

Good morning.

My name's Alex Randall and I'm a middle school social studies educator at Trenton Elementary School in AOS 91. I'm from Midcoast Maine and I've been teaching for eight years.

One of the difficulties small schools--especially in an AOS--face is that curriculum is either all over the place, missing pieces, ancient, or missing entirely. For example, I had *no* curriculum whatsoever when I began working for AOS 91. As such, I've had to spend a lot of the time I should be giving students feedback creating curriculum as I go. This has taken all of my creative energy and means that I have no energy left to plan fun projects and/or field trips. I feel very much like I'm treading water and my students aren't making the gains they could be making academically or behaviorally.

Things that would help teachers like me:

- One-Stop Shop Curriculum Resources for Maine teachers
 - scope and sequences
 - objective calendars
 - pre-made unit plans
 - project exemplars
 - field trip ideas attached to curriculum and standards
 - list of helpful community organizations to partner with
- More geography and experiential learning built into middle and elementary school scope and sequences
- WAY more resources on Native history and culture
 - (Maulian Dana, Barry Dana, Donna Loring, and the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor are great resources)
- Resources on history of people of color in Maine
- History of Maine curriculum

The demand on teachers, like other frontline workers, has only increased due to the pandemic. Covid has exposed education's failings at a time when schools are hemorrhaging educators and are losing federal money because of soaring housing prices. The SEL work we're expected to do on top of life skills *and* curriculum is too much. If the bulk of the creative work is done for us, we can improve and adapt accordingly much more quickly, giving us more planning time for direct instruction or SEL interventions with students.

Thank you for providing a solution-oriented opportunity to provide feedback.

Respectfully and warmly,

An overworked Mainer/educator

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Marshwood Middle School Social Studies Department, we greatly appreciate the opportunity to give input and feedback on the revision of the standards.

On the whole, many of the changes from five years ago closely mirrored the changes we wished to see, and we think the current standards are strong guides for instruction about *America*, but we believe the current cultural and cross-cultural standards fall short. We would like to see a restructuring of the cultural component, and we would like to see a new standard band.

In even the past five years, the political and social landscape has shifted dramatically: censorship on social media, "fake news," racial unrest, politicizing of public health, gender identity issues, "alternate facts," etc. Even simple discussions have the potential to turn combative.

Given that "clear communicator" is already a guiding principle for the standards, and given the ever-changing digital landscape, we would like to see these issues reflected by a codified standard.

We would like to see a "Digital Citizenship" standard. This would incorporate both productive and receptive areas of communication (oral, written, viewing, etc.), ethical and responsible use, evaluating digital materials (in a similar fashion to the Common Core reading standards, but applied to digital materials), and civil discourse. Since there are many, easily accessible views that should probably not be shared in civil society and since every discussion seems to require a winner, giving our students the ability to navigate this landscape, separate valid from invalid, and generate a responsible original idea that is supportable is the most valuable skillset we can foster in our students.

Continuing this line of reasoning, we feel the current standards do a great job expanding citizenship from local to state to national citizenship, but we generally feel the current standards fail to adequately prepare students for true, global citizenship. We would like to see a heightened sensitivity reflected in the new, revised standards.

Thank you again for the opportunity to give feedback. Best of luck!

Andy Rowe
Grade 7 Social Studies
We The People program advisor
Marshwood Middle School

Dear Social Studies Standards Review Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Hindu American Foundation (HAF), a non-profit 501(c)(3) education and advocacy organization that seeks to promote dignity, mutual respect and pluralism. We understand that Maine has begun the process of revising its social studies standards, beginning with stakeholder input on the existing standards.

The Hindu American community in Maine is eager to engage in the Department of Education's social studies standards revision process to ensure that Hinduism and Hindus are portrayed in ways that are historically accurate, culturally competent, inclusive, equitable, and free from bias or negative stereotypes. Any additional insight or guidance you could provide to help us better engage with this process would be greatly appreciated.

