
SECTION I

Recommendations Regarding Proposed Revisions to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Social Studies

Submitted Following Review of First Reading Draft, Proposed Amendments, and Public Comments

Executive Summary

After reviewing the proposed Social Studies TEKS revisions, the amendment packages currently under consideration, and the extensive public comments submitted following First Reading, I believe the proposed standards contain a number of meaningful improvements. In particular, the revisions strengthen Holocaust education, improve historical specificity in several secondary courses, expand attention to primary source analysis, and provide stronger sequencing in Economics. Several amendments also improve historical accuracy by clarifying chronology, adding important historical context, and strengthening disciplinary thinking skills.

At the same time, the public comments reveal widespread concerns that should be addressed before final adoption. While individual amendments vary in quality, four recurring themes emerge across multiple grade levels and courses.

Developmental Appropriateness

The most consistent concern is the introduction of increasingly abstract political, constitutional, economic, and religious concepts in the elementary grades. Students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 are frequently expected to engage with concepts such as constitutional government, republicanism, separation of powers, federalism, civic virtue, constitutional influence, and political philosophy before they have developed a basic understanding of chronology, historical context, or civic institutions.

The issue is not rigor. The issue is sequencing.

Students should first understand how people lived, how communities functioned, how governments emerged, and how societies changed over time before being asked to analyze complex constitutional systems or philosophical traditions.

Content Overload

Many public comments identified concerns regarding the sheer volume of content proposed in several grades. The cumulative effect of adding historical figures, primary source quotations, civic concepts, constitutional ideas, religious influences, and geographic content raises legitimate questions regarding instructional feasibility.

A rigorous curriculum is not necessarily one that contains the greatest amount of content. Rather, it is one that allows sufficient time for students to develop genuine understanding.

Religious Balance

Religion unquestionably belongs in social studies instruction. Students should learn about the influence of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Indigenous spiritual traditions, Hinduism, Buddhism, and other belief systems on the development of societies and cultures.

However, the proposed standards frequently expand Christian content across multiple grade levels while providing comparatively less attention to other religious traditions and nonreligious historical influences. The concern is not the inclusion of Christianity. The concern is the cumulative imbalance created by repeated additions emphasizing Christian motivations, Christian values, Biblical literacy, and Christian contributions to political development.

Historical Inquiry Versus Predetermined Interpretation

Several amendments strengthen historical inquiry by requiring students to analyze evidence, evaluate causes and consequences, and examine multiple perspectives.

Other amendments move in the opposite direction by presenting particular interpretations as settled conclusions. Social studies standards should equip students to think historically rather than directing them toward predetermined political, religious, or ideological conclusions.

The recommendations below are intended to preserve the strongest aspects of the proposed revisions while improving developmental appropriateness, instructional feasibility, historical balance, and analytical rigor.

Foundational Recommendations Applicable Across All Grades

Recommendation A: Conduct an Instructional Feasibility Review

Before final adoption, TEA should conduct an instructional minutes analysis for each grade level and course.

Numerous public comments noted that the proposed standards significantly increase content volume without a corresponding increase in instructional time. The Board should request:

- Estimated instructional days required;
- Estimated instructional hours required;
- Pacing recommendations;
- Identification of standards requiring the greatest instructional investment.

This review would help ensure that standards are realistic and teachable.

Recommendation B: Conduct a Developmental Appropriateness Review

The Board should conduct a systematic review of all K–5 standards to determine whether concepts align with child development research.

Particular attention should be given to standards introducing:

- Constitutional government;
- Republicanism;
- Federalism;
- Separation of powers;
- Rule of law comparisons;
- Enlightenment philosophy;
- Political ideology.

Many of these concepts are important but may be more appropriate for upper elementary, middle school, or high school instruction.

Recommendation C: Establish a Consistent Framework for Religious Content

The standards should consistently treat religion as a historical force rather than as a preferred worldview.

Students should learn:

- How religions influenced societies;
- How religions shaped institutions;
- How religions motivated historical actors;
- How religious traditions interacted with one another.

The same analytical framework should be applied regardless of the religion being studied.

Recommendation D: Replace Memorization with Interpretation

Across multiple grades, students are expected to recite:

- Patriotic songs;
- Historical quotations;
- Constitutional texts;
- Famous speeches.

While memorization can have value, understanding should remain the primary goal.

Whenever possible, standards should ask students to:

- Explain ideas in their own words;
 - Interpret meaning;
 - Connect concepts to historical context;
 - Analyze significance.
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Kindergarten

Recommendation K-1: Remove Constitutional Theory from Kindergarten

The proposed standards introduce concepts such as:

- Constitutional republics;
- Federalism;
- Civic virtue;
- Free enterprise;
- The Constitution as the supreme law of the land.

