Thank you for your hard work in revising the standards! The committees have done an excellent job in reviewing and revising the documents.

I commend the committees for the strong inclusion of content regarding climate and climate change in the Science Standards. The committee provided a strong, balanced approach to help students explore these concepts and the issues that they will be helping to solve in the future.

I also commend both the science and social studies committees for their strong inclusion of language regarding human and environment interactions. Students have the opportunity to explore their role in the places we live, work, and play as Coloradans.

Colorado's Essential Skills demonstrate important skills that students need to have to be successful in life. They were well written and clear. Several of the essential skills could be strengthened within the content standards.

**Entrepreneurial Skills**

**Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:** Please consider adding more emphasis on planning in the standards. The standards in Science and Social Studies have a strong focus on designing solutions, but there needs to be opportunities to identify the steps it would take to enact those solutions. Without practicing these skills, students will not master the skills needed to solve problems.

**Personal Skills**

**Personal Responsibility:** Personal responsibility could be strengthened throughout the science standards. How do students plan to enact solutions they design? How does personal responsibility play a role in designing solutions.

**Perseverance/Resilience:** Particularly in science, Consider including more opportunities through evidence outcomes to help students develop the skills to evaluate the results of actions/solutions and make changes based on results.

**Civic/Interpersonal Skills**
Civic Engagement: Please consider including more emphasis on this skill in Science and more opportunities to directly practice skills in Social Studies. In several places throughout the Social Studies standards the language regarding "practicing" civic engagement skills was weakened to developing understanding or knowledge.

Thank you for all your hard work to ensure students in Colorado have the knowledge and skills they need to be successful.

Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education
1536 Wynkoop St, Suite 314
Denver, CO 80202

www.caee.org

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Join us Online!
In general the revisions are very encouraging. Below are a few highlight observations.

Science:
The format of Grade Level Expectations and Evidence Outcomes create a very clear lens to determine what learning will look like and how it can be measured in the classrooms. The Boundary statements will provide clarity for districts and buildings to identify clear learning targets and focus on how to use manageable content as a vehicle to develop inquiry and solutions. It would make life much easier and learning more focused if the social studies standards could follow a similar format.

Social Studies:
In general the revisions have created clarity and stronger alignment between the focus of the four disciplines. Too many of the grade level expectations act more as titles than learning targets. Hard to know what learning should look like and how to measure the statement when there is no action included.

Economics: The size of the high school economic standards are a concern. The current set of standards include 7 grade level expectations with 29 evidence outcomes. These in and of themselves present a challenge for districts and buildings to design meaningful learning opportunities that are connected and relevant. The revised high school standards include 8 grade level expectations and 43 evidence outcomes. More work needs to be done here in determining critical learning outcomes. Shoving the math related personal financial standards in as new outcomes is not reasonable. Several of the evidence outcomes for personal financial literacy are completely disjointed with the appearance that they were PFL math standards that needed a place to be housed (i.e. 6th Grade E.2.e). They don't add to the flow of concept understanding or skill development.

History:
One of the first grade evidence outcomes looks to be a knee jerk reaction to the current political atmosphere. The first grade history 2.c evidence outcome reaches beyond grade level appropriateness. I appreciate the focus of students learning about the multicultural and democratic way of life in our country. However, the example of a raised fist for resistance is not appropriate for first grade. The symbolism and complexity of the fist is beyond the conceptual development for first grade. Additionally, the raised fist can also resemble solidarity depending on perspective. The listed examples outside of the raised fist are sufficient.

Civics:
The first grade civic standard 2.b is of the same concern as the history standard I previously addressed. Removing the national anthem and replacing it with raised fist is a concern. I hate to think that the political firestorm over the anthem would push us to remove focusing on the civic symbol it represents. We still need to share with students what the anthem has represented over time in a safe manner that helps students understand how and why different groups view it through unique perspectives.

The Kindergarten civics standard 1.a example of protest as an example of civic participation is not grade level appropriate. This needs to be removed and leave the list as is or replace it with sharing of ideas. Students are
not able to successfully understand appropriate ways to protest until the 3rd-4th grade.

