

Content Advisor Feedback

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Please review the proposed revisions to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for

- the social studies practices (Work Group B),
- kindergarten-grade 8 (Work Group D), and
- ethnic studies courses (Work Group E).

Use the following questions to develop feedback for the State Board of Education regarding revisions to the standards.

GUIDING QUESTION: SOCIAL STUDIES PRACTICES (WORKING GROUP B)

1. Are the student expectations in the social studies practices clear and specific? If not, please give examples of how the language might be improved.

I frankly loved this product. I think it captures the art and craft of social studies well.

2. Do the student expectations sufficiently prepare students to engage in social studies practices? If not, please provide suggestions for improving the standards.

Yes. Again, well done.

3. Are there any gaps or practices missing that should be addressed?

I would say this is a tight document and a great plan for scope and sequence.

GUIDING QUESTIONS: K-8 (WORKING GROUP D)

1. Does each grade level follow a complete and logical development of social studies concepts presented? If not, what suggestions do you have for improvement?

I believe they do.

2. Are there any gaps or concepts missing that should be addressed?

Yes, and I will address them below.

3. Is the level of rigor appropriate for each grade level?

I believe so, but I yield to the professionals who teach K-2 especially since that is not my expertise.

4. Do the standards for the grade levels adequately address social studies skills/practices as recommended by Work Group B? If not, please give examples of how the standards might be improved.

I believe they do.

5. Are the student expectations clear and specific? If not, please give examples of how the language might be improved.

I was confused by such jargon as SE's and do not see specifics (ex. What exactly are the SE's and where are they catalogued for easy review), so I will assume that the number of stated SEs are in fact embedded in the language of the Workgroup D document.

6. Are there student expectations that are not essential or unnecessarily duplicative and can be eliminated? If so, please identify by course and student expectation number, e.g., 6.5.B, for Grade 6 (5)(B), etc.

May be addressed in remarks to follow.

7. Do you have any other suggestions for ways in which the elementary and middle school TEKS can be improved?

Will be addressed in the specific comments to follow.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORK GROUP D

KINDERGARTEN

1 (XX): Might insert How streets got their names, and perhaps who some of these people were. Perhaps how to follow a route on a map and read a GPS map.

2 (G): Add Mirabeau B. Lamar to the list.

3 (B): Might introduce the Spanish Empire here, too.

3 (E): Might introduce the mission as a place where newcomers interacted with the natives.

3 (J): I appreciate this impulse, but I worry that it might seem like tokenism by the time these standards are implemented. In their lifetimes, the US has had a black president and a woman VP as a matter of fact. In short, this is normal—and to be expected—instead of a break with the status quo.

3 (N): Examples from Texas, too? Say Barbara Jordan, or LULAC (ex. José Tomás Canales) which was founded in Corpus Christi? I like Huerta and Chavez, but why use a California example when there are plenty of Texas examples?

GRADE 1

2 (D): Add Comanches to the list

2 (F): A tried and true construct, but an artificial construct since the French really didn't exert an influence, the German flag never flew here but did exert an influence, and for these kids, the presence of an Indian, Vietnamese, and Filipino flag might be even more instructive. So maybe talk about flags and what they represent, and which flags flew over Texas. Good art project, too.

3 (H): Include media influence here, too. Movies, etc.

GRADE 2

1 (E): This assertion may prove troublesome. The best evidence is that humanity came to the shores of the Americas through a series of prehistoric migrations going back as far as 30,000 BCE. Clovis and Pre-Clovis culture sites show that even Native Americans moved here from someplace else, and current anthropology suggests that Asia as well as Europe were probable starting points. In short, humans roamed around and settled where conditions promised success. The “nation of immigrants” tale is just another part of the human roaming around story.

3 (E): Might mention that some of the enslaved escaped to Mexico from Texas.

GRADE 3

(b) (1): Do we dare discuss ancient DNA and the presence of Neanderthal and Denisovan populations that were displaced or absorbed by Homo Sapiens?

