



### **Social Studies Standards Revision: Executive Summary**

- Tennessee will be revising Social Studies standards this winter for implementation during the 2013-2014 school year.
- There will be a suspension of Social Studies Assessments during the 2013-14 school year and a reintroduction of Social Studies Assessments during the 2014-2015 school year. This includes suspending all Social Studies TCAP Assessments and the US History End of Course.
- Textbook bids will be expected to align to the new standards and ready for district use by the 2014-2015 school year.
- Training on the literacy standards will be offered Summer 2013 and training will be offered on the revised Social Studies standards during the 2013-2014 school year.

### **Social Studies Standards Revision: Report**

#### **Context:**

The Tennessee Department of Education conducts a review of standards every six years prior to textbook adoption. This year the Social Studies Standards were up for cyclical review.

Standards adoption is the final responsibility of the State Board of Education. The revision of standards is proposed by the Tennessee Department of Education.

Over time, the department has received significant feedback on the Social Studies Standards:

- Educators have provided regular requests to revise the Social Studies standards at conferences, in writing and through professional associations.
- The legislature has called for more emphasis on Civics education.
- Current Social Studies test results are considered unhelpful because they are so dramatically misaligned from student results in other subjects.

The Social Studies standards were not revised during the Tennessee Diploma Project transition because of insufficient resources to dedicate to the task. The Social Studies standards were last revised in 2002.

This fall, the department hired a Tennessee district supervisor of instruction to lead a process of gathering feedback from educators across the state to advise the department on the directions desired for Social Studies standards. Jared Myracle, Ed.D, Supervisor of Instruction in Gibson County, led this process and convened groups of educators including teachers, supervisors, higher education representatives and representatives of subject associations and non-profit organizations with interest in Social Studies to gather input. This ad-hoc committee provided valuable feedback across three months, representing perspectives from across the state. This feedback process led to the recommendation of a revision of standards.

This committee reported several problems with our current standards:



- The standards are difficult to understand and organize because they are sometimes presented in fragmented themes at various levels (performance indicators, learning objectives, standards)
- The standards lead to incoherent student experiences with insufficient connection grade to grade and course to course
- Like the previous English Language Arts, Math and Science standards, the current Social Studies Standards represent minimal expectations rather than appropriate aspirations for student learning
- Because current assessments are built around broad, low-level, content memorization indicators, there is insufficient time to focus or dig deeply into analysis or understanding
- The standards pay insufficient attention to Civics, Tennessee History and, in places, Geography.
- Social Studies is integrally connected to literacy. As Common Core State Standards expect more writing and text analysis, this should be reflected in the Social Studies Standards

In “The State of the State U.S. History Standards 2011”, published by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Tennessee’s standards were described as an “organizational quicksand, from which the reader is lucky to escape with any content or comprehension intact.”

The committee urged the speedy revision of Social Studies Standards.

- Textbook bids are due to the state this spring, linking to a six year adoption.
- The Common Core State Standards include literacy standards for Science, Social Studies and Technical Subjects. Revising standards now will allow for the incorporation of these expectations in preparation for full implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Based on the recommendation, the department will propose revision of the standards this winter with State Board of Education decision-making on the following timeline:

- First read of the proposed new standards at the State Board meeting in April, 2013
- State Board final review in July, 2013

Three priorities will drive the standards revision:

1. Improve coherence of student experience grade to grade
2. Deepen the focus and rigor to match student expectations in other subjects
3. Incorporate the literacy expectations of the Common Core State Standards

Based on the feedback of this committee, no significant additions or deletions of subjects are proposed. The committee instead proposed a reorganization of the existing content to strengthen the expectations and improve the coherence of student learning.

**Process:**

The process for revising the standards will allow for multiple opportunities for school and district feedback. The Department of Education sought nominations for a Social Studies Leadership Council



through the Directors Update and TNCore Update in December and this council will guide the rewriting and feedback gathering process.

