

NCSS on the Development of State Social Studies Standards

The revision of the Texas social studies standards is generating hot debate and strong opinions, and this is no surprise. Because the subjects that compose social studies touch upon cultural, societal and political topics, social studies generates the most controversy when decisions are made regarding what is taught to students. It is important, therefore, that the development of standards for social studies relies on strong scholarship rather than politics.

National Council for the Social Studies believes that *best practice* in the development of state social studies standards consists of these processes, in order:

1. First, *scholars* are consulted for their expertise: historians, economists, political scientists, geographers, archaeologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists.
2. Input by *community members and educators* follows, both online and in multiple public meetings.
3. Standards are developed by *master social studies educators*, who assure that the standards are effective and age appropriate tools with which to organize curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
4. Finally, standards are circulated in the community for *further input*, which may then result in adjustments or addenda to the original documents written by the master educators.

State Boards of Education may vote at that point to accept or to send back the standards with their concerns, but *it is not their job to rewrite them, even in part.*