

Social Studies Standards DRAFT – Expert Panel Review

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Introduction Section

As you conduct your review of the introduction, please consider the following questions.

- A. Does the introduction provide sufficient information and guidance on how to read the standards?
- B. Does the introduction provide sufficient information on how the standards are structured?
- C. Is there anything missing that should be included in the introduction?

Please provide feedback on the Introduction section. Include strengths and well as suggestions for refinements.

On the whole, I believe that the introduction successfully communicates the purpose of the standards, their structure, and guidance on how to read the standards. There are several elements of the introduction which I believe are quite helpful. The K-8 story line is most useful when reading through the standards, and serves as a nice guide for the “big-picture” of what is taught at each grade level, and demonstrates the ways in which the grade level standards both build on each other and avoid unnecessary repetition. The section describing the content descriptors provides a solid overview of the areas of social studies addressed by the standards, and clearly communicates the purpose that each content area plays in shaping the overall social studies program. The content descriptors are effective in describing not just the content to be covered, but the skills students should learn with regards to each content area, and the role each piece plays in developing strong citizens, historians, economic thinkers, etc. In reading the introduction as a whole, the reader gets a strong sense of the approach taken when drafting the standards, and the purpose they serve. I also found immense value in the time chart for elementary teachers. While a small piece, I think there is a large variation in the amount of time elementary teachers spend on social studies, and this guide clearly communicates how much time is necessary each day to meet the required standards.

At first read, the way in which the standards are structured seemed somewhat confusing. I believe this is partly because there are a variety of elements that the standards are attempting to address, and my first interpretation found it somewhat difficult to distinguish the differences between the big ideas, the disciplinary skills and processes that are a key focus of

the big ideas, and the inquiry elements. My general assumption was that the big ideas were content-focused, where the inquiry-elements would be skills-focused. With the disciplinary skills and processes standards added to the big ideas however, it is clear that this is not the case. While I understand the numbering system and the way in which the standards are coded and numbered, it was not until I started reading through the standards themselves until I fully understood the structure. Perhaps this is just the simple fact that these new standards are quite a departure from the old standards, and the new elements will take some getting used to. I think this will be true of most teachers adapting to the new standards as well. The infographic that breaks down the coding of the standards is most helpful.

In terms of refinement, right at the very start of the introductory section, the quote from Ronald Reagan should be more clearly identified as a quote from the former president. If nothing else, quotes added around the passage would be useful. Under the section covering “Design of the History and Social Studies Standards,” it might make sense to note that the Arizona History and Social Studies are aligned closely with the National Council for Social Studies Standards. Maybe this was not by design, but they are in alignment and in some places quite similar to the College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework designed by NCSS. Lastly, I find the section explaining that the standards are not curriculum and not instructional practices to be a bit problematic. I will elaborate more on the specifics in terms of grade level later on, but essentially I think the reliance on local levels might be too stressed. One of my biggest concerns with the standards as a whole is the lack of sequence or order in which the standards should be taught at each grade level. While I understand the need for discretion and local decision-making, there is much room for interpretation here. It is quite likely that with such vague direction, districts or local sites will do much to mold the standards into their own curriculum, and social studies instruction could look vastly different across the state (which I do not believe is the goal). Along those lines, some districts have the support and ability to put together district-wide curriculum, and smaller districts lacking those resources will largely leave this up to individual teachers. In addition, the lack of clarity and chronology in the standards make them somewhat difficult to assess. I will admit that I find myself somewhat on the fence here however; as I do appreciate the room for individual teacher discretion and I also appreciate some of the vagueness in the language and the elimination of long lists of content items to be checked off. In my opinion, I think it is possible for the standards to provide a bit more guidance, while still allowing individual districts, sites, and teachers to make informed decisions about teaching the standards in their individual classrooms.

I would like to conclude this section by saying that I think the focus on skills and disciplinary habits of mind and big ideas are most refreshing, and more closely align with current practices in their respective fields of study. While the old version of the standards did include some focus on skills, it was minimal, and it is clear that inquiry is a driving factor in these new standards. I very much appreciate the attention given to the skills and thought processes

students must master when thinking as a historian (or political scientist, or economist, or geographer, etc.), and feel that this is clearly communicated as an explicit element of these new standards. While content serves as the method by which students master these skills, it is made obvious to the reader that what students learn by completing this curriculum is much more than just mastery of names, dates, places, events, etc. In stressing skills over long lists of content, I feel these standards do more to reflect the current world in which our student live, and do more to prepare them for not just the workplace, but civic life, and active members of their communities.