These concepts exceed the developmental readiness of most five-year-olds.

Recommended Revision

Replace these expectations with instruction focused on:

- Classroom rules;
- Fairness;
- Cooperation;
- Responsibility;
- Community participation.

Rationale

Young children can understand why rules exist and why communities establish expectations. They are not yet prepared to understand constitutional systems or political theory.

Recommendation K-2: Revise Pilgrim Standards

The proposed amendments increasingly emphasize that the Pilgrims came to America to practice and share their Christian faith.

Recommended Revision

Retain religion as part of the story, but broaden the standard to include:

- Migration;
- Settlement;
- Family life;
- Community building;
- Adaptation to a new environment.

Rationale

Students should understand religion as one motivation among many rather than the defining feature of early colonial history.

Recommendation K-3: Retain Wants Versus Needs Standards

The revised economic standards represent one of the strongest examples of developmentally appropriate instruction.

Students are asked to distinguish between:

- Food and toys;
- Needs and wants;
- Goods and services.

Recommendation

Retain these revisions without modification.

Rationale

The standards use familiar examples and connect abstract concepts to children's lived experiences.

Grade 1

Recommendation 1-1: Review Cumulative Religious Emphasis

Across Grade 1, students repeatedly encounter:

- Pilgrims;
- Thanksgiving;
- Worship practices;
- Meeting houses;
- Christian motivations.

Each standard may be historically defensible individually. However, the cumulative effect creates a disproportionate emphasis on a single religious tradition.

Recommended Revision

Present religion as one historical influence among several, including:

- Community formation;
- Settlement;
- Geography;
- Economic activity;

- Daily life.

Recommendation 1-2: Replace Song Recitation Requirements

Students are expected to memorize portions of patriotic songs.

Recommended Revision

Ask students to explain:

- Why songs are important;
- What symbols represent;
- Why communities celebrate holidays.

Rationale

Understanding demonstrates deeper learning than recitation.

Grade 2

Recommendation 2-1: Move Constitutional Convention Content

Students are introduced to:

- James Madison;
- Constitutional Convention debates;
- Bill of Rights;
- Rule of Law.

Recommended Revision

Move these standards to Grades 4–5.

Rationale

Students should first understand fairness, rules, and citizenship before studying constitutional design.

Recommendation 2-2: Retain and Expand African Civilization Content

The additions regarding:

- Mali;
- Kush;
- Egypt;
- Trade;
- Innovation;

represent a significant improvement.

Recommendation

Expand these standards further by including governance, agriculture, and cultural achievements.

SECTION II

Detailed Recommendations: Grades 3–5

Grade 3

Grade 3 represents one of the most significant departures from traditional elementary social studies instruction. The proposed standards increasingly introduce students to classical political philosophy, constitutional theory, citizenship, representative government, and civic concepts derived from Ancient Greece and Rome. While these topics are important, the proposed sequence asks students to understand why ancient political ideas matter before they have developed a basic understanding of the civilizations themselves.

The result is a course that often resembles an introductory civics course rather than an elementary social studies course focused on understanding civilizations, culture, geography, trade, and historical development.

Recommendation 3-1: Remove Direct Comparisons Between Ancient Civilizations and Modern Constitutional Government

The proposed standards ask students to explain:

- How Greek ideas influence voting today;
- How Greek concepts of citizenship influence American government;
- How rule of law and separation of powers relate to contemporary government;
- How Roman representative government influenced the United States Constitution and Texas government.

Recommended Revision

Retain instruction regarding:

- Greek city-states;
- Greek citizenship;
- Roman government;
- Roman law;
- Civic participation.

Move direct constitutional comparisons to:

- Grade 7;
- U.S. Government;
- World History.

Rationale

Students should first understand:

- What Greece was;
- What Rome was;
- How those societies functioned;
- Why they were historically significant.

Only after students understand those civilizations should they be asked to evaluate their influence on modern institutions.

The current sequence effectively requires students to understand the U.S. Constitution before they have studied it.

Recommendation 3-2: Reduce Civic Vocabulary Overload

The standards introduce a substantial amount of abstract terminology, including:

- citizenship;
- liberty;
- representative government;
- republicanism;
- separation of powers;
- constitutional influence;
- civic responsibility.

Recommended Revision

Focus instruction on:

- leadership;
- decision-making;
- community participation;
- laws;
- fairness.

Introduce abstract terminology gradually in later grades.

Rationale

Elementary students learn civic concepts most effectively through examples rather than political vocabulary.

The standards should prioritize understanding over terminology.

Recommendation 3-3: Retain and Expand Indigenous Governance Standards

One of the strongest portions of Grade 3 is the inclusion of Indigenous governance systems.

Students are introduced to:

- Caddo communities;
- Karankawa leadership structures;
- Coahuiltecan bands;
- Ancestral Pueblo societies.