Greeley-Evans Weld County School District 6
Dear Dr. Colsman,

Realizing that we are between public input times for the revision of our social studies state standards, I believe it is important to share with you that we are hopeful in the Littleton Public Schools that the social studies review committee will consider adding an emphasis in studying the Holocaust as well as other acts of genocide in the Eastern Hemisphere to the seventh grade social studies standards. Our young adults need to have an early understanding about how groups of people have been and can be mistreated so that it will not be repeated in the future.

We appreciate the committee's consideration of this request and look forward to seeing the draft revisions later this year.

Respectfully,

Littleton Public Schools
ADDRESS 5776 South Crocker St. Littleton, CO 80120
www.littletonpublicschools.net | Accredited With Distinction for 2016

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September 20, 2017

Dr. Stephanie Hartman  
Social Studies Content Specialist  
Colorado Department of Education  
Standards Review and Revision – Social Studies Committee  
201 East Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203

Re: Inclusion of Sikhism in Colorado Social Studies Standards

Dear Dr. Hartman:

I am writing on behalf of the Sikh Coalition, the nation’s largest Sikh civil rights organization, to request inclusion of Sikhism – the world’s fifth largest religion – in Colorado’s social studies standards, alongside other world religions. In making this request, we join a number of Colorado Sikhs who have already provided feedback to your committee about this important issue.

The Colorado Academic Standards for social studies published in December 2009 anticipated that Colorado high schoolers would be able to discuss “the historical development and impact of major world religions and philosophies” and “modern changes in Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism.”¹ The standards also anticipated that seventh graders would gain exposure to world religions.²

Recognizing that the format of these standards may be amended significantly over the next few months during the review and revision process, we believe that the Sikh religion should be included in the new standards wherever other world religions are mentioned.

As you know, the Sikh religion was founded by Guru Nanak over five centuries ago in the Punjab region of South Asia. Today, there are an estimated 25 million adherents of Sikhism throughout the world, including a growing population of Sikhs in Colorado. The Sikh religion is based on a belief that all people are equal before God. Nondiscrimination is a central focus of the Sikh religion and explains why the founders of Sikhism rejected the caste system, gender inequality, and religious exclusivity. Sikh contributions to human rights, world civilization and American history are deeply profound and extremely relevant to today’s world.

¹ [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cosocialstudies/cas-socialstudies-p12-pdf](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cosocialstudies/cas-socialstudies-p12-pdf), at 29.  
As a religious minority in India, Sikhs have faced violent persecution for centuries, from the formative years of the religion to the present, and have not always enjoyed the luxury of writing their own history. Mughal and British imperialists – and, more recently, Hindu nationalists – have consistently attempted to distort or dilute Sikh history as a means of suppressing our community. For example, Sikhism has been inaccurately characterized as a “blend of Hinduism and Islam” or “Hindu sect,” implying that its ideas are neither original nor historically significant. The legacy of these distortions is that Sikhism is largely invisible from history textbooks in the United States or relegated to an inaccurate footnote or sidebar.

Fortunately, Sikhism is increasingly being recognized by scholars worldwide as an independent religion, with its own scripture, sacred language, doctrines, and traditions. Because Asian immigration to the United States was largely restricted on racial grounds until 1965, it has taken at least two generations for Sikh perspectives to surface in American society, including our nation’s schools, and this is why efforts to include accurate information about Sikhs in educational curricula are beginning to accelerate.

This is not merely an issue of historical accuracy and academic integrity. According to Sikh Coalition research, a majority of Sikh American students that we have surveyed across the country since 2007 have experienced bias-based bullying and harassment because of their religious practices, which include wearing a turban and maintaining uncut hair. Many of these students report that there is overwhelming ignorance about their religion among students in our public schools and believe that educating American students about Sikhs is an effective and proactive way to address the problems of bullying and harassment.

Enclosed for your consideration are resources that provide additional context about the Sikh religion in the broad context of social studies. Our interim managing director of programs, Rajdeep Singh Jolly, will monitor the progress of the review and revision process on our behalf in consultation with the Colorado Sikh community.

