

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Lydia Mielke [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 17, 2024 3:34 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored)  
**Subject:** Social studies standards

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** Orange Category

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Hello,

I noticed that the board is considering updating the social studies content standards. I can't seem to find the Alaska Social Studies Standards revised as of June 2024. Could you direct me to that publication?

Thank you!

Lydia

**From:** [Jensen, Curtis M \(EED\)](#)  
**To:** [Lydia Mielke](#)  
**Cc:** [Jolin, Kathijo M \(EED\)](#)  
**Subject:** Follow up on draft Social Studies Standards question  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 19, 2024 3:48:41 PM

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Hi Lydia:

Thank you for your email. Kathijo Jolin let me know that she received your email and responded with details about finding the draft AK Social Studies Standards online.

I'm writing to follow up. Were you able to find the draft standards?

In case it is helpful, information about the public comment period can be found [here](#).

Also, the draft Alaska Social Studies Standards can be found [here](#).

If you have any other questions, please let me know.

Best,

Curtis Jensen

**Curtis Jensen**

**ELA / Social Studies Content Specialist**

*Alaska Department of Education & Early Development*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** [mcneil\\_caitlin](#)  
**To:** [EED, State Board \(EED sponsored\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for New Social Studies Standards  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 1:42:05 PM

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Good Afternoon -

I am reaching out to express my concerns for the proposed Social Studies standards. First, I would like to applaud the fact that Social Studies standards are being revised. As they currently are, it is hard to know the progression between grade levels. The new standards do a good job of making the progression of teaching geography, civics, history, etc. clearer, but it also presents some concerns.

As the revised standards are presented, there is no set time where students will learn about 20th century topics until high school. That means students may not hear about WWI, WWII, the Holocaust, or the Civil Rights Movement until high school. These topics are key to understanding how geography has changed, how civics work to improve the country, etc. It used to be that these topics were covered generally in 6th grade as students progress through history chronologically. However with the new standards there is no guarantee that they will be exposed to these parts of US history before high school. Please consider looking at the 6-8 progression (or possibly 5<sup>th</sup> grade) and make sure students have the chance to learn about the 20th century before they enter high school. Thank you.

Caty McNeil  
Romig Middle School - Social Studies  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [Jolin, Kathijo M \(EED\)](#)  
**To:** [mcneil\\_caitlin](#)  
**Bcc:** [Jensen, Curtis M \(EED\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Public Comment for New Social Studies Standards  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 19, 2024 4:14:00 PM

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Dear Caitlin:

Thank you for taking the time to review the draft Alaska Social Studies Standards and share your input with us. We appreciate your support of the standards revision, and your engagement in the process.

You raise valid concerns: it is important for students in the middle grades to encounter the 20th century topics (and others) you listed, and the history standards sequence for the current draft does not specify those topics before Grade 9.

Your comments will be shared with the Alaska Board of Education and the drafting team.

Your comments are valuable, and your feedback will help us refine and finalize the Alaska Social Studies Standards.

If you have additional comments or suggestions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,  
~Kathijo

**Kathijo Jolin**

Executive Secretary  
DEED | Office of the Commissioner  
**P:** 907.269.1092

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**From:** mcneil\_caitlin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 11, 2024 1:42 PM  
**To:** EED, State Board (EED sponsored) <eed.stateboard@alaska.gov>  
**Subject:** Public Comment for New Social Studies Standards

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Caty McNeil  
Romig Middle School - Social Studies  


**From:** [Josh Daniels](#)  
**To:** [EED, State Board \(EED sponsored\)](#)  
**Subject:** Written Comments on Proposed Changes to Social Studies Content Standards  
**Date:** Thursday, November 14, 2024 3:29:08 PM  
**Attachments:** [ICS Review of 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards Revision.pdf](#)

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To whom it may concern,

Attached are written comments on the proposed changes to the Social Studies Content Standards. We thank you for the work put into the new draft and the opportunity to submit feedback.

Best regards,  
**Josh Daniels | Associate Content Editor**  
Institute for Curriculum Services  
[icsresources.org](https://icsresources.org)



## Review of 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards Revision

**General Comments:** We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards revision, and commend the hard work done by the committees charged with gathering feedback and producing the standards. Our feedback is primarily aimed at two main areas: including more specific coverage of the development of early Judaism and of the Holocaust. Including more specific content in the standards below would bring them in line with standards elsewhere in the document which have a comparable level of specificity.

