

Overview

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for Social Studies

History

The Sunshine State Standards were first approved by the State Board of Education in 1996 as a means of identifying academic expectations for student achievement in Florida. These original standards were written in several subject areas and were divided into four separate grade clusters (PreK-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12). This format was chosen to provide flexibility to school districts in designing curriculum based on local needs.

As Florida moved toward greater accountability for student achievement at each grade level, the Sunshine State Standards were further defined with specific “Grade Level Expectations” added over time. As time went on, two realities appeared that magnified the need to increase the level of rigor, coherence, and clarity in Florida’s academic standards. First, it was recognized that the level of rigor in the 1996 standards was inadequate to address the increased levels of achievement registered by our students. Second, ample evidence from both national and international measures of student achievement indicated the urgent need for higher levels of challenge for all our students. This could not occur without a serious effort to increase the level of rigor and expectations across the board for all Florida students.

The Department of Education recognized the need for a systematic approach to review and revise all of the academic standards, and on January 17, 2006, the State Board of Education adopted a six-year cycle that set forth a schedule of the regular review and revision of all K-12 content standards. (<http://www.flstandards.org>) This move went far beyond increasing the rigor of the standards; however, it included alignment of the new standards with assessments, instructional materials, professional development, and teacher licensure exams. This way, the new standards and their higher levels of rigor will be fully integrated into the entire culture of K-12 instruction. This move sets the stage for higher levels of rigor and higher academic achievement for years to come.

A Commitment to Excellence

In 2006, the Florida Legislature boldly stated its commitment to higher and more challenging standards for Florida’s children by passing HB 7087. Florida law now reads:

§1001.03(1) ...The state board shall establish a schedule to facilitate the periodic review of the standards to ensure adequate rigor, relevance, logical student progression, and integration of reading, writing, and mathematics across all subject areas.

§1003.4156 (3)...Three middle school or higher courses in social studies, one semester of which must include the study of state and federal government and civic education.

In 2008 the Florida Legislature passed SB 1908, which requires the creation of Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. Many people were involved in the review and revision of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies. The Department of Education extends sincere thanks to all of the educators and members of the public for their active interest in this important work. We look forward to continued work with them as partners in implementing these higher expectations for all of Florida's students.

Dr. Eric J. Smith
Commissioner of Education

Social Studies Standards Revision Process

In June 2007, the Bureau of Instruction and Innovation convened a committee to consider the framework for the revision of the Sunshine State Standards for social studies. Taking into account research in social studies education, a major goal of the revision of the Sunshine State Standards would be to strive for consensus among content experts, educational experts, researchers, parents, educators, and members of the business and workforce communities.

National and international social studies curriculum issues were presented, as well as research on the best practices in social studies education used by other states and countries that lead the world in student achievement. There was agreement by all reviewers that Florida's standards fit the description of "a mile wide and an inch deep" and lacked coherence. Combined with their own expertise in social studies curriculum, the framers used this information to define the structure and provide recommendations that would become the guiding principles for the writers of the standards to follow.

From July 2007 to July 2008, the Writers Committee met to draft new standards and benchmarks according to the structure that the framers set. This was a collaborative process, with the framers reviewing the work and providing comments to the writers.

From May 16, 2008 to July 16, 2008, a draft of the standards was provided for public input via an online system and through public forums in various parts in the state. Online reviewers were able to rate the benchmarks and provide optional comments. Online reviewers provided 123,122 ratings of 931 draft standards and benchmarks. Of these stakeholders, 5,146 interested persons completed the visitor profile. These reviewers identified themselves, in descending order of number of reviewers, as state level educators, district level educators, school administrators, K12 school level educators and postsecondary educators, parents, business representatives, out-of-state stakeholders and others. Additionally, experts in social studies and social studies curriculum volunteered to provide in-depth reviews of the draft.

From July 24, 2008 to July 26, 2008, the benchmarks were revised by the writers based on the considerable input from the public, experts, and other reviewers. The names of the framers, experts in the field of social studies, writers, and expert review panelists are included in the *Acknowledgments* section of this document.

Access Points for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

As part of the revision to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies, access points for students with significant cognitive disabilities were developed. These access points are expectations written for students with significant cognitive disabilities to access the general education curriculum. Embedded in the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, access points reflect the core intent of the standards with reduced levels of complexity. The three levels of complexity include

participatory, supported, and independent with the participatory level being the least complex.

The access points for the standards were developed through the cooperative efforts of writing teams composed of Florida educators and parents under the direction of staff from the Accommodations and Modifications for Students with Disabilities Project, the Accountability and Assessment for Students with Disabilities Project, and the Florida Department of Education.

Structure of the Standard Documents

The Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies are organized by grade level for grades K-8 and by strands for grades 9-12. This structure was determined by the Framers Committee based on review of the issues presented by experts and research in curriculum standards. The strands do not comprise courses. Standards and benchmarks will be pulled from the various strands to write specific course descriptions in social studies.