We look forward to working with you and your colleagues. Please let us know if you require additional information, and thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Sapreet Kaur
Executive Director

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Appendix 1: Sikhism in the Context of World Religions

Background Information on Sikhism:
- Sikhism is the fifth largest world religion, after Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.
- Population of Sikhs:
  - ~25 million Sikhs worldwide
  - 500,000+ Sikhs in America
  - The largest concentrations of Sikhs in America live in California, New York, and New Jersey
- The Sikh faith was founded by Guru Nanak in 1469 in what is now the Punjab region of South Asia (split between present-day Pakistan and India).
- Sikhism is the youngest of the world’s major religions.
- The core Sikh beliefs were shaped by Guru Nanak and his nine successors during the 16th and 17th centuries.
- Sikhism is a distinct, independent and monotheistic religion. It is not a branch or blend of any other faith.
- Sikhs share common religious, social, and political institutions.

Basic Tenets of Sikhism:
- Sikhism teaches that all human beings are equal and can realize the divine within themselves without any human intermediaries or a priestly class. Sikhs believe that each individual can realize the divine through practicing three core beliefs: devotion to God, truthful living and service to humanity.
- There were 10 living Gurus (spiritual guides) who shaped the beliefs of the faith.
- The tenth Guru did not choose a person as the successor but instead gave the Guru-ship to the Guru Granth Sahib and the Guru Khalsa Panth in 1699.
- The Guru Granth Sahib:
  - The Guru Granth Sahib is unique as a religious scripture in that it teaches through poetry set to a formal system of Sikh classical music. In other words, the entire religious scripture may be sung.
  - It is also unique in that it includes the hymns of many non-Sikh saints from diverse religious traditions (Hinduism, Islam, Sufism), making the Guru Granth Sahib uniquely universal.
- The Guru Khalsa Panth:
  - The name given to the community of initiated Sikhs, or Sikhs that have made an active commitment to adopt the Sikh lifestyle.
  - Guru Khalsa Panth is meant to be a society of Sikhs guided by the Guru Granth Sahib who are dedicated to practicing the essential Sikh values: truthfulness, trust, loyalty, generosity, integrity, and spirituality.
- Together, the Guru Granth Sahib and Guru Khalsa Panth are now the Guru of the Sikhs.
The Sikh “Uniform”:

- Sikhs wear an external uniform to remind them at all times of their commitment to the essential Sikh values of equality, religious pluralism, and justice for all. Sikhs can be viewed as ambassadors to their faith.
- This uniform consists of the five Sikh articles of faith. The five Sikh articles of faith all begin with the letter “K” and so are often called the “5 Ks.” Together they form the Sikh uniform or external identity. They are:
  1) Kesh (uncut hair), which is kept covered by a distinctive turban
  2) the Kirpan (religious sword)
  3) Kara (metal bracelet)
  4) Kanga (comb)
  5) Kachera (under-shorts)
- Though the articles of faith have deep personal meaning to the individuals who wear them, the most widely accepted symbolic interpretation of each of the 5 Ks is:
  o Kesh (uncut hair) represents spirituality
  o the Kirpan (religious sword) represents upholding justice and standing up for those who cannot defend themselves
  o Kara (metal bracelet) is a reminder of the Sikh dedication to perform good deeds
  o Kanga (comb) represents cleanliness
  o Kachera (under-shorts) represent self discipline
- In America, 99% of the people you see wearing a turban are Sikhs.
Recommended Resources:

**General:**
  [https://www.onfaith.co/text/10-things-i-wish-everyone-knew-about-sikhism](https://www.onfaith.co/text/10-things-i-wish-everyone-knew-about-sikhism)
- “Who are the Sikhs?” An informational poster. Request free copies by emailing education@sikhcoalition.org, or access a downloadable copy here: [http://www.sikhcoalition.org/resources/educational-materials/qwho-are-the-sikhsq-poster](http://www.sikhcoalition.org/resources/educational-materials/qwho-are-the-sikhsq-poster).

