Overview
Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for Social Studies

History

The Sunshine State Standards were first approved by the State Board of Education in 1996 as a means of identifying academic expectations for student achievement in Florida. These original standards were written in several subject areas and were divided into four separate grade clusters (PreK-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12). This format was chosen to provide flexibility to school districts in designing curriculum based on local needs.

As Florida moved toward greater accountability for student achievement at each grade level, the Sunshine State Standards were further defined with specific “Grade Level Expectations” added over time. As time went on, two realities appeared that magnified the need to increase the level of rigor, coherence, and clarity in Florida’s academic standards. First, it was recognized that the level of rigor in the 1996 standards was inadequate to address the increased levels of achievement registered by our students. Second, ample evidence from both national and international measures of student achievement indicated the urgent need for higher levels of challenge for all our students. This could not occur without a serious effort to increase the level of rigor and expectations across the board for all Florida students.

The Department of Education recognized the need for a systematic approach to review and revise all of the academic standards, and on January 17, 2006, the State Board of Education adopted a six-year cycle that set forth a schedule of the regular review and revision of all K-12 content standards. (http://www.flstandards.org) This move went far beyond increasing the rigor of the standards; however, it included alignment of the new standards with assessments, instructional materials, professional development, and teacher licensure exams. This way, the new standards and their higher levels of rigor will be fully integrated into the entire culture of K-12 instruction. This move sets the stage for higher levels of rigor and higher academic achievement for years to come.

A Commitment to Excellence

In 2006, the Florida Legislature boldly stated its commitment to higher and more challenging standards for Florida’s children by passing HB 7087. Florida law now reads:

§1001.03(1) ...The state board shall establish a schedule to facilitate the periodic review of the standards to ensure adequate rigor, relevance, logical student progression, and integration of reading, writing, and mathematics across all subject areas.

§1003.4156 (3)…Three middle school or higher courses in social studies, one semester of which must include the study of state and federal government and civic education.
In 2008 the Florida Legislature passed SB 1908, which requires the creation of Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. Many people were involved in the review and revision of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies. The Department of Education extends sincere thanks to all of the educators and members of the public for their active interest in this important work. We look forward to continued work with them as partners in implementing these higher expectations for all of Florida’s students.

Dr. Eric J. Smith
Commissioner of Education
Social Studies Standards Revision Process

In June 2007, the Bureau of Instruction and Innovation convened a committee to consider the framework for the revision of the Sunshine State Standards for social studies. Taking into account research in social studies education, a major goal of the revision of the Sunshine State Standards would be to strive for consensus among content experts, educational experts, researchers, parents, educators, and members of the business and workforce communities.

National and international social studies curriculum issues were presented, as well as research on the best practices in social studies education used by other states and countries that lead the world in student achievement. There was agreement by all reviewers that Florida’s standards fit the description of “a mile wide and an inch deep” and lacked coherence. Combined with their own expertise in social studies curriculum, the framers used this information to define the structure and provide recommendations that would become the guiding principles for the writers of the standards to follow.

From July 2007 to July 2008, the Writers Committee met to draft new standards and benchmarks according to the structure that the framers set. This was a collaborative process, with the framers reviewing the work and providing comments to the writers.

From May 16, 2008 to July 16, 2008, a draft of the standards was provided for public input via an online system and through public forums in various parts in the state. Online reviewers were able to rate the benchmarks and provide optional comments. Online reviewers provided 123,122 ratings of 931 draft standards and benchmarks. Of these stakeholders, 5,146 interested persons completed the visitor profile. These reviewers identified themselves, in descending order of number of reviewers, as state level educators, district level educators, school administrators, K12 school level educators and postsecondary educators, parents, business representatives, out-of-state stakeholders and others. Additionally, experts in social studies and social studies curriculum volunteered to provide in-depth reviews of the draft.

From July 24, 2008 to July 26, 2008, the benchmarks were revised by the writers based on the considerable input from the public, experts, and other reviewers. The names of the framers, experts in the field of social studies, writers, and expert review panelists are included in the Acknowledgments section of this document.

