

March 25, 2026

Response to the work product from Workgroup B

Dr. Kate Rogers

In general, the workgroups did a fantastic job in moving the process along and I am very pleased with the progress that has been made thus far.

At the recent content advisors meeting where we were to share our feedback, a document was presented suggesting several changes and additions that some of the advisors had clearly seen in advance while myself and a couple of others had not. In my view, this put some of us at a disadvantage as we thought we were going to be responding directly to the document from workgroup B which was sent to us last week. I am not comfortable with the way that this process was handled, and it speaks to the speed with which we are advancing as well as my perception that there is a small group of people behind-the-scenes maintaining tight control over the final work product which does not allow for transparency nor honest feedback. For these reasons, I object to the description of the document being presented to the SBOE members as a “consensus” document. In fact, we took a vote to consider moving forward with the new document or the workgroup B product and three of us voted against using the version we did not have an opportunity to review in advance but were overruled. Please see a link below to a short article I recently wrote about my experience overall as a content advisor.

https://texassocialstudied.ed.substack.com/p/whose-history-will-we-teach-an-insiders?r=19f8lz&utm_medium=ios&triedRedirect=true

I am offering minimal feedback on the document presented by workgroup B as most of my comments were grammatical and can be addressed later.

Elementary Grades:

In certain sections, emphasis needs to be given to chronology – examples are the content regarding the Comanche on p. 18 of the document and on p. 28 regarding the sequence of events in the Texas Revolution – The battle of Gonzales, the signing of the Constitution, the Battle of the Alamo, the battle at Goliad and the Battle of San Jacinto.

I do not support the language regarding slavery as I feel it is not strong enough. In my view, slavery as an institution was not just “unfair.” I support the recommendation of one of my colleagues to label it as “wrong.”

I also do not support the labeling of native or indigenous people as American Indians throughout, especially for those tribes and people who were here before the creation of what is modern-day America.

I do support the description of Ruby Bridges and other key figures in the civil rights movement as either African American or black to provide clarity to teachers who may be unfamiliar with their stories.

We did have a robust discussion about the critical use of verbs in the final TEKS and making sure that we are clear about when we want the student to be able to identify versus explain or describe. I find that some of the other content advisors want to emphasize the breadth of content and what I consider “rote memorization” versus deep learning and the building of key skills. I remain concerned that we are providing too many topics and subtopics to be covered in the classroom time allotted.

I would also like to express concern over the amount of religious content that is currently being proposed. It seems incongruous with the emphasis on religious freedom, particularly during the colonial era. Specific sections that give me pause are p. 36, section 5 and p. 39, section 8. It is my opinion that we are blurring the separation between Church and State intended by the country’s founders and violating the First Amendment of the Constitution which prohibits the formation of a national religion and the posting of religious documents in public spaces.

I also believe we should be truthful and factual in our presentation of history with an emphasis on the utilization of primary source documents. For example, even in the early grades, we have an opportunity to clarify that the Pilgrims did not actually land on Plymouth Rock nor did Columbus reach the shores of what is now known as the United States. We can still maintain these powerful symbols of American history, while being factually accurate about events and people of the past. If we are going to take the time to rewrite the social studies standards, we have an opportunity to incorporate the latest scholarship into the material.

On p. 64 of the document, I believe there is a slight error in confusing Mexican Independence Day with the Grito de Dolores or the Cry for Independence that launched the Mexican War for Independence.

High School:

The most substantial additions being proposed by the content advisors are in the world geography course. Here, there were many additions focused on specific battles and events that in my view, belong in a history course, not a world geography course. Many of the advisors voiced strong objections to any mention of climate change or environmental

concerns which today's students have a strong interest in understanding. This is one example of how politics is sometimes driving the discussion, which I do not believe is in the best interest of Texas school children. There was also opposition expressed regarding content about how countries and regions work together and cooperate to solve complex problems such as protection of the planet and its natural resources.

I have expressed multiple times that we are trying to force more than 100 pounds of content into a 50-pound bag in terms of instructional time. Instead, I believe we should follow the recommendations of workgroup B regarding how many topics and lessons can be covered in a course with the appropriate rigor.

I would also like to note that the breadth of content being proposed for grade level world geography could create a real burden for teachers of AP Human Geography. If these teachers are expected to cover all the grade level content AND the AP content as they currently are, it could make their jobs even more difficult. This is something the SBOE should consider in their deliberations.

I have one final note regarding the personal financial literacy course. On p. 197, section C, I would like to explicitly encourage students to participate in an employer-sponsored 401(K) and to take advantage of any match that may be offered.

Lastly, I want to reiterate my gratitude to the teachers who volunteered their time and expertise to be part of both workgroups A and B. They did a fantastic job.