Three phases of public feedback will be sought:

1. Immediate feedback on the proposed course sequence (due by February 1)
2. Feedback on the first draft standards (early March)
3. Feedback on the second draft standards (early April)

Draft documents will be posted publicly on the website and announced through the Directors Update and TNCore Updates. The Social Studies Leadership Council will be announced this month through the same channels.

#### **Assessment Implications:**

- In order to allow teachers time to adjust to the new expectations and provide a transition year so schools can adjust to the new course sequence, there will be a suspension of all Social Studies assessments during the 2013-2014 school year.
- During this assessment suspension (and for the year immediately following,) Social Studies teachers will not have an individual value-added TVAAS score and will use school-wide literacy in evaluation. Individual TVAAS scores will be back after the baseline setting year.
- More information about the structure, operations and expectations of the Social Studies Assessment for the 2014-2015 school year will be shared during the fall of 2013.

#### **Textbook Implications:**

- Bids for Social Studies textbooks are due to the state this May and will be expected to reflect the new framework and standards.
- Social Studies textbooks will be reviewed against the draft standards presented at the April meeting of the State Board. These draft standards will be made available to publishers and districts in advance of the meeting to begin the feedback gathering process.
- The textbooks will be expected to align to the new course sequence. That sequence, already informed by district feedback, is shared in draft form in this memo and will be finalized after final feedback by February 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Throughout the revision process, we will aspire to keep publishers informed about direction emerging from feedback.

#### **Professional Development**

- Training on the literacy standards will be offered Summer 2013 and training will be offered on the revised Social Studies standards during the 2013-2014 school year.
- Specifics will be shared through the Directors and TNCore Updates.

#### **Revised Course Sequence:**



This proposed course sequence has been reviewed initially by committees of educators across the state and represents a proposal for the revised course sequence in grades 6-12.

In order to allow publishers sufficient time to print materials, this course sequence must be finalized by February 4<sup>th</sup>. If you have feedback (affirming or constructive) you would like to share on this proposal, please email [jmyracle@k12tn.net](mailto:jmyracle@k12tn.net).

Grade Level	Current	Proposed Sequence
K-5	Content stays the same with some edits to focus content to make room for more time spent on building literacy with the social studies curriculum	
6 <sup>th</sup> grade	World History (Early Civilizations to Renaissance)	World Geography
7 <sup>th</sup> grade	World Geography	World History (Early Civilizations to Renaissance)
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	U.S. History (Colonies to Civil War)	World History (Reformation to Modern Times)
High School (3 required credits)  +  Personal Finance, 1/2 credit	World History – 1 credit (Reformation to Modern Times) or World Geography – 1 credit  U.S. History (Reconstruction to Modern Times)- 1 credit  U.S. Government (1/2 credit) and Economics (1/2 credit)	U.S. History (Colonies to Civil War)- 1 credit  U.S. History (Reconstruction to Modern Times)- 1 credit  Civics (1/2 credit) and Economics (1/2 credit)

**Content Notes:**

- US History will continue to be prominent in the fourth and fifth grade standards
- Tennessee history will be amplified in the U.S. History courses with more time dedicated to the subject than in the current standards
- Geography will be a significant theme throughout the world and US History courses, taught in an integrated factor alongside historical event
- Personal Finance is still a graduation requirement. It is not considered a Social Studies course because of licensure.

**Transitions Notes:**

- For incoming freshman (entering in the 2013-2014 school year) the current graduation requirements will remain the same. Freshman entering fall 2013 will be expected to take:
  - World History or World Geography
  - US History
  - US Government and Economics



- Beginning in 2014-15, incoming freshman graduation requirements will consist of:
  - US History I
  - US History II
  - Civics and Economics
- In 2013-2014,
  - sixth grade will teach World Geography
  - eighth grade will teach world history (reformation to modern times)
  - To prevent overlap, seventh grade teachers will continue to teach world geography for one additional year and then move to world history during the
- Additional guidance to support the transition next year will be provided once the course sequence is final in February.

Please email [tncore.questions@tn.gov](mailto:tncore.questions@tn.gov) with any questions or feedback.