

# Social Studies Content Advisors Consensus Recommendations

January 14, 2022

## Recommendation 1. Adopt a Preamble for the TEKS in Social Studies

### Recommendation

Kim Baxter, Shalon Bond, Pinar Emiralioğlu, Don Frazier, Jeff Lash, Alexa Proffitt, Mary Smith

We recommend that the State Board of Education (SBOE) adopt the following preamble as the first paragraph in the introduction to the social studies TEKS.

Social studies is the study of cooperation and conflict, viewed through the lenses of civics, economics, geography, and history. Students should understand their roles, identities, and experiences as citizens of their local communities, the State of Texas, the United States, and the world. Social studies students will employ disciplinary skills to better understand our story and therefore, participate in and protect the democracy of the United States.

### Rationale

The preamble answers the questions *What is social studies?* and *What is the importance of social studies?* The preamble helps communicate the value of social studies to students, teachers, school administrators, parents, and the general public.

### Dissenting Opinion on the Language of the Preamble

Stephen H. Balch, Steven Mintz

Social studies is the integrated study of civics, economics, geography, and history with the goal of cultivating knowledgeable and informed citizens.

### Rationale for Dissenting Opinion

The social studies curriculum seeks to ensure that all public school graduates:

- Are well-prepared to function effectively in a society marked by both shared ideals and cultural pluralism.
- Possess the range of knowledge expected of high school graduates and who are well-equipped for success in postsecondary education.
- Have the knowledge and skills needed to manage their personal finances effectively and to evaluate public policy choices and decisions.
- Understand the principles that underlie the American system of government, the shared history and traditions that bind Texans and Americans together as a people, and who can appreciate how the American economy functions.
- Appreciate the uniqueness of the time and place in which they live with its extraordinary levels of prosperity, freedom, and security and who have a grasp of how this was achieved.

## **Preamble**

Texas and the United States are distinctive in many respects. In their extraordinary ethnic and racial diversity. In their varied geography, which features a remarkably wide range of landscapes, climates, and wildlife. In their economy, which is more entrepreneurial than that found in most other countries. In their political systems, which differs in important respects from the parliamentary system found in most other economically advanced democratic countries, and vastly from the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes that still control large parts of the world

Texas and the United States are also distinguished by their emphasis on individualism and, compared to most other high-income societies, their optimism, work ethic, religiosity, sense of patriotism, and the widespread belief that people's success in life is largely under their control.

But what makes Texas and the United States especially unique is that their systems of government rest on a series of distinctive publicly proclaimed ideas, ideals, values, and guiding principles. These include commitments to freedom and opportunity and a belief that all people, irrespective of their background, possess certain inalienable natural rights.

It is the prospect of a better, freer life that continues to attract tens of thousands of immigrants to Texas and the United States every year.

This nation's history contains many ugly episodes of injustice, discrimination, exploitation, and violence. But it is also marked by ongoing efforts to live up to its founding principles. Indeed, despite its shortcomings, the United States has provided its people with a degree of liberty, security, and material prosperity beyond the dreams of even the most privileged classes of times past. Understanding how this "miracle" came to be is one of the key objectives of these standards.

A vast transformation has taken place in the human condition over the past half millennium that greatly increased life expectancy, raised living standards, and produced a revolution in moral consciousness that succeeded in outlawing slavery, child labor and racial and gender discrimination. Absent an understanding of this epochal development and the forces within Western culture that drove it—including the rise of constitutional democracy, advances in science, technology, industry, and agriculture, and the emergence of modern capitalism—the nature of America's successes cannot be put in proper context. Nor can the globalization of human society in which America has played so large a role.

There are dismal chapters in this story of transformation, and these need to be learned about as well. but unless students comprehend the unique nature of the civilization which gave America its birth, they won't be adequately equipped to take up their responsibilities as its future stewards. Fostering an understanding the transformative character of Western civilization, and its varied roots in classical antiquity and in the contributions of other civilizations, is therefore a prime objective of these standards.

