

## Guidelines for Content Advisor Feedback

Working Groups B, D, & E

Alexa M. Proffitt, Ph.D.

My feedback is focused on grades 6-8 and the ethnic studies courses. I have some concerns around the “TEKS Guide” versus what is written in the actual standards themselves. Will there be some sort of expectation setting surrounding how teachers utilize the TEKS guide to inform their planning and instruction? There is a lot of content that has been left to be embedded in the guides and not embedded in the standards themselves, therefore I would love to have further clarity around their use.

### GUIDING QUESTION: SOCIAL STUDIES PRACTICES

- 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.**

The category of “Civic Analysis” is necessary and meaningful, however there needs to be more ‘analysis’ in the corresponding skills. Can students analyze governmental and democratic processes instead of just knowing how to explain them? These standards need to be able to provide students with the opportunity to actually analyze and apply their analysis to civics discourse, and as the skills currently stand, that does not seem to be the aim.

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

The Research and Inquiry as well as the Media Literacy sections of these skills are the only sections that allow for appropriate rigor to be embedded within the provided grade spans. I believe that the sections that do not allow for analysis or evaluation to also live in the lower grade spans forces our students to be taught in spaces that do not adequately challenge their thinking. Young adolescents in the middle grades, as well as elementary students, have the ability to engage in deep analytical work. The social studies skills/practices should honor that ability throughout all of the grade ranges.

#### Social Studies Analytical Discipline Skills

- 6-8 (A) describe continuity and change over time through reasoning skills
  - Middle grades students are consistently underestimated in their abilities to analyze content and the world around them. To solely have the analysis of continuity and change over time living in the high school grades, does a great disservice to our middle grades students.
- This lack of opportunity for middle grades students to engage in analysis work is also present in 6-8B.
- K-2 (B) compare perspectives of people in the past to people of the present
  - Is this meant to read “compare perspectives held by people” or is it asking about students being able to compare various perspectives about people?

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

N/A

### GUIDING QUESTIONS: K-8

- 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?**

The grade levels that I specifically analyzed do have a complete and logical development of social studies concepts. I believe that there has been a vast improvement of that development in comparison to the previous standards.

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

There is much more breadth to the learning, with the opportunity for significant depth. I would love for there to have been more opportunity for place-based learning to be embedded within the standards. Students need to also understand the specific histories of the land and its Indigenous peoples in the direct context of where they are learning and living.

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

There is much more opportunity for analytical work to be done in the middle grades. As this draft is written, there is too little opportunity for students to be engaging in true analysis work and the standards remain more at the ability for students to describe historical events and concepts without having the opportunity to analyze those events and concepts.

**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.**

Skills are embedded throughout the 6-8 grades draft standards, however my concerns with the skills/practices not matching the rigor that is necessary for the middle grades remains.

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

The SEs have been greatly streamlined and are clearly stated.

**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.**

N/A

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

My specific suggestions in regards to some of the middle grades standards are listed below.

Grade 6 - p. 52

- I find the “time to teach” column to be unnecessary. TEKS are the standards, TEKS are not curriculum. It is imperative that individuals within local school districts are able to utilize their content and curricular expertise to support teachers in how long specific content can and should be covered. If it is necessary to leave the “time to teach” information it should be housed in the TEKS guide as reference for experts who will be building curriculums from these standards.
- 6th Grade Intro:
  - Instead, the purpose of grouping the standards into chronological eras is for students to be able to make connections within and outside across of specific periods.
  - The introduction states, “ students study the history of the American continents, including world events, from pre-European contact to the 1780s,” yet all of the ‘historical content’ listed next does not include any specificity of experience outside of what is now the U.S.