HAF regularly delivers [professional development for educators](#) and presentations on Hinduism to K-12 students. Depending on the time allotted, we can tailor our content to better meet the needs of Maine teachers and students, as well as include time to work on lesson plans and build out potential classroom activities. We have also created take-and-turn style resources on a variety of [topics related to Hinduism and themes](#) commonly found in the Hindu culture.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak to you further about professional development and our classroom resources. Please do not hesitate to contact me at anita@hinduamerican.org if you have questions about HAF resources or wish to [request professional development training](#) for educators.

Sincerely,

Anita

ANITA JOSHI

Associate Director of Policy Research
Hindu American Foundation

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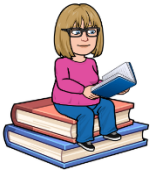
social media: @hinduamerican

Hello,

All of the middle school social studies teachers compiled this feedback together. Please let me know if you have any questions or need any clarification.

Thank you!

1. Need for integrated ELA standards
 - a. Examples taken from Common Core are:
 - i. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source
 - ii. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies
 - iii. Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.
 - iv.
2. Need for more specific performance expectations
 - a. Examples: On a physical map, use cardinal directions, map scales, key/legend, and title to locate important physical features of a specific region
3. Structured, spiraling model akin to the [Massachusetts DOE](#)
4. Would like to see more specific topics that should be covered at each grade level/span



Audra Whitney

6/7 Social Studies

Glenburn School

207-947-8769

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for requesting comment on the 2018 MLR Standards for Social Studies. I have used them throughout my teaching career to guide my curricula, and I appreciate the latest updates to use time periods from AP courses as a framework for the history standards.

The biggest challenge I see with the standards, which has always been the case, is the scope. Both at Maranacook Community School, where I taught from 2003-2016, and at Morse High School, where I have taught since 2016, we have struggled to meet all of the standards in all of the areas with only three years of required Social Studies and small staffs. I understand that the beauty of having standards so broad is that it allows for school and teacher autonomy. On the other hand, meeting them, especially from the local, national, and global level, in any one course, has proven to be very challenging, as has incorporating Maine Native American experiences in addition, especially for a course like World History.

Regarding standards more specifically, I would love a bit more clarification on the Personal Finance standards: the law states that they can be taught by a Social Studies or Math teacher, but they are now an important element of the Economics standards.

Also, I am disappointed that the Research standard was eliminated and folded into the curriculum overall. In my experience, it makes it easier to ignore them. Instead, I think teaching students the skills of critical analysis of sources is one of the most important things we can teach.

In the end, while I believe in them and support them, I find that they are overwhelming, and therefore not necessarily embraced by everyone, especially now that they are not mandatory. While I appreciate the autonomy and flexibility, I do also support having some commonality in expectations, streamlined.

Thanks for listening. I am happy to provide more feedback or assistance in the ongoing process of advancing and promoting Social Studies education in Maine.

Sincerely,

Caroline (Carrie) Emmerson

Carrie Emmerson ([she/her/hers](#))
Social Studies Teacher
Morse High School
826 High St.
Bath, ME 04530
(207) 443-8250 x3230

P.S. I would really, really like to see Civic Education rise to the level of Personal Finance. I believe our whole nation is suffering due to the lack of focus on the purpose and structure of our government.

Hi there.

I teach 6th grade SS and ELA in Cape Elizabeth. We just recently met to do PD work in SS in CEMS which spans grades 5-8. We feel like the grade 5 standards are way too specific. For example, it has standards about teaching the Constitution, while many of the 6-8 standards are much more general about geography, culture, etc. In our school, the Constitution has been taught in 8th grade as it was decided that 5th graders were too young to really dig into some of the concepts.

Thanks for requesting feedback.

Claire Ramsbotham

Hello,

My name is Jacob Newcomb and I am a social studies teacher at Bonny Eagle High School. My feedback for the social studies standards review is that I would like to see expanded personal finance standards that align more closely to the resources used in the classroom, specifically those resources provided by Next Gen Personal Finance. I find there are useful and engaging curriculum and lessons made available to us that don't have a "home" in the social studies standards. I would be happy to expand on this more in the future and would be glad to work with the DOE to make changes to the standards. Bonny Eagle requires all students to take a personal finance class prior to graduation. Thank you for your consideration.