Standards Section by Grade Level

As you conduct your review of the grade level standards, please consider these questions.

- A. Does the introductory information for the grade band and for each grade level provide enough context to understand how the standards connect within the grade and between grades within each band?
- B. Does each standard clearly state what students should know and be able to do?
- C. Can the standard be measured?
- D. Are there any ambiguous or unclear words/phrases?
- E. Do the standards in each section have appropriate **breadth**?
- F. Do the standards in each section have appropriate **depth of content and rigor** for the grade level?
- G. Is there meaningful alignment and development of skills/knowledge within each grade and from one grade band/grade level to the next?

One note before the individual grade breakdown: On pg. 12 where the big ideas are listed, it is unclear why these are not numbered. They are numbered on pg. 6 in the introductory section, but as these are the key ideas being measured in each of the standards, and they are an important part of the numbering and coding process, I feel the numbers should be included here. It is highly likely that an individual might just flip to the “Content Standards” portion of the document without looking at the introduction, and the numbers should be added in this section to communicate the big ideas to which each of the standards correlates.

1. Please provide feedback on Kindergarten-Grade 2 Band:

I will begin by saying that the entirety of my career has been spent working with secondary students, so I by no means feel that I am an expert in reviewing the elementary portions of standards. That being said, I think that the K-2 band is, in my opinion, the strongest and most clearly defined band within the standards. The introduction pieces to each of the K-2 grade levels are clear, and provide a coherent overview of what is to be covered at each grade level.

Again, I share some concerns about the fact that there is no order/chronology or even suggested order in which these standards are to be taught.

A. Please provide feedback on Kindergarten:

For the most part, the kindergarten standards seem measurable, and can be mastered within a school year time frame. While the big ideas are obviously quite complex and sophisticated, they are broken down quite nicely to be attainable at the kindergarten level. My concerns with kindergarten mostly lie in the “Inquiry Elements” section. Three of the items, “recognize a compelling question,” “recognize a supporting question,” and “identify evidence to support a claim,” seem difficult for kindergarten students to master. Maybe examples of the types of compelling or supporting questions that would be appropriate for this grade level could be included here? I also find K.SP1.2 to be a bit problematic in wording, especially when looking at how to measure student learning. The word “understand” is troublesome for me, as it does not identify a clear way for the student to demonstrate knowledge in the same way that “explain,” “compare,” or “apply” does.

B. Please provide feedback on Grade 1:

As was true with kindergarten, for the most part, the 1st grade standards seem measurable, and can be mastered within a school year time frame. While the big ideas are obviously quite complex and sophisticated, they are broken down quite nicely to be attainable at the 1st grade level. Similar to what was mentioned above, my concerns with Grade 1 also lie in the “Inquiry Elements” section. As before, I think three of these elements are difficult for 1st grade. These include “explain why a compelling question is important,” “make connections between compelling questions and supporting questions,” and “identify evidence drawn from multiple sources to support a claim.” In some ways I think the kindergarten elements might be more appropriate for 1st grade. Or as noted above, perhaps examples of how this could be taught in 1st grade could be included. I also have concerns about 1.SP1.2 for the same reason noted above, in that the word “understand” is difficult to assess.

C. Please provide feedback on Grade 2:

It was interesting to me at first read that the introduction to the Grade 2 band was the only piece that described an intersection with the English Language Arts standards. It made me wonder about other common points of overlap between the ELA and the Social Studies standards, as surely Grade 2 is not the only place where this occurs. Perhaps a section in the general introduction might be appropriate to communicate that these standards help to support the ELA standards and indicate notable places of intersection. It might also be worth noting in the individual grade level standard introductions where there are ELA elements that

would serve to support the Social Studies standards at that particular grade level, as Grade 2 does.

As was true with kindergarten and 1st grade, the 2nd grade standards seem measurable, and can be mastered within a school year time frame. Again, the big ideas are quite complex and sophisticated, but broken down quite nicely to be attainable at the 2nd level. As before, I have concerns regarding the “Inquiry Elements” section, this time with the first point, “Identify disciplinary ideas associated with compelling ideas.” The word choice here is confusing to me, and I’m not clear on the intent of this standard. Again, examples of what is meant here and how this could be integrated would be helpful. I find Grade 2 for the History standards to be limited in scope when compared to the others, which does not necessarily seem to fit with the storyline “The World Around Me.” I have concerns about 2.SP1.2 for the same reason noted above, in that the word “understand” is difficult to assess. Also, for 2.H1.1, it might be helpful to list some suggested cultures or civilizations for teachers to study.

