

Red4EdNC Special Report on the Revised K-12 Social Studies Curriculum

The purpose of this document is to inform interested persons about how the proposed K-12 social studies revision compares to the old social curriculum, adopted in 2010. The public comment period ends on 1/31/2020 and can be accessed [here](#).

Changes that affect all / most grades

1. Every grade and course now has separate standards related to Civics and Government, Economics, Geography, History, and Behavioral Sciences.
2. Personal Finance instruction occurs less consistently across the K-12 curriculum and in less depth, but there is now a stand alone course on economics and personal finance in high school.
3. There are fewer standards / objectives specifically related to analyzing historical documents and narratives.
4. The “four dimensions of historical thinking” have been eliminated from all standards.
5. There is very little guidance in these standards and objectives about what specific topics, events, people and concepts must be taught.
6. The scaffolding of tasks and skills has been abandoned. In general, this is problematic because it is not systematic or developmentally appropriate. For example, in this draft, 1st graders must know twelve tasks including “analyze.” Previously, there were seven and all were lower order cognitive tasks. In addition, it will make it harder to create common assessments that are deeply and meaningfully aligned with standards.

Grade	Old Curriculum Tasks/ Skills Introduced at That Grade Level	New Curriculum Tasks / Skills Introduced at That Grade Level
K	Understand Explain Use Identify	Understand Summarize Compare Exemplify Explain Differentiate Identify Apply

1	Summarize Classify Compare	Analyze Classify Examine Infer
2	Interpret Exemplify	Interpret Distinguish Determine
3	Analyze Describe Apply	Categorize
4	Differentiate	None
5	Evaluate	Critique
6	Construct	Illustrate
7	None	None
8	None	None
9-12	None	Evaluate Design Deconstruct Create Generate Assess Attribute Provide Explore Construct Implement

Grade By Grade Analysis and Evaluation / Concerns

Grade Level	Analysis	Evaluation / Concerns
K- The World Around Us	1. Following Rules has been promoted from an objective to a standard. 2. The identification of goods and services has been added. It used to be in second grade. 3. The idea that goods can come from near or far has been added. 4. Key concepts consistent across old and new: change over time, geographic representations, human / environmental interaction, needs and wants, roles of citizens, how people are similar and different.	1. Since not all residents are citizens, but people who live in close proximity depend on each other in communities, shouldn't we change the word "citizen" to "resident" throughout the curriculum?