The model for writing the standards for social studies was created using information from several sources: The National Council for the Social Studies(NCSS); *A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education* by Kendall and Marzano; The Council of Economic Education; The Council for Geographic Education, The Council for Civic Education; The Albert Shanker Institute Report on Quality Standards; The National Report Card for Economics; The National Report Card for U.S. History; The National Report Card for Civics, Final Draft; The United States History and Geography by Texas Southern University; Bloom's Taxonomy; and The Fordham Institute's Report, The State of State Standards.

The framers believed that history, world or American, should be divided into time periods which would allow for greater in-depth teaching and learning. The framers also incorporated HB 7087, passed by the 2006 Florida Legislature, which requires a semester of civic education before entering high school. The framers also wanted geography to have a prominent place in the curriculum; therefore all 6-8 strands have a strong geography component included.

At the high school level, the standards are organized into the following content strands: American History, Geography, Economics, World History, Humanities, and Civics and Government. The content in the strands reflects the scaffolding of content from the K-6 portion of the K-8 standards.

Florida included Humanities in the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies. The new addition of humanities to the social studies standards will be cross-curricular with emphasis on language arts, fine arts, and music.

With people from many parts of the education community involved with framing, writing, reviewing, and revising the standards, the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies education are truly representative of Florida social studies educators and what they believe Florida students should know and be able to do. The Florida Department of Education is sincerely grateful for the work performed in revising these content standards.

Mary Jane Tappen
Deputy Chancellor for Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Services

Acknowledgments

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We would like to express special thanks to the many educators, parents, and business people who participated in the current revision process by serving on curriculum committees and by providing input to the draft document as well as those who took the time to review and rate the draft online. These people include, but are not limited to the following:

Framers Committee:

- Sarah Arteaga
Federal Reserve Bank, Atlanta Branch
- Louise Ball
Curriculum Specialist, Broward County Schools
- Michael Ballard
Curriculum Specialist, Citrus County Schools
- Ted Banton
Curriculum Specialist, St. Johns County Schools
- Jack Bovee
Curriculum Specialist, Collier County Schools
- Glenna Burnfin
Teacher, Leon County Schools
- Margaret Collier
Curriculum Specialist, Palm Beach County Schools
- Amber Craft
Curriculum Specialist, Hillsborough County Schools
- Brian Donovan
Teacher, Citrus County Schools
- John Doyle
Curriculum Specialist, Miami-Dade County Schools
- George M. Engel
Teacher, Citrus County Schools
- Kandyce Ericson
Curriculum Specialist, Lee County Schools
- Martha Ford
Curriculum Specialist, Hillsborough County Schools
- Shellie Gory
Curriculum Specialist, Broward County Schools
- Gail Hawks
Professor, Miami-Dade College

- Francis Holleran
Curriculum Specialist, Charlotte County Schools
- Debbie Gallagher
Curriculum Specialist, Alachua County Schools
- Lon Lazzeri
Federal Reserve Bank, Miami Branch
- Randy Lightfoot
Curriculum Specialist, Pinellas County Schools
- Steve Masyada
Teacher, Levy County Schools
- Carrie Oldham
Curriculum Specialist, Polk County Schools
- Janie Phelps
Curriculum Specialist, Orange County Schools
- Jennifer Smith
Teacher, Volusia County Schools
- Ron Toops
Citizen/Parent, Sons of the American Revolution
- Theron Trimble
District Representative, Collier County Schools

Writing Committee:

- Tim Arnold
Teacher, Orange County Schools
- Jason Caros
Curriculum Specialist, Volusia County
- Linda Clark
Teacher, Polk County Schools
- Patrick Coggins
Professor, Stetson University
- Peter Cowdrey
Teacher, Leon County Schools
- Jennifer Cox
Teacher, Sarasota County Schools
- Jim Curtis
Teacher, Lake County Schools
- Peggy Durham
Professor, Flagler College
- Edward Fernald
Professor, Florida State University
- Martha Ford
Curriculum Specialist, Hillsborough County Schools
- Debbie Gallagher
Curriculum Specialist, Alachua County Schools

- Erin Gallagher
Teacher, Alachua County Schools
- Dawn Gentry
Teacher, Washington County Schools
- William Guzman
Professor, Florida A&M University
- John Harrell
Teacher, Orange County School
- Tracy Hinson
Teacher, Hillsborough County Schools
- Dennis Holt
Curriculum Specialist, Hillsborough County Schools
- Elizabeth Kingsbury
Teacher, Orange County Schools
- Mollie Lawrence
Professor, University of West Florida
- Grace Lourcey
Teacher, Leon County Schools
- Linda Medvin
Curriculum Specialist, Broward County Schools
- Dianna Miller
Teacher, Florida Virtual Schools
- Laurie Molina
Professor, Florida State University
- Sharon Murray
Teacher, Collier County Schools
- Diana Nadaskay
Teacher, Dade County Schools
- Janie Phelps
Curriculum Specialist, Orange County Schools
- Annette Pitts
Director, Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc.
- Donna Powers
Teacher, Orange County Schools
- Jennifer Ricardo
Teacher, Leon County Schools
- Sally Rozanski
Curriculum Specialist, Palm Beach County Schools
- Marie Santana
Teacher, Orange County Schools
- Daryl Saunders
Teacher, Hillsborough County Schools
- Janice Shepard
Teacher, Alachua County Schools

