first draft. The directive was to make recommendations for revisions of the first draft (keep, edit/rephrase, combine, delete, add new) based on the gap analysis findings and career and college readiness vision.

The standards committee articulated the need for the revised standards to be meaningful and manageable.

- **Meaningful** – the need to attend to race, ethnicity, identity, lived experience of young people (especially people of color and American Indian people) in relation to civic life; the need to acknowledge and validate voices and experiences of marginalized youth.
- **Manageable** – the need for fewer number of standards and benchmarks, focusing on concepts and big ideas/critical thinking; being mindful to limit changes to only necessary standards and benchmarks; excitement around alignment with C3 Framework shifts.

Standards committee members also expressed the need to revise standard statements from being declarative conclusions to a student-based inquiry, in alignment with the C3 framework.

The committee did commit to and supported that standards will promote culturally sustaining learning (in Guiding Assumptions document).

Lively discussions occurred among standards committee members in regards to how to incorporate ethnic studies and climate change and how to organize standards. These discussions were revisited in multiple meetings and writing group sessions. MDE articulated that decisions should be made through compromise and consensus.<sup>152</sup>

### Writing Teams in October and November 2021

In order to develop a draft, the committee broke into smaller subgroups. The work of the writing subgroup during this time was oriented towards working collaboratively, and was based on discussions had by the full standards committee, details from the gap analysis, public feedback, and C3 Framework, in order to determine “anchor” standards (key big ideas) for the various social studies disciplines. The anchor standards were crafted first, with the intention of creating grade-level benchmarks for the second draft.

Writing teams agreed to align standards to the four dimensions of the C3 Framework in each discipline because the framework promotes literacy practices and outcomes for students to practice reading, writing, speaking and

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<sup>152</sup> “Social Studies Standards Committee Meeting Questions and Answers,” Academic Standards (K–12):

Social Studies, Minnesota Department of Education, <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/stds/soc/>.

listening; helps students apply knowledge to real-world problems; promotes honoring of students’ lived experiences; and integrates content and skills in a purposeful way.

The work began with the creation of a vision of CCCR in social studies that centered equity:

*Minnesota is the contemporary and ancestral home of the Anishinaabe and Dakota peoples, and social studies education on this land will acknowledge and honor their contemporary and historical voices.*

*Social studies engages students in the disciplinary and interdisciplinary practices of political scientists, economists, geographers, and historians in order to examine and address societal problems. Social studies empowers learners to acquire, evaluate and apply knowledge; to practice critical thinking, reasoning, inquiry, and literacy skills; to be conscious and critical of their own biases and those of larger society; and develop the dispositions needed to become inquisitive, informed, empathetic, and engaged members of our global community.*

*Social studies prepares students to live and interact in diverse communities through examining their identities, respectfully engaging with different perspectives, and addressing powerful social, cultural, and political inequities, as well as their connections to other axes of stratification, including gender, race, class, sexuality, and legal status.* The writers worked to include ethnic studies concepts along with social studies disciplinary concepts as well to address equity concerns about the current standard. One example is shown below.

<b>2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies, standard 3</b>	<b>2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies, draft 1 standard</b>
The United States is based on democratic values and principles that include liberty, individual rights, justice, equality, the rule of law, limited government, common good, popular sovereignty, majority rule and minority rights	Explain democratic values and principles that guide government, society, and communities and analyze the tensions within the United States constitutional government

The rephrasing allows and encourages critical thinking versus leading students in a certain direction to a certain conclusion. Analyzing value tensions and how well principles are “working” better allows students to examine contemporary issues (with historical context) and tap into their lived experiences. It also allows students to examine multiple perspectives, evaluate the strengths of arguments towards shared understandings, determine their own stance, and investigate ways in which democratic principles could be improved.

**Feedback on the First Draft of the Proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies**

The public was invited to ask questions and submit comments on the first draft through an online survey and at five virtual town hall meetings hosted by MDE Director of Academic Standards and Instructional Effectiveness and MDE staff. The meetings were held in December of 2020. MDE was requesting feedback on the anchor standards only, as benchmarks had not been revised. However, many of the comments were about content that survey respondents and town hall attendees thought was missing in the benchmarks.

Public Review and Comment Period #1: The first draft of the revised standards was prepared and posted on November 30, 2020, followed by a Public Review and Comment Period, ending on January 4, 2021. There were

877 survey respondents. Forty-four percent of the respondents thought the first draft of the anchor standards was aligned to the Career, College, and Civic Life Statement, and 50% thought the first draft of the anchor standards were clear and free of jargon. Town hall attendants identified as community members, parents and guardians, students, and representatives of higher education. Several people identifying as Sikhs requested inclusion of Sikhism in the list of world religions. Several people identifying as students and parents expressed concern that the Holocaust was not included in the first draft.<sup>153</sup> Several people identifying as parents, students, and higher education representatives expressed support for inclusion of ethnic studies concepts as well as inclusion of perspectives of individuals with identities based on race, religion, geography, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. Some attendees identifying as teachers expressed desire for implementation supports after standards are adopted. Letters and emails with feedback were also collected from a broad range of both constituents and advocacy organizations including, but not limited to, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas, the Minnesota Ethnic Studies Coalition, the Center for the American Experiment, and the Minnesota Environmental Justice Committee.

All feedback on the first draft was shared with the standards committee at the January meeting, to be considered as the committee began the process of creating the second draft.

## **Writing the Second Draft of the Proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies**

The second draft of the proposed 2021 K–12 academic standards in social studies was developed in January through July of 2021. The full standards committee met five times during that timeframe to consider public feedback on the first draft, organize the anchor standards, further develop and refine benchmarks, and provide guidance to the writing teams to inform the second draft.

The academic standards and their supporting benchmarks of the second draft were organized into five strands: Citizenship and Government, Economics, Geography, U.S. and World History, and Ethnic Studies. Each of the strands had between three and six standards. At the middle and high school levels, the strands do not correlate to specific course names.

The contributions of Minnesota’s American Indian tribes and communities were integrated into each strand and all standards. Ensuring that the standards reflect Minnesota’s student population was an underpinning throughout the standards review process. This includes the interdisciplinary study of the social, political, economic, and historical perspectives of the diverse racial and ethnic groups in America.

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<sup>153</sup> As noted above, the standards express broad conceptual frameworks, which are applicable across grade levels. Specific content to be taught is outlined in grade-level benchmarks. As the committee started with the anchor standards, and not the benchmarks, many specific pieces of content that were intended for inclusion were not yet in the draft. It was anticipated that the standards developed in history would have benchmarks that would tie to specific historical events, such as the Holocaust.

The standards were also reviewed to identify consistency in skills and knowledge across the subject areas, specifically with the English language arts (ELA) standards. When the ELA standards were revised in 2020, Literacy in History was removed, in favor of integrating ELA concepts into Social Studies and Science standards.<sup>154</sup> A workgroup of the committee reviewed the 2020 ELA Standards to ensure consistency and make connections with that document to create cohesion in learning for students. A workgroup of the committee also reviewed connections with technology and information literacy standards as well as computer science concepts and skills, as appropriate.<sup>155</sup>

Feedback on the second draft of the proposed rules was sought and received by the standards committee in July and August of 2021.

### **Feedback on the Second Draft of the Proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies**

The second draft of the revised standards was prepared and posted on July 30, 2021, followed by an online Public Review and Comment Period. The comment period for the second draft of the proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies ended August 16, 2021.

In addition to the public comment online survey, over 15 community groups/organizations were invited to attend a meeting with the assistant commissioner overseeing academic standards and staff in order to get feedback and discuss any concerns they had with the second draft of the standards. The meetings were held virtually August 11–13 and the groups were given a set of eight possible meeting times. Groups unable to attend were invited to submit written feedback. Participating organizations included:

- Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas
- Minnesota Association of School Administrators
- Minnesota School Board Association
- Minnesota Council for the Social Studies
- Minnesota Council on Economic Education
- Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education
- Minnesota Humanities Center
- Minnesota Council for History Education
- Learning Law and Democracy Foundation
- Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs
- Minnesota Indian Affairs Council
- Minnesota Rural Education Association

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<sup>154</sup> State of Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in English Language Arts (Minnesota, 2010),

[https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET\\_FILE&dDocName=005238&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary](https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=005238&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary).

<sup>155</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 4(a).

- Outfront Minnesota
- Sikh Coalition
- Islamic Resource Group
- Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council
- Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage
- Tribal Nations Education Committee

There were 637 survey respondents to the second draft. The survey asked respondents if they wanted to rewrite each standard and to give a reason. In hindsight, it would have been better if the survey also asked if respondents were happy with each standard, but it did not, so the committee was only presented with feedback in the form of critique and recommended changes. In the comments field, several respondents expressed concern that examples were not included for the benchmarks and therefore necessary details and specific details were lacking. Consistent with the feedback received on the first draft, people expressed support for the inclusion of ethnic studies concepts and diverse perspectives while others did not support this inclusion. The requests for implementation supports were present in public feedback on both Draft 1 and Draft 2.

All feedback on the second draft was shared with the standards committee at the August 2021 meeting. This information was considered as the committee began the process of preparing the third draft.

## **Writing the Third Draft of the Proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies**

In August and September of 2021, the writing groups continued their efforts to consider public feedback on the second draft and consider full committee priorities and recommendations. This work continued discussions to ensure the standards were meaningful and manageable, further organize the anchor standards, and further develop and refine benchmarks. The standards committee’s last meeting was on September 21, 2021. Per 120B.021, subdivision 2, the committee co-chairs and other members of the standards committee’s leadership team presented the final committee draft to the commissioner for consideration on September 28, 2021. The proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies represents the work of the social studies standards review committee that met from September 2020 to September 2021.