**Elementary School:**
- Recommended children’s books about Sikh children: The Boy With Long Hair by Pushpinder Kaur (The Sikh Foundation), A Lion’s Mane by Navjot Kaur (Saffron Press), Dear Takuya by Jessi Kaur, and Jasmin’s Summer Wish by Elizabeth Glines (Wilderness House Press).
- A great 5 minute video lesson on Sikhs, which comes with a related lesson plan: True Tube’s Charlie and Blue Go to a Gurdwara.
Appendix 2: Contemporary Issues

The history and experiences of Sikhs in the United States offer educators a rich way to connect national and world history to contemporary issues facing Americans today. By teaching students about the experiences of Sikh Americans, educators can combat inaccurate and hateful misconceptions and prepare their students to participate in and contribute to the diverse country and world they live in.

Misrepresentation, Misunderstanding, and the Media

- The media plays a huge part in shaping people’s perceptions about an issue, event, or group. Since many Americans see men with turbans and beards labeled as terrorists in the media they make inaccurate and harmful assumptions that all who maintain a turban and beard are terrorists.
- Couple this with the fact that 99% of turban-wearing people in America are Sikhs, and the effect is disastrous: Sikhs are thought of as terrorists and become the object of bias and discrimination.
- “In North America, the majority of those who wear turbans are Sikhs. As a result, recurring media images of alleged terrorists and negative portrayals of men in turbans have created an environment in which Sikhs are regularly singled out for harassment, verbal abuse and mistreatment by both private and, at times, public actors.” (Taken from the Sikh Coalition report Making Our Voices Heard)
- One way to introduce students to the ignorance and prejudice faced by Sikhs in America is through The Daily Show’s humorous and informative segment on Sikhs. The segment is titled, “Confused Islamophobes Target American Sikhs.” Watch here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RskvZgc_s9g

Sikh American Experiences in the Aftermath of 9/11:

- 9/11 was a tragic event that affected millions of Americans. Unfortunately, as the nation and world grieved in the days after 9/11, many Americans, including Sikh Americans, suffered hatred and anger from their own neighbors. Muslims, Arabs, and Sikhs have felt this backlash through hate crimes, employment discrimination, and bullying in schools.
- The Sikh Coalition reported over 300 bias incidents against Sikh Americans in the first 30 days after 9/11. These incidents in the first 30 days after 9/11 included the firebombing of a Sikh house of worship in Cleveland, Ohio, the stabbing of a Sikh woman in San Diego, the beating of an elderly Sikh with a baseball bat in New York City, and the murder of Balbir Singh Sodhi in Mesa, Arizona.
- Mr. Sodhi was the first American murdered as a result of 9/11. His murder was condemned by President George W. Bush and prosecuted as a hate crime.
- From September 2001 to May 2002, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the federal agency charged with enforcing federal employment discrimination laws, had received 488 complaints of September 11-related employment
discrimination. Of these, 301 people were fired from their jobs. Similarly, as of June 2002, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) reported that it had investigated 111 September 11-related complaints from airline passengers who claimed that they were singled out at security screenings because of their ethnic or religious appearance. The DOT reported that it was also investigating an additional 31 complaints of persons who alleged they were barred altogether from boarding airplanes because of their ethnic or religious appearance.

- In discussions about 9/11, it is imperative that the Muslim, Arab, and Sikh experience after the terrorist attacks be included as part and parcel of the story of the effects of terrorism on all Americans.
- One rich resource for teaching about the Sikh experience following 9/11 is Valarie Kaur’s film “Divided We Fall.” The opening sequence from the film runs at about 7 minutes, and is a great lens for these issues. The “Divided We Fall - opening sequence” video is available on the NewMoonProductions YouTube channel.

Resources for “Sikh American Experiences in the Aftermath of 9/11”:
- Sikh Coalition. Congressional Resolution on Hate Crimes Against Sikhs. http://www.sikhcoalition.org/LegislativeRes1c.asp
- Justice and Democracy: Challenges and Opportunities in the Aftermath of September 11, 2001 Unit 2: The Aftermath of September 11, 2001

Bullying, Discrimination, and Violence:
The nationwide bullying epidemic disproportionately targets Sikh students.
- Turbaned Sikh children experience bullying at over twice the national average.
- Bullying ranges from racist slurs and other verbal abuse to physical assaults. For example, in 2012, Sikh student Japjee Singh was brutally attacked in school, sustaining injuries that required multiple surgeries and left him with irreparable recurrent breathing problem. Japjee Singh and the Department of Justice took legal action to ensure that his school district take measures to protect over 100,000 students from peer-to-peer bullying.