1st - People, Places and the Environment	- Any mention of money in the standards or objectives has been eliminated. - The entire standard about rules has been moved to kindergarten. - There is a totally new standard: “Analyze the various roles individuals play in shaping places and environments.” - There is a new objective about scarcity / limited resources. - An objective about money and goods and services in the context / scale of the family unit is now about global trade. - An objective from second grade has moved to this grade, “Compare local goods and services to those produced around the world.” - History standards that used to focus on neighborhoods and communities now focus on individuals / historical figures (moved from second grade). - History standards now introduce the idea of primary and secondary sources (moved from 3rd grade). - History standards now introduce the idea that there can be various interpretations of the same time period (moved from 3rd grade). - The study of national holidays has been eliminated altogether. - There are two totally new objectives: “Infer how culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse people shape a community” and “Summarize various ways in which conflicts are resolved in communities around the world.” - The study of “literature” has been changed to the study of “folklore”.	- Is the introduction of primary and secondary sources and multiple perspectives developmentally appropriate for this age group? - The two new objectives are on point: It is important to name, recognize, and honor ethnic, racial and cultural identities children may bring into the classroom. It is also important to begin focusing on various ways to resolve conflict.
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2nd- Foundations of America	1. The focus here on NATIONAL IDENTITY is consistent and new. 2. Most of the geography standards from the old curriculum have been moved to 1st grade. 3. The new geography standard focuses on the formation of national identity: "Analyze how the interactions between humans and their environment both shape and reflect a nation's identity." It includes three objectives about movement inspired by tools and maps, how environmental characteristics impacted settlement and why people decide to move. 4. In economics, the focus is scaled to the national economy. Needs and wants and supply and demand has moved to first grade. Producers and consumers has been retained, scarcity and conflict has been added, as has interaction with natural resources to produce goods and services. 5. The standards related to saving, spending, borrowing, giving and financial institutions have been eliminated. 6. In Civics, the focus has narrowed to democracy only (it had previously focused on the purpose of "governments") and its relationship to American national identity. 7. This objective has been eliminated: "Explain government services and their value to the community (libraries, schools, parks, etc.)" 8. The old Civics standard focused on the roles and responsibilities of citizens. The new curriculum demotes this to an objective and makes it only about the roles and responsibilities of leaders, not citizens. Another objective focuses on how "good citizenship contributes to the national community."	1. This would seem like a good place to bring back national holidays, symbols, etc. that were eliminated from 1st grade. 2. The objective about how we all benefit from government services and public goods should be restored. 3. The emphasis on personal finance K-12 is giving way to less consistent coverage that occurs mainly at grades 4 and in high school through a single course. 4. Inclusion of the term empathy and the idea that we seek the common good us on point.
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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">9. The History standard is totally new: “Understand how America’s national identity has developed over time.”10. An old objective had been about “various interpretations using evidence.” A new objective is now about primary versus secondary sources.11. An objective about “key historical figures and events” has been dropped and that objective now focuses on groups.12. An objective with specific language about “artistic expressions, stories, art, music, food, etc.” is now “Summarize how diverse cultures from other countries influence the United States.”13. An objective about “appropriate social skills” now uses the word “empathy” and working together “for the common good.” | |
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3rd- “Our Community and State”	1. The second history standard, “Use historical thinking skills to understand the context of events, people and places” and the related objectives about the study of historical narratives has been eliminated. 2. Civics standards used to only focus on local government but now focus on national, state and local governments. 3. The ways that citizens come together to solve problems in their localities and states has been demoted to an objective from a standard. 4. Entrepreneurship has been demoted from a standard to an objective. 5. The five themes of geography (location, place, interaction, movement and region) has moved to 6th grade. The new geography standard focuses on how human interaction with the environment develops local communities. 6. The idea that the values and beliefs of diverse cultures contribute to local and regional communities has been demoted to an objective from a standard.	1. The economics standard might sound better if the word “how” is inserted so it reads, “Understand how economic decisions and resources affect the local economy.” 2. Since second grade is all about the nation, and this grade is about “Our Community and State”, it seems odd that the civics standard includes the national government.
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4th-

**North
Carolina
History and
Geography**

1. There is a new civics standard about the roles and responsibilities outlined in the state constitution.
2. An objective comparing state and local government has been eliminated.
3. An objective about entrepreneurship has been eliminated.
4. The standard "Understand the economic factors when making personal choices" has become "Understand best practices in personal financial decisions."
5. The objective "Explain how scarcity of personal finance resources affects the choices people make based on their wants and needs" has changed to "Exemplify positive financial decision making strategies."
6. The geography standard "Understand how human, environmental and technological factors affect the growth and development of North Carolina" is now ""Understand regional changes of NC since precolonial times to present day."
7. A new geography standard appears: "Understand movement in NC past and present."
8. The history standards had been very concrete: founding, events and chronology, wars, state symbols and monuments were emphasized. There are three new conceptual standards about pre-colonial times to present day and (1) what has changed, (2) Understand NC's role, and (3) understand various views of NC's history.
9. The standard about understanding *cultural* characteristics of NC now focuses on state AND local level.
10. An objective that said, "Explain how the settlement of people from various cultures affected the development of regions in NC" is now "Summarize changes to various minority groups in NC from colonial times to present day."

1. The new history standards are great, focusing on groups, change, innovation, major conflicts, social justice movements, various perspectives and primary and secondary sources.