## Recommendation 2. Edit Content Strands

### Recommendation

Kim Baxter, Shalon Bond, Pinar Emiralioglu, Don Frazier, Jeff Lash, Alexa Proffitt, Mary Smith

We recommend using the following disciplinary content strands to organize the TEKS for social studies:

1. Civics and Government
2. Economics
3. Geography
4. History

### Rationale

As recommended, the TEKS for social studies focus on four disciplines of social studies and represent a way of categorizing knowledge about the human experience of the world. The content strands help to organize the multitude of social studies themes taught at age-appropriate levels in grades K-12. Table 1 presents each content strand with a brief description.

**Table 1. Recommended Content Strands with Descriptions**

<b>Content Strand Title</b>	<b>Content Strand Description</b>
Civics and Government	Students will gain knowledge of political systems at the local, state, national, and international levels. Students will come to understand that people create systems of government as structures of power and authority to provide order, maintain stability, and promote the general welfare. Students will gain an understanding of the appropriate functions of government as well as the possibilities for corruption and abuse of power. They will come to understand how the U.S. and Texas constitutions were meant to curb the abuses of power. Students will gain the use of civic knowledge, skills, and virtues to examine, evaluate, and live out the ideals needed for competent citizenship in a democracy.
Economics	Students will use economic reasoning skills and knowledge of essential economic concepts, issues, and systems to make informed choices as producers, consumers, savers, investors, workers, and citizens in an interdependent world.
Geography	Students will use knowledge of geographic locations and physical and human conditions and connections to analyze relationships among locations in an increasingly interdependent world. Students will learn about physical and human geography, climate, natural resources, topography, and build spatial awareness and spatial reasoning. Students use knowledge of geographic practices and patterns to understand how cultural, ethnic, and social groups interact with each other and the world around them.
History	Students will examine the diversity of the human experience to analyze and interpret significant events, patterns, and themes in the history of Texas, the United States, and the world. Student will learn about the cultures, civilizations, decisions, leaders, and landmark events that shaped human development and created the contemporary world.

### Dissenting Opinion

None.

## Recommendation 3. Need for Powerful, Vertically and Horizontally Aligned K-5 Student Expectations, Fully Integrating Social Studies (i.e., Civics and Government, Economics, Geography, and History) with English Language Arts and Reading

### Recommendation

Shalon Bond, Jeff Lash, Mary Smith

We recommend strengthening the K-5 TEKS with strong, vertically and horizontally aligned student expectations focused on integrating social studies disciplinary knowledge and skills (i.e., civics and government, economics, geography, and history) with the TEKS for English language arts and reading (ELAR).

### Rationale

The purpose of elementary school social studies is to enable students to understand, participate in, and make informed decisions about their world. Social studies content allows young learners to explain relationships with other people, to institutions, and to the environment, and equips them with knowledge and understanding of the past. It provides them with skills for cooperative problem solving and decision making as well as for assessing issues and making thoughtful value judgments. Above all, it integrates these skills and understandings into a framework for responsible citizen participation locally, nationally, and globally.<sup>1</sup>

Social studies education at the elementary level, however, has been marginalized when compared to English language arts and reading, math, and science. According to a report by the Center on Education Policy, since the enactment of the “No Child Left Behind” federal education policy (NCLB), 44 percent of districts surveyed have reduced time for social studies. That percentage rose to 51 percent in districts with “failing schools.” In addition, the K-5 TEKS, and especially the K-2 TEKS, are shallow on content and poorly aligned.

This recommendation addresses both the need for increased classroom time devoted to social studies and the need to strengthen and align student expectations in elementary social studies. The elementary TEKS in social studies should align and integrate student expectations focused on integrating social studies disciplinary knowledge and skills (i.e., civics and government, economics, geography, and history) with the TEKS for English language arts and reading and encourage meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active pedagogy. The social studies TEKS should highlight opportunities for students to explore increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse literary texts. These qualities reflect social studies learning that is foundational to the development of children’s knowledge, skills, and dispositions as participating citizens in a global society.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from a [Position Statement from the National Council for the Social Studies](#), Approved 2017.

### Dissenting Opinion

None.

## Recommendation 4. K-8 Framework #1 and Framework #2

The content advisors have put forth two frameworks to consider for revising the kindergarten-grade 8 TEKS under Recommendation 4.

