

Alabama Social Studies Standards: Grassroots Information Packet

The state of Alabama revises its statewide social studies standards according to a schedule periodically released by the Alabama Department of Education. These standards govern social studies instruction in all Alabama public schools. The revision of statewide standards is a process that is directed by the Alabama Department of Education and completed by the Alabama Courses of Study Committee. The Committee is responsible for writing recommendations for social studies standards and then presenting them to the State Board for final adoption. Members of the Committee are appointed by the Alabama State Board of Education and governor. Local boards of education nominate Alabama educators and university faculty and send these nominations to the Alabama State Superintendent of Education. With the advice of the Superintendent, the Alabama Board of Education selects 21 nominees to serve on the Courses of Study. The governor then appoints 7 additional business representatives with expertise in social studies to serve on the Committee. Before the final adoption of standards takes place, however, the general public has the opportunity to review and comment on proposed revisions to existing social studies standards through three separate public comment periods.

Below we explain and list in sequential order:

1. Current Alabama social studies standards and their current website location
2. How often Alabama is required to review and revise its social studies standards
3. State laws and administrative codes governing social studies instruction in Alabama public schools
4. Which state agencies and groups are responsible for writing and adopting social studies standards
5. The electoral or bureaucratic relationships these agencies have with the general public in Alabama
6. What opportunity Alabama community members and educators have to offer feedback and comment during a standards' revision cycle

1. Current Alabama Social Studies Standards and their current website location

[Alabama K-12 Social Studies Standards](#) [Adopted May 2010; Revised April 2013]

a. Website Location

- i. [Alabama State Department of Education \(ALSDE\) Website](#)

2. How often Alabama is required to review and revise its social studies standards?

[ALSDE Drafted Social Studies Standards Revision Schedule](#): Alabama’s course of study law ([Title 16, Chapter 35](#)) does not specifically set a schedule for the adoption of courses of study. Instead, the schedule for development of courses of study is set by the Alabama Department of Education; per the ALSDE’s recently drafted revision schedule, current (2010) social studies standards will be adopted from January 2024 – March 2025

3. State laws and administrative codes governing social studies instruction in Alabama public schools?

a. Alabama Legislation

- i. *See:* [NAS Compilation of State Statutes concerning Social Studies Instruction for each US State](#)
- ii. [H. RES. 679](#) [Victims of Communism Day]
 1. [Victims of Communism Memorial Day Website](#)
- iii. [Alabama Code Title 16. Education § 16-1-20.2](#) [*School prayer*]
- iv. [Alabama Code Title 16. Education § 16-6B-2](#) [*Core curriculum*]
- v. [Alabama Code Title 16. Education § 16-35-5](#) [*Studies required to be taught in elementary school*]

**b. Alabama State Board of Education State Department of Education
Administrative Code**

- i. [Alabama Admin. Code §290-3-1-.02](#) [*Regulations Governing Public Schools*]
- ii. [Alabama Administrative Code §290-3-.02](#) [*Regulations Governing Public Schools*]

4. Which state agencies and groups are responsible for writing and adopting social studies standards

a. Which agency writes Alabama’s social studies standards?

The Alabama Department of Education oversees the processes for adopting all educational standards. This process involves selecting a Courses of Study Committee in accordance with [Alabama Code Title 16, Education § 16-35-3](#). State Department of Education (SDE) specialists are also assigned to assist the Committee and Task Force with the development of the courses of study.

During Alabama’s current (2022) standards’ revision process, the members of the 2022 Career and Technical Education State Courses of Study Committee and Task Force have the responsibility of reviewing and revising the content standards.

b. How is the Courses of Study Committee appointed?

The 28 members of the Courses of Study Committee are appointed by the State Board of Education and Alabama governor in accordance with [Alabama Code Title 16, Education § 16-35-1](#). The first 14 members are appointed by the Board; the remaining 7 are appointed by the governor.

Local boards of education, through their superintendents, nominate 14 individuals to serve on these Courses of Study Committee. All nominations are sent to the State Superintendent of Education. Upon the recommendations of the State Superintendent, the State Board of Education then appoints members of the State Courses of Study Committee from the nominees provided by the local boards of education. These 14 members include:

- i. One social studies elementary teacher (grades K–6) and one social studies secondary teacher (grades 7–12) from each of Alabama’s seven congressional districts
- ii. Four supervisors or administrators from Alabama at-large in the field of education and who are knowledgeable or who have had previous teaching experience in social studies
- iii. Alabama State university and college faculty who are specialists in social studies

The governor is responsible for appointing seven additional business or professional representatives not employed in the field of education who have expertise in social studies from each of Alabama’s seven congressional districts.

c. Which agency adopts Alabama’s social studies standards?

The Alabama State Board of Education approves statewide academic standards ([Alabama Code Title 16. Education § 16-35-4](#)).

5. The electoral or bureaucratic relationships these agencies have with the general public in Alabama

a. How are members of the Alabama State Board of Education appointed?

The Board is made up of eight elected members and the Alabama governor serves on the Board with eight other members who are elected every 4 years by electors of their respective district at the general election ([Alabama Code Title 16. Education § 16-3-1](#)).

b. How is the Alabama State Superintendent appointed?

The Alabama State Superintendent is appointed by the Alabama State Board of Education every 4 years ([Alabama Code Title 16, Education § 16-4-1](#)).

6. What opportunity do Alabama community members and educators have to offer feedback and comment during a standards’ revision cycle.

a. Where does public input occur during Alabama’s standards’ revision process?

Neither Alabama statutory law nor regulatory code specifies the level of involvement by the public in the standards’ revision processes. Alabama’s social studies standards review process in the past, however, has allowed for three public review periods — two during the revision and development of the standards and an additional review period 1 month between the presentation of a new course of study to the Alabama Board of Education and the final approval of the standards at a Board meeting:

- i. Initial Public and Professional Input Month: “Opportunity is provided for public and professional input for one month at the beginning of the development process. Local superintendents and college and university deans of education and arts and sciences are notified by email. Public notice is placed on the Alabama Department of Education Website, advertising the period of public input [www.alabamaachievers.org].”
- ii. Secondary Public and Professional Review: “A period of professional and public review is held during the middle of the development process, allowing teachers, administrators, and the general public an opportunity to make comments about each draft course of study document. The drafts are available for review on the Alabama Department of Education Website (www.alsde.edu). Content specialists (outside readers) review each draft of course of study standards for content accuracy and appropriateness, providing comments for the Committee and Task Force [at www.alabamaachievers.org].”

- iii. Final public review: The public has one final opportunity to evaluate the Course of Study Document; any changes are communicated to the State Board of Education prior to the vote for adoption.

Furthermore, all State Board of Education meetings are public and are streamed live for those who wish to follow state board proceedings. The public is always invited to attend state board monthly work sessions and/or the monthly meetings.

- iv. Our Alabama State Information Packet provides information that is not available on the state of Alabama's website, which is drawn from documents provided by Michael Sibley, the current Alabama State Department of Education Director of Communications.
- v. Any questions can be directed to:

[Michael Sibley](#),

Director of ALSDE Communications,
Alabama State Department of Education