

## **Introduction to Ohio's New Learning Standards: K – 12 Social Studies**

The State Board of Education approved Ohio's revised *Academic Content Standards: Pre-K-12 Social Studies* in June 2010. These are currently known as *Ohio's New Learning Standards: K-12 Social Studies*. This action was taken to comply with the requirements of Amended Substitute House Bill 1 (2009) to update the previous version of the standards which had been in place since 2002. The approval of the 2010 standards was the culmination of a year and a half of work by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) with input from educational stakeholders and content experts.

The revision process focused on five primary goals. The newly revised standards were to communicate the most essential concepts and skills. They were to be more manageable for teachers and allow teachers to elicit a greater depth of understanding on the part of students. There was also to be a clear progression of content from grade to grade. Course syllabi were to be developed for high school courses. And finally, the revised standards were to be designed to meet the needs of students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The first goal, to identify the most essential concepts and skills, was accomplished with input from many individuals and groups. These included a discussion group of teachers representing the diversity of Ohio's school districts and regions of the state; an advisory committee representing Ohio social studies stakeholder groups; a working group consisting of teachers, professors, and curriculum supervisors; in-depth reviews conducted by national content experts; numerous focus groups; and multiple opportunities for online review by the public. The advice received helped to frame the content of the standards.

The second goal was for the revised standards to be more manageable for teachers and to allow students to develop a greater depth of understanding. Consequently, the seven standards in the 2002 document were condensed to four strands. Manageability was also achieved by reducing the breadth of content that is to be taught at each grade level, allowing for teaching content in greater depth.

A third goal was for a clear progression from grade to grade. One of the tasks of the working group was to check for horizontal and vertical alignment. Horizontal alignment refers to the linkages among the strands at a particular grade level. Vertical alignment includes the progression of a set of related content statements from one grade level to the next.

A fourth goal was to create course syllabi for high school courses as stipulated in Am. Sub. H. B. 1. Stakeholder groups assisted the department in identifying six courses for which syllabi were created:

- American History
- Modern World History
- American Government
- Economics and Financial Literacy
- Contemporary World Issues
- World Geography

Syllabi are organized around topics rather than strands, as seen in grades kindergarten through eight, and do not specify grade levels. The inclusion of particular courses in the revised standards is not meant to require that all of these must be offered (except American History and American Government which are specified as graduation requirements) or to limit the choice of additional courses which districts may choose to offer in their social studies programs.

The final goal was to have the standards meet the needs of students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The revised standards include many of the skills from the 2002 Social Studies Skills and Methods standard, as well as some skills aligned to the *Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning* from The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills ([www.p21.org](http://www.p21.org)).

Skills topics include:

- Historical Thinking and Skills;
- Spatial Thinking and Skills;
- Civic Participation and Skills;
- Economic Decision Making and Skills; and
- Financial Literacy.

*Ohio's New Learning Standards: K-12 Social Studies* address the challenges of Am. Sub. H. B. 1. Their clarity and progression through the grades makes them coherent and manageable. Their focus on essential concepts and skills allows for instruction with greater rigor. They point out a new direction for social studies in Ohio.

### ***Philosophy and Guiding Assumptions***

Ohio's social studies content standards serve as a basis for what all students should know and be able to do in social studies by the time they graduate from high school. These standards are intended to provide Ohio's educators with a set of common expectations upon which to base social studies curricula.

#### **Philosophy of Ohio's New Learning Standards: K-12 Social Studies**

Ohio's social studies content standards incorporate history, geography, government and economics in order to prepare students to be participating citizens. Specifically, social studies:

- Helps students develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for themselves and for the common good;
- Prepares students for their role as citizens and decision makers in a diverse, democratic society;
- Enables students to learn about significant people, places, events and issues in the past in order to understand the present; and
- Fosters students' ability to act responsibly and become successful problem solvers in an interdependent world of limited resources.

#### **Guiding Assumptions for Ohio's New Learning Standards: K-12 Social Studies**

Ohio's social studies content standards:

- Set high expectations and provide strong support for social studies achievement by all students;
- Represent the social studies knowledge and skills needed to make a successful transition to post-secondary education, the workplace and civic life;
- Are informed by national standards documents;
- Balance knowledge, conceptual understanding and skill development;
- Address significant understandings that are the basis for sound decision-making as citizens;
- Focus on important social studies topics;
- Represent a rigorous progression across grades and in-depth study within each grade;
- Serve as the basis for classroom and statewide assessments; and
- Guide the development of local social studies curricula and instructional programs.

## ***How to read Ohio's New Learning Standards: K-12 Social Studies***

### **Kindergarten – Grade Eight**

The revised standards for K – 8 are organized using the following components: **Strands, Themes, Topics** and **Content Statements**.