3: Western European sites seem to be in short supply. I would add places like Stonehenge (UK), New Grange (Ireland), and the Beaker People and Celtic migration into Europe, as well as Mycenaean Greece to provide context later for discussions of Homer and *The Iliad*.

3 (A): I would specifically mention the domestication of the horse as being co-important with the wheel and that his combination spread human civilization rapidly and remained state-of-the-art into the 20th Century.

9: There may be a question of balance in coverage. There is a month allocated to the Kingdom of Kush, and nothing blocked out for prehistoric Britain, Western Europe, or Greece.

GRADE 4

6 (C): Recommend putting in a discussion of Roman concepts of Civic and Public Virtue, since these themes are picked up in the founding of the American Republic. I would also make sure and include a specific distinction between the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, and how that change occurred. Many of these kids will be familiar with the *Star Wars* franchise and its take on the fall of republics and the rise of authoritarian states.

GRADE 5

5 (B): Might be a good place to introduce the idea of the slave trade in the Mediterranean and Africa at this time. Muslims enslaving Christians (Turks, Moors), Christians enslaving Muslims (Venetians, Spanish), and everyone enslaving Africans including Africans. Cultural and religious distinctions gave people license to enslave the “other” who were seen as “less than.”

7: The reintroduction of Christianity into the British Isles and Western Europe by Irish missionaries is an under reported, but profoundly important story that does much to set the state for the rise and identity of Great Britain—and important cultural hearth for the United States.

8: Similarly, the Viking influence on shaping all of Europe, from Ireland and Great Britain to the Kievan Rus, Normans, and the Varangian Guard in Byzantium. I would include this bunch and how it hewed Europe as context for later discussions.

9 (C): Tulipmania doesn’t occur until the 1630s, so a discussion here seems out of place.

13: I would insert a discussion of the rise of money and banking in 1300s Florence (and money exchange markets) here, as well as a rise in the stock exchanges in Amsterdam as a way of impressing upon students the idea of a time before money, as today we head rapidly into an era where the forms of money and exchange are ever evolving.

16 (A): Somewhere, I would recommend including a discussion of Cahokia as the largest indigenous settlement in what is now the US, and which slightly predates the Aztecs and Incas.

GRADE 6

1 (E): The Cherokees were the hegemon in the lower Appalachians and the counterpart to the better known Haudenosaunee Confederacy (Iroquois). In addition, Cherokees play a part in Texas history.

3 (A): I would include the *entradas* of Hernando de Soto and Francisco Coronado. See 5 (D).

4 (A): San Augustine, Florida, founded in 1565, predates these other settlements.

6 (H): Should there be a mention of the arrival of Africans in 1619?

8 (B): Should there be a mention of other colonial wars—and perhaps even their European name? For instance, King George’s War (War of the Austrian Succession) Queen Anne’s War (War of the Spanish Succession)? War of Jenkins’s Ear? Somehow, the Spanish need to be included in the discussion of the wilderness wars to dominate the Americas.

9: The fact that Louisiana is ceded to Spain by France has huge implications for the province of Texas and should be discussed here. It also set the Spanish up as controlling New Orleans, which will lead to conflict with the US later.

GRADE 7

GENERAL COMMENT

While encouraged at first that Texas would be more integrated with US and World History so it wasn't seen as a "one off" sort of topic that was never tested and little regarded, there needs to be a real and determined effort to "localize" all the lessons from these larger arenas to Texas throughout grades 7 and 8. Not to play "six degrees of separation," but nearly everything discussed at the national and international level has some sort of impact on events in Texas. For instance, the Wars of Napoleon led to a power vacuum in Spain that manifested in the Mexican War for Independence and the campaigns in Tejas. Likewise, the question of "what did Texas do in the Civil War" other than secede remains unaddressed. Those are just two examples.

2 (A): Adam Smith and the *Wealth of Nations* also heavily influences the US Constitution and it becomes as much of a commercial and economic document as a political document.

4 (F): We need to introduce the rise of the Comanche Empire and its domination of both New Mexico and Tejas, and its forays into northern Mexico.