The Minnesota Department of Education recommends implementation for the 2026–2027 school year. This date gives districts, charters, schools, and educators around four years to work through the initial planning stages of implementation. This also positions Social Studies Standards to be implemented the year after English Language Arts Standards are implemented.

### **Important Elements of the Proposed Standards**

#### ***Statutory Requirements and Guiding Assumptions, Role of Career, College, and Civic Life Readiness in the Social Studies***

The department relied on several guiding considerations when designing the proposed 2021 rules, including statutory requirements, the commissioner’s approved Assumptions, basing the standards on the nature of social studies and a goal of promoting career, college, and civic life success. The statutory requirements the standards committee incorporated into the proposed standards covered many areas, including career and college readiness, contributions of American Indian Tribes and communities, and the assumption that all students

complete 3.5 social studies credits. The statutory requirements, guiding assumptions, and the role of college, career, and civic life in the social studies have been discussed in detail in previous sections.

### ***Career and College Readiness in the Proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies***

In Minnesota, all academic standards must align with the knowledge and skills needed for career and college readiness and success.<sup>156</sup> As discussed above in this SONAR, the standards committee created a vision statement for college and career readiness and success in social studies and civic life participation.

### ***Contributions of Minnesota American Indian Tribes and Communities in the Proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies***

The Minnesota Tribal Nations Education Committee was invited to nominate standards committee members, and members from TNEC participated in the review committee. Contributions of Minnesota American Indian Tribes and communities were considered throughout the process of the standards review and revision. TNEC was invited to give specific feedback on the standards and benchmarks during the period of public comment on draft two.

### ***Technology and Information Literacy in the Proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies***

The MDE STEM and Computer Science specialist presented the Computer Science Teaching Standards (CSTA) to the standards committee while they were working on the second draft to encourage alignment where it fit naturally in the social studies standards.

## **Important Shifts in the 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies**

The following shifts represent the ambitions set forth in the C3 Inquiry Arc and articulate ways that teachers can strengthen their instruction, while also impacting the design of curriculum and assessment. The shifts also reflect exemplary practice that can now be found in many social studies classrooms.

### **Inquiry-Based Practices**

The standards focus on engaging students in disciplinary inquiry. For example, Economics Standard 7 states, “Use economic models/reasoning and data analysis to construct an argument and propose a solution related to an economic question. Evaluate the impact of the proposed solution on various communities that would be affected.” Applying this standard to a student learning about cost-benefit analysis, rather than simply learning a definition for the foundational concept, the student will need to go through the stages of the Inquiry Arc: first forming a question, applying the disciplinary concept of cost-benefit analysis, gathering evidence, and using that evidence to communicate a conclusion. These standards frame the expectation that students engage in the inquiry process throughout the K–12 social studies experience.

### **Cultivating Collaborative Civic Spaces**

Collaboration is a key component of the proposed 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies. The idea of collaboration is an essential social studies skill, as collaboration is a natural part of civic life. Collaboration is a critical element of an inquiry approach. When engaging with disciplinary-specific standards and benchmarks students are expected to communicate to a variety of audiences, including classmates as well as audiences

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<sup>156</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 4(a).

outside the classroom. Students are also expected to analyze sources and critique arguments. In order to fully engage in the inquiry process, students must also engage in a range of deliberative and democratic conversations in and outside of the classroom.

### **Integration of Content and Skills**

The proposed 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies focus on disciplinary skills and key conceptual knowledge associated with civics, economics, geography, and history. The standards and benchmarks outline the content necessary for a rigorous social studies program. Discipline-specific content specifies the particular ideas and concepts to be taught and the grade levels at which to teach them. Disciplinary content is critically important to studying social studies, and teachers will need to be thoughtful in selecting appropriate and relevant content to help students ground their learning and to help them build upon their disciplinary skills and conceptual knowledge. The notion of content as separate from skills is an artificial distinction. Skills, particularly those in the disciplines, exist for the purpose of developing content knowledge.<sup>157</sup>

### **Integration of Literacy**

The standards committee coordinated with MDE’s literacy specialist to align standards and benchmarks to English Language Arts (ELA) concepts of evaluating sources, and both developing and communicating arguments. This effort worked well because the inquiry process in social studies includes many skills that are also part of the ELA standards. Social studies inquiry emphasizes the identification of primary and secondary sources, the analysis of sources to develop claims and arguments, and the communication of the claims and arguments to a variety of audiences. While distinct in the manner of inclusion in social studies, these skills align with the 2020 ELA Standards.

- Essentially, literacy in social studies also includes disciplinary literacies in each of the fields of social science. Disciplinary literacies that emerge in social studies from the disciplines of civics, economics, geography, and history require special attention. The 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies emphasize these unique disciplinary literacies throughout the grade-level standards and benchmarks. The standards and benchmarks represent a roadmap for students to develop disciplinary literacies as they examine content in civics, economics, geography, and history. Disciplinary literacies include processes such as using deliberative processes, using economic data, reasoning spatially, and analyzing cause and effect. With consistent practice, students can become more literate and practiced at thinking in the social studies disciplines.
- Inquiry Literacies: Questioning, selecting sources, Gathering information from sources, Evaluating sources, Making claims, Using evidence, Constructing arguments and explanations, Adapting arguments and explanations, Presenting arguments and explanations, Critiquing arguments and explanations, Analyzing social problems, Assessing options for action, Taking informed action
- Disciplinary Literacies: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles, Using Deliberative Processes, Perspective-Taking, Making economic decisions, Using economic data, Identifying prices in a market,

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<sup>157</sup> John Lee, Kathy Swan, SG Grant, Dan Rothstein and Luz Santana, *Questions, Frameworks, and*

*Classrooms* (C3Teachers, 2015), <http://c3teachers.org/c3shifts>.

Reasoning spatially, Constructing maps, Using geographic data, Analyzing cause and effect, Classifying sources, Determining the purpose/perspective of an historical source

### **Incorporating Opportunities to Communicate Conclusions and Take Informed Action**

Social studies should be a thought-provoking and inspirational exploration of information from various sources that ultimately promotes depth of understanding of the past and present and encourages active civic engagement. Students can construct meaning by investigating the world around them. Just as students “do” chemistry or physics in the science laboratory, students can “do” social studies. S.G. Grant wrote, “At heart, Social Studies is about understanding the things people do. Whether those things are brave, ambitious, and inventive or cowardly, naive, and silly, Social Studies is about using questions to direct our investigations into the world around us.”<sup>158</sup>

Implementation of the 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies requires the teacher to serve as a facilitator and coach, providing support for student-centered sustained inquiry, productive collaboration, and informed action. This support comes in many forms and it should be noted that the teacher will make careful, strategic choices about creative ways to communicate and disseminate important information to students.

Communicating conclusions and/or taking informed action is an essential component to helping students “do” social studies. The 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies do not prescribe the actions that are appropriate for a particular classroom context. Instead, what these standards do is focus on being informed when taking action. Students use their learning in social studies as a launching pad for action. The standards and benchmarks guide the development of experiences, allowing students to grow in the skills that undergird purposeful, informed, and reflective action. The C3 Framework describes Dimension 4, which is the section focused on communicating conclusions and taking actions:

“Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework closes the inquiry arc with opportunities for students to communicate the results of their inquiries and, in cases where it is curricularly appropriate, to take informed action. The C3 does not prescribe the actions that are appropriate for a particular classroom context or for a specific inquiry. Instead, what these indicators focus on is being informed when taking action. Students in social studies use their C3 inquiries as a launching pad for action. The indicators in Dimension 4 guide students in doing three things as they move from academic inquiry to the public square: 1) Understand the pervasiveness of the problem as well its complexity (D4.6); 2) Assess options for action given the context of the problem (D4.7); 3) Engage in deliberative processes to move toward an “action” plan (D4.8). There is an expectation that social studies students practice citizenship in the same way they practice historical thinking, economic decision-making or geographic reasoning. As a

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<sup>158</sup> S.G. Grant, “From Inquiry Arc to Instructional Practice: The Potential of the C3 Framework,” *Social Education* 77, no. 6 (2013): 322-326, 351, <https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/77/6/inquiry-arc-instructional-practice-potential-c3-framework>.

result, students will need tangible spaces in curricula to consider, debate, and plan for action-oriented experiences that would culminate their academic inquiries.”<sup>159</sup>

### **Focus on Conceptual Understanding**

Social studies is far more than a mere march through facts, where student learning stops at the level of recalling names, dates, and other information they may soon forget. Specific content knowledge is important and serves as a foundation for conceptual understandings. Social studies learning can be designed around meaningful conceptual understandings related to ideas such as human-environment interaction, economic decision-making, or revolution. The proposed 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies include these conceptual understandings as an integral part of the overall framework. Students develop conceptual understanding by engaging with the ideas and concepts in the standards and benchmarks at each grade. The anchor standards help to allow students opportunities to return to the key ideas and concepts throughout a K–12 social studies experience in order to ensure they can continue to apply their understanding at deeper levels with different content. With consistent practice, students can transfer their conceptual understanding to a practical example. In summary, organizing learning around the anchor standards increases the likelihood that students will remember more specific knowledge in relation to concepts, be more engaged in their learning, and be better able to apply their understandings across places and times.<sup>160</sup>

### **Approval by the Commissioner of Education And Beginning of Formal Rulemaking Process**

On Monday, November 15, 2021, the third draft of the social studies standards was released by the commissioner of education, and the statutory rulemaking process for the standards began. The first step of the statutory rulemaking process for the K–12 academic standards in social studies is publishing the Request for

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<sup>159</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, *College, Career and Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K–12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (Silver Springs, MD: NCSS, 2013), <https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/c3-framework-for-social-studies-rev0617.pdf>.