Beyond places of learning, ignorance and misunderstandings about Sikhism manifest in the form of prejudice, discrimination, and hate crimes against Sikhs.
• Sikh soldiers, including Captain Simratpal Singh, the first ever active duty soldier granted a religious accommodation to keep his articles of faith intact, have fought repeatedly for the right to serve while maintaining their articles of faith. Read Captain Singh’s story here: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/02/us/sikh-army-captain-simratpal-singh.html.

• Sikh civilians, targeted for their appearance, are subject to unprovoked acts of violence and hate. In cases such as that of Inderjit Singh Mukker, a Chicago resident and father of two who was brutally attacked in his car during a 2015 hate crime, Sikh Americans are made unsafe by the ignorance and hatred of those around them. Read more here: http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/burr-ridge/crime/ct-dbr-darien-hate-crime-tl-0917-20150915-story.html

The most widely known hate crime committed against the Sikh community was the horrific 2012 Oak Creek Massacre.

• On August 5, 2012, a white supremacist gunman entered the Oak Creek Gurdwara, a community center where Sikhs were worshipping together, and opened fire, killing six and wounding three.

• The Oak Creek Shooting is the second-largest religiously-motivated hate crime in American history.

• For more on the shooting at Oak Creek, watch “Waking in Oak Creek” here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4N-UVoc-d5E.

Resources for “Bullying, Discrimination, and Violence”:

• Lee, Esther Yu Hsi. “Sikh Family Takes On Racist Bullying After Teen Was Beaten And Sent To The Hospital.” Thinkpiece. 16 Oct. 2015, https://thinkprogress.org/sikh-family-takes-on-racist-bullying-after-teen-was-beaten-and-sent-to-the-hospital-8fd8586f7927#.20q771d8e


Appendix 3: Sikhs in North America
(Adapted from Margaret Hill, California 3Rs Project)

Some of the earliest South Asian migrants to North America were Sikhs.

Sikhs first migrated to North America in the early 20th century. The stories of Sikh immigration to North America in the early 20th century can be included in classrooms when teaching American history and South Asian history.

Sikh immigration narratives can not only provide a critical perspective on the history of the Sikh American community, but also help students to better understand how immigration policy, citizenship, and belonging have shifted in meaning over the course of American history.

In this section, you will find background on Sikh migration to the West, notable Sikh Americans (such as the first Asian-American congressman) that can help to shape lesson plans on immigration and serve as reading materials for students. Additionally, this appendix includes primary source materials and discussion questions that can be adopted for a variety of grade levels and topics.

Sikh Migration

General information:
- Sikhism originated in the Punjab region of South Asia (present-day India and Pakistan) in 1469. It was founded by Guru Nanak.
- Sikhism is the world’s fifth largest religion by population. Today, there are sizable Sikh communities all over the world.

Source: BBC
The earliest Sikh migration out of Punjab took place as a result of service in the British Indian army and police. Additionally, semi-skilled Sikh artisans migrated as laborers from Punjab to British East Africa and elsewhere, often to work on building railways.

In 1947, after World War II, and India’s independence from British rule, British-ruled India was partitioned into India and Pakistan. After Partition, South Asians in general, and Sikhs in particular, migrated from India and Pakistan across the world, especially to the United Kingdom and the United States. Most headed to the United Kingdom, but many also headed for North America. The main ‘push’ factor for Sikh migration has been economic. Significant Sikh communities are now found in the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Malaysia, parts of East Africa, Australia and Thailand.

Sikh Immigration to the United States

Sikh immigration to the United States has come about in three general waves:

1. In the early 1900s, Sikhs from British-controlled colonial India to the West Coast of North America, often in search of economic opportunity.

Sikh Americans have played an integral role in the formation of United States immigration policy and law.

