

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and Readiness Competencies in Social Studies

The social studies subcommittees embedded 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, school readiness, and postsecondary and workforce readiness skills into the draft revised standards utilizing descriptions developed by Coloradans and vetted by educators, policymakers, and citizens.

### **Colorado's description of 21st century skills**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are the synthesis of the essential abilities students must apply in our rapidly changing world. Today's students need a repertoire of knowledge and skills that are more diverse, complex, and integrated than any previous generation. Social studies is inherently demonstrated in each of Colorado 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, as follows:

Critical Thinking and Reasoning – Social studies is a discipline grounded in critical thinking and reasoning. Doing history, geography, civics and economics involves recognizing patterns and relationships across time and space. Social studies provide the structure that makes it possible to describe patterns that exist in nature and society.

Information Literacy – The disciplines of social studies equip students with tools and mental habits to organize and interpret a multitude of resources. A social studies student with information literacy skills can effectively analyze primary and secondary sources, detect bias, use learning tools, including technology, and clearly communicate thoughts using sound reasoning.

Collaboration – The content areas of social studies involve the give and take of ideas. In the course of understanding social studies, students offer ideas, strategies, solutions, justifications, and proofs for others to evaluate. In turn, the student interprets and evaluates the ideas, strategies, solutions, and justifications of others.

Self-Direction – Understanding social studies requires a productive disposition, curiosity and self-direction. This involves monitoring and assessing one's thinking and persisting to search for patterns, relationships, cause and effect, and an understanding of the events and people throughout time.

Invention – The social studies are a dynamic set of content area disciplines, ever expanding with new ideas and understandings. Invention is the key element as students make and test theories, create and use social studies tools, search for patterns and themes, and make connections among ideas, strategies and solutions.