<sup>160</sup> S.G. Grant, “From Inquiry Arc to Instructional Practice: The Potential of the C3 Framework,” *Social Education* 77, no. 6 (2013): 322–326, 351, <https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/77/6/inquiry-arc-instructional-practice-potential-c3-framework>; National Council for the Social Studies, *College, Career and Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K–12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (Silver Springs, MD: NCSS, 2013), <https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/c3-framework-for-social-studies-rev0617.pdf>.

Comments in the State Register. A 60-day public comment period on the proposed standards follows the publishing of this document. Per Minnesota Statutes 120B.023, subd. 1(d), the statutory rulemaking process does not apply to the supporting benchmarks and thus the 60-day public comment period is only open for the proposed standards language and does not give the public an opportunity to comment further on the supporting benchmarks.<sup>161</sup>

**The statutory rulemaking process is an iterative one and begins once the initial review and revision work of the standards review committee is complete. This process is set out in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 14, and is a complex process with many steps.**

## Compliance with Minnesota Rulemaking Law

### Statutory Authority

The Minnesota Department of Education has statutory authority to adopt rules for social studies academic standards under Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.02, subdivision 1; Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.021, subdivision 1(a)(4).

### General Statement of Need and Reasonableness

As mentioned in previous sections of the SONAR, the proposed 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies shift from the 2011 Standards in several ways that improve the standards, such as reducing the total number of standards, focusing on inquiry skills, and incorporating more diverse perspectives.

The standards build on 30 years of research that supports enhancing student engagement and better preparing students for career, college, and civic life by teaching disciplinary inquiry skills. Social studies in K–12 schools has historically had a significant disconnect from the practices of working social scientists. Research has consistently supported the incorporation of the disciplinary literacy skills of social studies for all students—not just those who obtain mastery of the kind of rote memorization promoted by standards that list discrete facts. In one of many studies of disciplinary practices in K–12 classrooms conducted by researchers connected to the Stanford History Education Group, Avishag Reisman found that students, who described their experience of social studies classes as boring, or as Reisman described the classes, full of droning “like Ben Steiner in *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*,” self-reported being more engaged in deep thinking.<sup>162</sup>

Crucially, researchers like Reisman point to state mandates, including curriculum and standards, as having impeded teachers in implementing decades of best practice. The shift in the proposed 2021 K–12 Academic

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<sup>161</sup> Minnesota Statutes section 120B.023, subd. 1(d).

<sup>162</sup> Avishag Reisman, “The Document-Based Lesson: Bringing Disciplinary Inquiry into High School History Classrooms for Struggling Reader,” *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 44 no. 2 (2012): p. 233–264, [https://stacks.stanford.edu/file/druid:tx527hh4640/Document-Based%20Lesson\\_Revision%20for%20JCS\\_wineburg\\_adviser.pdf](https://stacks.stanford.edu/file/druid:tx527hh4640/Document-Based%20Lesson_Revision%20for%20JCS_wineburg_adviser.pdf).

Standards in Social Studies towards disciplinary inquiry remove a significant barrier to teachers' implementation of long-established best practices.<sup>163</sup>

When considering the reasonableness of the proposed standards, it should be noted that the standards were developed over the course of a number of years. As noted above, MDE engaged an expert committee with members representing the interests of key constituencies. The standards proposed reflect an ongoing and serious discussion with those constituencies. MDE has thoughtfully considered all feedback received from members of the public and weighed multiple factors and parties' interests. The proposed standards reflect this thoughtfulness and compliance with the statutory requirements. For these reasons and all of those articulated in the sections above, the adoption of the proposed standards social studies standards are necessary and reasonable.

### **Analysis of Rule by Subparts**

This section describes the necessity and reasonableness of the proposed rules, in detail. The section illustrates the importance of the rules in setting learning goals for Minnesota students in social studies. It also shows how the rules incorporate research and provide continuity from the 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies, with shifts in some areas. This section further shows how the standards review and revision process incorporated stakeholder and expert feedback.

The proposed rules are the academic standards in social studies. By statute, an “Academic Standard” is a “summary description of student learning in a required content area under 120B.021<sup>164</sup> or elective content area under 120B.022.”<sup>165</sup> A “Benchmark” is defined by statute as a “specific knowledge or skill that a student must master to complete part of an academic standard by the end of a grade level or grade band.”<sup>166</sup> So, while the standards describe what students must learn in school by grade 12, the supporting benchmarks describe the specific student learning outcomes for each grade level or grade band. The standards review and revision process includes review and revision of the supporting benchmarks, which are the way the standards (the rules) are carried out at specific grade levels. The review and revision of the supporting benchmarks is necessary so that schools can offer and students can achieve all the supporting benchmarks to satisfactorily complete each of the state standards in a particular content area.

The proposed rules are organized as 25 anchor standards that apply to student learning in grades K–12. These standards are described as anchor standards because they consistently anchor student learning in grades K–12 in these key areas. The anchor standards are organized into the following strands (subparts). Strands can be thought of as organizing folders for the anchor standards.

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<sup>163</sup> Avishag Reisman, “The Document-Based Lesson: Bringing Disciplinary Inquiry into High School History Classrooms for Struggling Reader,” *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 44 no. 2 (2012): p. 233–264, [https://stacks.stanford.edu/file/druid:tx527hh4640/Document-Based%20Lesson\\_Revision%20for%20JCS\\_wineburg\\_adviser.pdf](https://stacks.stanford.edu/file/druid:tx527hh4640/Document-Based%20Lesson_Revision%20for%20JCS_wineburg_adviser.pdf).

<sup>164</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021.

<sup>165</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.022.

<sup>166</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.018, subd. 3.

Subpart 2: Citizenship and Government

Subpart 3: Economics

Subpart 4: Geography

Subpart 5: History

Subpart 6: Ethnic Studies

The organization of the proposed rules into five strands (subparts) represents a shift from the 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies. In 2011, there were four strands (subparts) at each grade level. In 2011, the standards at each grade level made up their own rule. The rule numbers are in the chart that follows.

<b>Rule Number in 2011</b>	<b>Grade Level in 2011</b>
3501.1300	Kindergarten Standards
3501.1305	Grade 1 Standards
3501.1310	Grade 2 Standards
3501.1315	Grade 3 Standards
3501.1320	Grade 4 Standards
3501.1325	Grade 5 Standards
3501.1330	Grade 6 Standards
3501.1335	Grade 7 Standards
3501.1340	Grade 8 Standards
3501.1345	Grade 9–12 Standards

This section builds on the previous sections of this SONAR and specifically addresses the proposed 2021 rule language of the 2021 K–12 Minnesota Academic Standards in Social Studies. It describes why these standards are needed and reasonable. In many cases, standards from [Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies 2011](#) were compiled and adapted to fit the 2021 anchor standard approach.<sup>167</sup> Many became more student-focused and inquiry-based. The proposed social studies standards are:

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<sup>167</sup> State of Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Education, *Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies* (Minnesota, 2011),  
2011[https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET\\_FILE&dDocName=042018&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary](https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=042018&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary).

## **Proposed Permanent Rules Relating to K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies**

### ***Subpart 2: Citizenship and Government***

- A. Civic Skills: The student will apply civic reasoning and demonstrate civic skills for the purpose of informed and engaged lifelong civic participation.
- B. Democratic Values and Principles: The student will explain democratic values and principles that guide governments, societies and communities, and analyze the tensions within the United States constitutional government.
- C. Rights and Responsibilities: The student will explain and evaluate rights, duties, and responsibilities in democratic society.
- D. Governmental Institutions and Political Processes: The student will explain and evaluate processes, rules, and laws of the United States governmental institutions at local, state, and, federal levels and within Tribal Nations.
- E. Public Policy: The student will analyze how public policy is shaped by governmental and nongovernmental institutions, and how people and communities take action to solve problems and shape public policy.
- F. Tribal Nations: The student will evaluate the unique political status, trust relationships, and governing structures of sovereign Tribal Nations and the United States.

### ***Subpart 3: Economics***

- A. Economic Inquiry: The student will use economic models and reasoning and data analysis to construct an argument and propose a solution related to an economic question. The student will evaluate the impact of the proposed solution on various communities that would be affected.
- B. Fundamental Economics Concepts: The student will analyze how scarcity and artificial shortages force individuals, organizations, communities, and governments to make choices and incur opportunity costs. The student will analyze how the decisions of individuals, organizations, communities, and governments affect economic equity and efficiency.
- C. Personal Finance: The student will apply economic concepts and models to develop individual and collective financial goals and strategies for achieving these goals, taking into consideration historical and contemporary conditions that either inhibit or advance the creation of individual and generational wealth.
- D. Microeconomics: The student will explain and evaluate how resources are used, and how goods and services are distributed within different economic systems. The student will analyze how incentives influence the decisions of consumers, producers, and governments. The student will evaluate the intended and unintended consequences of these decisions from multiple perspectives.
- E. Macroeconomics: The student will measure and evaluate the well-being of nations and communities using a variety of indicators. The student will explain the causes of economic ups and downs. The student will evaluate how government actions affect a nation's economy and individuals' well-being within an economy.

- F. Global/ International Economics: The student will explain why people trade and why nations encourage or limit trade. The student will analyze the costs and benefits of international trade and globalization on communities and the environment.

#### ***Subpart 4: Geography***

- A. Geospatial Skills and Inquiry: The student will apply geographic tools, including geospatial technologies, and geographic inquiry to solve spatial problems.
- B. Places and Regions: The student will describe places and regions, explaining how they are influenced by power structures.
- C. Human Systems: The student will analyze patterns of movement and interconnectedness within and between cultural, economic, and political systems from a local to global scale.
- D. Human-Environment interaction: The student will evaluate the relationship between humans and the environment, including climate change.
- E. Culture: The student will investigate how sense of place is impacted by different cultural perspectives.