4 (G): A discussion of the Northwest Indian Wars would demonstrate how the US struggles with what it calls Domestic Dependent Nations and give context to much of this discussion.

5 (G): One of the frequently asked questions among my students is "where did the money come from to buy Louisiana and who handled the sale? Helps tie in economics with the other social studies topics.

7 (C): The correct terminology is The Mexican War for Independence. A great opportunity to describe, too, the role that Texas played in this conflict, including the Battle of the Medina and the massacre of large portion of the province's population.

7 (E): Understanding that there is a growing demographic in this state that could use some understanding of Mexican history, this point in the lesson would be a great place to compare the two North American republics—the US and the Republic of Mexico. In particular, the rise of factions—Jefferson v. Hamilton in the US, and Centralists v. Federalists in Mexico. Both nations are struggling to define themselves; the US has a head start and more developed local political, social, and economic institutions.

9 (A): Time to come back to the Comanche Empire and see how things go between them and Texas, and to discuss their extensive trade network and their raid and trade economy.

10 (A): Annexation of Texas led to the US-Mexican War, not the other way around.

13 (B): I would include discussions of Unionism across the south to put to rest the idea that everyone in the South were rabid secessionists. Then, I would talk about Unionism in Texas in particular.

13 (C): I am happy to see Galveston included, but I think more could be said of the Civil War in Texas and Louisiana to bring that conflict back to the Lone Star State.

GRADE 8

2 (A): I would include a discussion of the Buffalo Slaughter as well, with environmental implications.

2 (C): The Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek (1867) had huge implications for Texas and often goes undiscussed in contemporary classrooms.

7 (C): “explain the clash of the Mexican Americans and immigrants with the Texas Rangers during the Mexican Revolution.” This is an area fraught with controversy. The Texas Rangers responded to the violence of the Mexican Revolution by patrolling the border, which often led to confrontations and excesses on both sides. It is fashionable today to talk about the Rangers as delivering “state-sanctioned violence” in places with Porvenir, Texas, but this discussion rarely includes descriptions of non-state violence on the part of Mexicans, Mexican Texans, and others or the fact that the perpetrators of the killings may have been acting beyond state sanction. Other incidents include the clearly racist plot known as the Plan de San Diego which advocated race war and the systematic execution of non-Hispanic Whites. Others include the raid on the Brite Ranch. Border violence, especially in the age of *contrabandista* and narco-cartel issues along the Rio Grande is a critical discussion to have, and it needs to be taught, but it requires context. Mexico had spiraled into chaos, and some of it lapped over to this side of the Rio Grande. Eventually, Ranger behavior led to sweeping reforms.

(10): A discussion of the Texas 1836 Centennial celebration as a recasting of the Texas identity would go well here, and could lead to discussions of how this event helped boost lagging spirits and flagging fortunes.

10 (F): What is this National Guard Unit 200? Are we discussing the 200th Coastal Artillery, New Mexico National Guard? If so, get the nomenclature correct. Also, why no discussion of the 36th Division, Texas National Guard and its “lost battalion,” the 131st Field Artillery (from western Texas) which was captured on the Dutch island of Java or the loss of USS *Houston* with many Texas men aboard. Again, localizing the big picture.

11 (D): In discussing containment, need to insert the French in Indochina and how the US support for a European ally sets the nation on the path of the Vietnam War.

GUIDING QUESTIONS: ETHNIC STUDIES (WORKING GROUP E)

1. Does each course follow a complete and logical development of social studies concepts presented? If not, what suggestions do you have for improvement?

The Native American course seems a little hazy, and more topical, which may prove challenging for student comprehension. With more than 500 nations to discuss, this course will require serious skills to deliver.

2. Are there any gaps or concepts missing that should be addressed?

They seem to be comprehensive.

3. Do these high school course(s) sufficiently prepare students for postsecondary success? If not, please provide suggestions for improving the standards.

I believe so, the lack of balance in a few instances may lead to distortions of understanding. Specific examples will be address below.