#### **Strands**

The four disciplines within the social studies: History, Geography, Government and Economics

#### **Themes**

The focus for a particular grade level or the descriptive narrative of a high school course syllabus

Example in *Grade Two: People Working Together*

#### **Topics**

The different aspects of content within a strand

Example in Geography: *Human Systems*

#### **Content Statements**

The essential knowledge to be learned at each grade level or within each course

Example from Grade Eight: *20. The U.S. Constitution established a federal system of government, a representative democracy and a framework with separation of powers and checks and balances.*

### **High School**

The revised standards for high school contain syllabi for six high school social studies courses:

- American History
- Modern World History
- American Government
- Economics and Financial Literacy
- Contemporary World Issues
- World Geography

Each course contains a theme and broad topics which are further clarified with content statements. Grade levels are not specified for any of the courses. The syllabi are available for districts to use as they plan course offerings.

## Strand Definitions – K – 8 Social Studies

### History

Students use materials drawn from the diversity of human experience to analyze and interpret significant events, patterns and themes in the history of Ohio, the United States and the world.

### Geography

Students use knowledge of geographic locations, patterns and processes to show the interrelationship between the physical environment and human activity, and to explain the interactions that occur in an increasingly interdependent world. Students use knowledge of perspectives, practices and products of cultural, ethnic and social groups to analyze the impact of their commonality and diversity within local, national, regional and global settings.

### Government

Students use knowledge of the purposes, structures and processes of political systems at the local, state, national and international levels to understand that people create systems of government as structures of power and authority to provide order, maintain stability and promote the general welfare. They use knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in order to examine and evaluate civic ideals and to participate in community life and the American democratic system.

### Economics

Students use economic reasoning skills and knowledge of major economic concepts, issues and systems in order to make informed choices as producers, consumers, savers, investors, workers and citizens in an interdependent world.

**Skills Topic Descriptions – K – 8 Social Studies**

One of the primary goals of standards revision was to develop an integrated system of standards, model curricula and assessments that meets the needs of students in the 21st century. As a participating member of the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills ([www.p21.org](http://www.p21.org)), Ohio has worked to integrate many of the skills from the *Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning* directly into the new standards. These include civic literacy, financial and economic literacy and global awareness. Links to other 21st-century skills such as problem solving, communication, media literacy and leadership are further developed in the model curriculum. The new standards also include many of the skills previously encompassed by the Social Studies Skills and Methods standard.

Strand	Topic	Topic Description
History	<i>Historical Thinking and Skills</i>	Historical thinking begins with a clear sense of time – past, present and future – and becomes more precise as students progress. Historical thinking includes skills such as locating, researching, analyzing and interpreting primary and secondary sources so that students can begin to understand the relationships among events and draw conclusions.
Geography	<i>Spatial Thinking and Skills</i>	Spatial thinking examines the relationships among people, places and environments by mapping and graphing geographic data. Geographic data are compiled, organized, stored and made visible using traditional and geospatial technologies. Students need to be able to access, read, interpret and create maps and other geographic representations as tools of analysis.
Government	<i>Civic Participation and Skills</i>	Civic participation embraces the ideal that an individual actively engages in his or her community, state or nation for the common good. Students need to practice effective communication skills including negotiation, compromise and collaboration. Skills in accessing and analyzing information are essential for citizens in a democracy.
Economics	<i>Economic Decision Making and Skills</i>	Effective economic decision making requires students to be able to reason logically about key economic issues that affect their lives as consumers, producers, savers, investors and citizens. Economic decision making and skills engage students in the practice of analyzing costs and benefits, collecting and organizing economic evidence and proposing alternatives to economic problems.
	<i>Financial Literacy</i>	Financial literacy is the ability of individuals to use knowledge and skills to manage limited financial resources effectively for lifetime financial security.

### ***Tools to Help Implement Ohio's New Learning Standards: K-12 Social Studies***

Tools are available to educators to help them implement Ohio's social studies content standards. All of these tools can be found on the Ohio Department of Education web site under *Ohio's New Learning Standards: K-12 Social Studies*. These tools include:

- Introduction to Social Studies Standards Part 1 (MP4)
- Introduction to Social Studies Standards Part 2 (MP4)
- Social Studies K – 8 Crosswalk (PDF)
- Social Studies High School Crosswalk (PDF)
- Using the Crosswalk (MP4)
- Screencast: Introduction to Ohio's Model Curriculum for Social Studies
- Social Studies K – 8 Comparative Analysis (PDF)
- Unit Organizer (Word)
- Focus One: TPD Meeting (PPT)
- Focus Two: TPD Meeting (PPT)
- Vertical Alignment Chart (PDF)
- Gap Analysis
- Implementation Tools

These tools can be used for professional development and planning. Additional resources may be added as the web site is updated.