
Thoughts on the Proposed Revisions to the K-8 Social Studies TEKS
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Introduction

After careful review of the draft K-8 Social Studies TEKS revisions, I have concerns about the proposed Chronologic Framework, the inconsistent use of strands, and the organization of process skills. At this point in the revision process however, rejecting the Chronologic Framework in favor of the Enhanced Framework, presented at that June SBOE meeting, is the priority (see Table 1.).

How did we get here?

How did we get here – at the point of considering a radical revision to the social studies framework? The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has stated that by consensus, content advisors suggested the revision. This is not true. Content advisors did discuss the Existing Social Studies Framework and offered minor revisions, not the sweeping changes reflected in the proposed Chronologic Framework. The Agency has also stated that the results of a survey of teachers indicated a desire for the framework revision. To my knowledge, TEA has not released the survey results to the public. Additionally, TEA has not presented any research supporting the use of pure chronology as the grades 3-8 social studies framework. The answer to how we have gotten to the point of reimagining the K-8 social studies TEKS framework, therefore, remains a mystery. Yet here we are, on the verge of radically changing the social studies framework for no good reason.

Thoughts on Implementing the Proposed Chronologic Framework

Implementing the proposed Chronologic Framework will

- Betray the interdisciplinary nature of social studies in favor of pure history.
- Perpetuate a myth that elementary teachers have time to teach complex world history concepts.
- Create an unrealistic expectation that students will matriculate to high school with a mastery of world history from 20,000 BCE to 1600 CE.
- Require grade 3-6 teachers to master and adapt high school world history content for young learners.
- Require teacher training certification programs to completely redesign their K-8 social studies curricula.
- Add to the list of professional frustrations pushing teachers out of the classroom.

Thoughts on Implementing the Proposed Enhanced Framework

Implementing the proposed Enhanced Framework will

- Provide significant, practical, revisions to the existing K-8 TEKS.
- Honor the interdisciplinary nature of social studies.
- Vertically align and spiral student expectations.
- Enhance the study of Texas history and preserve the 6th Grade Contemporary World Cultures course.

Recommendation

I recommend that the State Board of Education (SBOE) direct the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to instruct K-8 social studies TEKS working groups to

- **Adopt the “Enhanced Framework” presented at the June SBOE meeting**

Table 1. Comparison of Existing and Proposed Grade Level Social Studies Frameworks (Scope and Sequence)

Grade	Existing Framework	Proposed Enhanced Framework	Proposed Chronologic Framework
K	Self, Home, Family, and Classroom	Foundations in Social Studies	Journey – Community, Texas, America, and the World
1	Classroom, School, and Community	Foundations of Texas	Culture – Community, Texas, America, and the World
2	Local Community Connections	Foundations of Our Nation	Migration – Community, Texas, America, and the World
3	Communities and the World	US and the World	World History 20,000BCE – 600BCE
4	Texas History Overview	Texas History Overview	World History 550BCE-900CE
5	US History Overview	US History Overview	World History 600-1600CE
6	Contemporary World	Contemporary World	History of the Americas to 1780s
7	Texas History	Texas History with Connections to US History	History of the US and Texas 1783-1870s
8	US History to 1877	US History to 1877	History of the US and Texas 1876-1970s