2. Please provide feedback on Grade 3-5 Band:

The grade 3-5 band makes an appropriate jump into more sophisticated and specific content, while obviously building on the skills mastered by students in grades K-2. When reading through the standards as a whole, the introductory pieces of the grade 3-5 standards do not match the introductory pieces of the grades before them. While the grades K-2 introductions provided detail and an overall picture of the standards to be taught at each grade level, the 3-5 standards only include bullet point highlights of the specific content to be covered. More description would be useful for each of these grade levels as to the overarching themes that are to be taught at each grade and the skills to be mastered.

A. Please provide feedback on Grade 3:

Grade 3 standards seem to be a substantial increase in rigor and content knowledge over the Grade 2 standards. Not to say this is not appropriate for this grade level, but the increased level of sophistication from one grade level to the next definitely stands out here. Again, I have concerns about the inquiry elements section, in the first point, “Identify disciplinary concepts associated with a compelling question that are open to different interpretations.” It is not clear exactly what this would look like in a 3rd grade classroom, and some examples or clarification would be helpful.

On the whole, I think the standards for Grade 3 cover a wide range of content and skills, and can easily be measured and covered in the time frame of a school year. There are a few that stand out: 3.SP.1 is a little ambiguous in the wording. Many other standards include a second bullet point of “Key concepts” and perhaps those could be included here as well with some examples of

what this might look like. 3.C3.1 is a very large standard, which could, quite honestly be broken into three standards. This might make the individual pieces easier to measure and assess. The key concepts here are quite advanced compared to the government knowledge they have learned in the K-2 band. Not to say that the standard is not attainable, but more thought might be given to the background knowledge of students in this area. I share similar concerns with 3.H2.1. The list of key concepts here is quite advanced given the students lack of prior knowledge from previous grade levels. In 3.H1.1, one of the key concepts reads “Key events include but are not limited to statehood.” It is unclear what is meant by this key event. More detail and explanation could be included, specifically with regard to what else (other than statehood) might be included here.

B. Please provide feedback on Grade 4:

Similar to Grade 3, the Grade 4 standards are a substantial increase in rigor, content, and sophistication. The 4th grade standards are incredibly clear, and come across as easy to measure. Nearly every standard includes a bullet point listing key concepts to be covered, and this is most helpful in evaluating the way each standard would be taught in the classroom. The first bullet point in the “Inquiry Elements” section here, “Identify disciplinary concepts associated with a compelling question that are open to different interpretations,” is the same as the 3rd grade element. As I mentioned before, it is not clear exactly what this would look like in a 3rd grade classroom, and I feel the same here for 4th grade. Specifically, it might be helpful to note the ways in which students are expected to build upon this from the prior grade level understanding. It is somewhat concerning that the information covered in this grade level is not really covered again in the standards at the upper levels. Surely the level at which students cover this information in 4th grade should not be the only opportunity they have to interact with this content. Some of these key concepts and ideas should also be more integrated into the middle school and/or high school curriculum. In my understanding, there is not much U.S. history covered at the middle school level, and the high school U.S. history curriculum begins at the creation of the nation.

C. Please provide feedback on Grade 5:

Grade 5 is a nice progression beyond Grade 4. The two seem closely related, and match each other in terms of increased content, rigor, and understanding of material. Like 4th grade, these standards are easy to read and comprehend, with many examples given as to how they could be taught in the classroom. They are easily measureable, and provide defined lists of how the content is to be taught. Out of all of the previous “Inquiry Elements” sections, I feel that this one is finally clear, and represents what could be accomplished by students in this grade level. My main concern with 5th grade is the sheer volume of content. This grade level bears a heavy burden in educating students on the history of the U.S. Similar to 4th grade, much of the content here is not repeated or built upon in later grade levels. I noted in the introductory section it mentioned that “LEAs should select a manageable amount of content to support the inquiry

process to educate students. If this discretion is left up to the LEAs, large amounts of content could be omitted, possibly with the opportunity to never be covered again in the future, and therefore hindering students ability to understand later events and key themes/ideas present throughout U.S. history. In particular, from both a government stand point and U.S. history standpoint, I feel quite strongly that 5th grade should not be the only time that the Constitutional Convention and the creation of the Constitution is discussed. It does not reappear in the middle or high school levels. Specifically, the third bullet point detailing the creation of the Constitution and the principles found within should be reiterated and built upon in later grades. This is somewhat addressed in the high school government standards, but it could be more purposefully aligned. The debates at the Convention still define many of the debates in modern American democracy, and students should have a fundamental understanding of these concepts.