#### ***Subpart 5: History (United States and World)***

- A. Context, Change, and Continuity: The student will ask historical questions about context, change, and continuity in order to identify and analyze dominant and nondominant narratives about the past.
- B. Historical Perspectives: The student will identify diverse points of view and describe how one's frame of reference influences historical perspective.
- C. Historical Sources and Evidence: The student will investigate a variety of historical sources by: 1) analyzing primary and secondary sources, 2) identifying perspectives and narratives that are absent from the available sources; and 3) interpreting the historical context, intended audience, purpose, and author's point of view of these sources.
- D. Causation and Argumentation: The student will integrate evidence from multiple historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument and/or compelling narrative about the past.
- E. Connecting Past and Present: The student will use historical methods and sources to identify and analyze the roots of a contemporary issue. The student will design a plan to address it.

#### ***Subpart 6: Ethnic Studies***

- A. Identity: The student will analyze the ways power and language construct the social identities of race, religion, geography, ethnicity, and gender. The student will apply understandings to one's own social identities and other groups living in Minnesota, centering those whose stories and histories have been marginalized, erased or ignored.
- B. Resistance: The student will describe how individuals and communities have fought for freedom and liberation against systemic and coordinated exercises of power locally and globally. The student will identify strategies or times that have resulted in lasting change. The student will organize with others to engage in activities that could further the rights and dignity of all.
- C. Ways of Knowing/Methodologies: The student will use ethnic and Indigenous studies methods and sources in order to understand the roots of contemporary systems of oppression and apply lessons from the past in order to eliminate historical and contemporary injustices.

## Subpart 2 – Citizenship and Government (Civics)

Citizenship and Government (Civics), the first strand in the proposed social studies standards, sets forth rigorous knowledge, skills, and dispositions requirements. The civics standards help meet the goals of public education outlined in Article 13, Section 1, of the Minnesota Constitution, namely to provide for the “stability of a republican form of government.”<sup>168</sup>

The National Assessment of Education Progress’ civics assessment measures students’ knowledge and understanding of civics with three interrelated components: knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills, and civic dispositions, which “taken together, these three elements are defined in the framework as the core elements of civics instruction in the U.S.”<sup>169</sup>

According to the highlights of the 2018 8th grade Civics Assessment, only 24 percent of students perform at or above NAEP Proficient in 2018—no significant change compared to 2014 or 1998.<sup>170</sup>

In light of the challenges faced in civic education, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and Educating for American Democracy “explicitly recommends a shift away from the way that most schools have taught history and civics: from a model based on the learning of long, detailed, and practically unteachable sets of state standards to one that uses an inquiry process that weaves history and civics together, and that inspires students to learn by asking difficult questions and then seeking fact-based answers in and out of the classroom.”<sup>171</sup>

The 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies for Citizenship and Government had five substrands and 11 standards. The proposed 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies for Citizenship and Government have six anchor standards which are discussed below.

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<sup>168</sup> Minn. Const., art 13, sec. 1.

<sup>169</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment Governing Board, *Civics Framework for the 2018 National Assessment of Educational Progress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2018), <https://www.nagb.gov/content/dam/nagb/en/documents/publications/frameworks/civics/2018-civics-framework.pdf>.

<sup>170</sup> “NAEP Report Card: Civics- Highlights from the 2018 Assessment,” *The Nation’s Report Card*, National Assessment Governing Board, accessed February 8, 2023, <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/highlights/civics/2018/>.

<sup>171</sup> Educating for American Democracy, *Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy* (2021), <https://www.educatingforamericandemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Roadmap-to-Educating-for-American-Democracy.pdf>.

**Subpart 2A – Civic Skills: The student will apply civic reasoning and demonstrate civic skills for the purpose of informed and engaged lifelong civic participation.**

This standard is needed and reasonable to respond to national research that calls for preparing students for fuller participation in democratic society by focusing on civic skills, reasoning, and dispositions. This standard is an adaptation of a standard from the 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies.

A recent national report on civic education in the United States noted: “American citizens and communities can address our nation’s fundamental problems...But to do so requires civic skills, especially the ability to gather and interpret information, speak and listen, engage in dialogue about differences, resolve conflicts, reach agreements, collaborate with peers, understand formal government, and advocate for change.”<sup>172</sup>

The National Academy of Education states, “To engage in civic reasoning, one needs to think through a public issue using rigorous inquiry skills and methods to weigh different points of view and examine available evidence. Civic discourse concerns how to communicate with one another around the challenges of public issues in order to enhance both individual and group understanding. It also involves enabling effective decision making aimed at finding consensus, compromise, or in some cases, confronting social injustices through dissent. Finally, engaging in civic discourse should be guided by respect for fundamental human rights.”<sup>173</sup>

Civic discussion is central to the goals of social studies education because “through discussions, debates, the use of authentic documents, simulations, research, and other occasions for critical thinking and decision making, students learn to apply value-based reasoning when addressing problems and issues” and are able to “develop fair-mindedness, and encourage recognition and serious consideration of opposing points of view, respect for well-supported positions, sensitivity to cultural similarities and differences, and a commitment to individual and social responsibility.”<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, *Civic Skills and Federal Policy* (2010), accessed between August 2020–December 2021, [http://www.civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Civic-Skills-and-Federal-Policy\\_final.pdf](http://www.civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Civic-Skills-and-Federal-Policy_final.pdf). Website has been archived.

<sup>173</sup> Carol D. Lee, Gregory White, & Dian Dong (Eds.), “Executive Summary,” *Educating for Civic Reasoning and Discourse* (Committee on Civic Reasoning and Discourse, Washington, DC, National Academy of Education, 2021). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED611952.pdf>.

<sup>174</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, “A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies,” *Social Education* 80, no. 3 (2016): p. 180–182, <https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/80/03/vision-powerful-teaching-and-learning-social-studies>.

**Subpart 2B – Democratic Values and Principles: The student will explain democratic values and principles that guide governments, societies and communities, and analyze the tensions within the United States constitutional government.**

This standard is needed and reasonable to respond to national research that calls for preparing students in our democratic republic to be better informed and engaged. Students need to understand how and why our systems of government work, including the foundations of the American political system, and the degree to which the federal government, established by the U.S. Constitution, embodies the purpose and principles of American democracy. This standard is a reframing of a standard from the 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies, in order to have a greater inquiry focus.

- The National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies state that “the development of civic competence requires an understanding of the foundations of political thought, and the historical development of various structures of power, authority, and governance. It also requires knowledge of the evolving functions of these structures in contemporary U.S. society, as well as in other parts of the world.”<sup>175</sup>
- Analyzing tensions and how well principles are “working” allows students to examine contemporary issues (with historical context) and tap into their lived experiences. It also allows students to examine multiple perspectives, evaluate the strengths of arguments, work towards shared understandings, determine their own stance—and investigate ways in which democratic principles could be improved.<sup>176</sup>

**Subpart 2C – Rights and Responsibilities: The student will explain and evaluate rights, duties, and responsibilities in democratic society.**

This standard is needed and reasonable to respond to national research that calls for preparing students to recognize the responsibilities that all residents of the United States have in contributing to America’s economy and political system. It is necessary for students to understand the additional rights and responsibilities that come with American citizenship. In 2011 the standard focused specifically on the rights, duties and responsibilities of American citizens. However, the American public is made up of citizens and non-citizens. Citizenship is defined by the Constitution, and carries its own unique set of expectations. Regardless of citizenship, however, all individuals living within the borders of the United States have rights, duties and responsibilities. The change from only including citizens to “in a democratic society” broadens the inclusion and understanding of the concepts.

This standard is an integration of two standards from the 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies and increases the complexity requiring students to explain and evaluate. This integration is in line with the language

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<sup>175</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, “The Themes of Social Studies,” in National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (Brentwood, MD: NCSS Publications, 1994).

<sup>176</sup> Michael Hartoonian, Richard Van Scotter, and William E. White, “An Idea Called America,” Social Education 71, no. 5 (September 2007): p. 243–247, <https://www.socialstudies.org/idea-called-america>.

used in the C3 Framework’s expectations for Civic disciplinary tools and concepts, which consistently ask students to explain, evaluate, analyze and critique facets of life in a democratic society.<sup>177</sup>

**Subpart 2D – Governmental Institutions and Political Processes: The student will explain and evaluate processes, rules, and laws of United States governmental institutions at local, state, and federal levels and Tribal Nations.**

This standard is needed and reasonable to respond to a Minnesota statutory requirement. This standard is an adaptation of standards from the 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies. It is adding contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes in response to Minnesota Statute section 120B.021 subd. 4 which requires the commissioner to include the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities during the standards revision process.<sup>178</sup> Additionally, it shifts to a phrasing centered on what students will be able to do with their understanding of the way governments function.

**Subpart 2E – Public Policy: The student will analyze how public policy is shaped by governmental and nongovernmental institutions, and how people and communities take action to solve problems and shape public policy.**

It is needed and reasonable to respond to national research that calls for preparing students to understand how public policy is created in the United States, including the processes and the players involved. This standard is a reframing of a standard from the 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies, becoming inquiry-focused for students.

In their position statement advocating for increased student inquiry in social studies, NCSS states, “Emphasis should be placed on pervasive and enduring social issues and connections to the lives of students. Local, regional, national, and global issues should be investigated for how these issues connect on many different levels. Such investigations of social issues should not solely focus on the issue, but also look at and analyze attempts to formulate potential resolutions of present and controversial global problems.”<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, *College, Career and Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K–12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (Silver Springs, MD: NCSS, 2013), 32, <https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/c3-framework-for-social-studies-rev0617.pdf>.