### Framework #1

#### Recommendation

Kim Baxter, Shalon Bond, Pinar Emiralioglu, Don Frazier, Jeff Lash, Alexa Proffitt, Mary Smith

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For grades K–3, the use of story and the understanding of stories from different perspectives, is critical to the study of history. (Please refer to <i>Recommendation 7: Craft Student Expectations across the Strands in a Way That the Story of the Era or Event is Not Lost</i> for more information.)</li> <li>For grades K–3, concepts should be taught through the lenses of local, state, national, and world experiences.</li> </ul>
Grade	
K	<p>Kindergarten should be a place where students learn about their own identity, how they relate to others and how others relate to them, as well as about experiences that are outside of daily experiences.</p> <p>Kindergarten could be a foundation, including the idea of self and identity, community, rules, interacting with the world around us, wants/needs, and basic spatial terms. Students begin to understand that the world is bigger than just their family and their home, and how events impact them.</p>
1	<p>Local and Global Cultures</p> <p>Culture is essentially how people live and why they live that way. Students will understand their own culture within the context of the continent of North America, and then expand that understanding across the world (to include the seven continents) over time. Students should understand that multiple cultures exist within each continent, country, and even community. Students should also understand that cultures change over time and are impacted by physical geography.</p> <p>By the end of this year, students should understand about the seven continents and that they are filled with peoples that each have their own stories.</p>
2	<p>Interacting with the World Around Us</p> <p>Students build on their work in first grade by learning about resources and how humans satisfy their needs by using the resources available to them. Students expand their understanding of the globe as well as the concept of time.</p> <p>Again, the use of story will help students to understand how humans interact with the world around them in different places across the world.</p>
3	<p>Impact of Early Civilizations</p> <p>Building on the foundation of grade two, students in grade three will learn about the beginnings of civilizations and early empires. Through these stories, students will learn how ancient governments and economies functioned, as well as how human societies interacted with the world around them. Students will understand the connections</p>

	between the foundation of civilizations (across the world, nation, and state) to the modern world.
Note: For grades 4–8, this framework is mostly in alignment with Framework #2.	
4	Texas History The focus of this course should be the history, geography, economy, and culture of the area that is currently Texas from the time of its earliest inhabitants through today. The course should include nuanced understanding of Indigenous peoples both past and present. It should also include the interaction between the land and its people since earliest times.
5	World Geography and History 1 [to about 1400/1450ish]
6	World Geography and History 2 [from about 1400/1450ish]
7	Civics and Government [including local, Texas, and US] <sup>1</sup>
8	US History to 1877 [with Texas history embedded and highlighted within chronology]

<sup>1</sup> For this course, we would propose focusing on the following concepts:

- Constitution: structure, its creation (including compromises), successes and failures, and founding principles (best taught within the structure of the Constitution itself)
- Founding documents
- Compare/contrast to the government/Constitution of Texas
- Compare/contrast to local governments
- Citizenship and responsibilities
- Maybe compare to other nations
- Balancing rights of many and the rights of the few, including civil rights in America over time

**Rationale**

- Students should experience an increasingly complex understanding of the world around them and their place in it. Students should end grade three with a working knowledge of the basic concepts of history, economics, civics and government, and geography.
- Beginning in grade four, students focus on particular places and points in history.
- Students end grade eight with a solid foundation in the tools used to study social studies as well as a general understanding of the history of the world. They also have an understanding of U.S. and Texas history in the context of the world.

**Recommendation with Caveat**

Jeff Lash: I support this recommendation with the exception of grade 3. I do not support an elementary curriculum focused on early civilizations. I would recommend keeping the existing grade 3 focus on communities and the world.

## K-8 Framework #2

### Recommendation

Stephen H. Balch, Steve Mintz

#### Social Studies Outline by Grade

- Kindergarten: Foundations for Learning  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade: My Family, My Community, My State, and My Country  
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: Our Diversity and Our Shared Traditions and Heritage  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: People Who Left a Mark on Texas, the Nation, and the World  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Texas: Its People, Geography, Economies, and History  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade: World History and Geography, I (to 1450)  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade: World History and Geography, II (Since 1450)  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Civics and Government, Local, State, and National  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade: United States to 1877

In the lower grades the imparting of historical knowledge should be centered on stories that vividly convey major events, the doings of important personalities, and a recognition that Texans and Americans are diverse and yet share certain common values and institutions. As students mature the emphasis should become more abstract, involving concepts, causes, analysis and interpretations, but also resting on the analysis of primary sources and foundational texts.