With regard to specific standards, 5.C2.1 asks teachers to “Choose examples from historical events during the period studied to illustrate this standard such as the work of the abolitionist movement to abolish slavery.” There are many other examples that could fit within this, and it might be helpful to provide teachers with a larger list of samples to choose from. On 5.E5.1, it might be helpful to include in the key concepts something noting the role of trade and taxation in the American Revolution as well as the Industrial Revolution.

3. Please provide feedback on Grade 6-8 Band:

On the whole, the 6 -8 band is not as clearly defined as those in previous grade levels. The way content is pieced together is not always coherent, specifically with the 8th grade standards. As mentioned before, I think too much of the U.S. history burden is placed on the 5th grade standards. More of this should be moved to the middle school, or at the very least revisited and expanded upon in some instances. There is some U.S. history covered in the 8th grade standards, but the students have little context in which to place that knowledge. More details on this are described in my 8th grade commentary below.

The introductory sections in this band are an improvement over the 3 -5 band, with more detail and attention given to the “big-picture” view of the standards, as opposed to just a content listing. It is also clear in these introductory sections specifically what content is to be covered, and what skills are to be incorporated.

A. Please provide feedback on Grade 6:

Right from the start, I struggled to understand the 6th grade title. I’m not sure why World Regions and Cultures of the Eastern Hemisphere are treated as two separate and seemingly distinct topics. I think the title Global Studies: Early Civilizations to 1500s would communicate both of those concepts, and could be more clearly defined in the standards themselves. This

would also more clearly communicate that the 7th grade standards are intended to be a continuation of Global Studies into the present day. As noted before, it raises concerns to me when the phrase “LEAs should select a manageable amount of content to support the inquiry process and educate students,” as this could easily lead to the omission of some critical information and understandings. As this content is not covered again in middle or high school, it should be made more explicit what is to be covered to aid student understanding at later grade levels.

With regard to the specific standards themselves, there are very few standards that include the “key concepts” explanations. These should be more readily included to give teachers a better understanding of how the standards is to be taught, and more guidance on what specific content should be covered. The lack of these pieces creates much vagueness in the curriculum for 6th grade. They are clearly defined in the geography standards, but lacking in the other sections.

B. Please provide feedback on Grade 7:

My comments and concerns on the 7th grade standards are near identical to my comments for the 6th grade standards. I still express concern over “LEAs should select a manageable amount of content to support the inquiry process and educate students,” as this could easily lead to the omission of some critical information and understandings. While this content is taught to students again at the high school level, it is still critical that the students have key understanding in which the high school curriculum can continue to build. I still believe it would be helpful for the key content in this grade to be more clearly identified.

As with 6th grade, though even more prevalent here, there are no “key concepts” or “key factors” bullet points that provide ideas and examples to teachers on what content is to be taught or what content might help illustrate a particular standard or idea. Again, the lack of these pieces creates vagueness in the 7th grade curriculum, and makes it difficult to see how these pieces would be assessed. The lack of clarity and direction in 7th grade in particular is of concern.

C. Please provide feedback on Grade 8:

To begin, I think the theme of the 8th grade standards is spectacular. I really like the idea that an entire year is dedicated to describing citizenship and civic engagement. As mentioned before however, I do have some concerns over the lack of U.S. history, not just the middle school levels entirely, but in 8th grade in particular. For example, in the introductory section, under suggested areas of study, it includes topics such as landmark Supreme Court cases, civil rights movements, terrorism, and the expansion of constitutional governments since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Up to this point, the students have not had any U.S. history instruction that would allow them the contextual knowledge in which to place these events. At some point, whether in 8th grade or

otherwise, I feel that the students should get more U.S. history beyond just the early years – Industrialization which they covered in 5th grade. It is critical to their understanding of many of the suggested areas of study listed for 8th grade, and would provide more upon which to build in the high school curriculum. On another note, as economics serves as a large portion of the 8th grade curriculum, it should be more clearly outlined and discussed in the introductory section.

In the “Inquiry Elements” section, I think it should be added in the first bullet point that there are points of disagreement among experts as well. It could read: “Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.”