4. Do the standards for the course(s) adequately address social studies skills/practices as recommended by Work Group B? If not, please give examples of how the standards might be improved.

Yes.

5. Are the student expectations clear and specific? If not, please give examples of how the language might be improved.

Yes.

6. Is the scope of the course appropriate? If not, what suggestions do you have for eliminating or adding content?

The scope is appropriate, if not a little ambitious! I would love to have taken these courses as a high school student, but I would not have had the mental discipline to have appreciated them at the time!

7. Are there student expectations that are not essential or unnecessarily duplicative and can be eliminated? If so, please identify by course and student expectation number, e.g., Ethnic Studies: Mexican American Studies 5.B, etc.

Will be addressed below, but nothing jumps out.

8. Do you have any other suggestions for ways in which the high school courses can be improved?

See below.

§113.51 African American Studies

2 (A): Is there room to talk about other enslavement systems, for instance slavery among the Native Americans (taking children as captives) and Islamic enslavement of

Christians as other examples of slavery in play at the time? Would help to contextualize the African Diaspora.

4(A): This struck me as being potentially out of the chronological flow, and I would recommend moving it earlier.

11 (A): There are some things I would suggest. For instance, the once famous buffalo soldiers (9th and 10th Cavalry, 24th and 25th Infantry) were relegated to serving as dock hands and stevedores in allied ports by white officers who did not trust Black troops despite their storied history; the so-called Red Ball Express fueled the Allied drive from Normandy to the Rhine in fall of 1944, truck drivers were almost exclusively African Americans; Charles McGee is a famous Texan in the Tuskegee Airmen.

General Comments

I may have missed it, but I would have liked to see a discussion of expressions of African Nationalism from the likes of Marcus Garvey, Louis Farrakhan, Quannell X (of Houston), and other attempts at Black driven resegregation. In addition, a description of Liberia as an attempt at American recolonization of emancipated people in Africa would be instructive.

§113.XX Asian American Studies

General Comments

This course attempts to bring together Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Pacific Islander, Indian, and Arab stories in one course under the idea that all of these are Asian cultures. It is a tall task and can come off as a bit of an overreach. China and its real and perceived threats to American interests and the geo-political implications for Asian-Americans needs to be discussed, as does modern immigration and maternity tourism. Some 20% of the world's population is Han Chinese, and this reality should be discussed in the context of this class. The fourth most spoken language in Texas is Mandarin, Vietnamese is third, Tagalog is fifth. This class is important and vital for the coming age.

1 (E): I don't believe the Boston Tea Party was about access to luxury goods.

5. Is it appropriate to introduce the discussion of dropping atomic bombs on Japan in this section?

5 (A): US Troops defended the Philippines, the Pacific Islands, and China from Japanese aggression. The fact that this nation made a serious sacrifice of blood and treasure in this regard seems to be given little attention.

§113.5 Mexican American Studies

General Comments

This course comes off a bit radical, and for lack of a better word, angry. There is no doubt that this is a valuable piece of the curriculum, but there are places (see below) where the language borders on offensive. The phrase White Supremacy is bandied about a lot but is not exactly descriptive because it is either intentionally or unintentionally conflated with the action of active terrorist groups like the KKK. Potentially offensive.

3 (A): As has been noted elsewhere, there is a great opportunity to show how Texas played an important part in the Mexican War for Independence. I believe connections to the Haitian Revolt are overdrawn, however.

3 (E): “The Texas Rebellion for Independence” seems to be unique language to this work group and not particularly descriptive. In Mexico, they refer to the events of 1835-1836 as the “Secession of Texas.” It started as an expression of Civil War between Federalists and Centralists but morphed into a war for independence. So, while “The Texas Revolution” which appears to have become the standard doesn’t adequately capture the conflict, neither does “Texas Rebellion for Independence.” I would settle on Texas War for Independence.