Recommended Revision

Retain these standards and expand instruction to include:

- trade relationships;
- environmental adaptation;
- resource management;
- diplomacy;
- cultural continuity.

Rationale

These standards are developmentally appropriate and help students understand that Indigenous peoples governed sophisticated societies long before European settlement.

Recommendation 3-4: Expand Poverty Point Rather Than Reduce It

The proposed standards include Poverty Point as an example of a significant Indigenous civilization.

Recommended Revision

Expand instruction regarding:

- trade networks;
- transportation routes;
- geography;
- resource exchange.

Rationale

Poverty Point provides one of the best opportunities in elementary school to teach students how geography influences economic development and cultural exchange.

Recommendation 3-5: Reconsider the Jewish Diaspora Standard

The amendments improve historical accuracy regarding the Jewish diaspora.

However, the concept remains historically complex.

Recommended Revision

At Grade 3, focus on:

- migration;
- movement of people;
- maintaining traditions;
- cultural continuity.

Move deeper analysis of imperial conquest and diaspora to later grades.

Rationale

Students can understand movement and continuity more readily than they can understand the political and military causes of displacement.

Recommendation 3-6: Expand World Civilizations Beyond Greece and Rome

One recurring concern in public comments is the disproportionate emphasis on classical Mediterranean civilizations.

Recommended Revision

Increase attention to:

- African civilizations;
- Indigenous civilizations;
- Asian civilizations;
- Trade networks connecting civilizations.

Rationale

Students should understand that major civilizations developed in many parts of the world, not solely in Greece and Rome.

Grade 4

Grade 4 may provide the clearest example of content overload within the elementary grades.

Students are expected to move rapidly among:

- Medieval Europe;
- Christianity;
- Monasticism;
- Magna Carta;
- Silk Road trade;
- Marco Polo;
- Renaissance Italy;
- Exploration;
- Mesoamerican civilizations;
- Indigenous Texas cultures.

The challenge is not historical accuracy. The challenge is coherence.

Recommendation 4-1: Reorganize Grade 4 Around Themes Rather Than Chronology Alone

Recommended Revision

Organize the course around:

- civilizations;
- trade;
- geography;
- governance;
- cultural exchange.

Use:

- Medieval Europe;
- Indigenous North America;
- Mesoamerica;
- Asia

as comparative examples.

Rationale

Students are more likely to retain broad concepts than isolated historical facts.

Recommendation 4-2: Revise Christianity Standards

Several amendments expand the role of Christianity in explaining:

- literacy;
- education;
- law;
- political development;
- the Magna Carta;
- later democratic institutions.

Recommended Revision

Retain Christianity as an important historical influence.

However, frame standards around:

- historical impact;
- institutions;
- education;
- culture.

Avoid framing standards around theological explanations.

Rationale

Students should understand how religion influenced history rather than being directed toward particular religious conclusions.

Recommendation 4-3: Revise Magna Carta Standards

The amendments increasingly connect Magna Carta to Christian understandings of justice.

Recommended Revision

Focus on:

- rule of law;
- limits on government power;

- legal rights;
- constitutional development.

Rationale

The significance of Magna Carta lies primarily in legal and political history.

Recommendation 4-4: Expand Indigenous Civilizations

The Indigenous portions of Grade 4 are among the strongest standards in the course.

Recommended Revision

Expand instruction regarding:

- governance systems;
- diplomacy;
- trade;
- agriculture;
- cultural continuity.

Rationale

Students should understand Indigenous peoples as historical actors rather than merely populations encountered by Europeans.

Recommendation 4-5: Reduce Hero-Centered Exploration Narratives

The current standards emphasize:

- Marco Polo;
- Columbus;
- explorers as individuals.

Recommended Revision

Shift emphasis toward:

- trade routes;

- technological developments;
- exchange of ideas;
- consequences of exploration.

Rationale

Systems and processes are often more important than individual biographies.

Recommendation 4-6: Revise Columbus Day Standards

Recommended Revision

Students should learn:

- why Columbus is commemorated;
- why some communities celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day;
- how historical interpretations change over time.

Rationale

This encourages historical thinking rather than memorization.

Recommendation 4-7: Expand Mesoamerican Civilizations

The amendments include cultural influences such as food traditions.

Recommended Revision

Expand instruction regarding:

- governance;
- urban planning;
- agriculture;
- engineering;
- trade networks.

Rationale

Students should understand Mesoamerican civilizations as major civilizations, not simply as cultural influences.

Recommendation 4-8: Remove Sensationalized Treatment of Indigenous Civilizations

Public comments repeatedly questioned the emphasis on:

- human sacrifice;
- cannibalism.