-Jacob Newcomb
Bonny Eagle High School

Hi Beth,

Thank you for reaching out to me for feedback. I will be very honest that teaching about Maine Native Americans is extremely difficult. I wish resources could be provided, I am new to this 6th grade curriculum, only my second year teaching it, and feel that I do not have the resources needed to teach the standards. Secondly, what makes all of Social Studies difficult and different from some of the other curriculum areas is that of meeting all of the students' needs when the degree of ability varies drastically. I have close to one-third of my students not at grade level reading and many of that one third below two standard deviations. It is difficult to meet all of the needs of the population with such a vast range of abilities, to be frank. In other curriculum areas many of that one-third of the population are pulled out for special services in lieu of being in the classroom. In moving forward of looking at these standards could you please ask the people looking at these standards to be cognizant of making standards achievable and appropriate for all.

Janet Daigle



Testimony of Allen Sarvinas
Parents' Rights in Education Maine
DOE Standards Revision Committees
Maine Social Studies Standards Principles
March 21, 2023

Good afternoon DOE Standards Revision Committee,
(Thank you to Beth for providing that information 😊)

Parents' Rights in Education is testifying here today to provide principles from the Civic Alliance which is a program from the National Association of Scholars. Maine's social studies standards should be revised with these principles in mind:

- 1) Clear format. Social studies standards should be simple, clear, and lucid, without professional jargon. They should eschew a tangle of skills and crosswalks and concentrated on facts to be learned, presented as a straightforward bullet-pointed list. Each individual grade should have its own standard.
- 2) Rich factual content. Social studies standards should have rich factual content. Disadvantaged students benefit from intensive content instruction even more than better-off students, who receive large amounts of content knowledge from their families and peers. Content standards that focus on skills and abbreviate content foster an unequal society because they especially harm the education of disadvantaged children.
- 3) Liberty. Social studies standards should teach students to identify the ideals, institutions, and individual examples of human liberty, individualism, religious freedom, and republican self-government; assess the extent to which civilizations have fulfilled these ideals; and describe how the evolution of these ideals in different times and places has contributed to the formation of modern American ideals.
- 4) Documents of Liberty. Social studies standards should include comprehensive study of documents of liberty including the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Emancipation Proclamation, and Dr. King's Letter from Birmingham Jail.
- 5) National Content. K-6 social studies standards should include national symbols, history, and government throughout, rather than proceeding from community to state to nation.
- 6) Comprehensive High School Education. High school standards should include one year of Western Civilization, one year of World History, one year of United States History, and one year of Civics and Economics.



Our first hand and direct advocacy on the front lines brings the committee an urgency to incentivize a K-12 vertical framework that allows for an enlightening experience for our Maine students. Without this structure, social studies has veered into a non-disciplined cultural-based environment failing our students, parents and all stakeholders expectations. Civics and the birth of US civics is paramount for our students.

To conclude, Parents' Rights in Education does not pretend it is an easy and simple process to establish optimal learning standards. All stakeholders in the process are respected and appreciated for their passion for education. Our purpose is to provide principles and feedback to assist in a balanced and a great learning platform for all Maine students.

Thank you.



Maine Curriculum Leaders Association

Championing Policies And Practices That Enhance Teaching And Learning

Heather Manchester, MSAD 17, President

Niki Chan, RSU 24, President Elect

Deb Taylor, RSU 12, Treasurer

Joanne Dowd, RSU 23, Secretary

Debra McIntyre, Executive Director

Social Studies Standards Review

Senator Rafferty, Representative Mike Brennan and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

My name is Debra McIntyre, and I am the Executive Director for the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association. MCLA recognizes the MDOE is required to review content area standards on a regular and ongoing basis. We also recognize the amount of work this requires and are always looking to be partners in this work. The members of MCLA are recommending that the Maine social studies standards, which are focused on the big picture of social studies understandings, are reviewed, and revised only to fine tune the standards that exist in the current document. We strongly believe that the standards, as they exist, include the performance expectations which embed the application of social studies processes, knowledge, and skills. The field is only just beginning to dig into these standards and develop aligned curricula documents. The resources available to support implementation of these standards are also being developed.