3 (E): About White Supremacy. This term is, intentionally or unintentionally, conflated with such terrorist organizations as the KKK. Here is a brief review of the term from the online Encyclopedia Britannica and pay special attention to the second paragraph:

white supremacy, beliefs and ideas purporting natural superiority of the lighter-skinned, or “white,” human races over other racial groups. In contemporary usage, the term *white supremacist* has been used to describe some groups espousing ultranationalist, racist, or fascist doctrines. White supremacist groups often have relied on violence to achieve their goals.

From the 19th to the mid-20th century the doctrine of white supremacy was largely taken for granted by political leaders and social scientists in Europe and the United States. For example, in the four-volume *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853–55; *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*), the French writer and diplomatist Arthur de Gobineau wrote about the superiority of the white race, maintaining that Aryans (Germanic peoples) represented the highest level of human development. According to 19th-century British writers such as Rudyard Kipling, Charles Kingsley, Thomas Carlyle, and others, it was the duty of Europeans—the “white man’s burden”—to bring civilization to nonwhite peoples through beneficent imperialism. Several attempts were made to give white supremacy a scientific footing, as various institutes and renowned scientists published findings asserting the biological superiority of whites. Those ideas were bolstered in the early 20th century by the new science of intelligence testing, which purported to show major differences in intelligence between the races. In such tests northern Europeans always scored higher than Africans.

So, while unpleasant and jarring to modern sensibilities, describing American settlers to Texas in the 1820s-1830s as “white supremacist” is simply calling them people of their time, but the language chosen seems to construe a more traditional and sinister modern

usage—meaning that they were racist ultra-nationalists, which is not borne out by the historical record. So, the language ends up being offensive to an audience that does not harbor those sentiments; historically muddled since the understandings of the times were different; and provocative to a modern population that is not prepared to understand the difference. To use an analogy, it would be like calling George Washington an idiot because he didn't use penicillin to cure his pneumonia that led to his death. Based on the practices of the time, they bled him to release the "ill humors" believed to be causing his malady. Perfectly rational people reading the scientific journals and opinion leaders of their times made decisions based on the best information they had at hand. To expect them to do otherwise is to refuse them the grace we ourselves will crave from future generations.

4 (E): The Plan of San Diego was not exactly resistance as it was an attempt to violently overthrow the existing order and ignite a race war. From the *Handbook of Texas*:

"The most extreme example of this was a movement supporting the "Plan of San Diego," a revolutionary manifesto supposedly written and signed at the South Texas town of San Diego on January 6, 1915. The plan, actually drafted in a jail in Monterrey, Nuevo León, provided for the formation of a "Liberating Army of Races and Peoples," to be made up of Mexican Americans, African Americans, and Japanese, to "free" the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and Colorado from United States control. The liberated states would be organized into an independent republic, which might later seek annexation to Mexico. There would be a no-quarter race war, with summary execution of all White males over the age of sixteen. The revolution was to begin on February 20, 1915. Federal and state officials found a copy of the plan when local authorities in McAllen, Texas, arrested Basilio Ramos, Jr., one of the leaders of the plot, on January 24, 1915..."

5 (A): White supremacy, again...

§113.XX Native American Studies

11 (G): Petroglyphs are mentioned, but the pictographs at Paint Rock (Texas) and the Lower Pecos Canyons could localize this course to Texas.

15 (C): Slavery between tribes should be discussed, as should the abduction and enslavement of European, Mexican, and American children by various tribes. Some scholars believe that by 1870 perhaps as many as 40% of the Comanche Nation were born as ethnic Mexicans but were abducted as children to be raised as *Numunu*. We teach slavery elsewhere and in other classes, we should do so here as well.

16 (B): I would include the court case of *Worcester v. Georgia*.

16 (G): The creation of a Cherokee syllabary by Sequoyah is nothing short of miraculous and gave this nation a written language which allowed them to chronical their lives with "talking leaves" while also empowering them to resist American encroachment through

the courts, through writing, and through correspondence. This needs to be discussed in this class.

19 (C) I would nominate Wilma Mankiller as a visionary native leader to include in this class.