Recommended Revision

Prioritize:

- governance;
- trade;
- agriculture;
- engineering;
- urban development.

Rationale

Students gain more historical understanding from studying the achievements and organization of civilizations than from focusing on sensational practices.

Grade 5

Grade 5 is arguably the most consequential elementary course because it introduces students to the origins of American government and society. It is also the grade where concerns regarding religious framing become most pronounced.

Recommendation 5-1: Reconsider the Reformation-to-America Narrative

Throughout the standards, students are repeatedly asked to connect:

- Martin Luther;
- Bible literacy;
- printing;

- migration;
- religious liberty;
- constitutional development;
- democracy.

Recommended Revision

Teach the Reformation as one influence among many.

Students should also study:

- Enlightenment ideas;
- economic changes;
- imperial competition;
- Indigenous societies;
- African experiences.

Rationale

American democracy emerged from multiple historical influences.

Recommendation 5-2: Remove the Thomas Paine/Reformation/Bible Literacy Standard

The proposed amendment creates a long causal chain linking:

- Reformation;
- Bible reading;
- printing;
- Thomas Paine;
- American independence.

Recommended Revision

Focus directly on:

- Common Sense;
- political communication;
- public opinion;
- revolutionary ideas.

Rationale

Students should study historical actors directly rather than through speculative causal chains.

Recommendation 5-3: Expand Indigenous Agency

Recommended Revision

Add instruction regarding:

- alliances;
- resistance;
- diplomacy;
- adaptation;
- cultural survival.

Rationale

Indigenous peoples should appear as historical actors, not simply recipients of European actions.

Recommendation 5-4: Strengthen Colonization Standards

Students should understand:

- labor systems;
- displacement;
- cultural transformation;
- resistance;
- adaptation.

Rationale

Colonization involved both opportunities and profound consequences.

Recommendation 5-5: Revise Mission Standards

Mission instruction should include:

- Indigenous experiences;
- adaptation;

- cultural change;
- cultural loss.

Rationale

Current standards emphasize missionaries more than Indigenous peoples.

Recommendation 5-6: Reduce Constitutional Theory Density

Students are expected to master:

- Locke;
- Montesquieu;
- Magna Carta;
- English Bill of Rights;
- Articles of Confederation;
- Constitutional Convention;
- Connecticut Compromise.

Recommended Revision

Focus on:

- why governments are created;
- how disagreements are resolved;
- rights and responsibilities.

Rationale

Students should understand constitutional purpose before constitutional theory.

Recommendation 5-7: Replace Preamble Memorization

Recommended Revision

Ask students to explain:

- the goals of the Constitution;
- why governments exist;

- why citizens create laws.

Rationale

Explanation demonstrates deeper learning than recitation.

Recommendation 5-8: Expand Women's History

The standards remain heavily focused on political and military leaders.

Recommended Revision

Expand discussion of:

- women's roles during the Revolution;
- political participation;
- labor;
- family life;
- community leadership.

Rationale

Students should understand that history is shaped by more than elected officials and military leaders.

Recommendation 5-9: Strengthen Slavery Instruction

Students should understand:

- slavery's role in colonial economies;
- resistance by enslaved people;
- contradictions between liberty and slavery.

Rationale

A balanced understanding of the founding era requires confronting both democratic ideals and persistent inequality.

SECTION III

Detailed Recommendations: Grades 6–7

Grade 6 – Texas History

Of all the courses reviewed, Grade 6 is among the strongest from a historical perspective. Unlike the elementary grades, the course addresses slavery, sectional conflict, Reconstruction, immigration, industrialization, and Jim Crow with greater specificity. Many of the proposed amendments improve historical accuracy and provide opportunities for more sophisticated analysis.

However, the course still presents several areas where additional context, balance, and historical complexity would improve student understanding.

Recommendation 6-1: Expand Mexican History Beyond Its Role as a Precursor to Texas Independence

The current sequence introduces:

- Miguel Hidalgo;
- Mexican independence;
- the Constitution of 1824;
- early Mexican government.

However, Mexico frequently appears only as background information leading to Anglo settlement and the Texas Revolution.

Recommended Revision

Expand instruction regarding:

- Mexican independence from Spain;
- federalist versus centralist political debates;
- Indigenous communities within Mexico;
- nation-building after independence;
- economic and political instability during the early republic.

Rationale

Students should understand Mexico as a nation with its own history rather than simply as a backdrop for Texas history.

A stronger understanding of Mexican history also improves understanding of the causes of the Texas Revolution.

Recommendation 6-2: Strengthen Indigenous Perspectives Throughout the Course

Throughout Grade 6, Indigenous peoples often appear primarily in discussions of:

- conflict;
- removal;
- settlement;
- westward expansion.