If our Maine standards were dramatically altered, this would have a large impact on teachers and school districts (curriculum development, resource, and program purchases). Thank you for your consideration.

April 6, 2023

My name is Joe Schmidt, and I am providing public testimony related to the current Maine Learning Results for Social Studies as part of the standards revision process. My testimony is to reflect that of a private citizen of the state of Maine and is not intended to represent the thoughts or concerns of any organization that I work with or for. My experience in social studies content and standards work includes work in the following positions:

- Former Social Studies Specialist for the Maine Department of Education (MDOE), where I facilitated the most recent (2018) standards revision process.
- Current member of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Executive Board and the NCSS Executive Committee.
- Member of the NCSS Task Force on Standards, NCSS Taskforce on Inquiry, and NCSS Taskforce on Advocacy.
- Member of the NCSS Position Statement Committee: Developing State and Local Social Studies Standards
- Co-chair of the NCSS Government and Public Relations Committee
- Member of the Maine Council for the Social Studies Board of Directors.
- Member of the Maine Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy Board of Directors.
- Member of the Editorial Board for the National Council for Geographic Education
- Former Vice-President of the Wisconsin Council for the Social Studies.

While I am not speaking for any of the organizations represented above, I have done work relevant to the social studies standards revision process. The current Maine Learning Results for Social Studies have areas that should be highlighted and potentially expanded and weaknesses that must be addressed.

Strengths:

- Four separate content strands emphasize social studies beyond just U.S. History.
- Middle school and high school progression of foundational and developmental helps educators to differentiate learning for students.
- Attempts to embed inquiry authentically that shows the connection between inquiry and content.
- Wabanaki studies is woven through the content strands and across all grade levels.
- The separation of personal finance and economics helps clarify the different intended outcomes in instruction.
- The individual grade-level standards at K-5 help to provide direction for instruction at the grades where there are the most questions about what and how to teach social studies.
- The grade bands at grades 6-8 and 9-diploma provide flexibility for districts to implement the standards in alignment with the unique curriculum of their schools and to best meet the needs of their students and communities.

- The list of major enduring themes helps students build on a progression of learning that crosses the different strands of social studies.

Weaknesses:

- No strand that addresses learning related to psychology or sociology or courses beyond the four main strands addressed in the standards.
- The sections related to the skills of social studies, the major enduring themes, and spiraling K-12 need to be expanded with additional information and support, or at least have supporting documents that help districts identify how they can connect the standards to their curriculum.
- Section on eras for US and World histories should be eliminated. It gives the impression that a specific curriculum or scope and sequence of teaching and learning is required or recommended by the state, which is not the case.
- The section *Maine Statutes Related to Social Studies* should either be removed or expanded to include explanations of how the MDOE interprets these statutes.
- Does not do a good job of showing a progression of learning related to inquiry. The standards would benefit from a more intentional connection to the C3 Framework.
- Lacks support for teaching deliberative skills and civil discourse that is essential to addressing potentially contentious topics, both historical and contemporary.
- There continues to be confusion at the school and district level about the difference between the standards and the learning expectations listed in the MLRs for social studies. The overall shared framework adopted by all the content areas in the latest revision cycle lacks clear support from the MDOE in helping teachers, and districts understand what they are required to do and what it means to implement the standards in classrooms as part of district curriculum. This lack of support is a clear equity issue, as access to the standards is determined by which district they reside in. Without the state providing a specialist and related training and resources, there are clear inequities for a student to learn social studies based on the ability of a district to provide what the state is not providing.
- Civics is highlighted as community engagement but does not include a clear progression of the skills and dispositions necessary for students to be informed citizens ready to critically fulfill their rights and responsibilities.
- The mostly status quo work of the previous revision does not always have clear connections to research-based learning across the different content areas. This is most evident in the lack of coherent structure when it comes to teaching historical thinking skills and social studies specific disciplinary literacy.
- There needs to be accompanying standards-aligned documents that provide guidance and resources that support curriculum and instruction beyond what standards can do.
- The current standards do not adequately meet the recently passed state statutes regarding the teaching of African American history and cultures, the Holocaust, and genocide. There is much research about best practices related to teaching these topics. Those with the research knowledge and lived experiences need to be involved in the work to develop standards that meaningfully meet the expectations of the new state statutes.