5th - American History and Geography	1. A civics standard about individual rights and responsibilities now related those concepts to “civic participation”. 2. An objective that focused on how other governments influenced ours was eliminated. 3. There had been two standards in economics, one on the market economy and one on personal finance choices. The new single standard is to “Understand the ways in which economic factors and decisions impact life in the United States.” 4. An objective in economics that had focused on international trade up to Reconstruction now stretches to the present day. 5. An objective in economics that had only been about growth now is about growth AND decline. 6. Objectives about budgeting, spending and saving and borrowing are now more vague about the “economic benefits and consequences of economic decisions” and the ways “personal economic decisions have impacted lives”. 7. The history standards have merged and there is just one standard about the roles of people, events and ideas in shaping the US. 8. The history objectives are more vague and have eliminated these specific references: founding fathers, 13 colonies, and a single objective about war. 9. A standard that used to be about how diversity resulted from migration and settlement patterns and economic development is now about “the influence of the culture and choices made by various groups of people on the development and evolution of the US.”	1. In reference to #9 on the left, the standard needs to be restated to indicate that some groups (slaves, “removed” natives) did not have “choice” in their development and evolution.
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	10. An objective focusing specifically on natives was eliminated. 11. An objective focused specifically on cultural narratives was eliminated. 12. In the geography standard, the old standard focused on how human activity shaped the US. The new standard focuses on how “geographic factors and features” influenced the development of the US. 13. In geography, there are two new objectives. One focuses on knowing the states on a map, and one is about the impact of movement on US development using maps.	
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6th-

**Integrated
World
Studies I:
Development
of
Civilizations.**

1. The course spans the Neolithic Era to 1200.
2. The five themes of geography (location, place, movement, human/environment interaction and region) are now here.
3. The civics standards have been expanded and involve higher order thinking skills. The old standard was simply to “Understand the development of government in various civilizations.” Now students will “Understand the purpose of government and authority between the Neolithic Era and High Middle Ages” and “Analyze the impact of social, religious and economic systems on the development of legal and government institutions.”
4. In the objectives for civics, all references to specific content to be taught have been eliminated. There are two new objectives. One focuses on how governments derive and maintain authority and one focuses on the impact of trade networks on legal and governmental institutions.
5. Civics objectives related to requirements and responsibilities for citizenship in various governments have been eliminated here and in 7th grade.
6. There are three new objectives related to the economic standard “Understand how human interactions influence the development of economic systems and trade.”
7. An objective about conflict and compromise over resources has been eliminated and an objective about how quality of life is affected by economic choices has been eliminated.
8. The three new objectives are: “how various economic systems contributed to the growth and decline of various civilizations”, “how trade routes allowed the movement of innovations and ideas between civilizations”, and “Compare natural and manmade resources of various civilizations.”

1. Beginning with the Neolithic Era means the Paleolithic era and the origins of man will not be studied in NC schools. This is very problematic. Students will not be exposed to the following key ideas:

- The Pangea theory
- The “Out of Africa” theory
- Berengia / Bering Strait theory

It is becoming increasingly evident that for 90%+ of human history, people lived as hunters and gatherers, and that that economic and social system has profound impacts (thanks to evolution) on our brain processes and social constructs. We cannot understand modern humans and their behavior without understanding tribal humans and their culture.

2. In 6th and 7th grades, objectives related to “requirements for . . . citizenship in various governments” have been eliminated. The uniqueness of birth-right citizenship in the United States is a fundamental idea that is not present in the revised K-12 curriculum and should be restored, if not here, then elsewhere.

	9. There is a totally new economics standard: "Analyze economic systems and social conflicts within a civilization and with other civilizations." 10. In geography, a standard on tools of geography and using and constructing maps has been eliminated. 11. A new geography objective has been added: "Explain how innovations and resources influenced the movement and settlement of people, goods and ideas." 12. The history standards are very different. One old standard simply asked students to explain events over time and had them summarize historical documents, analyze primary and secondary sources and consider various perspectives. The other old standard had students state the political, economic and social significance of events, issues, people and groups. 13. The new standards include "Analyze how the growth and decline of civilizations were influenced by human's [sic] access to resources, interaction with their environment and their ability to change over time." The related objectives focus on components that contribute to development and influences that contribute to collapse. 14. The objective on differing perspectives has been upgraded to a standard and modernized: "Understand historical and current events from a variety of perspectives." 15. A new objective to that "differing perspectives" standard gives a particularly rosy spin on globalization: "Explain how increased global interaction accelerates the pace of innovation in modern societies." The old objective simply said innovation and technology transform society - it was less optimistic about the effects. 16. The objectives in history no longer mention specific content on historical figures like Mansa Musa or Confucius. 17. A single vague standard about culture influencing civilization has been beefed up and fleshed out. There are now three standards about culture, cultural systems and human interaction and 7 new objectives.	3. The history standards are much improved with a new emphasis on perspective taking. 4. The positives AND negatives of globalization should be considered.
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7th -