Recommended Revision

Expand instruction regarding:

- Comanche political power;
- Apache communities;
- Caddo diplomacy;
- Indigenous trade networks;
- Indigenous adaptation to changing political realities.

Rationale

Indigenous peoples should be presented as historical actors shaping Texas history rather than groups reacting to events created by others.

Recommendation 6-3: Add Greater Complexity to the Texas Revolution

Current instruction continues to emphasize:

- the Alamo;
- Goliad;

- San Jacinto;
- Sam Houston;
- Santa Anna.

These events are central to Texas history and should remain.

However, the standards risk presenting the Revolution solely as a heroic military narrative.

Recommended Revision

Expand discussion regarding:

- slavery as a source of political tension;
- federalism versus centralism;
- constitutional disputes;
- Tejano participation;
- differing perspectives among settlers.

Rationale

Students should understand that multiple factors contributed to the Revolution.

Historical understanding improves when students recognize complexity rather than simple hero narratives.

Recommendation 6-4: Preserve Strong Civil War Language

One of the strongest revisions in the Grade 6 standards is the explicit recognition that the expansion of slavery contributed significantly to sectional conflict and the Civil War.

Recommendation

Retain this language without modification.

Rationale

This reflects current historical scholarship and helps students understand the central role slavery played in the conflict.

Recommendation 6-5: Expand Reconstruction

The proposed standards include:

- Black Codes;
- Freedmen's Bureau;
- Ku Klux Klan violence;
- limits on African American rights.

These additions are important.

Recommended Revision

Further expand instruction regarding:

- African American political participation;
- constitutional amendments;
- schools established during Reconstruction;
- community-building efforts;
- rollback of civil rights after Reconstruction.

Rationale

Students should understand Reconstruction as both a period of opportunity and a period of resistance to equality.

Recommendation 6-6: Replace Gettysburg Address Memorization Requirements

The amendments require students to recite portions of the Gettysburg Address.

Recommended Revision

Replace recitation requirements with:

- explanation;
- interpretation;
- discussion of historical significance.

Rationale

Students who can explain Lincoln's message demonstrate deeper understanding than students who merely memorize words.

Recommendation 6-7: Expand Immigration History

The addition of Angel Island is one of the stronger revisions.

Recommendation

Retain Angel Island and expand instruction regarding:

- Mexican immigration;
- Asian immigration beyond Chinese exclusion;
- immigrant labor;
- immigrant communities in Texas.

Rationale

Texas immigration history extends far beyond Ellis Island and should reflect the state's unique demographic history.

Recommendation 6-8: Strengthen Jim Crow Instruction

The standards identify:

- Jim Crow laws;
- disenfranchisement;
- Plessy v. Ferguson.

Recommended Revision

Explicitly connect:

- Reconstruction;
- Black Codes;
- segregation;
- voting restrictions;
- civil rights struggles.

Rationale

Students should understand continuity and causation rather than viewing these topics as isolated events.

Recommendation 6-9: Balance Political Leaders with Social History

Students study numerous political and military leaders, including:

- Andrew Jackson;
- Sam Houston;
- Santa Anna;
- Theodore Roosevelt;
- Abraham Lincoln;
- Ulysses Grant.

Recommended Revision

Expand instruction regarding:

- women;
- laborers;
- immigrants;
- formerly enslaved people;
- Indigenous communities;
- Tejanos.

Rationale

History is shaped by communities as well as famous leaders.

Recommendation 6-10: Address Violence and Displacement More Directly

Several topics involving violence and displacement receive less attention than political developments.

Recommended Revision

Increase instruction regarding:

- forced removal;
- slavery;
- racial violence;
- discrimination;
- resistance movements.

Rationale

Students can engage with difficult history in age-appropriate ways.

Avoiding difficult topics weakens historical understanding.

Grade 7 – Modern U.S. History

Grade 7 raises some of the most significant concerns identified in public comments.

Unlike most other courses, several amendments appear to move beyond historical content and into interpretation. In some cases, the standards seem designed to guide students toward specific conclusions rather than encouraging independent analysis.

The strongest Grade 7 revisions strengthen Holocaust education and improve historical accuracy. The weakest revisions introduce ideological framing that risks undermining historical inquiry.

Recommendation 7-1: Preserve Analytical Verbs

Several amendments replace verbs such as:

- analyze;
- evaluate;
- assess

with:

- identify;
- describe;
- explain.

Recommended Revision

Retain analytical verbs wherever possible.

Rationale

Students should analyze historical developments rather than memorize approved conclusions.

Higher-order thinking should remain a core goal of social studies instruction.

Recommendation 7-2: Rewrite the Communism Standards

The proposed amendments introduce extensive instruction regarding communism.

Students are asked to understand:

- government ownership;
- rejection of religion;
- one-party rule;
- dictatorship;
- limitations on liberty.

