

Iowa Social Studies Standards: Grassroots Information Packet

The state of Iowa periodically revises its statewide social studies standards. These standards govern social studies instruction in all Iowa public schools. The revision of statewide standards is directed by the Iowa Department of Education. The Department selects Iowa K-12 teachers (public and non-public), teacher leaders, Area Education Agencies, higher education faculties, and curriculum coordinators to serve on Social Studies Standards Writing and Review Committees Committee. These Committees are responsible for reviewing existing social studies standards and public input as well as writing recommendations for new social studies standards. The Iowa State Board of Education is responsible for adopting finalized revisions to academic standards. Before this adoption takes place, however, the general public has the opportunity to review and comment on proposed revisions to existing social studies standards through online public surveys, teacher focus groups, and public hearings.

Below we explain and list in sequential order:

1. Current Iowa social studies standards and their current website location
2. How often Iowa is required to review and revise its social studies standards
3. State laws and administrative codes governing social studies instruction in Iowa 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 Iowa
6. What opportunity Iowa community members and educators have to offer feedback and comment during a standards' revision cycle

1. Current Iowa social studies standards and their current website location

[Iowa K-12 Social Studies Standards](#) [Adopted May 11, 2017]

a. Website Location

- i. [Iowa Department of Education \(IDOE\) Website](#)

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

Iowa Academic Standards Revision Schedule: Iowa does not have an academic standards' revision schedule which requires the state to review and revise its standards every certain number of years; Iowa's most recent (2015-2017) social studies standards' revision cycle was begun at the behest of a gubernatorial executive order.

- a. See: [Iowa Social Studies Standards Writing and Review Process: 2017 Report Submitted to Iowa SBE](#), (pg 4)

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

a. Iowa Legislation

- i. See: [NAS Compilation of State Statutes concerning Social Studies Instruction for each US State](#)
- ii. [Iowa Code §256.18](#) [*Character education policy*]
- iii. [Iowa Code §256.18A](#) [*Service learning*]

b. Iowa Administrative Code

- i. [Iowa Admin. Code r. 281-12.5](#) [*Education program*]

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

a. Which agency writes Iowa's social studies standards?

The Iowa Department of Education is responsible for overseeing the standards' writing and revision process; in Iowa's most recent (2015-2017) standards revision process, the Department assembled two different groups in order to draft proposed standards and review proposed standards.

- i. **Social Studies Standards Writing Team:** This Team was responsible for drafting new social studies standards; members were chosen by application released by the Department, and 1 ex-officio member. Representation included K-12 teachers (public and non-public), teacher leaders, Area Education Agencies, higher education, curriculum coordinators, external partners, etc., reflecting Iowa geographical diversity.
 1. For more information, see:
 - a. [Iowa Social Studies Standards Writing and Review Process: 2017 Report to Iowa SBE](#) (pg 4)
 - b. [Iowa IDOE Social Studies Standards Frequently Asked Questions](#) (pg 1)
- ii. **Social Studies Review Team:** This Team was established to review proposed standards drafted by the Standards Writing Team and analyze public feedback on standards collected through an online public survey, in-person public forums, and focus groups. Members included classroom teachers, higher education personnel, administrators, and informal educators. All members on the Review Team were chosen by the Department of Education.

1. For more information, see:
 - a. [Iowa Social Studies Standards Writing and Review Process: 2017 Report to Iowa SBE](#) (pg 11)
 - b. [Iowa IDOE Social Studies Standards Frequently Asked Questions](#) (pg 1)

b. Which agency adopts Iowa’s social studies standards?

The Iowa State Board of Education adopts statewide social studies standards ([Iowa Code § 256.7](#)).

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

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

The 10 members of the Iowa State Board of Education (SBE) are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Iowa Senate ([Iowa Code §256.3](#)).

b. How is the Iowa State Director of Education appointed?

The State Director of Education is appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate ([Iowa Code §256.8](#)).

6. What opportunity Iowa community members and educators have to offer feedback and comment during a standards' revision cycle

a. *Where does public input occur during Iowa's standards revision process?*

During a standards' revision cycle, the Iowa Department of Education solicits and receives public input by releasing public surveys and drafts of new standards for online public review and comment as well as holding open, in-person forums and hearings.

1. **Teacher Focus Groups:** The Iowa Department of Education convened seven focus groups, consisting of Iowa teachers in order to review proposed standards according to each grade and content band (i.e., geography, sociology history).

a. See: [Iowa Social Studies Standards Writing and Review Process: 2017 Report to Iowa SBE](#) (pg 11)

2. **Public Survey:** During Iowa's most recent (2015-2017) social studies standards' revision process, the Review Team released an online survey where members of the general public could offer comment on proposed social studies standards; the survey was open for 4 weeks and was made available through the Iowa Department of Education's website, as well as being advertised through a press release, social media and Department newsletters.

a. See: [Iowa Social Studies Standards Writing and Review Process: 2017 Report to Iowa SBE](#) (pg 11)

3. **Public Forums:** In Iowa's 2015-2017 social studies standards revision process, the Department of Education held three in-person public forums across the state where any member of the general had the opportunity to provide feedback on proposed social studies standards. In addition to three sites, additional satellite locations were open at area education agencies across Iowa so that more people could participate.

a. See: [Iowa Social Studies Standards Writing and Review Process: 2017 Report to Iowa SBE](#) (pg 16)

After receiving public comment and feedback from each of these three mediums, the Social Studies Standards Review Team makes adjustments to drafts of proposed social studies standards.

- i. See: [Iowa Social Studies Standards Frequently Asked Questions](#)