It is interesting that beginning with 8th grade, and leading into high school, the standards themselves seem to become more specific and content related. In grades 6 and 7, I felt that more of the “key factors” and “key concepts” bullet points should be included to help clarify the content. I do not necessarily feel as strongly in the 8th grade standards that this is necessary. Many standards, and the economics standards in particular, give pointed instruction on what is to be taught. I do think more guidance could be included in the History section however, particularly with regard to 8.H3.4.

4. Please provide feedback on the High School Standards:

Right from the start, I think the high school standards are a little tough to understand just from a technical standpoint in the way they are grouped together. It is a little off that the course considerations for each course are listed, but separate from the actual standards for that course. Similar to what was done in the earlier grade levels, I believe that the course consideration should be listed as more or less the introductory section, then each of the standards should follow. This may lead to repetition in terms of listing the “Inquiry Elements” and the “Disciplinary Skills and Processes” within each section and the duplication of the History big ideas in both the U.S. course and the World courses, but I think it is important that these are clearly communicated in each course. It is also likely that someone may just go to the document and look specifically for, say, the world history standards, but not be able to clearly identify what is expected for that course. I think each course, U.S. History, World History, Civics/Government, and Economics, should each be able to “stand alone” in their listing of course considerations, inquiry elements, disciplinary skills, and standards, even if there is repetition among sections.

As has been a common theme throughout my comments, I still express concerns over the amount of freedom being given to LEAs here, and the disparity that will most likely result in curriculum across the state. As mentioned before, I am concerned about small districts where creating district-wide curriculum might not be as much of an option, and much individual decision-making is left up to teachers. In my current position, I work with pre-service teachers, and many have expressed concern to me over the standards and their lack of direction. To new teachers, not

as solid in the content as they might be, and often lacking sophisticated understandings and the minor nuances that a more veteran teacher would possess, the standards present a near-threatening amount of autonomy. That being said, as I mentioned earlier as well, I do very much appreciate the fact that the standards do not read as long lists of content, and focus more on skills and general themes. I understand that there must be a balance, but I still feel strongly that more guidance on specifically what content is to be covered is necessary. Perhaps, as was done with the standards in lower grade levels, a list of “key points” or “key concepts” might be included with many of the standards to provide some guidance and direction on what content might be linked with each of the standards.

In terms of the individual courses themselves:

The United States/Arizona history course has a few discrepancies in the course consideration and in the standards themselves. To begin, Arizona history is in the title, yet it is not mentioned at all in the list of content considerations. If this truly is to be a defining theme in the course, I feel it should be specifically noted. This is true in the actual standards as well, as no standards seems to have a direct correlation to the explicit teaching of Arizona history. In addition, the course consideration section mentions that students have studied Arizona and U.S. history from “the colonial period through the Cold War.” In reviewing previous grade levels, this is simply not true. The students covered the early beginnings of the nation – Industrialization, and a few topics beyond that, but they have not had a comprehensive U.S. History curriculum prior to this.

I have no major issues or concerns with the World History course considerations or standards, but would reiterate that more guidance and direction on the ways in which these themes and content relate to the standards would be helpful for teachers.

The geography course considerations seem quite vague, especially when compared to the other course considerations, and given the fact that the geography standards carry significant weight in the standards list. As most high schools do not offer geography as a stand-alone course, it should be more explicitly communicated as to how these course considerations and standards interact with the world history and/or U.S. history course considerations and standards. As geography is traditionally paired with World History, combining the course considerations and the standards into one grouping/course might add clarity.

With the Civics/Government course considerations, I think it is important (as was mentioned before) to explicitly list the creation of the Constitution, and the study of the principles contained within the Constitution. These debates are key to understanding modern politics, and I believe should be specifically addressed and build upon students’ prior knowledge. I would also think that the government portion of the standards should add more addressing comparative governments, as well as foreign policy. These were key pieces to the old standards, and do much to build civic understanding and participation.

The course considerations for economics are quite minimal, and could certainly be expanded. I would think that in the big idea centering on “The interconnected global economy impacts all individuals and groups in significant and varied ways,” should include sections describing varying economic systems across the world, and something with regards to wealth disparity.

Standards Section organized by Big Idea/learning progression

You have also been provided with each standard organized by content area and big idea to review and provide feedback on the development of the learning progression for each big idea. As you conduct your review of the progression, please consider the following questions.

- A. Does the standard address meaningful content within both the content area and the big idea?
- B. Do the standards within each progression have appropriate **depth of content and rigor**?
- C. Is there meaningful alignment and development of skills/knowledge within each grade and from one grade band/grade level to the next for each progression?