Many of these characteristics accurately describe historical communist states.

However, the standards are framed primarily as criticism rather than analysis.

Recommended Revision

Focus instruction on:

- Marxism;
- Leninism;
- Soviet communism;
- Chinese communism;
- Cold War anti-communism;
- historical outcomes.

Rationale

Students should evaluate historical evidence rather than receive predetermined conclusions.

Recommendation 7-3: Apply Equivalent Scrutiny to Fascism and Other Authoritarian Systems

The proposed standards devote substantial attention to the flaws of communism.

Recommended Revision

Apply the same analytical framework to:

- fascism;
- authoritarian nationalism;
- racial supremacy ideologies;
- military dictatorships.

Rationale

Students should understand that threats to democracy have emerged from multiple ideological traditions.

Recommendation 7-4: Retain "Tulsa Race Massacre"

One amendment proposes replacing:

Tulsa Race Massacre

with:

Tulsa Race Riot

Recommended Revision

Retain "Tulsa Race Massacre."

Rationale

Current historical scholarship overwhelmingly supports the use of "massacre" to describe the scale and nature of the violence.

Recommendation 7-5: Preserve and Expand Holocaust Standards

The Holocaust revisions are among the strongest amendments in the entire package.

The standards now include:

- antisemitism;
- propaganda;
- dehumanization;
- state-sponsored persecution;

- genocide.

Recommendation

Retain these additions.

Additional Recommendation

Ensure Holocaust instruction includes:

- survivor experiences;
- resistance movements;
- postwar consequences;
- displacement after liberation.

Rationale

Holocaust education remains essential to understanding the twentieth century.

Recommendation 7-6: Restore Broader Japanese American Internment Standards

The proposed revision narrows the discussion primarily to fear of espionage.

Recommended Revision

Restore instruction regarding:

- racism;
- wartime hysteria;
- civil liberties;
- constitutional rights;
- long-term consequences.

Rationale

Students should understand both causes and consequences.

Recommendation 7-7: Revise Israel Standards

The amendments describe Israel as:
the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people.

This statement reflects an important historical reality.

However, the standard provides little additional context.

Recommended Revision

Include:

- British Mandate Palestine;
- Zionism;
- Arab communities;
- UN partition;
- competing national movements.

Rationale

Students benefit from understanding complexity rather than a single historical narrative.

Recommendation 7-8: Remove Normative Great Society Language

The proposed amendment contrasts Great Society programs with the Founders' belief in limited government.

Recommended Revision

Ask students to examine:

- goals;
- implementation;
- successes;
- limitations;
- long-term impacts.

Rationale

Students should evaluate evidence rather than adopt predetermined judgments.

Recommendation 7-9: Expand Cold War Instruction

Current revisions often frame the Cold War primarily as a contrast between communism and liberty.

Recommended Revision

Include:

- diplomacy;
- decolonization;
- nuclear deterrence;
- international alliances;
- social movements.

Rationale

The Cold War was a global historical phenomenon, not solely an ideological contest.

Recommendation 7-10: Present Reagan Within a Broader Historical Context

The amendments suggest Reagan's leadership brought about the end of the Cold War.

Recommended Revision

Present Reagan as one important factor among many, including:

- Gorbachev's reforms;
- Eastern European resistance movements;
- economic pressures;
- diplomacy.

Rationale

Students should understand multiple causes rather than single-cause explanations.

Recommendation 7-11: Expand Social and Cultural History

The course devotes extensive attention to:

- presidents;
- wars and battles;
- political ideologies.

Recommended Revision

Expand instruction regarding:

- women;
- labor movements;
- immigrants;
- Mexican Americans;
- Native communities;
- social movements.

Rationale

Students should understand history through the experiences of communities as well as governments.

Section III Conclusion

Grades 6 and 7 demonstrate both the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed TEKS revisions. The strongest standards present multiple perspectives, acknowledge historical complexity, and encourage analysis. The weakest standards reduce complexity, emphasize memorization, or direct students toward particular interpretations. Revising these standards would improve both historical rigor and instructional balance.

SECTION IV

Detailed Recommendations: U.S. History, World History, Economics, Final Recommendations, and Conclusion

U.S. History

Among all of the proposed revisions reviewed, the U.S. History amendments are generally among the strongest. Unlike several Grade 7 amendments, most of the proposed changes improve historical specificity, strengthen chronology, clarify historical relationships, and expand important content. The majority of these revisions should be retained.

The principal concerns involve the framing of Israel, portions of the Cold War, immigration, and the Great Society.

Recommendation USH-1: Retain the Treaty of Versailles Additions

One of the strongest amendments adds explicit instruction regarding the Treaty of Versailles and its role in shaping the post-World War I world.

