

# Massachusetts Social Studies Curriculum Frameworks: Grassroots Information Packet

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The state of Massachusetts periodically revises its statewide social studies curriculum frameworks. These frameworks govern social studies instruction in all Massachusetts public schools. The revision of statewide standards is a process developed by the Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Massachusetts Department of Education selects a Social Studies Review Panel (SSRP) through an application process; Panel members are K-12 teachers, department heads and curriculum coordinators, K-12 administrators, and higher education faculty with expertise in social studies. The SSRP is responsible for reviewing and writing Massachusetts' social studies standards. The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is responsible for adopting all Massachusetts' statewide academic standards including in social studies. 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 public surveys, public comment periods on drafted proposed revisions to standards developed by the Social Studies Review Panel, and public hearings.

Below we explain and list in sequential order:

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

**1. Current Massachusetts social studies curriculum frameworks and their current website location**

[Massachusetts preK-12 Social Studies Curriculum Framework](#) [Adopted June 26, 2018]

**a. Website Location**

- i. [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(MADESE\) Website](#)

**b. Massachusetts Social Studies Resources**

- i. [Massachusetts Current Academic Standards Information Page](#)
- ii. [Massachusetts Social Studies Resources web page](#)

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

Massachusetts Academic Curriculum Frameworks Revision Schedule: Massachusetts does not have a legally mandated schedule for revising and updating its academic curriculum frameworks; the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education periodically makes changes as necessary.

- a.** Any questions can be directed to:

[Reuben Henricques](#),

History and Social Science Content Support Lead,

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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

**a. Massachusetts Legislation**

- i. *See:* [NAS Compilation of State Statutes concerning Social Studies Instruction for each US State](#)

**4. Which state agencies and groups are responsible for writing and adopting social studies curriculum frameworks**

**a. *Which agency writes Massachusetts' social studies curriculum frameworks?***

The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education directs the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education to institute a process to develop Massachusetts' state curriculum frameworks ([Ma. Gen. Laws, Ch 69, section 1D](#)).

The Department appoints a Social Studies Review Panel through an application process; Panel members are K-12 teachers, department heads and curriculum coordinators, K-12 administrators, and higher education faculty with expertise in social studies.

- i. For more information, see: [Massachusetts 2018 Social Studies Standards Review Process Information Page](#)

**b. *Which agency adopts Massachusetts' social studies standards?***

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopts all Massachusetts' statewide academic curriculum frameworks including in social studies ([Ma. Gen. Laws, Ch 69, section 1D](#)).

- i. For more information, see: [Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Information page](#)

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

***a. How are members of the Massachusetts’ State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education appointed?***

All members of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education are appointed by the Governor; there is no legislative review ([Ma. Gen. Laws, Ch 15, section 1E](#)).

***b. How is the Massachusetts’ State Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education appointed?***

The State Commissioner of Education is appointed by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education ([Ma. Gen. Laws, Ch 15, section 1E](#)).

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

***a. Where does public input occur during Massachusetts’ standards revision process?***

The process of writing and updating Massachusetts’ social studies frameworks is required to be “open and consultative”; it can include but isn’t limited to receiving input from Massachusetts classroom teachers, parents, and leading higher education faculty, with expertise in social studies ([Ma. Gen. Laws, Ch 69, section 1E](#)).

In Massachusetts’ most recent 2018 social studies revision cycle, the Department posted a public online survey at the onset of the cycle concerning existing social studies curriculum frameworks in order to receive input. Public comment and input was then reviewed and considered by the Social Studies Review Panel in writing the first draft of revised social studies curriculum frameworks. The Department then presented draft frameworks to the Board for a vote to invite public comment on the drafted revised standards.

When the draft revision was approved for public comment by the Board, it was posted at a named address on DESE’s website: [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#); Public comments were received at an email address also publicly posted on DESE’s website.

Further revisions to initial drafts of proposed social studies frameworks were then made following public comment and before the final approval vote by the Board.

- i. For more information, see: [Massachusetts 2018 Social Studies Standards Review Process Information Page](#)

The Massachusetts’ State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) has the authority to solicit public comment on items before the Board, thus during a social studies framework revision cycle, it can also decide to hold public hearings, collect the comments in written form, and accept comments through the public comment portion of each BESE meeting. All public hearings and public comment notifications from BESE appear on the [Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education website](#).

- ii. Any questions can be directed to:

[Reuben Henricques](#),

History and Social Science Content Support Lead,

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education