<sup>178</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 4.

<sup>179</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, “A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies,” *Social Education* 80, no. 3 (2016): p. 180–182, <https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/80/03/vision-powerful-teaching-and-learning-social-studies>.

This shift towards inquiry in civics education is echoed in the *Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy*, which similarly is organized around an intentional inquiry-based approach to learning civics.<sup>180</sup>

**Subpart 2F – Tribal Nations: The student will evaluate the unique political status, trust relationships, and governing structures of sovereign Tribal Nations and the United States.**

This standard is needed and reasonable to respond to a Minnesota statutory requirement. Minnesota Statute section 120B.021 subd. 4 requires the commissioner to include the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities during the standards revision process.<sup>181</sup>

It is imperative, consistent with Laws of Minnesota, 1st Spec. Sess. chapter 14, article 11, section 5, for students to understand the government-to-government relationship so that they can support and foster that relationship as citizens.<sup>182</sup>

**Subpart 3 - Economics**

The C3 Framework emphasizes the need for students to develop “an economic way of thinking” in order to help them understand the “interaction of buyers and sellers in markets, workings of the national economy, and interactions within the global marketplace.” C3 centers economic inquiry on the development of decision-making skills that take into account goal setting, resource allocation, and the consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Throughout, students are consistently asked to evaluate, analyze and explain the economic concepts they are interacting with.

The 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies for Economics had five substrands and 11 standards. The proposed 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies for Economics have six anchor standards which were reframed to become inquiry-focused for students. As discussed above, the inquiry-based standards emphasize the concepts and practices that students need to analyze, explain, and create arguments about topics in our social world.

Additionally, Subparts 3B, 3D, 3E, and 3F merge two or more standards from 2011, in order to provide clearer organizational structure, and clearer vertical alignment of skills and concepts K–12.

**Subpart 3A – Economic Inquiry: The student will use economic models and reasoning and data analysis to construct an argument and propose a solution related to an economic question. The student will evaluate the impact of the proposed solution on various communities that would be affected.**

As discussed above, the change is needed and reasonable to reframe standards from 2011 to emphasize the development of “an economic way of thinking.”

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<sup>180</sup> *Educating for American Democracy, Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy* (2021), <https://www.educatingforamericandemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Roadmap-to-Educating-for-American-Democracy.pdf>.

<sup>181</sup> Minn. Stat., section 120B.021, subd. 4.

<sup>182</sup> Laws of Minnesota, 2021, First Special Session, Chapter 14, Article 11, Section 5.

**Subpart 3B – Fundamental Economics Concepts: The student will analyze how scarcity and artificial shortages force individuals, organizations, communities, and governments to make choices and incur opportunity costs. The student will analyze how the decisions of individuals, organizations, communities, and governments affect economic equity and efficiency.**

As discussed above, the change is needed and reasonable to reframe standards from 2011 to emphasize the development of “an economic way of thinking.”

**Subpart 3C – Personal Finance: The student will apply economic concepts and models to develop individual and collective financial goals and strategies for achieving these goals, taking into consideration historical and contemporary conditions that either inhibit or advance the creation of individual and generational wealth.**

As discussed above, the change is needed and reasonable to reframe standards from 2011 to emphasize the development of “an economic way of thinking.”

**Subpart 3D – Microeconomics: The student will explain and evaluate how resources are used, and how goods and services are distributed, within different economic systems. The student will analyze how incentives influence the decisions of consumers, producers, and government. The student will evaluate the intended and unintended consequences of these decisions from multiple perspectives.**

As discussed above, the change is needed and reasonable to reframe standards from 2011 to emphasize the development of “an economic way of thinking.”

**Subpart 3E – Macroeconomics: The student will measure and evaluate the well-being of nations and communities using a variety of indicators. The student will explain the causes of economic ups and downs. The student will evaluate how government actions affect a nation’s economy and individuals’ well-being within an economy.**

As discussed above, the change is needed and reasonable to reframe standards from 2011 to emphasize the development of “an economic way of thinking.”

**Subpart 3F – Global and International Economics: The student will explain why people trade and why nations encourage or limit trade. Analyze the costs and benefits of international trade and globalization on communities and the environment.**

As discussed above, the change is needed and reasonable to reframe standards from 2011 to emphasize the development of “an economic way of thinking.”

#### **Subpart 4 – Geography**

Geographic literacies include tools and concepts central to the discipline. Students should be able to construct and use physical and cultural maps and tools. Students should also understand how we use geographic data and information to think about human interaction, human populations, and global interactions.

To be geographically literate, students need to move beyond the memorization of geographic facts. While it is important for students to develop factual knowledge, in order “to develop competence in an area of inquiry, students must: (a) have a deep foundation of factual knowledge, (b) understand facts and ideas in the context of

a conceptual framework, and (c) organize knowledge in ways that facilitate retrieval and application.”<sup>183</sup> In geography, this means the ability to think spatially about the world and the people who live in it.

Experts use factual knowledge, which allows “them to see patterns, relationships, or discrepancies that are not apparent to novices.” In geography, the ability to understand fact in the context of conceptual understanding is essential because while “a student can learn to fill in a map by memorizing states, cities, countries, etc., and can complete the task with a high level of accuracy,” without understanding of the spatial concepts of geography “if the boundaries are removed, the problem becomes much more difficult. There are no concepts supporting the student’s information.” On the other hand, “an expert who understands that borders often developed because natural phenomena (like mountains or water bodies) separated people, and that large cities often arose in locations that allowed for trade (along rivers, large lakes, and at coastal ports) will easily outperform the novice. The more developed the conceptual understanding of the needs of cities and the resource base that drew people to them, the more meaningful the map becomes. Students can become more expert if the geographical information they are taught is placed in the appropriate conceptual framework.”<sup>184</sup>

The NAEP Geography Assessment reflects the need for students to engage in more authentic disciplinary practices. The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) describes the geography assessment as combining “key physical science and social science aspects of geography into a cohesive and topical whole by focusing on what students should know about geography to be competent and knowledgeable 21st century citizens,” and identifies its purpose as providing “a measure of students’ knowledge, understanding, and application of geography’s content and perspectives.”<sup>185</sup>

In the 2018 NAEP Geography Assessment, “the average score has dropped to 258, below the baseline score of 260. Overall, 25% of students score in the proficient range, a decline from 28% at that level in 1994.”<sup>186</sup> The continuing decline of student performance on the NAEP Geography Assessment suggests the need for increased implementation of research-based best practices in geography education.

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<sup>183</sup> John Bransford, Ann L. Brown, Rodney R. Cocking, Suzanne Donovan, John D. Bransford, and James W. Pellegrino, eds, *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000), 10–18.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment Governing Board, *Geography Framework for the 2018 National Assessment of Educational Progress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2018), <https://www.nagb.gov/content/dam/nagb/en/documents/publications/frameworks/geography/2018-geography-framework.pdf>.

<sup>186</sup> Linda Jacobson, “NAEP: 8th-Graders’ Scores Drop in US History, Geography,” *K–12 Dive* (2020), <https://www.k12dive.com/news/naep-8th-graders-scores-drop-in-us-history-geography/576498/>.

The 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies for Geography had four substrands and 10 standards. The proposed 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies for Geography have five anchor standards which are discussed below.

**Subpart 4A – Geospatial Skills and Inquiry: The student will apply geographic tools, including geospatial technologies, and geographic inquiry to solve spatial problems.**

This standard is necessary and reasonable because students need to be able to locate and comprehend geographic information, and ultimately use that information to solve problems and plan for the future. Students must develop basic geographic skills, including utilizing technologies in the field of geography - the inclusion of geospatial technology tools in this standard addresses a state mandate that all revised state standards address technology and information literacy. This standard is a combination and revision of standards in 2011 that aligns with national standards and academic research on geography.

According to the *National Geography Standards*, “Creating effective and lasting solutions to the world’s pressing problems requires that today’s students mature into adults who can make skilled and informed use of geographic knowledge, skills, and perspectives to identify possible solutions, predict their consequences, and implement the best solutions.”<sup>187</sup>

Geographical thinking provides tools for adapting to 21st century challenges such as ones with the environment, global economy, and cultural migration. “Thinking geographically is not a research-oriented approach to investigating the world; rather it is a way to know where something is, how its location influences its characteristics, and how its location influences relationships with other phenomena. There are five steps to thinking geographically: (1) Ask geographic questions, (2) Acquire geographic resources, (3) Explore geographic data, (4) Analyze geographic information, and (5) Act upon geographic knowledge.”<sup>188</sup>

**Subpart 4B – Places and Regions: The student will describe places and regions, explaining how they are influenced by power structures.**

This standard is necessary and reasonable because students will become adults operating in a global marketplace, and they need to know the basic regions of the world and characteristics of those regions. This is an adaptation of a 2011 standard, based on academic research.

The Earth’s population is divided among different natural environments, including desert, plains, mountainous and coastal regions. To make sense of all of this, people construct regions that help to characterize and explain their world. According to the *National Geography Standards*, “A region has certain characteristics that give it a

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<sup>187</sup> Geography Education National Implementation Project, *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards, Second Edition*, Susan Gallagher Heffron and Roger M. Downs, eds. (Washington, D.C.: National Council for Geographic Education, 2021), p. 104, [https://ncge.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Geography\\_for\\_Life\\_2ndEd.pdf](https://ncge.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Geography_for_Life_2ndEd.pdf).