Recommendation

Retain the amendment without modification.

Rationale

Students frequently study World War I and World War II as separate events. The Treaty of Versailles provides critical context for understanding:

- German resentment;
- political instability;
- economic hardship;
- the rise of extremism;
- the conditions that contributed to World War II.

The amendment improves historical continuity and should remain.

Recommendation USH-2: Retain Expanded Civil Rights Standards

The addition of:

- Brown v. Board of Education;
- the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- the Voting Rights Act of 1965;
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.;

represents a significant improvement.

Recommendation

Retain these additions.

Rationale

These standards strengthen students' understanding of the Civil Rights Movement and provide greater historical precision.

The Civil Rights Movement should remain a central component of U.S. History instruction.

Recommendation USH-3: Retain Expanded Holocaust Instruction

The Holocaust revisions are among the strongest standards in the entire amendment package.

The proposed standards include:

- antisemitism;
- state-sponsored persecution;
- genocide;
- displacement;
- survivor experiences.

Recommendation

Retain and expand these standards.

Additional Recommendation

Include:

- resistance movements;
- liberation experiences;
- postwar refugee crises;
- the Nuremberg Trials.

Rationale

Holocaust education provides students with critical opportunities to examine:

- authoritarianism;
 - prejudice;
 - propaganda;
 - civic responsibility;
 - genocide.
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Recommendation USH-4: Revise the Israel Standard

The amendment identifies Israel as the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people.

This reflects an important historical reality.

However, the standard omits important historical context.

Recommended Revision

Include:

- British Mandate Palestine;
- Zionism;
- Arab communities living in the region;
- the United Nations Partition Plan;
- competing national aspirations.

Rationale

Students should understand the complexity surrounding Israel's establishment rather than a single historical perspective.

Recommendation USH-5: Revise Great Society Framing

The proposed amendment emphasizes expansion of the federal government through Great Society programs.

Recommended Revision

Require students to examine:

- goals;
- implementation;
- outcomes;

- successes;
- criticisms.

Rationale

Students should evaluate policy outcomes rather than memorize ideological interpretations.

Recommendation USH-6: Expand Immigration Frameworks

The proposed standards emphasize the "melting pot" concept.

Recommended Revision

Introduce both:

- assimilation;
- cultural pluralism.

Rationale

Modern scholarship recognizes that American identity has been shaped both by integration and by the preservation of cultural traditions.

Recommendation USH-7: Broaden Cold War Analysis

The current revisions generally emphasize anti-communism and containment.

Recommended Revision

Include:

- decolonization;
- nuclear deterrence;
- diplomacy;
- proxy conflicts;
- international institutions.

Rationale

Students should understand the Cold War as a global historical phenomenon rather than solely a conflict between two ideological systems.

World History

World History contains some of the strongest historical content additions in the amendment package, but it also reveals a broader philosophical shift toward emphasizing Western civilization and Christianity as central drivers of historical development.

While many of these connections are historically valid, the standards would benefit from additional balance and comparative perspectives.

Recommendation WH-1: Retain Holocaust Revisions

The Holocaust revisions strengthen:

- historical precision;
- terminology;
- understanding of genocide;
- understanding of antisemitism.

Recommendation

Retain these standards.

Additional Recommendation

Ensure students understand:

- causes;
- implementation;
- consequences;
- postwar impacts.

Rationale

The Holocaust remains one of the defining events of modern world history.

Recommendation WH-2: Retain Improvements to Chinese History

The amendments improve connections between:

- dynasties;
- inventions;
- technological innovations;
- cultural developments.

Recommendation

Retain these revisions.

Rationale

The amendments improve both accuracy and clarity.

Recommendation WH-3: Balance Expanded Christianity Standards

The proposed amendments significantly expand discussion of:

- Christian teachings;
- Christian influence;
- Christian institutions;
- Christian contributions to abolition.

These are legitimate historical topics.

Recommended Revision

Retain the standards but balance them with additional discussion of:

- religious conflict;
- church-state relations;
- competing interpretations;
- secular influences.

Rationale

Students should understand both contributions and complexities.

Recommendation WH-4: Expand Islamic Civilization Content

Compared with Christianity, Islamic civilization receives relatively little expansion.

Recommended Revision

Add instruction regarding:

- algebra;
- medicine;
- astronomy;
- architecture;
- preservation of classical texts;
- philosophy;
- trade networks.

Rationale

Students should understand the enormous influence of Islamic civilization on world history.

Recommendation WH-5: Expand African Civilizations

The proposed revisions improve African content but additional opportunities remain.

Recommended Revision

Strengthen instruction regarding:

- Mali;
- Songhai;
- Great Zimbabwe;
- Timbuktu;
- trans-Saharan trade.

Rationale

African civilizations should receive treatment comparable to European and Asian civilizations.