Pg. 76, Grade 7 World History Standards, Theme 2: Ancient Civilizations and the Development of World Religions, **Add standard:** “SS.7.2.24.3 Describe the religions of the ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Israelites, Greeks, and Romans.”

**Comments:** We recommend that the time periods covered in grades 6-8 include more defined references to historical content. Elsewhere, particularly in the High School world history standards, the content standard defines specific historical groups or events which students are required to learn about - see for example, pg. 125, SS.WH.1.17.1, which requires coverage of four specific civilizations (Olmec, Mayan, Aztec, and Inca).

The only standards in this section that address religion are geography standards (SS.7.2.18.1-2, pg. 76), neither of which ask students to understand the historical significance of the religious developments within ancient civilizations. We recommend adding two new standards, one covering the religions of the ancient civilizations mentioned above, and another covering the emergence of some of the major modern world religions.

Pg. 76, Grade 7 World History Standards, Theme 2: Ancient Civilizations and the Development of World Religions, **Add standard:** “SS.7.2.24.4 Describe the characteristics and emergence of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism in the ancient world.”

**Comments:** See above comments. Though less well known, we recommend including Zoroastrianism because of its influence on other religions in the ancient world and the fact that it is often considered a precursor to monotheism.

Pg. 122, Grades 9-12 U.S. History Standards, Theme 4: Emergence as a Global Power, SS.US.H.4.23.2, **Change:** “Use primary sources and varying perspectives to analyze how the American government’s response to the Holocaust and how it shifted American perceptions and policies regarding civil liberties and human rights.”

**Comments:** While the impact of the Holocaust on civil liberties and human rights is undeniable, this standard risks presenting America as passively impacted by the Holocaust, which is defined only in terms of how it affected other issues in the country.

However, students should understand that the United States played an active role in impacting the fate of Jews in Nazi-occupied areas during and after the war. For example, immigration quotas which had been in place since 1924 remained in place, limiting the chance for Jewish refugees to find safe haven in the United States.

Pg. 128, Grades 9-12 World History Standards, Theme 4: Emergence of Modern Global Conflict, SS.WH.4.21.2, **Change:** “Analyze primary and secondary sources to explain the significance of the Holocaust and the Nuremberg Trials and other atrocities in WWII and subsequent war crime tribunals.”

**Comments:** We recommend the standard focus on the Holocaust and its specific aftermath. A wide range of atrocities were committed during World War II in addition to the Holocaust, including the Holodomor, the parajmos, and many others. However, the Nazis’ main genocidal activity was directed against the Jews, and the Holocaust stands out among the atrocities due to the degree to which it involved the industrialization and bureaucratization of genocide. In addition, we recommend specifically mentioning the Nuremberg Trials, which helped lay the legal foundations for prosecuting crimes against humanity.

Pg. 128, Grades 9-12 World History Standards, Theme 4: Emergence of Modern Global Conflict, SS.WH.4.21, **Add separate standard:** “Analyze primary and secondary sources to explain the significance of other atrocities committed during WWII and the international community’s reaction.”

**Comments:** See above comments.



**From:** [Stefanie Kondro](#)  
**To:** [EED, State Board \(EED sponsored\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public Input-SS Standards  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 10:04:21 AM  
**Attachments:** [Outlook-bi3hll0k.png](#)

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Dear Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Social Studies Committee:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed Alaska state social studies standards, specifically the curriculum focus for 6th-grade students.

I understand and appreciate the importance of teaching students about Alaska's rich history, geography, and culture; however, I am concerned that the current standards place an exclusive emphasis on Alaska-related topics, which could limit students' understanding of broader national and global perspectives at a critical stage in their education. I have taught 6th grade Social Studies for over ten years and my students learn about the geography and culture of the Western Hemisphere, which includes Alaska. If 6th grade is an elementary grade level, I could see these proposed standards more beneficial. However, using an entire middle school course to exclusively teach Alaska content limits other important learning.