**Integrated
World
Studies II:
Modern Era**

1. This course spans 1200 to the present.
2. In civics, one vague standard about development of government has expanded into two. One is about the purpose of government / authority and the other focuses on the development of modern governmental systems and the forces that shape them.
3. The objectives in civics focus much less on ideas like democracy, science, socialism and communism.
4. An objective about comparing requirements for citizenship has been eliminated.
5. New civics objectives include:
 - a. Explaining how governments are formed in modern societies.
 - b. Analyzing reasons new forms of government are created and their impact.
 - c. Explaining how citizens' rights, privileges and responsibilities lead to governmental change.
 - d. Explaining the impact and struggle between religious and secular thought and practice have on decision-making process of governments.
 - e. Critique forms of government in terms of the common good.
6. The economics standards are very different. All standards / objectives to personal financial decision-making have been eliminated. The idea that we compete for resources has been removed.

1. In 6th and 7th grades, objectives related to "requirements for . . . citizenship in various governments" have been eliminated. The uniqueness of birth-right citizenship in the United States is a fundamental idea that is not present in the revised K-12 curriculum and should be restored, if not here, then elsewhere.
2. Since communism and socialism are economic and not governmental systems, their elimination under civics objectives is excellent.
3. The recognition of the existence and role of social classes is excellent.
4. The inclusion of a geography standards / objectives that recognize involuntary movement and climate change are excellent.
5. The addition of the terms oppression, human rights violations, and genocide to the history standards, in addition to disease, is excellent.

	7. Two new economic standards: (1) Understand how human interactions influence the development and impact of economic systems and trade. Objectives: - Explain the factors and conditions that contributed to economic developments and systems in various parts of the world. - Explain how trade routes contributed to cultural diffusion. - Summarize the impact of globalization on macro and micro economic decisionmaking. (2) Understand how economic systems contribute to the struggle for power and identity through social classes. - Explain how trade impacts economic growth and decline, labor markets, the environment, resources and income distribution. - Summarize the main characteristics of most economic systems. 8. The geography standards are very different. There is now only one standard, instead of two. One old standard was less focused: "how geography, demographic trends and environmental conditions shape society." The new standard is more focused on movement: "Understand the geographical factors that influence human migration and settlement." 9. Applying the tools of geography using maps has been demoted from a standard to an objective.	6. In the history standards, requiring students to consider conflict AND diplomacy is an improvement. Instead of simple summarizing international cooperative efforts, students should be required to evaluate those efforts. 7. The new behavioral science standards and related objectives are excellent as they will lead to greater cross cultural understanding and give greater context to multiple perspectives. .
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10. There are some new geography objectives:

- a. Infer the impact of voluntary and involuntary movement in terms of cultural and environmental changes based on geographic tools and data.
- b. Explain government responses to issues presented by climate, environment, and human interaction.

11. History standards are very different. Two broad standards have been collapsed into one. The old standards included: “use historical thinking to analyze various modern societies” and “understand implications of global interactions.”

The new standard is “Understand historical and current events from a variety of perspectives.” So, it introduces perspective taking into the standard.

12. There are four new history objectives:

- a. Interpret historical perspectives *of competing narratives* based on primary and secondary sources.
- b. Summarize the social, Economic, and political effects of conflict *and/or diplomacy* in global interactions.
- c. Explain the causes of historical events of *oppression, human rights violations, genocide* and disease as well as responses to those events.
- d. Infer the direction of current events and outcomes based on the past.