<sup>188</sup> ESRI Schools and Libraries Program, *Geographic Inquiry: Thinking Geographically* (2012), <https://www.esri.com/content/dam/esrisites/sitecore-archive/Files/Pdfs/industries/k-12/pdfs/geoginquiry.pdf>.

measure of cohesiveness and distinctiveness and that set it apart from other regions; studying regions enables students to synthesize their understanding of the physical and human properties of Earth’s surface at scales that range from local to global.”<sup>189</sup>

**Subpart 4C – Human Systems: The student will analyze patterns of movement and interconnectedness within and between cultural, economic, and political systems from a local to global scale.**

This standard is necessary and reasonable because human systems are defined by the people who operate within them, and students need to develop an understanding of how people move across the Earth and what factors drive mobility. The standard is a combination and revision of several 2011 standards adapted to emphasize inquiry. The standard aligns with national standards and assessments.

The NAEP Geography Framework asks students to consider content related to *space and place*, especially content related to particular places on Earth, spatial patterns on Earth’s surface, and physical and human processes that shape spatial patterns.<sup>190</sup>

According to the *National Geography Standards*, students who are geographically informed “understand that the growth, distribution, and movements of people on Earth’s surface are the driving forces behind not only human events—social, cultural, political, and economic—but also certain physical events—large-scale flooding, resource depletion, and ecological breakdown.”<sup>191</sup>

This change aligns with the Global Connections theme in the *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Geography Education National Implementation Project, *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards, Second Edition*, Susan Gallagher Heffron and Roger M. Downs, eds. (Washington, D.C.: National Council for Geographic Education, 2021), p. 104, [https://ncge.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Geography\\_for\\_Life\\_2ndEd.pdf](https://ncge.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Geography_for_Life_2ndEd.pdf).

<sup>190</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment Governing Board, *Geography Framework for the 2018 National Assessment of Educational Progress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2018), <https://www.nagb.gov/content/dam/nagb/en/documents/publications/frameworks/geography/2018-geography-framework.pdf>.

<sup>191</sup> Geography Education National Implementation Project, *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards, Second Edition*, Susan Gallagher Heffron and Roger M. Downs, eds. (Washington, D.C.: National Council for Geographic Education, 2021), p. 104, [https://ncge.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Geography\\_for\\_Life\\_2ndEd.pdf](https://ncge.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Geography_for_Life_2ndEd.pdf).

<sup>192</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, “The Themes of Social Studies,” in *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment* (Brentwood, MD: NCSS Publications, 1994).

**Subpart 4D – Human-Environment interaction: The student will evaluate the relationship between humans and the environment, including climate change.**

This standard is necessary and reasonable because as global population and human use of resources continues to rise, it is vitally important that students understand how geography plays a role in human activity, and in turn, how human activity exerts long-term effects on the environment. The standard is a combination and revision of 2011 standards adapted to emphasize inquiry. The standard aligns with national standards and assessments and fills a gap that the committee identified in the gap analysis process.

Human Environment Interaction is one of the six key themes of geography in the national geography standards. The NAEP assessment for geography asks students to master knowledge of “how people depend upon, adapt to, are affected by, and modify the natural environment.”<sup>193</sup>

The world has a finite amount of resources, and students need to understand the challenges posed by limited resources on a global stage. According to the national geography standards, “it is essential that students have a solid grasp of the different kinds of resources, of the ways in which humans’ value and use (and compete over) resources, and of the distribution of resources across Earth’s surface.”<sup>194</sup>

**Subpart 4E – Culture: The student will investigate how sense of place is impacted by different cultural perspectives.**

This standard is needed and reasonable because it prepares students to examine geography through a cultural lens. This is a new standard, created in line with national research trends and national standards, following the work done in the standards in Oregon, Nevada, and Utah. It is in line with the themes from the *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, which says, “in a multicultural, democratic society and globally connected world, students need to understand the multiple perspectives that derive from different cultural vantage points.”<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment Governing Board, *Geography Framework for the 2018 National Assessment of Educational Progress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2018), <https://www.nagb.gov/content/dam/nagb/en/documents/publications/frameworks/geography/2018-geography-framework.pdf>.

<sup>194</sup> Geography Education National Implementation Project, *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards, Second Edition*, eds. Susan Gallagher Heffron and Roger M. Downs (Washington, D.C.: National Council for Geographic Education, 2021), p. 104, [https://ncge.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Geography\\_for\\_Life\\_2ndEd.pdf](https://ncge.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Geography_for_Life_2ndEd.pdf).

<sup>195</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, “The Themes of Social Studies,” in *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment* (Brentwood, MD: NCSS Publications, 1994).

## Subpart 5 - History (United States and World)

Aligning with current research and best practice in social studies, the focus in the history standards (subparts 4A through 4D) has shifted away from memorization of content to historical thinking skills and historical literacies.

Historical literacies include concepts central to the field, but are mostly focused on the tools used in the process of developing historical knowledge. The concepts in the historical strand are focused on perspectives. Skills are focused on Context, Change, and Continuity, Historical Sources and Evidence, as well as Historical Causation and Argumentation.<sup>196</sup> Changes to the standards in history follow 30 years of research to develop historical thinking skills for K–12 students. In a study of the practices of history teachers in 1987, Wineburg and Wilson described teaching that more intentionally engaged students, which would come to be termed “historical thinking,” as accompanying the belief that the development of critical thinking and analysis skills was both necessary and attainable for all students, rather than something just for already high-performing students.<sup>197</sup>

Moving to the teaching of historical literacy skills recognizes that the literacy skills gained in a history class are distinct from more general literacy skills. A student with strong comprehension, good reading strategies, and an ability to both summarize reading, and connect what is read to their existing knowledge, but without historical literacy skills has less ability to discern the credibility of a given source.<sup>198</sup> This gap was of concern in the 1990s, but today, with a universe of available sources in students’ pockets, the ability to evaluate the reliability and credibility of sources has never been more essential for students. The criticality of these skills is highlighted in the findings from the Stanford History Education Group’s (SHEG) study on online civic reasoning, which showed that two-thirds of high school students couldn’t tell the difference between news stories and sponsored content, and that ninety-six percent of students could not make a connection between content funded by industry lobbyists and the credibility of that content.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, *College, Career and Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K–12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (Silver Springs, MD: NCSS, 2013), <https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/c3-framework-for-social-studies-rev0617.pdf>.

<sup>197</sup> Suzanne M. Wilson, and Sam Wineburg, “Wrinkles in Time and Place: Using Performance Assessments to Understand Knowledge of History Teachers,” *American Educational Research Journal* 30, n. 4 (1989): 729–69, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1163203>.

<sup>198</sup> Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 8–10.

<sup>199</sup> Joel Breakstone, Mark Smith, Sam Wineburg, Arnie Rapaport, Carleton Jill, Marshall Garland, and Anna Rosefsky Saavedra, “Students’ Civic Online Reasoning: A National Portrait,” *SSRN Electronic Journal* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3816075>.

In the introduction to their Standards in Historical Thinking within the *National Standards for History*, the National Center for History in the Schools at UCLA described skills necessary for students of history, saying that “true historical understanding requires students to engage in historical thinking: to raise questions and to marshal solid evidence in support of their answers...[to] examine the historical record for themselves,” and that “real historical understanding requires that students have opportunity to create historical narratives and arguments of their own.”<sup>200</sup>

The shift to focusing standards on historical thinking skills was supported by a group of thirty-two history professors in a letter they sent to the commissioner during the review process. They mentioned that the approach of integrating content into the Inquiry Arc aligns with the expectations for college success.

One example follows:

2011 History Standard	2022 History Standard
Standard 22 – Post-World War II United States was shaped by an economic boom, Cold War military engagements, politics and protests, and rights movements to improve the status of racial minorities, women and America’s indigenous peoples.	Subpart 5A (Standard 18) – Change, Continuity, and Context: Ask historical questions about context, change, and continuity in order to identify and analyze dominant and non-dominant narratives about the past.

Local control allows for districts to decide on specific context to which to apply the skills in the standards and benchmarks. The proposed 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies allow for the student to develop understanding of historical thinking skills.

The 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies for History had four substrands and 23 standards. The proposed 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies for History have five anchor standards which are discussed below.

**Subpart 5A – Context, Change, and Continuity: The student will ask historical questions about context, change, and continuity in order to identify and analyze dominant and non-dominant narratives about the past.**

For the reasons addressed above related to shifting to a focus on historical thinking and literacy skills, this standard is needed and reasonable to replace 2011 standards that focus on content.

**Subpart 5B – Historical Perspectives: The student will identify diverse points of view and describe how one's frame of reference influences historical perspective.**

For the reasons addressed above related to shifting to a focus on historical thinking and literacy skills, this standard is needed and reasonable to replace 2011 standards that focus on content.

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<sup>200</sup> National Center for History in the Schools, *National Standards for History* (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA History Public History Initiative, 1996), <https://nchs.ss.ucla.edu/history-standards-1>.

**Subpart 5C – Historical Sources and Evidence: The student will investigate a variety of historical sources by: 1) analyzing primary and secondary sources, 2) identifying perspectives and narratives that are absent from the available sources; and 3) interpreting the historical context, intended audience, purpose, and author’s point of view of these sources.**

This standard is needed and reasonable to replace 2011 standards that focus on content with a standard that focuses on historical thinking skills and historical literacies. Additionally, this standard and its accompanying benchmarks align well with the 2020 English Language Arts (ELA) Standards. Research shows that investigating and analyzing sources is a complex process that benefits historical thinking, because, “assessing sources is a complex process involving at least four interrelated and interconnected cognitive acts: identification, attribution, perspective judgment, and reliability assessment.”<sup>201</sup>

**Subpart 5D – Causation and Argumentation: The student will integrate evidence from multiple historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument and/or compelling narrative about the past.**

For the reasons addressed above related to shifting to a focus on historical thinking and literacy skills, this standard is needed and reasonable to replace 2011 standards that focus on content.