While it is essential for Alaskan students to be well-versed in the history and cultural heritage of our state, a well-rounded social studies curriculum should also include significant exposure to the history, geography, and cultures of other regions. Without this, students may miss the opportunity to develop an understanding of the broader historical, cultural, and political contexts that shape our world.

Expanding the curriculum to include topics that explore connections between Alaska and other parts of the United States, as well as to global events, would provide a more balanced perspective and help students better understand the diversity and interconnectedness of our world. Such an approach could enrich students' understanding and prepare them more fully for subsequent social studies coursework in higher grades.

Thank you for considering this feedback. I would appreciate any information on how these concerns might be addressed in the proposed standards or if there is an opportunity for revision before final approval. I look forward to your response and am hopeful for a curriculum that balances local and broader perspectives for the benefit of our students.

Sincerely,

Stefanie Kondro  
6th Grade Teacher  
Kodiak Middle School



**From:** [Stefanie Kondro](#)  
**To:** [EED, State Board \(EED sponsored\)](#)  
**Subject:** question regarding new SS standards  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 10:20:37 AM  
**Attachments:** [Outlook-mo4l2a03.png](#)

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Dear Kathijo Jolin,

We are writing to inquire about the upcoming release of the proposed state social studies standards for Alaska. Specifically, we would like to know if there are plans to include a critical content list and a pacing guide to accompany the standards.

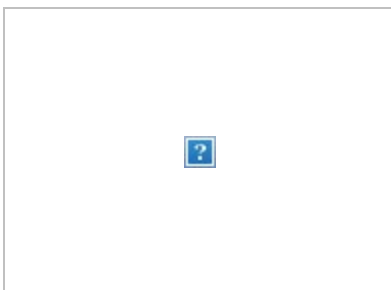
A structured content list and pacing guide would be invaluable for ensuring consistency and coherence across classrooms throughout Alaska. Such resources would assist educators in meeting the new standards effectively and uniformly, benefiting both teachers and students.

Could you please advise if these resources are being developed in conjunction with the standards? If so, any information about the anticipated timeline for their release would also be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your commitment to supporting Alaska's educators. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Kodiak Middle School-Social Studies Department  
Stefanie Kondro, Heather Norton, Brett Simpler



**From:** [Heather Norton](#)  
**To:** [EED, State Board \(EED sponsored\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Stefanie Kondro](#)  
**Subject:** Social Studies Content Standards Public Comment  
**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2024 10:51:20 AM

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Dear Members of the Alaska Department of Education,

I am writing to express some concerns regarding the newly adopted Social Studies standards for the state of Alaska, particularly the content expectations for elementary grades and the organization of historical content in the middle grades.

For young learners, introducing rigorous content across multiple disciplines can be overwhelming and may impact the depth at which they can engage with each topic. Elementary students are in a developmental stage where they benefit most from foundational understanding, hands-on activities, and opportunities to build curiosity about the world around them. Meeting the new standards may require a shift in instructional time that could reduce focus on these age-appropriate practices.

Additionally, educators in elementary settings face time and resource constraints that may make it difficult to cover the extensive content expected by the new standards effectively. Balancing social studies with other core subjects is already challenging, and the increased rigor in expectations may lead to cursory overviews rather than meaningful, in-depth learning experiences. This often leads to gaps and holes in students' knowledge as they transfer into Middle School.

To address these concerns, I would suggest reevaluating the volume and rigor of the content for the elementary grades. Simplifying or streamlining some aspects of the standards could allow teachers to focus on key skills and concepts, ensuring students gain a solid foundation without becoming overwhelmed.

Secondly, I am concerned about the abrupt shift to World History in 7th grade, which appears without adequate preparatory context in earlier grades. Transitioning to global studies without a gradual build-up may leave students unprepared for the scope and complexity of World History topics.

To address this, introducing a broad overview of key global cultures, events, and time periods in the upper elementary grades (specifically 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade) would provide the necessary foundation and make the 7th-grade World History curriculum more accessible.

Thank you for considering these concerns. I appreciate the work being done to establish content

standards that include Inquiry Standards creating a focus on Thinking skills rather than specific content and hope these recommendations may contribute to a more supportive learning experience for students across the state.

Sincerely,  
Heather Norton  
Kodiak Middle School