Specific details can be found in [Recommendation 4. K-8 Framework 2 - Proposed K-8 Grade Specific Learning Objectives](#).

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
CURRENT TEKS	Rules & Communities	Families, Leaders, and Communities	Communities and Citizenship	American Foundations	Texas History
FRAMEWORK 2 K-GRADE 5	Foundations for Learning (An Introduction to School)	My Family, My Community, My State, and My Country (Me and My World)	Our Diversity and Our Shared Traditions and Heritage	People who Left a Mark on Texas, the Nation, and the World (theme=human agency)	Texas: Its People, Geography, Economies, and History

	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>Grade 8</b>
<b>CURRENT TEKS</b>	U.S. History (survey)	World Cultures	Texas History	U.S. History (early colonial period through Reconstruction)
<b>FRAMEWORK 2 GRADES 6-8</b>	World Geography and History I to 1400/1450	World Geography and History II from 1400/1450	Civics and Government in Texas and the United States (local, state, and federal)	United States to 1877 (embed Texas history throughout as appropriate)

### Rationale

The social studies TEKS need to be—

- More user friendly: Reducing the number of strands will make the TEKS clearer.
- Better sequenced: Each grade’s learning objectives need to build on the previous grades.
- More intentional: Some of the Texas examples seem arbitrary.
- More specific, substantive, and assessable: We need to ask what specifically we want students to know and be able to do and how to measure whether they have mastered that knowledge and skills.

The social studies TEKS also need to ensure that students acquire the cultural literacies—and familiarity with the events, ideas, and individuals—expected of a public school graduate.

The overarching goal of the social studies TEKS should be to ensure that students are aware of diversity – cultural, geographic, political – and of unity, the principles, values, institutions, and commitments that distinguish the American people.

### Recommendation with Caveat:

Jeff Lash: I support this recommendation with the exception of grade 3. I do not support an elementary curriculum built on a list of TBD people. I would recommend keeping the existing grade 3 focus on communities and the world.

Mary Smith: I support Framework 2 but think the amount of content in the second world history year in middle school should be closely looked at. There is too much content to be covered in one year.

### Dissenting Opinion:

Kim Baxter

### Rationale for Dissenting Opinion

While I do not have major misgivings about the general topics covered at each year, the extensive lists referenced as part of this framework are simply too much for teachers to teach and students to learn in an academic year. I also have concerns that by focusing on details as listed, the connections between ideas and the big picture of social studies will be lost.



## Recommendation 5. High School Courses Framework #1 and Framework #2

The content advisors put forth two frameworks to consider for revising the TEKS for high school courses under Recommendation 5.

### High School Courses Framework #1

#### Recommendation

Kim Baxter, Shalon Bond, Pinar Emiralioglu, Jeff Lash, Alexa Proffitt, Mary Smith

- Recommend that work groups follow the same four strands: history, economics, civics and government, and geography
- Recommend that work groups integrate and align the skills strand
- Recommend that work groups follow the same guidelines with respect to specificity and quantity of content.
- Recommend that work groups should recognize that multiple perspectives are our reality and be intentional about including the whole story of history, even the difficult parts.
- Recommend that work groups follow recommendations about helping students understand their identity within the context of their community, state, nation, and world.
- We recommend, where appropriate, organizing the standards for the history courses by era, instead of by strand.

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- World Geography
    - Specify what should be taught, including which concepts and which areas of the world represent those concepts.
    - Integrate the use of story to help students understand the modern world. Students should have opportunities to develop their own voice and tell their own stories.
  - World History:
    - Keep the focus on "world" history, and not be as Eurocentric. Work groups should create standards that teach the history of the world, not just the part of the world impacted by Europe.
    - Begin about 1200 AD. By reducing the timeline, teachers will be able to provide deeper coverage around key concepts.
  - United States History Since 1877
    - Include ways in which history connects to the present world.
    - Include multiple perspectives and the whole story of history.
  - Government and Economics
    - The general recommendations apply here, especially with respect to making the content teachable within the allocated time and clarity around standards.
  - Social Studies Electives:  
Psychology, Sociology, Mexican American Studies, African American Studies, and other special topics
    - Special topics courses should be purposeful and focused on social studies concepts and should not be used as a "catch all."
    - Continue these courses as electives.