13. One history objective that said “*Evaluate* the effectiveness of cooperative efforts and consensus building among nations, regions and groups” has been changed to “*summarize*.”

14. The standards and objectives under behavioral science are new and very different. The old standard was: “Explain how cultural values influenced relationships between people, groups and society.”

The new standard is: “Analyze how culture has influenced individual and group identity.”

15. There are five new objectives under behavioral science:
- a. Identify the major components of culture in different modern societies.
 - b. Explain how values and beliefs impact access to human rights, justice and equality for different groups of people.
 - c. Differentiate how values and beliefs of modern societies are reflected in gender roles, social structures, cultural expression, justice, and equality.
 - d. Differentiate how individuals and groups respond to oppression and human rights violations.
 - e. Compare individual and societal responses to increased diversity and interconnectedness in various regions and societies.

8th- NC & American History	1. The first civics standard is the same but more focused. The old standard simply talked about how “ideas” “shaped government”, but now it narrows to “how democratic principles have influenced the structure and policies of NC and the nation.” 2. They have changed the second civics standard from one about “citizen participation” to “Analyze the access to democratic rights and the efforts for societal reform.” 3. The objectives under civics are largely the same, but the objective about analyzing historical documents has been eliminated. 4. The standard in economics has been given an optimistic twist. It used to say, “Understand the economic <i>activities</i> of NC and the nation.” The new standard says, “Understand the economic <i>development</i> of NC and the nation.” 5. Two objectives in economics have been eliminated: one focusing on economic indicators like GDP, inflation, unemployment, and one focusing on how quality of life is impacted by personal financial choices. 6. There are two new economics objectives: a. Explain how economic decisions have impacted individuals, communities and businesses in Nc and the nation. b. Summarize how the development of industries and trade relationships have impacted the economy of NC and the nation. 7. The geography standards and objectives are largely the same. They have replaced the term “place” with “human geography” in two instances.	1. Civics standards about access to rights and reform are excellent 2. The standard “Understand the role of conflict and cooperation in the development of NC and the nation.” includes only two types of social interaction theory. Add: social exchange, coercion, accommodation. 3. The new history objectives about injustice, recovery, resistance and resilience are excellent.
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8. The history standards are very different. Three history standards have collapsed to two. The old standards focused on (1) creation and development of NC and US (2) conflict, compromise and negotiation, and (3) change and continuity.

The new standards: "Understand the role of conflict and cooperation in the development of NC and the nation." and "Understand how change and innovation have impacted the development of NC and the nation."

9. There are three new objectives in history:
- Summarize injustices and responses to injustice in NC and the nation
 - Explain how recovery, resistance and resilience shape the history of NC and the nation.
 - Determine how growth and expansion have impacted the people and development of NC and the nation.
10. The standard in behavioral sciences has become more focused. Old standard: "... how different cultures influenced NC and the US." New standard: "Analyze factors that led to continuity and change in human and group behavior throughout NC and the nation." The related objectives are shorter and more complex.

World History- Issues and Patterns	1. The course used to cover ancient civilizations to the present. It now begins at 1200. 2. The standards used to be all related to history. There are now standards related to civics, economics, geography, and behavioral sciences. 3. The four dimensions of historical thinking have been eliminated. 4. There is really not continuity between the old curriculum and the new one. It is a totally new course. The standards lend themselves to teaching conceptually and not chronologically. 5. The standard in geography is particularly vaguely worded: "Analyze the intentional and unintentional spatial consequences of human-environment interaction." 6. One particular objective stood out: "Determine how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time."	1. These standards are well conceived and beautifully written. But, there is no clarity about what teachers should actually teach in terms of content, events, people, and specific civilizations.
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American History	1. This course has collapsed from two courses to one. Together, the two courses “covered” the era of exploration (1400s) to the present. It now concerns 1763-present. 2. The standards used to be all related to history. There are now standards related to civics, economics, geography, and behavioral sciences. 3. The four dimensions of historical thinking have been eliminated. 4. The specific statutory language about what should be taught from the Founding Principles Act (SL 2011-273) has been eliminated. 5. The old standards are still represented in the new ones.Examples: a. History standards: includes old standard 7 about war and impact, old standard 6 about relationships with other nations, and old standard 2 about turning points. b. The single geography standard concerns old standard 3 about movement and expansion. c. The civics standards concern old standard 4 on conflict and compromise and standard 5 on freedom, equality and power. 6. The economics standard is very different. While the old standard focused on the “American Dream”, the new standard is more pointed: “Analyze American capitalism in terms of affluence and poverty.” A related objective references how monetary, fiscal and regulatory policies impact various social classes.	1. These standards are well conceived and beautifully written. 2. Like the high school world history standards, it is very unclear what should be taught, at what level of depth and encompassing what details.
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7. There are two totally new standards related to behavioral science.