5. Please provide feedback on Big Ideas for Disciplinary Skills and Processes:

To begin, I would like to say that on the whole I find great value in organizing the standards into these big ideas and themes. They provide much consistency from grade level to grade level, and help students to understand patterns through social studies disciplines that aren't always made explicitly clear to them. I will also add that some of my issues or concerns with individual standards were addressed in the above section on individual grade levels.

A. Please provide feedback on the progression for SP1:

This first disciplinary skills and process standard conveys a very sophisticated understanding for students. I think the ways in which this standard is taught and progresses through grade levels is most appropriate. Students begin by explaining differences in past and present, start looking towards chronological explanation of events, and delve further into change over time, significant contribution of individuals, etc. The progression seems logical and well thought-out. My only suggestion would be to consider adding something regarding the development of historical empathy to the high school standards. It is easy to view history through our eyes, but equally important to view it through the eyes of the past. This is covered in SP2, but I think it might be equally appropriate here as well.

B. Please provide feedback on the progression for SP2:

SP2 might be my favorite of the disciplinary skills and processes, as the importance of multiple viewpoints is key to understanding social studies as a discipline. It is incredibly valuable that in as early as 3rd grade, students learn that individuals have multiple viewpoints on events and issues, and they continue to develop ideas on how those are shaped, and how they change over time. At the high school level, a standard might be included that discusses the role of minority

voices and those that differ from the “traditional narrative” of history. One technical note, this big idea is listed in the 2nd grade standards, but no specific standard is listed.

C. Please provide feedback on the progression for SP3:

One of my biggest concerns with SP3 is that it does not necessarily communicate the importance of secondary sources in the wording of the big idea itself. In the upper grade levels, this standard communicates the importance of secondary sources when analyzing historical record, and perhaps this could be included in the statement/definition. In addition, I think more attention could be given (especially in the younger grades) towards students’ ability to differentiate between primary and secondary sources. I think this standard could be included at the youngest of grade levels by simply showing students primary sources and artifacts (though this is somewhat covered in the SP2 standard for younger grades).

D. Please provide feedback on the progression for SP4:

The inclusion of this particular skill/big idea clearly communicates to students what it means to be a historian, and defines the field as an active field of study, and one that is continually open for discussion and debate. It also clearly communicates the significance of evidence when making claims and arguments. I think this standard is adequately covered throughout the grade levels, and flows through a logical progression of building upon concepts and key ideas.

6. Please provide feedback on Big Ideas for Civics:

Overall, I think the big ideas for civics clearly communicate the content and themes one would expect to see in civics courses. To me, there is much overlap in wording between C1 and C2. This holds true in some of the reading of the individual standards as well. It is minor in many instances, but in my mind civic virtue and democratic principles include citizen responsibility. I do see where it could be important to stress citizen responsibility separately however.

A. Please provide feedback on the progression for C1:

As mentioned above, there is some overlap between C1 and C2, though both are not present at all grade levels. I appreciate in C1 that much attention is given to cooperation, compromise, and open mindedness, particularly at the younger levels. This is something that might be more explicitly addressed at the 8th grade and high school level, as key principles to civic virtue and civil discourse and dissent.

B. Please provide feedback on the progression for C2:

C2 seems to have some gaps in the younger grade levels. It is not until 5th grade that students talk specifically about some of their role within a democracy. I believe this could be incorporated in some of the lower grade levels, and more explicitly outlined in some of the higher grade levels, specifically with relation to voting and the importance of voting within a democracy. High school standards might include information relating to the history of voting, disenfranchisement, current concerns over the stability of voting systems and processes, Electoral College, etc.

C. Please provide feedback on the progression for C3:

The wording on C3 is a little off and perhaps overly wordy in my opinion. I believe it could be condensed, possibly to “An understanding of civic and political institutions in society, as well as their principles, functions, and values, are essential to effective citizenship.” I see no issues with the way the big idea is measured across the grade levels, and appreciate the attention given to media and special interest groups at the upper grade levels.

D. Please provide feedback on the progression for C4:

I like that this standard starts with the word “process,” as this could have easily been left out of this idea. It is clear that this is a defining factor for this big idea however, as process, collaboration, and the common good are continuously stressed within this big idea. I very much appreciate the action project that is included with this big idea in the 8th grade standards. Perhaps something similar to this could be included in the high school standards, as students would have a much more sophisticated understanding of their community and the ways in which problems are solved at local, state, and international levels. Certainly analysis of current events seems appropriate here as well, and could maybe be included as an illustrating factor in the high school standards.