- The general recommendations apply here, especially with respect to making the content teachable within the allocated time and clarity around standards.

### Rationale

- The titles of the high school courses are appropriate.
- The issues identified with the current K-12 standards in general (broad, too much to teach, eight strands) are the same issues seen in the high school standards as they are currently written, and these issues should be addressed.

### Dissenting Opinion

Stephen H. Balch on World History

#### Rationale for Dissenting Opinion

The history of early civilization, especially Greco-Roman history and the origins of Christendom, deserve the sophisticated treatment that only a high school course can provide.

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## High School Courses Framework # 2

### Recommendation

Stephen H. Balch, Steve Mintz

We recommend revisions to the existing high school TEKS American History, World History, United States Government, and Economics standards that are designed to make the standards clearer, more specific and substantive, and more assessable. In each set of recommendations, we emphasize rich content and clarity of expectations about the outcomes that are to be meaningfully assessed.

Framework # 2 also seeks to pitch content at a level of sophistication suitable to prepare students for both college and informed citizenship. We value the importance of learning skills but believe these skills need to be embedded in specific content.

The subject matter stressed in Framework # 2, be it in American history, world history, U.S. government, or economics seeks to strengthen student understanding of the nature of free institutions, their difficult and often painful evolution, the improvements in the human condition they have wrought, the central role of Western civilization in bringing this transformation about, the continuing if imperfect process of overcoming injustice and inhumanity, and the assaults on freedom and justice that have disfigured the past and still menace the present.

### Rationale

As college educators and educational researchers, we know firsthand that too many students arrive at college with painfully meager knowledge of history, civics and government, economics, and geography.

We believe that our schools and teachers are capable of delivering a great deal more if challenged to do so. Our proposed framework is designed to:

- Make the language, organization, and presentation of the social studies TEKS more user friendly by reducing the number of strands from eight to four and sequencing the learning objectives more developmentally, with each grade's building upon the previous grades.
- Ensure that the learning objectives are specific, substantive, purposeful, and assessable. We spell out, grade by grade, precisely what students should know and be able to do by strand.
- Better prepare graduates for advanced education by placing a greater emphasis on cultural literacy, the essential ideas, events, individuals, concepts, and cultural achievements that every high school graduate should know.
- Introduce students to the geographic and cultural diversity of Texas and the United States, while also ensuring that students appreciate the history, principles, and institutions that bind us together as a single people.
- Enhance coverage of world history and civics so that students will better understand the exceptional character of contemporary American life, including its emphasis on freedom, individual rights, due process, and opportunity.

Specifically, we want to ensure that every public school graduate:

- Understands the principles that underlie the American system of government, the structure, purpose, and actual functioning of the Texas and U.S. governments, and how American government differs from those found elsewhere.
- Understands the development and workings of the American economy as well as key economic concepts, how the U.S. economy differs from economic systems elsewhere, and how to manage money responsibly.
- Is able to locate important places, events, and social phenomena on a map and understands variations in climate, topography, and the distribution of natural resources, how people have adapted to and made use of the physical environment, and how to use geographical and cartographic terms correctly.
- Is aware of the diversity and development of human social, cultural, political, and economic institutions; understands the political, cultural, economic, religious, and social history of Texas and United States, including the history, struggles, and achievements of the diverse peoples who make up their population; and is able to formulate important historical questions, locate, closely read, evaluate, and interpret historical evidence, and evaluate conflicting historical interpretations.

The sets of course recommendations can be found in the document [Recommendation 5, HS Framework #2: Proposed Revisions to High School Courses](#).

### Dissenting Opinion

Kim Baxter, Mary Smith

### Rationales for Dissenting Opinion

K. Baxter: While I do not have major misgivings about the general topics covered at each year, the extensive lists referenced as part of this framework are simply too much for teachers to teach and students to learn in an academic year. I also have concerns that by focusing on details as listed, the connections between ideas and the big picture of social studies will be lost.