Access Points for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

As part of the revision to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies, access points for students with significant cognitive disabilities were developed. These access points are expectations written for students with significant cognitive disabilities to access the general education curriculum. Embedded in the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, access points reflect the core intent of the standards with reduced levels of complexity. The three levels of complexity include
participatory, supported, and independent with the participatory level being the least complex.

The access points for the standards were developed through the cooperative efforts of writing teams composed of Florida educators and parents under the direction of staff from the Accommodations and Modifications for Students with Disabilities Project, the Accountability and Assessment for Students with Disabilities Project, and the Florida Department of Education.

Structure of the Standard Documents

The Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies are organized by grade level for grades K-8 and by strands for grades 9-12. This structure was determined by the Framers Committee based on review of the issues presented by experts and research in curriculum standards. The strands do not comprise courses. Standards and benchmarks will be pulled from the various strands to write specific course descriptions in social studies.

The model for writing the standards for social studies was created using information from several sources: The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS); A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education by Kendall and Marzano; The Council of Economic Education; The Council for Geographic Education, The Council for Civic Education; The Albert Shanker Institute Report on Quality Standards; The National Report Card for Economics; The National Report Card for U.S. History; The National Report Card for Civics, Final Draft; The United States History and Geography by Texas Southern University; Bloom’s Taxonomy; and The Fordham Institute’s Report, The State of State Standards.

The framers believed that history, world or American, should be divided into time periods which would allow for greater in-depth teaching and learning. The framers also incorporated HB 7087, passed by the 2006 Florida Legislature, which requires a semester of civic education before entering high school. The framers also wanted geography to have a prominent place in the curriculum; therefore all 6-8 strands have a strong geography component included.

At the high school level, the standards are organized into the following content strands: American History, Geography, Economics, World History, Humanities, and Civics and Government. The content in the strands reflects the scaffolding of content from the K-6 portion of the K-8 standards.

Florida included Humanities in the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies. The new addition of humanities to the social studies standards will be cross-curricular with emphasis on language arts, fine arts, and music.
With people from many parts of the education community involved with framing, writing, reviewing, and revising the standards, the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies education are truly representative of Florida social studies educators and what they believe Florida students should know and be able to do. The Florida Department of Education is sincerely grateful for the work performed in revising these content standards.

Mary Jane Tappen
Deputy Chancellor for Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Services
Acknowledgments

The Florida Department of Education gratefully acknowledges the cooperation and assistance received from individuals and groups throughout Florida and the country in this revision process. Without such cooperation, these revisions would not have been possible.

We would like to express special thanks to the many educators, parents, and business people who participated in the current revision process by serving on curriculum committees and by providing input to the draft document as well as those who took the time to review and rate the draft online. These people include, but are not limited to the following:

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FLORIDA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

K-12 GRADE-LEVEL STANDARDS

Strands
Strands are the major curriculum areas for social studies that are aligned with the Core Curriculum Subjects created by the National Council for the Social Studies. They include content areas which should be the primary focus of social studies instruction for each grade level, K-12. Establishing proficiency in these strands at each successive grade level will prepare a strong foundation for learning social studies in subsequent grades.

Standards
Standards are fundamental to sound social studies instruction. They are aligned with the Core Curriculum Content created by the National Council for the Social Studies. Standards are the key components to a structurally sound social studies education.

Standards serve one or more of the following purposes:

- Establish connections to and between the strands of social studies as defined by National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS);
- Prepare students for future social studies teaching and learning by focusing on conceptual understanding of concepts; and
- Address gaps in instruction that may appear insignificant but are important to the understanding, fluency, and application of social studies education.
## Benchmark Coding Scheme

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<td>Grade Level</td>
<td>Strand</td>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
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**Strand Key:**
- A ~ American History
- G ~ Geography
- E ~ Economics
- C ~ Civics and Government
- W ~ World History
- H ~ Humanities

## Access Points Coding Scheme

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<td>Access Point</td>
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</tbody>
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**Access Points Key:**
- In ~ Independent
- Su ~ Supported
- Pa ~ Participatory