

Rhode Island Social Studies Standards: Grassroots Information Packet

The state of Rhode Island regularly revises its statewide social studies standards. These standards govern social studies instruction in all Rhode Island public schools. The revision of statewide standards is directed by the Rhode Island Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Rhode Island Department of Education appoints the Rhode Island History and Social Studies Advisory Committee (RIHSSAC) to assist the Commissioner in reviewing and revising Rhode Island’s statewide social studies standards; members are selected by the Department through an application process. The Rhode Island Council of Elementary and Secondary Education is responsible for considering revised standards for adoption. 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 public comment periods on drafts of proposed revisions, public hearings, and community feedback sessions directed by the Department of Education.

Below we explain and list in sequential order:

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

1. Current Rhode Island social studies standards and their current website location

[Rhode Island K-12 Social Studies Standards](#) [Adopted November 2012]

a. Website Location

- i. [Rhode Island Department of Education \(RIDE\) Website](#)

b. Rhode Island Social Studies Resources

- i. [Holocaust and Genocide Education Resources](#)
- ii. [Resources on African American History](#)

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

Rhode Island Academic Standards Revision Schedule: The Rhode Island Council of Elementary and Secondary Education is required to initiate the next standards' review cycle in 2025, "with subsequent reviews taking place in 2029, 2033, and every four (4) years thereafter," ([R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-22-30](#)).

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

a. Rhode Island Legislation

- i. *See:* [NAS Compilation of State Statutes concerning Social Studies Instruction for each US State](#)
- ii. [R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-22-30](#) [*Statewide Academic Standards*]

- iii. [R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-22-31](#) [*Curriculum frameworks*]
- iv. [R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-22-10](#) [*Voting instruction*]
- v. [R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-20-3](#) [*Days of special observance — Duty of teachers and officials*]
- vi. [R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-20-4](#) [*Grand Army Flag Day — Uniform salute to the flag*]
- vii. [R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-93.1-3](#) [*Holocaust and genocide education commission*]

b. Rhode Island Board of Education Code of Regulations

- i. [RI Code of Rules 200-RICR-20-10-1.2](#) [*Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment*]
- ii. [RI Code of Rules 200-RICR-20-10-2.3](#) [*Rhode Island Diploma System*]

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

a. Which agency writes Rhode Island’s social studies standards?

The Rhode Island Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education institutes and convenes the social studies standards revision and development process ([R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-22-30](#)).

The Rhode Island Department of Education appoints the Rhode Island History and Social Studies Advisory Committee (RIHSSAC) to assist the Commissioner; the Department selects approximately 30 Rhode Island social studies, history, civic education, and elementary teachers for Committee membership through an application process.

- i. For more information, see: [Rhode Island History & Social Studies Advisory Committee \(RIHSSAC\) and Current Social Studies Standards Revision Process Information Page](#)
- ii. Any questions can be directed to:

Rhode Island Department of Education,
Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum,
curriculum@ride.ri.gov

b. Which agency adopts Rhode Island’s social studies standards?

The Rhode Island Council of Elementary and Secondary Education adopts all statewide academic standards ([R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-60-4](#)).

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

a. How are the members of the Rhode Island Council of Elementary and Secondary Education appointed?

The governor of Rhode Island establishes the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education by appointing eight members of the Rhode Island Board of Education to serve as members of the Council until the expiration of their term ([R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-60-2](#)).

b. How is the Rhode Island State Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education appointed?

The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education is appointed by the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, with the advice and consent of the Board of education; the Commissioner serves at the pleasure of the Council ([R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-60-4](#); [R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-97-1.2](#)).

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

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

The Rhode Island standards revision process is required to “be open and consultative” with Rhode Island educators and community members. ([R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-22-30](#)); as such, during each social studies standards revision cycle, the Rhode Island Department of Education posts drafts of proposed revisions to existing social studies standards and holds public hearings.

- i. Any questions can be directed to:

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The first stage of Rhode Island Department of Education’s current (2019–2022) revision process was to receive and collect public comment on existing social studies education; the Rhode Island History and Social Studies Advisory Committee communicated with Oregon community organizations to set up virtual feedback sessions, eventually releasing a statewide survey.

The Rhode Island Department of Education also scheduled public virtual sessions for educators and community members where participants received an overview of the revision cycle and then offered feedback about existing social studies education before being provided the survey link to complete.

- ii. See: [Rhode Island History & Social Studies Advisory Committee \(RIHSSAC\) and Current Social Studies Standards Revision Process Information Page](#)

The revision process continued with the first draft of proposed social studies standards being written, guided by previously received community input; feedback was then collected on the first draft through engagement sessions and a feedback survey. With new feedback, further revisions and edits were made to the proposed standards.

The finalized draft of social studies standards was then posted for a final round of public feedback.

- iii. See: [Rhode Island and Proposed Revision Process](#) (File page 6)