M. Smith: While there is much I like about the topics covered each year, I feel very strongly that the world history course should remain as a world history course and not as a western civilization course as proposed in Framework 2. The world is increasingly interdependent with China as one of the major financial powers in the world. It is critical that our students understand how the eastern civilizations operate also. As our working group discussed placing world history content into the K-8 grades, we hoped that it would alleviate some of the pressure off of the high school world history teachers so they would have more time to teach in depth due to reducing the time periods they would teach.

## Recommendation 6. Scope and Clarity of Standards

### Recommendation

Kim Baxter, Shalon Bond, Pinar Emiraliloglu, Donald Frazier, Jeff Lash, Alexa Proffitt, Mary Smith

- Standards should be written in a way that the amount of content required for one year can be reasonably taught within one academic calendar year. This might mean that standards are combined or eliminated. Additionally, we recommend an increase in the specificity of the standards. Teachers should have a clear understanding of what students should know and be able to do at the end of the course. When the standards include more material than can be taught, teachers are left to make decisions about what is included and what is excluded, and instruction then varies greatly across the state. The social studies TEKS 1) need to be user friendly; 2) should reduce the number of strands; 3) should be purposeful, specific, substantive, and assessable.
- Understanding that social studies concepts are extremely broad, difficult decisions will need to be made as the standards are written. There is value in a purposeful focus with respect to what students should learn. Depth is frequently more important than breadth. This may mean that some topics that are deemed important, especially specific names and dates, will be left out of the standards. The TEKS should address exclusively on essential knowledge and skills. The working group should try to distinguish between what is truly essential and what is peripheral. The benefit, however, is that students will have the opportunity to actually learn the standards as they are written. If standard writers try to appease everyone, they will end up pleasing no one.
- We recommend that work groups should recognize that multiple perspectives are our reality and should be intentional about including the whole story of history, even the difficult parts. It is important to understand that differences exist, have value, and make us stronger as a nation.
- When writing the standards, what teachers should teach should be specified in the language of the student expectation. "Including" statements as they are written in the current standards are helpful. "Such as" statements as they are written in the current standards are not helpful and should be avoided because they create ambiguity with respect to what students should learn. This supports assessment because the standards are purposeful and it is clear what students need to know and master.

### Rationale

Social studies instruction is important, and both teachers and students need clear direction about what it is that is to be taught and learned. Additionally, what is to be taught and learned should be reasonable within the academic school year.

### Dissenting Opinion

None.

## Recommendation 7. Craft Student Expectations across the Strands in a Way That the Story of the Era or Event is Not Lost

Shalon Bond, Jeff Lash, Alexa Proffitt

### Recommendation

We recommend that standards and student expectations be written in such a way as to encourage connections between disciplines (civics and government, economics, history, and geography) to form a holistic understanding of the story.

### Rationale

The use of stories should be used to support the understanding of social studies K-12. Understanding how human civilizations interact and cohabitate should not be taught disconnected from geography, civics and government, history, or economics. Therefore, presenting the content in the standards through topics based on chronology and/or regions supports student understanding. The use of stories supports conceptual understanding of the skills required for mastery.

Multiple perspectives to the same story are important for deeper understanding of human experiences. Therefore, include essential stories that contribute to the development of our current society locally, nationally, and internationally.

### Dissenting opinion

None.

## Recommendation 8. Recommend that Texas Content be Integrated within Each Grade Level as Appropriate

### Recommendation

Kim Baxter, Shalon Bond, Donald Frazier, Jeff Lash, Mary Smith

The goal is to make the study of Texas an important and organic part of social studies. The work groups should look for natural places where Texas-specific content and requirements from state law fit within the four strands. This recommendation can align with both proposed frameworks for the standards.

The document entitled [\*Recommendation 8. "A Curriculum for Texas"\*](#) is provided to serve as guiding principles regarding this recommendation and should be provided to the work groups.

### Rationale

Many states required their students to study their state's history at one time. With various fields competing for instructional time, states began to view the field as unnecessary and reduced or even eliminated state history. Texas public schools, however, still choose to insist that its students be exposed to the history of the state because it is seen as vital to producing productive citizens. Moreover, Texas' rich past offers an opportunity to introduce students to history on a broad scale since many events involve regional and even international influences. In essence, Texas History is a microcosm of the history of North America and the world.