**Subpart 5E – Connecting Past and Present: The student will use historical methods and sources to identify and analyze the roots of a contemporary issue. The student will design a plan to address it.**

For the reasons addressed above related to shifting to a focus on historical thinking and literacy skills, this standard is needed and reasonable to replace 2011 standards that focus on content.

## **Subpart 6 - Ethnic Studies**

Subparts 6A, 6B, and 6C (standards 23, 24, and 25) are all new additions to the proposed social studies standards that were created by the standards committee in response to research and national trends. Subparts 6A–6C endeavor to value and recognize student perceptions as well as to challenge, build on, and broaden those perceptions to give students a deep understanding of social studies concepts. Review of academic research that led to the creation of subparts 6A–6C include findings that student exposure to ethnic studies:

- Leads to an increase in attendance.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Bruce VanSledright, “What Does It Mean to Think Historically...and How Do You Teach It?” *Social Education*, 68, No. 3 (April 2004): 230, [https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/68/3/what-does-it-mean-think-historically-and-how-do-you-teach-it?nocache=TRUE&check\\_logged\\_in=1](https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/68/3/what-does-it-mean-think-historically-and-how-do-you-teach-it?nocache=TRUE&check_logged_in=1).

<sup>202</sup> Julio Cammarota, “A Social Justice Approach to Achievement: Guiding Latina/o Students Toward Educational Attainment With a Challenging, Socially Relevant Curriculum,” *Equity & Excellence in Education* 40, no. 1 (February 7, 2017).

- Leads to an increase in graduation and college enrollment rates.<sup>203</sup>
- Contributes to students' sense of agency and academic motivation.<sup>204</sup>
- Broadens student perspectives.<sup>205</sup>

In addition to research and national trends, the creation of ethnic studies standards (subparts 5A–5C) addresses the needs of Minnesota's increasingly diverse population. The standards committee considered it important for all students in Minnesota classrooms to see how the standards relate to them, regardless of their various backgrounds. All students need to see themselves as a vital part of Minnesota's future, particularly Minnesota's economic future. The following statistics illustrate the rapidly changing demographic profile of Minnesota.

- According to the Minnesota State Demographic Center, "Minnesota's Black or African American population grew by 36% between 2010 and 2018, the Asian population grew by 32%, and the Hispanic or Latin(x) population grew by 24% (Black or African American and Asian race groups are that race "alone" and not Hispanic or Latin(x))."<sup>206</sup>

**Subpart 6A – Identity: The student will analyze the ways power and language construct the social identities of race, religion, geography, ethnicity, and gender. The student will apply understandings to one's own social identities and other groups living in Minnesota, centering those whose stories and histories have been marginalized, erased or ignored.**

This standard is needed and reasonable because it supports the inclusion of ethnic studies in K–12 social studies, in line with national trends and research. The standard aligns with the *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* theme of Individual Development and Identity.<sup>207</sup>

**Subpart 6B – Resistance: The student will describe how individuals and communities have fought for freedom and liberation against systemic and coordinated exercises of power locally and globally. The student will**

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<sup>203</sup> Thomas Dee, and Emily Penner, "The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence from an Ethnic Studies Curriculum," *Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis* (San Francisco: Institute of Education Sciences, Stanford University, 2016), <https://www.nber.org/papers/w21865>.

<sup>204</sup> Christine Sleeter, "The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies," *National Education Association Research Department* (Washington, D.C.: NEA Research, 2011), 16–19.  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED521869.pdf>.

<sup>205</sup> John Bransford, Ann L. Brown, Rodney R. Cocking, Suzanne Donovan, John D. Bransford, and James W. Pellegrino, eds, *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000), 10–18.

<sup>206</sup> "Data by Topic: Age, Race & Ethnicity / MN State Demographic Center," MN State Demographic Center (2018), <https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/age-race-ethnicity/>.

<sup>207</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment* (Brentwood, MD: NCSS Publications, 2010).

**identify strategies or times that have resulted in lasting change. The student will organize with others to engage in activities that could further the rights and dignity of all.**

This standard is needed and reasonable because it supports the inclusion of ethnic studies in K–12 social studies, in line with national trends and research. The standard aligns with the *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* themes of Individuals, Groups and Institutions, and Power, Authority, and Governance.<sup>208</sup>

**Subpart 6C – Ways of Knowing/Methodologies: The student will use ethnic and Indigenous studies methods and sources in order to understand the roots of contemporary systems of oppression and apply lessons from the past in order to eliminate historical and contemporary injustices.**

This standard is needed and reasonable because it supports the inclusion of ethnic studies in K–12 social studies, in line with national trends and research.

### **Effective Date**

**Effective Date: These standards are effective at the beginning of the 2026–2027 school year.**

This section is needed and reasonable because it clarifies the timeline during which the new standards must be implemented. Minnesota school districts generally utilize a five-year implementation cycle to ensure curriculum directors and content specialists have time to adjust and adapt teaching curriculum and resources. This timeline also provides sufficient time for the department to communicate with the field and create supportive technical assistance guidance.

**Statement of Need and Reasonableness for Repeal of Existing Social Studies Standards**  
**Minnesota Rules, parts 3501.1300, 3501.1305, 3501.1310, 3501.1315, 3501.1320, 3501.1325, 3501.1330, 3501.1335, 3501.1340, and 3501.1345 are repealed.**

The department considered amending the existing rule language as well as adopting entirely newly drafted language or a combination of the two approaches. Ultimately, the department, in conjunction with the committee, chose to recommend adopting new standards and repealing the existing Minnesota Rules governing K–12 academic standards in social sciences in their entirety. This decision was made to better align with current research, such as the nationally recognized C3 Framework. Having standards that reflect the reality and condition of the world today will help ensure that students have the skills necessary for long-term success.

The repeal of the existing rules is necessary and reasonable for the reasons articulated above. Moreover, the new standards better align with current pedagogical research. Adoption of the proposed rule with repeal of the existing rules is additionally necessary and reasonable because failing to do so would create confusion for school districts as they attempt to plan curriculum for their students and prepare students for assessments. Assessment tools used by the Department to measure academic progress are tied to the standards, and as such it is reasonable and necessary to repeal the previous standards which will no longer be tied to assessments.

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

## **Regulatory Analysis**

Minnesota Statutes, section 14.131, identifies eight factors for the regulatory analysis that must be included in any SONAR of proposed rules. Each of the eight is identified below along with the MDE's response.

### **Description of the classes of persons who probably will be affected by the proposed rule, including classes that will bear the costs of the proposed rule and classes that will benefit from the proposed rule.**

The following classes of persons are likely to be affected by the proposed rules: Minnesota parents and students; Minnesota school districts, including charter schools; social studies educators and teachers implementing the social studies academic standards in their respective disciplines; and social studies curriculum specialists and directors.

The department does not believe that any cost increase due to the proposed rules will be significant. The minimal costs related to implementation are likely to be borne by the department and by local education agencies (LEAs), including Minnesota school districts and charter schools. Individual persons, such as educators, teachers, parents, and students, will not incur any costs from the proposed 2021 rules. Minimal costs borne by the LEA are described further in question #5 of this regulatory analysis.

The classes that will benefit from the proposed rules include Minnesota students, who will achieve greater levels of social studies literacy and competency, preparing them for career and college opportunities in a global economy; Minnesota school districts, including charter schools; social studies educators and teachers, who will have clear, articulable standards; and Minnesota citizens in general, who will benefit from a well-educated populace that is well prepared for employment and equipped to participate in civic activities on a local, state, and national level.

### **The probable costs to the agency and to any other agency of the implementation and enforcement of the proposed rule and any anticipated effect on state revenues.**

The proposed rules will have predictable costs for the department during the implementation of the 2021 proposed rules. The department is staffed to provide training and support for the social studies content area and is ready to develop and implement the federally mandated social studies assessments described in question #5 of this regulatory analysis. There is no anticipated effect on revenue.

There are other state agencies that may be impacted by these rules. The Professional Educators Licensing State Board (PELSB) will need to realign their social studies licensure rules to the content standards for implementation and enforcement. The fiscal impact to this other state agency will not be more than what is typically anticipated in the normal process of updating and revising educational policies and resources.

### **A determination of whether there are less costly methods or less intrusive methods for achieving the purpose of the proposed rule.**

Because establishing state academic standards for social studies is a legislative requirement, there is no less costly or less intrusive method to achieve the purpose of the proposed rules. As noted earlier, the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework, which was created by a collaboration of leading organizations in social studies and its individual disciplines, state education organizations, social studies experts, curriculum specialists, and teachers, was instrumental in revising the 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies. Because of the framework's existing widespread appeal and support, the department does not believe there would be a less costly or less intrusive method to achieve the purpose of the proposed rule.

**A description of any alternative methods for achieving the purpose of the proposed rule that were seriously considered by the agency and the reasons why they were rejected in favor of the proposed rule.**

Because adopting rules containing state academic standards in social studies is a legislative requirement, there is no alternative method for satisfying this requirement or achieving the purpose of the proposed rules.

**The probable costs of complying with the proposed rule, including the portion of the total costs that will be borne by identifiable categories of affected parties, such as separate classes of governmental units, businesses, or individuals.**

Local education agencies (LEAs) may face initial increased costs to implement the new rules. However, LEAs typically anticipate and undertake a regular curriculum adoption cycle. As a result, many of these costs would be borne regardless of the adoption of the proposed 2021 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies. The department has generally allowed for a five-year implementation timeline, spreading the cost for adjusting the curriculum out over a five-year period.