(1) "Evaluate American identity in terms of opportunity and crisis."

The objectives relate to critiquing the idea of American exceptionalism, determining the impact of diversity and discrimination on identity in terms of individuality and conformity, assessing how the immigrant experience has challenged and contributed to American identity, and critiquing the concept of the American Dream.

(2) "Analyze tensions between traditional and progressive American values and beliefs in terms of technological innovation and cultural developments."

The objectives relate to how technological innovation has challenged and expanded cultural norms, how religions, human reasoning and their relationship impacted society and culture, and deconstructing popular culture in terms of how it reflects and influences traditional and progressive values.

Founding Principles of the United States and North Carolina: Civic Literacy

1. The standards used to be all related to civics. There are now standards related to history, economics, geography, and behavioral sciences. .
2. The specific statutory language about what should be taught from the Founding Principles Act (SL 2011-273) has been eliminated.
3. All microeconomics has been moved out of the course. All macroeconomics unrelated to government policy has been moved out of the course.
4. The standards are all new and different than the old curriculum. It is a totally new course.
5. The time allowed to cover civics has doubled, yet there is not a standard dedicated to local or state government. The terms "local" and "state" appear in only one of 27 objectives and are related to a standard concerning federalism.
6. Some notable new objectives:
 - a. CL.G.1.1: Explain the impact of gerrymandering on the census, elections and overall democracy.
 - b. CL.G.2.2: Examine how the United States interacts with international governments to navigate global environmental issues.
 - c. CL.B.1.2: Determine the effects of institutional discrimination on cultural and national identity.

1. The standards presented are well conceived and well written.
2. There needs to be a greater focus on state and local government.
3. Some key concepts taught in the current course are missing. Given the fact that this course allows us to double civics instruction, the conceptual coverage should be greater, not less:
 - Sources of law: students do not realize law can be generated through case law, constitutional law, rulemaking and executive order, in addition to statutes
 - Criminal and Civil Procedure: students need to understand how civil and criminal law differ, and how related courtroom processes differ.
 - Elections / campaigns: these words do not appear in the curriculum and that seems odd.
 - International law / structures unrelated to climate: students need greater exposure to the United Nations, the Security Council, War Tribunal process, Geneva Conventions, Declaration of Human Rights, etc. in addition to international efforts related to climate change..

**Economics &
Personal
Finance**

1. All of the standards from the previous Civics and Economics course are present in the new course.
2. There is greater emphasis placed on the costs of postsecondary education.

1. Given the fact that the standards and objectives are largely the same and there is twice as much teaching time, there should be a unit on entrepreneurship. It should include:
 - Types of businesses and their advantages and drawbacks
 - How to get a federal tax ID#
 - How to file with the state Secty. of State
 - Domain name purchases
 - Trademarks and copyright
2. There should be standards / objectives addressing the interests of labor. It should include:
 - Labor protections
 - Ways abused workers can seek remedies through governmental and private institutions.
3. There should be standards / objectives related to systemic poverty, its causes, effects and an evaluation of solutions to address poverty. Students should learn how to address financial hardships (medical emergencies, layoffs, food insecurity, etc.)