Diversity is the hallmark of Texas when it comes to geography, people, and culture. A drive across the state will take the traveler through woodlands, prairies, high plains, deserts and even mountains. Texas' location as a passageway for the continent of North America ensured that people of different races and cultures would meet and interact. Their descendants are still here today as modern Texans.

Most historians will agree that the history of North America is taught with an emphasis on settlement of the continent from the direction of east to west. The result is that students learn an Anglo-centric interpretation that highlights the founding of the English colonies along the east coast. Although this has been a valid and useful approach, the study of Texas as a borderland introduced students view in which movement comes from other directions and places, giving the state its unique character. Additionally, Texas History presents the opportunity to learn about the nature of government, especially a republic. As the founders of the American nation foresaw, the continued existence and well-being of the United States relies on instilling the values associated with good citizenship in its population. The story of Texas is that of American values and world views—applied. The framing generation in this country formed the concept of the United States, but it was in Texas where these ideals were, and continue to be, tested, and proved.

History alone doesn't tell the whole story. It may tell us how we are, who we are, but not necessarily why we are, the way we are, and why we do the things we do!

First, studying how Texas culture formed, and the influences it formed, help build vibrant communities. The study of cultural values is a source of delight and wonder for students and it encourages creativity

and enhances a community's sense of place. The study of culture also enhances the lessons of diversity and builds empathy among groups that might identify differently from each other.

From a purely practical standpoint, understanding culture helps inform how we see ourselves, how we want others to see us, who we want to be, and how we see the wider world. Being aware of these aspects of life is powerful, and ends up yielding personal, and economic benefits, well into the future.

Traditionally, the Seventh Grade is where Texas History is taught. However, this is about more than just Texas History. This is about Texas cultural sustainability. As such, we should take a K-12 approach.

Seventh Grade Texas History, a rite of passage for generations of students in the Lone Star State, has helped to create a common language for discussing a usable past. Building upon a groundwork laid in fourth grade and elsewhere—it has helped build a shared culture that builds civic engagement and promotes social capital in the state's citizenry.

To this end, a shared conversation about lives lived in community ultimately builds trust. Not only between individuals, but also trust in the broad fabric of social institutions. When fully mature, this trust manifests itself as shared values, virtues, and expectations within the people. If this social capital—this trust—is not crafted and nourished within each educational cohort, within each wave of students, it decays. Eventually, this decay begins to manifest itself in strife, conflict, pessimism, and catastrophic social problems.

There is more to Texas than just Seventh Grade Texas History. It is an across the curriculum, K-12 endeavor. Texas is not just a one semester, or even a one year, curiosity. It is as much an idea, a people, and a shared endeavor, as a place. This approach is designed to nurture and build Texas's social capital for generations and to seek the common good in the process.

History will be front and center. It is the master key that provides the context for everything. Still, other disciplines in the humanities including modern languages, art, literature, politics, anthropology, archaeology, political geography, and religion, will play their parts as well. It will be a process of ramping up toward the middle grades, and then a reinforcement of those lessons in high school classes.

The objective of is to present a curriculum to teach Texas that encompasses the following elements:

- Introduction of basic chronology of events
- Introduction of key historical figures
- Introduction of key historical concepts
- Integration with local, regional, and world history
- Context and relevance to the time and place in which the students live
- Give students a solid understanding of citizenship and republican government
- Explore the evolution of Texas culture and its relation to Texas history

Texas is the tenth largest economy in the world; it is the second largest state in the Union but heading toward being number one. It exerts profound influence upon national and international affairs. A com-



prehensive knowledge of the culture and context of Texas will position our students to work in, or with, Texas people, products, and partnerships, well into the future.

### Dissenting Opinion

None.

## Recommendation 9. Create a Strand Comprised of General Inquiry, Literacy, and Discipline-Specific Skills

### Recommendation

Kim Baxter, Shalon Bond, Pinar Emiralioglu, Don Frazier, Alexa Proffitt, Mary Smith

We recommend students learn both the general skills of literacy and inquiry that are applied in multiple content areas as well as social studies specific skills that are unique to each discipline.