For example:

In 1913, the Alien Land Act was passed in California, which prohibited non-citizens -- including Sikhs, known then as “Asian Indians” -- from owning land long-term.

Similarly, the U.S. Immigration Act of 1917 banned the immigration of South Asian laborers (who were almost all Sikh) and prevented South Asians women from migrating to the United States. This law, in addition to the restrictions on interracial marriage--called anti-miscegenation laws--gave rise to a thriving Punjabi Mexican community. Sikh men often married Mexican women since both were categorized in the same race according the racial classifications of the time.

Supplementary Resource: Roots in the Sand, a PBS documentary on Punjabi-Mexican Community (see http://www.pbs.org/rootsinthesand/).

Eventually, in the early 1920s, all Asian immigration, which included immigration from South Asia, was restricted to the United States.

Discuss:

The experience of race and racism in the American context by South Asian immigrants by sharing primary sources written by Sikh Americans in that period. Consider the colonial context in India, which was ruled by the British until 1947. Additionally consider intersections in the experiences of race and racism between South Asian communities and other communities of color.
Primary sources may include: Sant Nihal Sing, “Color Line in the United States of America” (1908): https://www.saada.org/item/20110621-216

2. During the 1960s and 1970s, when the Immigration Act of 1965 allowed people from Asia who would pursue post-graduate degrees in the United States and already had professional skills to come to the United States. This immigration was voluntary and mainly occurred on both coasts of the United States.

With other South Asians, Sikh doctors, engineers, and other professionals immigrated to both coasts of the United States in large numbers.

3. During the 1980s and early 1990s, when Sikhs were escaping political unrest in the Sikh homeland of Punjab, India.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Sikhs in India were targets of state-sanctioned violence and repression, which came to a head in 1984, when the Indian state authorized an attack on the Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), a central site in Sikhism and the seat of Sikh political power. After the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the same year, Sikhs in Delhi and throughout India were attacked in brutal anti-Sikh riots.

To learn more about the violence against Sikhs in the 1980s and 1990s, please see Cynthia Keppley Mahmood, Fighting for Faith and Nation (1996), Gunisha Kaur, Lost in History: 1984 Reconstructed (2009), and Sanjay Suri, 1984: The Anti-Sikh Riots and After (2015).

More Background Information:
Early Immigrants in Rail and Lumber Industries and Farming

The first wave of Sikh immigrants came to North America to do laboring jobs on railway construction, in the lumber mills, and in forestry.

Sikh and South Asian laborers were generally paid less than their white counterparts.

In Northern California, Oregon, and Washington, some Punjabi Sikh immigrants took jobs in lumber mills and logging camps. Between 1903--1908, two thousand Punjabis worked on Western Pacific Railways in Northern California and on a 700--mile road between Oakland and Salt Lake City, which is in large part now the Interstate 80.

Sikh settlement was spread all along the West Coast of North America.

For example: The largest mill community of Sikhs was located in British Columbia, at Fraser Mills in New Westminster. According to Mawa Mangat, who immigrated to this settlement in
Canada in 1925, “There were only two families there then, the rest were all single men.” A Sikh gurdwara (house of worship) was built there in 1908. Sardara Gill, who came to join his father to live and work at Fraser Mills in 1925, says that when he arrived, there were between 200 to 300 Sikhs. They had four or five cookhouses and different sized bunkhouses in which the men slept. Some had thirty, forty or fifty people living in them.

Sikhs who worked at the Fraser Mills Company received five–cent lower wage than white workers. The same was true for the railroad and manufacturing jobs that many Sikhs held.