7. Please provide feedback on Big Ideas for Economics:

I find the economics big ideas to be a little confusing on the whole. When reading through the initial ideas on their own, they seem to stand-alone and be quite different from each other. When reading through each grade level however, there is a lot of overlap, and the differences between each big idea becomes more difficult to distinguish. This is especially true with E2 and E3, and somewhat with E5 as well. While this may not necessarily be a bad thing, and certainly there is overlap with the other big ideas as well, I do feel that it is worth mentioning, and perhaps could lead to these big ideas being more clearly defined. In reading through the individual standards by grade level, I am appreciative of the fact that the intersections between economics and historical events are clearly identified, especially in Grades 3 – 5.

A. Please provide feedback on the progression for E1:

In my opinion, this is the most clearly defined of the economics big ideas, and provides a clear progression throughout the grade levels. Financial literacy is of upmost importance in today's economy, and I feel this standard adequately addresses many of the ideas and issues with which students should be familiar.

B. Please provide feedback on the progression for E2:

My concern with E2 is that it's wording implies that we are always able to understand the decisions of people, groups, and societies. While we seek to do so, and economic reasoning is certainly a tool that can aid us in doing so, the fact remains that we cannot always understand the decisions of individuals, groups, or societies. I think it should be more clearly communicated, especially in the upper grade levels, that people do not always make rational decisions, and we cannot always understand their individual decision-making processes. Perhaps this could be more accurately worded as "By applying economic reasoning, we can *seek to understand* the decisions of people, groups, and societies."

C. Please provide feedback on the progression for E3:

I have no concerns with the big idea conveyed in E3. It only discussing market systems however, I believe that it does not provide much room or opportunity to talk about other kinds of economic systems. This idea is reflected in the standards associated with this big idea. While the study of comparative economic systems may more closely be aligned with E5, perhaps E3 could more clearly communicate that it references the U.S. market system, or even free market economies as a whole. This seems more accurate in reflecting the standards listed within this big idea.

D. Please provide feedback on the progression for E4:

This standard is a good example of one that stands well on it's own, but is not as easy to identify when reading through the individual grade level standards. No one would argue the truthfulness of this statement, but the institutions become hard to identify in the standards. Throughout the lower grade levels, much of what is described is government and private sector interaction, without much attention being given to other institutions. Even at the high school level, the standard is only listed as "Explain the roles of institutions in a market economy." Much more guidance should be given on what institutions are to be discussed.

E. Please provide feedback on the progression for E5:

The wording on this standard seems ambiguous and a little vague to me. The end phrase of “in significant and varied ways,” while true, just doesn’t seem to convey the main idea with the same clarity as the other big ideas in this discipline. In addition, I think this big idea, particularly at the upper levels should do more to discuss issues of wealth disparity across the world, and the impact of varying economic systems.

8. Please provide feedback on Big Ideas for Geography:

My own prior knowledge and background in this topic make it somewhat difficult for me to feel that I have a specified level of expertise to offer much critique with these big ideas. In my opinion, I see no issues or concerns with the geography big ideas. I think they clearly communicate the appropriate elements of study for the field of geography, and think they build appropriately through the grade levels. I do appreciate that in addition to traditional map skills, students are introduced to advanced technology in the field of geography in the upper-grade levels. I do think in some instances that the explicit connection between geography and history could be more clearly communicated, specifically with regard to the high school standards.

A. Please provide feedback on the progression for G1:

B. Please provide feedback on the progression for G2:

C. Please provide feedback on the progression for G3:

D. Please provide feedback on the progression for G4:

9. Please provide feedback on Big Ideas for History:

What is unique about the history big ideas is that not only do they communicate explicit themes within history, but they communicate to students the way in which those themes shape the modern world. They clearly stress the concept of change over time, and I believe, clearly support the disciplinary skills and processes emphasizing multiple perspectives, evaluation of primary and secondary sources, and using evidence to form an argument or opinion. These big ideas include many of the “key words” one would expect to come up in a history survey: civilization, culture, conflict and compromise, economics, politics, religion, interaction. It is clear that the standards are designed to communicate more than just names and dates. In addition, I feel that the development of these ideas is appropriate across the grade levels. As mentioned earlier, I still feel that the overlay of big ideas and content could be clearer and more explicit, specifically with regard to the high school standards.