#### General Inquiry & Literacy Skills

We recommend the following skills be organized within a single Inquiry and Literacy Skills strand:

1. Develop Questions and Plan Inquiries
2. Gather Information
3. Organize and Evaluate Sources
4. Communicate Conclusions

#### Discipline-Specific Skills or Social Studies Skills

Each social studies strand has specific disciplinary-based skills that students need to acquire. We recommend that these skills be embedded within each grade level's student expectations.

1. Geography Skills
2. History Skills
3. Civics Skills
4. Economics Skills

We generally recommend that the skills be differentiated by the following grade bands, however in certain circumstances they may be better differentiated from grade to grade. We also recommend that work groups spiral skills by determining when specific skills are introduced, practiced, and mastered.

1. K-2 (lower elementary)
2. 3-5 (upper elementary)
3. 6-8 (middle school)
4. 9-12 (high school)

We encourage work groups to refer to the document [Recommendation 9: Skills Examples](#).

### Rationale

We recommend creating a General Inquiry and Literacy strand that contains skills that students should apply in social studies. The other social studies specific skills within the study of history, geography, civics and government, and economics should be included with specific standards related to those four disciplines.

Learning civics and government, economics, geography, and history is dependent on and contributes to strong literacy. The General Inquiry and Literacy strand is designed to be integrated with the [TEKS for English, Language Arts, and Reading \(ELAR\) \(2017\)](#). Recognizing that ELAR skills and the skills of literacy

and inquiry overlap, we strongly recommend that working groups align the ELAR and social studies TEKS to make connections wherever possible.

Differentiating skills across four grade bands will facilitate a vertical alignment of skills.

Combined with the disciplinary strands of Civics, Economics, Geography, and History, the General Inquiry and Literacy strand unites significant content with strong literacy practices.

The skills are listed and described in Table 2.

**Table 2. Recommended Inquiry Strand Skills with Descriptions**

	Skill	Skill Title	Skill Description
<b>General Inquiry and Literacy Skills</b>	1	Develop Questions and Plan Inquiries	Students will develop inquiry questions and plan investigations. Students will connect self and previous knowledge, and will gain background and context.
	2	Gather Information	Students will gather information and data from multiple sources to help them answer their inquiry questions and define the scope of their investigation.
	3	Organize and Evaluate Sources	Students will organize and evaluate information and data in order to construct new understandings connected to previous knowledge.
	4	Communicate Conclusions	Students will communicate evidence-based conclusions.
<b>Discipline-Specific Skills</b>	5	Geography Skills	Students will be able to express location (Where is it?), describe the conditions (What is it like there?) and connections between locations (How is it linked to other locations?) and use spatial reasoning (Why there?) to organize knowledge about conditions and connections and to suggest questions for further inquiry.
	6	History Skills	Students will apply chronological thinking, will contextualize events, decisions, and historical figures, and will engage in historical thinking, and historical argumentation. Students will also learn how to differentiate between primary and secondary sources.
	7	Civics Skills	Students will evaluate information sources, engage in civic discourse, detect fallacies in reasoning, understand conflicting perspectives, and make evidence-based arguments. Work groups should reference the language in SB 3 to guide their work on student expectations.
	8	Economic Skills	Students will evaluate information to understand decisions based on unlimited wants versus limited resources and analyze economic decisions.

**Recommendation with Caveat**

Jeff Lash, Mary Smith

We strongly support this recommendation, however, we would eliminate civics skills and economic skills from the list of discipline-specific skills. We believe that the listed civics and economics skills are redundant, as they are included in general inquiry and literacy skills.

## Recommendation 10. Provide Additional Details and Recommendations Regarding Social Studies Skills

### Recommendation

Stephen H. Balch, Steve Mintz

Two members of the content advisory committee argue on behalf of detailed, grade-level student expectations for content and skills which are contained in the attached [\*Recommendation 10: Essential Social Studies Skills\*](#).

### Rationale

The TEKS review work groups need specific, targeted examples of the kinds of content and skills we expect students to meet at the end of each grade level.

### Dissenting Opinion

Kim Baxter, Shalon Bond, Jeff Lash, Alexa Proffitt, Mary Smith

### Rationale for Dissenting Opinion

While we support the spirit of the recommendation, namely the need for grade-level student expectations to combine content and skills, we do not support this recommendation because it is based on an incomplete document that does not align with previous strand-related recommendations.