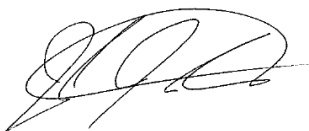
Overall thoughts:

The previous iteration did not allow those with a specialized background in social studies at the MDOE to meaningfully contribute to the revision process as the role was facilitation focused. With the recent moves of the MDOE to marginalize content-specific backgrounds, I anticipate that this gap will continue in this revision. The process needs to be led by someone with experience doing standards revision work combined and a specialized research background specific to social studies content, skills, and curricular design.

Members of the Maine Council for the Social Studies, the Maine Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy, and the Maine Humanities Council need to be invited to participate in the work as they are the best organizations to help ensure that the voices of the social studies field of Maine are represented. There are also individuals in Maine with connections to national organizations like the National Council for Geographic Education, National Geographic, the National Constitution Center, the Center for Civic Education, Center for Economic Education, Next Gen Personal Finance, and the National Council for History Education. Feedback from Maine educators who have knowledge of the work of these organizations will be vital to providing deep knowledge about these content areas beyond their own experiences in their classroom.

The National Council for the Social Studies position statement *Developing State and Local Social Studies Standards* emphasizes that beyond standards development, there needs to be support for implementation and a plan for continuous support through the next revision cycle. This ongoing work started during the previous revision but paused when COVID began and then stopped as the MDOE determined that it was not necessary to provide content-specific support. The lack of MDOE support has forced many districts to stop the implementation of the revised standards. Some districts have tried to continue implementing the latest revision but are doing so without the support of the MDOE, which leads to inconsistent or incomplete adoption across the state. Unless the Maine MDOE commits to having a full-time social studies specialist, the revision cycle will continue to be incomplete. This will give the appearance of it being done in service of “checking the box” of statute requirements, as opposed to committing to equitable support for Maine students, educators, and districts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Schmidt', with a stylized, cursive script.

Joe Schmidt

Hello,

Though I am an English teacher, I wanted to comment on the upcoming standards reviews.

First, I want to make a point about standards as a general practice: I believe they should be *referenced* rather than tightly tied to grading and curriculum. When we consider the fact that concepts like the North Atlantic slave trade and (to my knowledge) critical thinking and media literacy are absent from the standards, it reveals that not everything is, or will ever be, covered in this particular format. Though the inclination might be to add even more standards dealing with the aforementioned topics, or questions regarding morality, it seems ultimately almost pointless to continue to *add* standards as I don't think we will ever reach a point where we step back and say, "OK, this is everything a high school kid needs to know before graduating." Though I think we do need to cover those topics I mentioned, as well as take moral stances in regards to concepts like equality and democracy in schools (as, frankly, we already do), I am not convinced standards are the vehicle in doing so.

All of this being said, I assume this sort of larger critique will not be addressed in the upcoming review; so I am writing mostly to advocate that the slave trade be covered in the standards, particularly if we could admit - as Germany does, for example, with the Holocaust and the required teaching on the subject - that it is an extremely dark and unreckoned-with point in our nation's history. Additionally, we could afford to consider getting some work done on media literacy and critical thinking - which I, for one, am already incorporating in my English classes despite the absence in the standards. Though I don't think the standards are the answer, if it is to be for the time being perhaps it's something we should consider putting in. Thanks for hearing me out.

Sam
Sam Shain

Good morning! I teach 5th grade and I love Social Studies, especially history. Our standards for Social Studies were clustered grades 3-5. This was tough because some parts were covered, more than once sometimes depending on what the teacher at a specific grade level was comfortable teaching or had more knowledge of. For example, the American Revolution could have been taught yearly in grades 3, 4 & 5, and the civil war not at all. There is a lot of history in our country and it needs to be divided by grade level and what a student is old enough to understand. For example, maybe break up explorers and early Americans by years.

Thank you,
Tammy Nadeau