Recommendation WH-6: Revise Israel Standards

As in U.S. History, the Israel standards would benefit from additional historical context.

Recommended Revision

Include:

- Zionism;
- British Mandate Palestine;
- Arab nationalism;
- United Nations involvement.

Rationale

Students should understand multiple perspectives and historical complexity.

Recommendation WH-7: Reduce Repeated U.S.-Centric Framing

The amendments repeatedly connect:

- Greece to America;
- Rome to America;
- Enlightenment ideas to America.

Recommended Revision

Study civilizations on their own terms before connecting them to the United States.

Rationale

World History should remain global in scope.

Economics

Of all courses reviewed, Economics is perhaps the least controversial. Most amendments improve organization, clarity, and rigor.

The strongest changes should remain.

However, the standards would benefit from greater balance among economic schools of thought.

Recommendation ECO-1: Retain Improvements to Economic Foundations

The amendments improve instruction regarding:

- scarcity;
- opportunity cost;
- production possibilities curves;
- supply and demand;
- equilibrium;
- incentives.

Recommendation

Retain these revisions.

Rationale

They strengthen economic literacy and analytical thinking.

Recommendation ECO-2: Balance Economic Schools of Thought

The standards devote considerable attention to:

- Adam Smith;
- Friedrich Hayek;
- Milton Friedman.

Recommended Revision

Expand instruction regarding:

- John Maynard Keynes;
- mixed economies;
- behavioral economics;
- contemporary economic policy debates.

Rationale

Students should understand multiple approaches to economic thought.

Recommendation ECO-3: Reconsider Religious References

The standards direct students to examine economic virtue through:

- the Torah;
- the Old Testament.

Recommended Revision

Broaden discussion to include:

- ethical traditions;
- civic responsibility;
- economic ethics across cultures.

Rationale

Economics should remain grounded primarily in social science while acknowledging the role of ethics in economic decision-making.

Recommendation ECO-4: Expand Comparative Economic Systems

Current standards emphasize comparisons between:

- free enterprise;
- socialism;
- communism.

Recommended Revision

Include:

- social democracy;
- mixed-market economies;
- contemporary global economic systems.

Rationale

Students should understand the variety of economic systems operating in the modern world.

Final Recommendations to the State Board of Education

After reviewing the proposed revisions and public comments, I recommend organizing final Board action into four categories.

Standards Recommended for Retention

The following amendments strengthen historical understanding and should be retained:

Holocaust Education

- Holocaust definitions;
- antisemitism;
- propaganda;
- genocide;
- survivor experiences.

Civil Rights

- Brown v. Board of Education;
- Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- Voting Rights Act of 1965.

African Civilizations

- Mali;
- Kush;
- expanded trade network instruction.

Immigration

- Angel Island;
- expanded immigration perspectives.

Economics

- scarcity;
 - opportunity cost;
 - supply and demand;
 - production possibilities curves.
-

Standards Recommended for Revision

Religious Framing Standards

Revise standards that present Christianity as the primary explanation for democratic development.

Reformation Standards

Reduce the Reformation-to-America causal chain.

Thomas Paine Standards

Remove Bible literacy as a necessary explanatory framework.

Israel Standards

Provide broader historical context and multiple perspectives.

Great Society Standards

Focus on evidence-based evaluation rather than ideological framing.

Communism Standards

Emphasize historical analysis rather than political critique.

Standards Recommended for Relocation

Move the following content to later grades:

Grade 2

- Constitutional Convention;
- Bill of Rights;

- James Madison;
- Rule of Law.

Grade 3

- Roman influence on the Constitution;
- separation of powers;
- republicanism;
- constitutional comparisons.

Grade 5

Reduce density of constitutional theory and political philosophy.

Standards Recommended for Removal

Memorization Requirements

Remove mandatory recitation of:

- the Preamble;
- Gettysburg Address excerpts;
- patriotic songs;
- selected quotations.

Replace With

- interpretation;
 - explanation;
 - discussion;
 - analysis.
-

Conclusion

The proposed TEKS revisions contain many worthwhile improvements and should not be viewed as wholly problematic. Significant strengths include stronger Holocaust education, improved historical specificity, expanded treatment of African civilizations, improved economic reasoning standards, and greater attention to disciplinary skills.

At the same time, the public comments reveal legitimate concerns regarding developmental appropriateness, instructional feasibility, religious balance, and the replacement of historical inquiry with predetermined interpretations.

Texas students deserve standards that are rigorous without being overloaded, balanced without being vague, and intellectually challenging without directing students toward particular ideological conclusions. The strongest social studies standards help students evaluate evidence, understand multiple perspectives, and engage thoughtfully with the complexity of history, government, economics, and civic life.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Kate Rogers