- The historical content includes Indigenous Nations, Exploration to Colonization, Colonial Life, the Road to Independence, the American Revolution, and the Articles of Confederation
  - What does “Exploration to Colonization” reference? Are we separating the ideas from one another?
- 6.1: Indigenous Nations (1400s to 1500s). The student understands early indigenous cultures and their development in North and South America. The student is expected to:
  - Need to capitalize “I” in Indigenous whenever it is in reference to people throughout the standards, and there are many instances throughout where they are not capitalized
- All of standard 6.1 is devoid of specificity in relation to Indigenous peoples and land. There is no acknowledgement of place-based learning, where students come to understand the specific history and current reality of the indigenous land on which they currently reside.
- 6.2A: explain how global innovations in shipbuilding, cartography, and navigation enabled European transatlantic exploration (E, G, H);
  - If this grade is meant to focus on the “Americas,” how are we erasing the idea of ‘exploration,’ travel, navigation, and innovation of the Indigenous peoples of these lands? To only provide examples of ‘explorers’ and innovators from a European context is a disservice to the genius of peoples from outside a European context.
- 6.3: Exploration to Colonization (1492 to 1600s). The student understands the impacts of exploration. The student is expected to:
  - The knowledge statement for 6.3 specifically includes the ability for students to understand the impacts of exploration. Impacts should include specificity in relation to people, land, and societies.
  - 6.3A: compare the English, French, and Spanish relationships with indigenous nations and analyze how they led to the spread of disease, conflict, and cooperation (E, G, H);
    - The foundational understanding of settler colonialism is imperative in order for students to truly understand the ways in which colonization impacts Indigenous peoples. There should be a separate SE that is specific to the ways in which Indigenous people fought (and have continued to fight) against colonization.
- 6.4B: explain the different religious motivations of the English, French, and Spanish in colonizing the Americas and the impacts on Indigenous populations (H); and
  - There must also be an analysis of the impacts of these motivations, such as the active genocide of Indigenous people in order to gain land.
- 6.5C: summarize the successes and failures of the mission and presidio systems
  - As well as the direct impact upon Indigenous groups.
- 6.6J: identify how colonists and enslaved Africans resisted slavery in the colonies (C/G, E, H); and
  - Identify how enslaved Africans and colonists...

#### 7th grade

- 7.2C: describe how westward expansion and nativism led to the American assimilation and relocation efforts of the Homestead Act, Dawes Act, American Indian Board Schools, and Red River War (C/G, G, H).
  - American Indian Boarding Schools

- 7.5C: locate Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippine Islands, and Cuba on a map, and describe their significance as territories relinquished by Spain as a result of the Spanish American War (C/G, E, G, H); and
  - The context of 'territories' should be connected to the idea of colonialism

### GUIDING QUESTIONS: ETHNIC STUDIES

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

Each course does follow a complete and logical development of social studies concepts.

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

As far as my expertise in ethnic studies can attest, there are not missing gaps or concepts.

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

The learning embedded within these courses is necessary for our students to be able to attain postsecondary success. Our students need to be able to learn about themselves, their histories, and their communities. I believe that these courses should be available earlier than high school and that this content being taught in the earlier grades would actually further serve our students being successful in their postsecondary pursuits.

- 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.**

These courses could serve as the model for embedding specific social studies skill/practices into the contents for other grades levels/courses.

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

The student expectations are clear and specific.

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

The scope of the courses is appropriate, I would even think that it is possible for the content of these courses to be taught over more than one course. Ethnic studies is a part of history, and therefore touches all aspects of history embedded in other courses, therefore it could serve to have courses such as an AAS 1 & 2.

- 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.**

N/A

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

Not specific to these courses being improved, but there must be the discussion around these standards, or courses as a whole, being able to be embedded within the earlier grades. I have listed a few suggestions specific to MAS listed below.

MAS

- appreciate the consistent reference to resistance against colonization
- moving of people specifically named in the standards to the TEKS guide instead of having them embedded...what could this mean for expectations around the full amount of information to be taught?
- MAS.4A: identify and examine the ideologies of American Expansionism and Imperialism using primary and secondary sources (C/G, E, G, H);
  - This standard has settler colonialism listed as part of the TEKS guide. Due to settler colonialism being a foundation of Mexico and the United States, this terminology should be present earlier in the standards and embedded within the standard themselves, instead of solely within the TEKS guide.
- MAS.4F: evaluate the causes of the Mexican Revolution and its impact on the United States and people including immigration, racial violence, and militarization of the border; and (C/G, G, H)
  - Potential rewording: *evaluate the causes of the Mexican Revolution, its impact on the United States, and people including immigration, racial violence, and militarization of the border; and (C/G, G, H)*
- MAS.6I: identify and analyze the causes and impact of Chicana Feminism and intersectionality using primary and secondary sources (G, H);
  - The TEKS Guide portion includes *intersectionality - multiple perspectives & chicano feminism* and I need some clarity around what each of those means. Are we saying that intersectionality is solely multiple perspectives or are we naming intersectionality as the intersections of identity and their relationship to power? Can we name specific Chicana feminists within the *guide* section?