

# Tennessee Social Studies Standards: Grassroots Information Packet

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Tennessee law requires Tennessee to regularly revise its statewide social studies standards every six years. These standards govern social studies instruction in all Tennessee public schools. The revision of statewide standards is directed by the Tennessee State Board of Education. During a standards revision cycle, the Board appoints a Social Studies Standards Review and Development Committee and 3 advisory teams from Tennessee educators. Additionally, the governor of Tennessee, along with the Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives and Speaker of the Senate appoints the members of the Standards Recommendation Committee. Together, these committees and advisory teams are responsible for writing recommendations for social studies standards and then presenting them to the State Board for final adoption. Before 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 a public review, an online 60-day public comment period, and public Board meetings concerning standards' revision.

Below we explain and list in sequential order:

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

**1. Current Tennessee social studies standards and their current website location**

[Tennessee K-12 Social Studies Standards](#) [Adopted in July 28, 2017]

**a. Website Location**

- i. [Tennessee Department of Education \(TDOE\) Website](#)

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

[Tennessee Content Standard Revision Schedule](#): The Tennessee Board of Education is required to review all sets of academic standards at a minimum of every six years ([TE State Board Policy 3.209](#)).

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

**a. Tennessee Legislation**

- i. *See:* [NAS Compilation of State Statutes concerning Social Studies Instruction for each US State](#)
- ii. [Tenn. Code Ann. 49-1-226](#) [*Adoption of core standards in subjects beyond math and English language arts prohibited*]
- iii. [Tenn. Code Ann. 4-48-101](#) [*Tennessee Commission on Holocaust Education – Creation*]
- iv. [Tenn. Code Ann. 4-48-107](#) [*Tennessee Commission on Holocaust Education – Responsibilities and duties*]
- v. [Tenn. Code Ann. 4-1-412](#) [*Tennessee heritage protection*]

**b. Tennessee State Board of Education Rules**

- i. [Tenn. SBE Rule §0520-01-03-.03](#) [*Academic Program Requirements*]
- ii. [Tenn. SBE Rule §0520-01-03-.06](#) [*Graduation Requirements*]
- iii. [Tenn. SBE Rule §0520-01-03-.07](#) [*Civics*]

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

**a. Which agency writes Tennessee’s social studies standards?**

The Tennessee State Board of Education convenes the social studies standards revision process, appointing a social studies standards review and development committee and 3 advisory teams from Tennessee educators ([Tenn. Code Ann. §49-1-311](#)).

- i. **Social Studies Standards Review and Development Committee:** The Committee makes recommendations for adoption of new social studies standards to the State Board of Education; the Committee consists of two representatives from Tennessee universities and six Tennessee educators who work in grades K-12.
- ii. **Advisory Teams:** Teams review the current social studies standards and grade level together with the comments and suggestions gathered from the public and educators. After an advisory team conducts its review, the team makes recommendations to the current standards for the standards review and development committee; one of the three panels reviews K-5 standards, one reviews 6-8 standards, and one reviews 9-12 standards. Each team consists of one representative from a Tennessee university and six Tennessee social studies educators.

- iii. **Standards Recommendation Committee:** The standards recommendation committee reviews and evaluates the recommendations of the social studies standards review and development committee, posts the recommendations to the [State Board of Education’s website](#) to receive additional public feedback, and makes final recommendations to the new set of standards to the Tennessee State Board of Education. The committee is composed of 10 members; the governor appoints four, the speaker of the senate appoints three, and the speaker of the house of representatives appoints the remaining three ([Tenn. Code Ann. §49-1-313](#); [Tenn. Code Ann. §49-1-312](#)).

***b. Which agency approves Tennessee’s social studies standards?***

The Tennessee State Board of Education approves all statewide academic standards ([Tenn. Code Ann. §49-1-302](#)).

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

***a. How are the members of the Tennessee Board of Education appointed?***

The Board is composed of nine appointed members, one public high school student member and one ex officio member. Three of the nine appointed members are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the General Assembly; three are appointed by the speaker of the Senate and confirmed by the General Assembly, and the final 3 appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and confirmed by the General Assembly ([Tenn. Code Ann. §49-1-301](#)).

***b. How is the Tennessee State Education Commissioner appointed?***

The Tennessee State Education Commissioner is appointed by the governor ([Tenn. Code Ann. 4-3-802](#)).

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

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

Social studies revision cycles begin with an online public review of the then-current standards on the [State Board of Education's website](#); the Social Studies Standards Review and Development Committee and advisory teams then use this public feedback to begin developing their recommendations to Tennessee's social studies standards ([Tenn. Code Ann. §49-1-311](#)).

Proposed recommendations to Tennessee academic standards are required to be posted for public review on the [State Board of Education's website](#) at least sixty (60) days before the State Board meeting during which the final adoption of the proposed standard is to be considered; the Board is only permitted to vote on adoption of standards or proposed recommendations at a meeting which any member of the public can attend ([Tenn. Code Ann. §49-1-309](#)).

Board meetings, meeting times, and meeting agendas are available for public view by video in addition to archived videos on the [State Board of Education's website](#) ([Tenn. Code Ann. §49-1-301](#)).