A. Please provide feedback on the progression for H1:

This big idea clearly identifies the way in which civilizations, societies, etc. have been shaped, and how they have changed over time. Beginning in kindergarten with the understanding of one's own culture, and moving outward from there, students gradually build an increasingly complex understanding of the modern world. Again, especially at the upper-levels, I think more specific content could be included to give more guidance and direction to teachers on how they might teach this big idea in the classroom.

B. Please provide feedback on the progression for H2:

The unfortunate reality of this big idea is that in many ways, conflict has done more to shape the world than compromise. Obviously that statement is up for debate, but I think the way in which the standards address this reality is sophisticated and complex. While always still talking about points of cooperation and the need for it, it seems appropriate that the upper level standards move more towards focusing on points of conflict throughout history. I particularly like the 7th grade standard that lists conflict as both divisive and unifying. As will be true of all my comments regarding the big ideas for history, I think more can be done to provide specific content examples and ways in which this might be taught, specifically with regard to the upper grade levels. The high school standards listed for this big idea read as some of the most vague in all of the high school standards. More guidance and direction for teachers is needed.

C. Please provide feedback on the progression for H3:

In the younger grade levels, it is quite clear what is to be taught with regards to this particular big idea, and the content is well-detailed. All of the pieces fit the story-level for each grade level well. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I will just say that the standards associated with this big idea still incredibly vague and ambiguous in the upper grades, particularly in high school. This big idea is so critical to an understanding of history that it cannot be separated from the content. More should be done in both the World and U.S. history areas to illustrate ways in which this could be taught, and key ideas and concepts to focus on.

D. Please provide feedback on the progression for H4:

Though it is not made explicitly clear in just reading the statement/definition of the big idea, it becomes clear in the reading of the standards that this big idea is designed to communicate issues of diversity, race, class, gender, etc. to students. I wonder if perhaps this might be re-worded to include some of that language from the beginning. The inclusion of this element in history standards is incredibly important, and I think will go a long way towards letting all students feel

they have a place and a voice throughout history. It challenges again the idea of the traditional narrative, and gives value to all perspectives. As before, I think the addition of content key ideas and concepts in the high school level would be useful.

10. Please provide any additional comments about this draft that you want the revision committee to consider.

As I mentioned in the introduction, I was most excited on my first read-through of the standards to see the focus on skills, big ideas, and elements of inquiry, as opposed to long lists of content mastery. That is a great strength of these standards. On the other hand, I feel that the vagueness in content, particularly at the upper-levels could be cause for concern. In looking ahead, I think attention must be given to assessment for these standards. I have little doubt that a state-wide assessment of these standards could be in the works for the future, and the freedom of districts to more or less develop their own curriculum, makes it hard to assess on a statewide level. I hope that some attention and conversation will be given to this in the review discussion.

Inquiry Elements

Within the standards are Inquiry Elements organized by grade level. As you conduct your review of the Inquiry Elements, please consider the following:

- A. Are the Inquiry Elements developmentally appropriate for each grade level?
- B. Are the Inquiry Elements clear and easy to understand?
 - a. Will teachers be able to integrate the elements into their instruction?
 - b. Is there more guidance needed to illustrate how to use the Inquiry Elements?

On the whole, I would speak quite highly on the Inquiry Elements included in the standards. They communicate to students, from an early level, that these disciplines are not static, they are open to interpretation, and they are defined by questions, investigation, and evidence. I already discussed some of my concerns with the individual inquiry elements within each grade level in the earlier section. To reiterate here, I am not sure that the kindergarten inquiry elements are appropriate for that particular grade level, or 1st grade either. In the 2nd and 3rd grade Inquiry Elements, I'm not entirely sure what is meant by the phrase "Identify disciplinary ideas associated with compelling questions." I also believe in the 7th grade Inquiry Elements section that it is important to note that there are both points of agreement and disagreement among experts. This first Inquiry Element might be reworded to include this fact.

I do feel strongly that teachers will need more guidance on how to integrate these elements into their curriculum. This is a big change from the previous standards, and it will take some adaptation and further instruction for teachers. It might be helpful, at each grade level, to include a small section detailing some examples of what that each particular element might look like in a specific grade level. For example, when it is stated that one of the Inquiry elements is to "Use supporting questions to help

answer the compelling questions in an inquiry,” it would be helpful to provide examples of what those questions might look like, in relation to the content covered at that specific grade level. I think this is especially necessary in the earlier grade levels, and perhaps not as much in the upper grades.