- Edward Shulla
Teacher, Leon County Schools
- Stacy Skinner
Teacher, Orange County Schools
- Elizabeth Smith
Curriculum Specialist, Manatee County
- Fran Squires
Teacher, Sarasota County Schools
- Natalie Stevens
Teacher, Orange County Schools
- Kathy Taylor
Curriculum Resource Teacher, Hillsborough County Schools
- Matt Townley
Teacher, Polk County
- Theron Trimble
District Representative, Collier County Schools
- Linda Valencia
Teacher, Polk County Schools
- Tammi Wilson
Teacher, Broward County Schools

Access Point Writing Committee:

- Alesha Ard
Teacher, Holmes County Schools
- Laura Babbitt
Teacher, Hillsborough County Schools
- Bill Charlton
Gifted Support, Orange County Schools
- Holly Cromer
Teacher, Clay County Schools
- Stephanie Holmes
Teacher, Brevard County Schools
- Gina Horton
Teacher Support Specialist, Orange County Schools
- Terry Howard
Teacher Support Specialist, St. Lucie County Schools
- Glasmire Jones
Teacher, Broward County Schools
- Hyacinth Lawrence
Teacher, Broward County Schools
- Larry Logan
Teacher, Bay County Schools
- Diana Mazzullo
Teacher, St. Lucie County Schools

- Nancy McElligott
Teacher, Broward County Schools
- Paul Odham
Teacher Support Specialist, Orange County Schools
- Etta Payne
Teacher, St. Lucie County Schools
- Kimberly Riley
Teacher, Orange County Schools
- Bonnie Segal
Resource Teacher, Orange County Schools
- Fannie Smith
Alternative Assessment Specialist, Gadsden County Schools
- Henry Smith
Social Studies Specialist, Gadsden County Schools
- Jean Smith
Staffing Specialist, Hendry County Schools
- Terry Tomaka
Parent, Brevard County Schools
- Aiasha Walker-Johnson
Teacher, Palm Beach County Schools
- Deborah Williams
Autism Support Specialist, Duval County Schools
- Dee Valenzuela
Teacher, Orange County Schools
- Clint Wells
Speech Therapist, St. Lucie County Schools
- JoAnn Ziegenfuss
Teacher, Palm Beach County Schools

Social Studies Standards Expert Review Committee

Citizen Reviewers:

- Cassandra Grayson
Florida Credit Union League, Inc.
- Linda McLaughlin
Parent, Tallahassee, Florida

Professional Reviewers:

- Margaret Altoff
Geography, Past President, National Council for the Social Studies
- Mitch Bloomer
Holocaust Education, Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Florida
- Margret Branson
Civics Education, California Department of Education
- Ernest Brewer
Elementary Education, Florida Atlantic University
- Titus Brown
American History, Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University
- Ben Chaika
Economics, Institute for Curriculum Services, California
- Michael Clinton
World History, National Council for the Social Studies
- Sherman Dorn
University of South Florida
- Paul Dosal
Hispanic History, University of South Florida
- Marc Epstein
Albert Shanker Institute
- Cheryl Jennings
Economics, Florida State University (retired)
- Mike Koren
U.S. History, National Council for the Social Studies
- Ray Oldakowski
Geography, Jacksonville University, Florida
- Robert E. Raze
Elementary Education, St. Petersburg College
- Eileen Tramontana
Florida History, (St. Johns River Water Management District)
- The Florida Center for Citizenship: The Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government and The Bob Graham Center for Public Service, University of Florida

FLORIDA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

K-12 GRADE-LEVEL STANDARDS

Strands

Strands are the major curriculum areas for social studies that are aligned with the *Core Curriculum Subjects* created by the National Council for the Social Studies. They include content areas which should be the primary focus of social studies instruction for each grade level, K-12. Establishing proficiency in these strands at each successive grade level will prepare a strong foundation for learning social studies in subsequent grades.

Standards

Standards are fundamental to sound social studies instruction. They are aligned with the *Core Curriculum Content created by the National Council for the Social Studies*. Standards are the key components to a structurally sound social studies education.

Standards serve one or more of the following purposes:

- Establish connections to and between the strands of social studies as defined by National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS);
- Prepare students for future social studies teaching and learning by focusing on conceptual understanding of concepts; and
- Address gaps in instruction that may appear insignificant but are important to the understanding, fluency, and application of social studies education.

Benchmark Coding Scheme

SS.	K.	A.	1.	1
Subject	Grade Level	Strand	Standard	Benchmark

Strand Key:

- A ~ American History
- G ~ Geography
- E ~ Economics
- C ~ Civics and Government
- W ~ World History
- H ~ Humanities

Access Points Coding Scheme

SS.	K.	A.	1.	In.a
Subject	Grade Level	Strand	Benchmark	Access Point

Access Points Key:

- In ~ Independent
- Su ~ Supported
- Pa ~ Participatory