A Brief Timeline of Sikhs in America

1. Sikhs first migrated to the United States in the late 19th century, settling mainly on the West Coast, and working as farmers and laborers. Today, there are an estimated 500,000 Sikhs living in the United States.
2. In 1907, a racist mob in Bellingham, Washington attacked Sikh migrant workers and drove them to the edge of the town. This incident occurred during a time of overt hostility toward immigrants from Asia.
3. The first Sikh gurdwara (community center and place of worship) in the United States opened in Stockton, California in 1912.
4. Bhagat Singh Thind, a Sikh American, enlisted in the U.S. Army during World War I and subsequently applied for U.S. citizenship. His application was ultimately denied by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1923 because Thind was not considered Caucasian. After battling for more than a decade, Thind was finally granted citizenship because he was a veteran of World War I (see below for more).
5. In 1956, Dalip Singh Saund, a Sikh, was the first Asian American elected to Congress.
6. The 1960s and 1970s brought a new wave of Sikh immigrants when the Immigration Act of 1965 allowed people from Asia to come to the United States who would pursue post-graduate degrees and already had professional skills.
7. In the 1980s and early 1990s, tens of thousands of Sikhs immigrated to America due to sustained anti-Sikh violence and government policies.

Challenging Inequality: Bhagat Singh Thind

One of the ways that Sikhs attempted to fight discrimination was by challenging American immigration and citizenship laws in court. One of the most famous cases involved Bhagat Singh Thind, Born on October 3, 1892, in the village of Taragarh in the state of Punjab, India, Bhagat Singh Thind came to the U.S. in 1913 to pursue higher education in an American university after serving in the British Indian army. He was recruited by the US Army on July 22, 1918, to fight in World War I. A few months later, on November 8, 1918, Bhagat Singh was promoted to the rank of an Acting Sergeant. He received an honorable discharge on December 16, 1918, with his character designated as “excellent.”

After the war, following a legal ruling that Caucasians had access to citizenship rights, he sought to become a naturalized citizen. At this time, anthropologists categorized Indians as
Caucasian. Thind took the citizenship oath and received his citizenship certificate in the state of Washington on December 9, 1918.

Only a few days later, his citizenship was revoked on the grounds that he was not a white man. Thind applied for citizenship again in the neighboring state of Oregon in 1919. A federal judge heard testimony from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) but this time ruled in favor of Thind. He became a citizen in November of 1920.

INS appealed the decision to grant citizenship in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals which sent the case to the Supreme Court. In 1923, in the case United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind, the Court decided in favor of the United States, retroactively denying all Indian Americans citizenship for not being Caucasian in “the common man’s understanding of the term.”

Finally in 1935, the 74th congress passed a law allowing citizenship to U.S. veterans of World War I, even those from the barred zones. Dr. Thind received his U.S. citizenship through the state of New York in 1936, taking the oath for the third time to become an American citizen.

Religion and the Role of the Gurdwara in Immigration

Following the path used by countless other American immigrants, Sikhs turned to their religious communities for help. Beginning between 1901---1915, the Sikh place of worship, or gurdwara, became the center of Sikh immigrant life. Sikhs worked together to pay off immigration travel debt and focused on reviving and practicing the Sikh tradition.

They got involved in constructing places of worship where they could build fellowship and community. Then they addressed issues of their common welfare. The Gurdwaras became places to welcome new arrivals and to help these recent immigrants look for jobs and do what they needed to take care of themselves. These Gurdwaras provided shelter, food, and social life to all immigrants without any consideration of caste, creed, or religion.

Source: South Asian American Digital Archive
Additional Resources

- Sikh Research Institute. Sikhi.
- Sikh Research Institute. Sikh Diaspora.
October 23, 2017

Dr. Stephanie Hartman  
Social Studies Content Specialist  
Colorado Department of Education  
Standards Review and Revision – Social Studies Committee  
201 East Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203  

Re: Inclusion of Sikhism in Colorado Social Studies Standards  

Dear Dr. Hartman,  

I am writing on behalf of the Sikh Coalition, the nation’s largest Sikh civil rights organization, to follow up on our September 20, 2017 request for inclusion of Sikhism – the world’s fifth largest religion – in Colorado’s social studies standards.  

In a recent review of the most recent draft of Colorado’s social studies standards, we were pleased to see Sikhism included alongside other world religions. We welcome this update and look forward to working with you to ensure it is finalized. In addition, we would be happy to recommend teacher resources on Sikhs for incorporation into social studies courses.  

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require additional information, and thank you for your consideration.  

Respectfully,  

[Signature]

Narinder Singh  
Interim Executive Director