

Overview of Changes Social Studies Standards

Principles of the Standards Review Process

The Colorado Model Content Standards revision process was informed by these guiding principles:

- Begin with the end in mind; define what prepared graduates need in order to be successful using 21st century skills in our global economy.
- Align K-12 standards with early childhood expectations and higher education.
- Change is necessary.
- Standards will be deliberately designed for clarity, rigor, and coherence.
- There will be fewer, higher and clearer standards.
- Standards will be actionable.

Notable Changes to the Colorado Model Content Standards in History, Geography, Economics, and Civics

The most evident changes to the Colorado standards are replacing grade-band expectations (K-4, 5-8, and 9-12) with grade-level specific expectations. These are explained here in addition to other changes that are apparent upon comparison between the current social studies standards and the proposed changes.

1. **Impact of standards articulation by grade level.** The original Colorado Model Content Standards for history, geography, civics, and economics were designed to provide districts with benchmarks of learning at grades 4, 8, and 12. The standards revision subcommittee was charged with providing more a specific learning trajectory of concepts and skills across grade levels, from early school readiness to postsecondary preparedness. Articulating standards by grade level in each area affords greater specificity (clearer standards) in describing the learning path across levels (higher standards), while focusing on a few key ideas at each grade level (fewer standards).
2. **Articulation of high school standards.** High school standards are not articulated by grade level, but by standard. This is intended to support district decisions about how best to design curriculum and courses- whether through an integrated approach, a traditional course sequence, or h alternative approaches such as career and technical education. The high school standards delineate what all high school students should know and be able to do in order to be well prepared for any postsecondary option. The individual standards are not meant to represent a course or a particular timeframe. All high school students should be able to reach these rigorous standards within four years.
3. **Integration of P-2 Council's recommendations.** The subcommittees integrated the P-2 building blocks document into the P-12 standards, aligning expectations to a great degree. Important concepts and skills are defined clearly across these foundational years, detailing expectations to a much greater extent for teachers and parents.
4. **Standards are written for mastery.** The proposed revisions to standards define mastery of concepts and skills. Mastery means that a student has facility with a skill or concept in multiple contexts. This is not an indication that instruction at a grade-level expectation begins and only occurs at that grade level. Maintenance of previously mastered concepts and skills and scaffolding future learning are the domain of curriculum and instruction- not standards.

5. **Intentional integration of technology use, most notably at the high school level.** Using appropriate technology allows students access to concepts and skills in ways that mirror the 21st century workplace.
6. **Intentional opportunities for integration.** The subcommittees in history, geography, civics, and economics worked within content area and also within multi-content area grade level groups. The social studies standards were created to intentionally encourage integration. In addition, the subcommittees were focused on the consolidation of standards.
7. **Intentional integration of personal financial literacy.** Personal financial literacy was integrated P-13 in the economics standards in order to ensure the school experience prepared students for the financial expectations that await them on leaving school. Personal financial literacy expectations are indicated as (PFL) within the document and the content focuses on: goal setting and financial responsibility; income and career; planning, saving, and investing; using credit; and risk management and insurance. The mathematics standards were also intentionally integrated with personal financial literacy.

Below is a quick guide to changes in the social studies standards:

Area	Summary of changes	
	Previous Standards	Revised Standards
Number of standards	Separate standards.	The proposal is to combine and create 4 standards in social studies.
Names of standards	<p>History:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chronology 2. Historical Inquiry 3. Societies are diverse 4. Science, technology, economic activity 5. Political institutions and theories 6. Religious and philosophical ideas <p>Geography:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Geographic Tools 2. Place and Region 3. Physical processes 4. Economic, political, cultural, and social processes 5. Human and environment interaction 6. People, places, and environments to understand past, present and plan for future <p>Economics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scarcity 2. Production & Distribution 3. Trade, exchange and interdependence <p>Civics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purpose of government and constitutional principles 2. Structure and function of government 3. Political relationships 4. Roles, rights and responsibilities of citizens 	<p>Standard 1. History: History develops moral understanding, defines identity and creates an appreciation of how things change while building skills in judgment and decision-making. History enhances the ability to read varied sources and develop the skills to analyze, interpret, and communicate.</p> <p>Standard 2. Geography: Geography provides students with an understanding of spatial perspectives and technologies for spatial analysis, awareness of interdependence of world regions and resources and how places are connected on local, national and global scales.</p> <p>Standard 3. Economics: Economics teaches a student how society manages its scarce resources, how people make decisions, how people interact in the domestic and international markets, and how forces and trends affect the economy as a whole. Personal financial literacy applies the economic way of thinking to help individuals understand how to manage their own scarce resources using a logical decision-making process of prioritization based on analysis of the costs and benefits of every choice.</p> <p>Standard 4. Civics: Civics teaches students the complexity of the origins, structure, and functions, of governments; the rights, roles and responsibilities of ethical citizenship; the importance of law; and the skills necessary to participate in all levels of government.</p>
Integration of 21st century and postsecondary workforce readiness skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not deliberately addressed in original document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A design feature of the revision process. • Intentionally integrated into evidence outcomes.
P-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards articulated for grade band beginning with kindergarten. • Benchmarks articulated by grade band of K-4, with most geared to upper grades. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-K included. • Grade level expectations articulated for each elementary grade level. • Clear expectations articulated for grades P-2.
Number of grade level expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average of 27 benchmarks per grade level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average of 10 grade level expectations per grade level (P-8), with 17 for high school.