**The probable costs or consequences of not adopting the proposed rule, including those costs or consequences borne by identifiable categories of affected parties, such as separate classes of government units, businesses, or individuals.**

The primary cost and consequence of not adopting the proposed rules is the potential impact on students, families, and the business community. The existing 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies lack the depth and clarity of the proposed 2021 standards. The new standards are reflective of current cognitive and content research, particularly with regard to ethnic and cultural studies. If not adopted, all students will receive a less rigorous, complete, and competitive social studies education. Students will benefit from the proposed 2021 rules by being better equipped to live and work in a global economy. Their development of critical thinking skills, ranging from the application and use of technical and analytical data, such as that found in geography’s use of GPS and GIS, the ability to sort data, as well as the comparing and contrasting of information, that students may do when comparing alternate history narratives, or the balancing of competing factors, when faced with an ethical dilemma in a civics course, will serve them well not only in their work, but their lives as well. In turn, having citizens who are capable of reasoned decisions, using credible data, is a benefit for society as a whole.

**An assessment of any differences between the proposed rule and existing federal regulations and a specific analysis of the need for and reasonableness of each difference.**

There is not a significant difference between the proposed 2021 rules and existing federal regulations that govern state academic standards. The Minnesota Legislature’s decision to require statewide academic standards in social studies is permissible and consistent with current and applicable federal laws. The new *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA),<sup>209</sup> which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1964, requires that all students in the United States be taught to high academic standards that prepare them for success in career and college. As a part of the state plan that Minnesota submitted for the ESSA, the state provided an assurance that the state has adopted or has a process for adopting academic standards required under the federal law for mathematics, reading or language arts, and science as well as standards for other

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<sup>209</sup> [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-95, 114 Stat. 1177 \(2015-2016\)](#).

subjects determined by the state, including physical education, social studies, and the arts.<sup>210</sup> Minnesota has academic standards in these content areas, including social studies, which satisfies both state and federal requirements.

The reauthorized ESSA builds upon the previous version of the ESEA, known as the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). The previous definition of core academic subjects in NCLB included reading and language arts. The amended ESSA law expanded “core academic subjects” to “well-rounded education,” meaning “courses, activities and programming in subjects such as English, reading or language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, physical education and any other subject, as determined by the State or local educational agency, with the purpose of providing all students access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience.”<sup>211</sup> Thus, the proposed rules comply with existing federal law and state law requiring state academic standards in specific content areas, including citizenship and government, economics, geography, history, and ethnic studies.

### **An assessment of the cumulative effect of the rule with other federal and state regulations related to the specific purpose of the rule.**

The department is proposing these rule amendments to improve and to provide clarity and consistency in social studies education, for both teachers and students. The proposed amendments update the existing rules governing the K–12 academic standards in social studies that have been in effect for the last 10 years based on the last decade of academic research and best practices in this content area and high-quality academic standards as a whole. The proposed rule amendments are intended to align with state laws that govern academic standards and with the new federal legislation, ESSA, which requires states to submit a state plan that provides assurances that the state has adopted challenging academic standards aligned with academic achievement (see question seven above). The proposed standards do not establish overlapping or additional requirements; rather, they comply with existing requirements related to academic standards that are permitted (and required) by federal and state law. The cumulative effect of the proposed standards in combination with state statutes and the new federal regulation under ESSA is a higher quality education in social studies for all Minnesota students with better outcomes related to career and college readiness and success and meaningful citizenship. The department believes the proposed rules governing social studies standards and the supporting benchmarks will benefit all Minnesota families, students, educators, and school communities in their understanding and implementation of the updated K–12 academic standards in social studies.

## **Statutory Requirements**

### **Performance-Based Rules**

The SONAR must also describe how the agency, in developing the rules, considered and implemented the legislative policy supporting performance-based regulatory systems set forth in Minnesota Statutes section

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<sup>210</sup> “Minnesota State Plan,” *Minnesota Department of Education*, accessed March 7, 2023, <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/ESSA/mnstp/>.

<sup>211</sup> Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114–95, 114 Stat. 1177, Title VIII, 8002, paragraph 52 (2015–2016).

14.002. This statute requires state agencies, whenever feasible, to develop rules and regulatory programs that emphasize superior achievement in meeting the agency’s regulatory objectives and maximum flexibility for the regulated party and the agency in meeting those goals.

Throughout the development of the proposed rules and this SONAR, the department made every attempt to develop rules that will be understandable and workable for education practitioners and families, to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services, and to achieve the best possible results educationally for students. The department believes the proposed rules clarify and improve the standards, help Minnesota educators provide a higher quality education, and promote positive education outcomes for all students. The proposed rules and supporting benchmarks help Minnesota teachers, curriculum developers, and other district staff develop coursework that will ensure Minnesota students receive a robust education, leading to career and college readiness, success and an overall increase in civic participation and responsibility. The department believes the proposed rules are performance-based to the extent possible because the proposed rules extend duties and burdens no further than are necessary to meet the state’s academic standard requirements in the content area of social studies. Flexibility remains since districts can create and modify their own rigorous curricula that align with state standards.

### **Additional Notice Plan**

This Additional Notice Plan was reviewed by the Office of Administrative Hearings and approved by Administrative Law Judge Eric L. Lipman on November 10, 2021. This notice plan contains a description of the department’s efforts to provide additional notice to persons who may be affected by the proposed rules governing the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies.

In addition to mailing the proposed rules and the appropriate notice to all persons who have registered to be on the department’s paper and email rulemaking mailing lists under Minnesota Statutes, section 14.14, subd. 1a, the Additional Notice Plan includes notifying the following groups and organizations:<sup>212</sup>

#### **K–12 Social Studies Education Organizations**

- Minnesota Center for Social Studies Education
- Learning Law and Democracy Foundation
- Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education
- Minnesota Council for the Social Studies
- Minnesota Council on Economic Education
- Minnesota Humanities Center
- Minnesota Council for History Education
- Minnesota Historical Society

### **Consult with MMB on Local Government Impact**

As required by Minnesota Statutes, section 14.131, the department consulted with Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB).<sup>213</sup> The department sent MMB copies of the documents that were sent to the governor’s office for review and approval on the same day the documents were sent to the governor’s office. This was done prior

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<sup>212</sup> Minn. Stat., section 14.14, subd. 1a.

<sup>213</sup> Minn. Stat., section 14.131.

to the department’s publishing of the Dual Notice of Intent to Adopt. The documents sent to MMB included: the governor’s office Proposed Rule and SONAR Form, the proposed rules, and the SONAR. The department will submit a copy of the cover correspondence and the response received from MMB to OAH at the hearing or with the documents it submits for Administrative Law Judge review.

The department received a letter detailing the review from MMB on August 16, 2023. MMB determined that although there is no fiscal impact to local government because a school district is not included in the statutory definition of local government, school districts may experience increased costs when implementing the new social studies standards due to the development of new curriculum that complies with these standards.

### **Determination About Rules Requiring Local Implementation**

As required by Minnesota Statutes, section 14.128, subdivision 1, the agency has considered whether these proposed rules will require a local government to adopt or amend any ordinance or other regulation in order to comply with these rules.<sup>214</sup> The agency has determined that they do not because the proposed rules do not affect any of the local governments included in the scope of Minnesota Statutes, section 14.128.<sup>215</sup>

### **Costs of Complying for Small Business or City: Agency Determination of Cost**

As required by Minnesota Statutes, section 14.127, the department has considered whether the cost of complying with the proposed rules in the first year after the rules take effect will exceed \$25,000 for any small business or small city.<sup>216</sup> The department has determined that the cost of complying with the proposed rules in the first year after the rules take effect will not exceed \$25,000 for any small business or small city. This determination was made because the proposed rules do not affect small businesses and small cities.

## **Authors, Witness and SONAR Exhibits**

### **List of Witnesses**

If these rules go to a public hearing, the department anticipates having the following witnesses testify in support of the need for and reasonableness of the rules:

Jennifer Dugan, Director, Minnesota Department of Education Division of Academic Standards, Instruction, and Assessment will testify about the proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies.

Leigh Nida, Supervisor, Academic Standards, will testify about the proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies.

Eric Taubel, Attorney, will testify about the proposed rule language, any Minnesota Administrative Procedures Act process questions, and introduce any required jurisdictional documents into the record

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<sup>214</sup> Minn. Stat., section 14.128, subd. 1.

<sup>215</sup> Minn. Stat., section 14.128.

<sup>216</sup> Minn. Stat., section 14.127.

## Conclusion

The review process brought together a talented group of Minnesotans to review and recommend revisions to Minnesota’s 2011 K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies. This Committee followed an organized, detailed, and thorough review and revision process for the proposed standards and supporting benchmarks. Throughout the process, the Committee carefully considered the feedback of education experts, education and language and literacy organizations, additional stakeholders, and the general public. The Committee utilized the latest research, including national and other state standards in all of the social studies areas. The Committee also carefully reviewed state statutory requirements and incorporated these into the proposed standards. With this information and input, Committee members engaged in thoughtful and comprehensive discussion, review, and revision, which led to proposed rule language and supporting benchmarks that promote and support equitable, high quality social studies education in Minnesota for all students.

Overall, the department believes that the review and revision of the Minnesota social studies academic standards and supporting benchmarks feature many improvements over the existing standards, as discussed above. The Committee and department anticipate that the proposed K–12 Academic Standards in Social Studies will be a welcome resource to teachers and students in Minnesota. The department recommends the replacement of the 2011 rules regarding academic standards in social studies with the new proposed standards and supporting benchmarks.

Based on the forgoing, the proposed amendments are both needed and reasonable.

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Date

Minnesota Department of Education

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Willie Jett II, Commissioner