

Virginia Social Studies Standards: Grassroots Information Packet

Virginia law requires Virginia state to revise its statewide social studies standards every 7 years. These standards govern social studies instruction in all Virginia public schools. The revision of statewide standards is directed by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The Department assembles various social studies standards writing and review sub-committees. Members range from Virginia grade and secondary school educators, Virginia public school students, higher education faculty, and scholars in social studies. These committees are responsible for review, recommend revisions to, and potentially re-write existing content standards. The Virginia State Board of Education votes to adopt statewide social studies standards. 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 online surveys and public comment periods, public hearings, and Department-conducted community roundtable discussions.

Below we explain and list in sequential order:

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

1. Current Virginia social studies standards [Adopted in March 2015] and their current website location

a. Website Location

- i. [Virginia Department of Education \(VDOE\) Website](#)

b. Virginia Social Studies Resources

- i. [Virginia Resources for Social Studies Instruction](#)
- ii. [Virginia Social Studies Information Page](#)

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

[Virginia Academic Standards Revision Revision Timeline](#): Virginia’s standards of learning must be reviewed every 7 years ([Va. Code Ann. §22.1-253.13.1-B](#)).

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

a. Virginia Legislation

- i. See: [NAS Compilation of State Statutes concerning Social Studies Instruction for each US State](#)
- ii. [HJ 30](#) [*Victims of Communism Day*]
 1. [Victims of Communism Memorial Day Website](#)
- iii. [Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-200.03](#) [*Economics education and financial literacy required in middle and high school grades; Board of Education to establish objectives for economic education and financial literacy; banking-at-school programs*]
- iv. [Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-253.13:4](#) [*Standard 4. Student achievement and graduation requirements*]
- v. [Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-202.1](#) [*Comparative religion as elective course*]

b. Virginia State Board of Education Administrative Code

- i. [8VAC20-131-51](#) [*Requirements for graduation (effective with the students who enter the ninth grade in the 2018–2019 school year)*]
- ii. [8VAC20-131-30](#) [*Student achievement expectations*]
- iii. [8VAC20-131-70](#) [*Program of instruction and learning objectives*]
- iv. [8VAC20-131-80](#) [*Instructional program in elementary schools*]
- v. [8VAC20-131-90](#) [*Instructional program in middle schools*]
- vi. [8VAC20-131-100](#) [*Instructional program in secondary schools*]

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

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

Currently, the History and Social Science Program at the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) convenes and directs the social studies revision process by assembling various sub-committees to review, recommend revisions to, and/or re-write existing content standards ([Va. Code Ann. §22.1-253.13:1](#)).

During a history and social science standards review, the Department assembles five main committees:

1. **Practitioners Steering:** Division-level specialist/coordinators responsible for history and social science curriculum and instruction at the local division level
2. **Historian Steering:** Historians (PhDs) invited to review the Standards and CF and provide preliminary feedback and input; members of this committee are selected based upon their expertise in specific areas of history and social science (3 Historians who have specialized in US and World History), 1 of each Economist, Political Scientist, and Geographer).

3. **Student Advisory Council:** Based upon recommendation of Regional Superintendent, some students are invited to provide input and feedback.
 4. **Educators Committee:** Division teachers and administrators are selected through an application process to ensure regional representation.
 5. **External Committees:**
 - a. **Museums and Organizations:** Educators, faculty, or representatives of a history and social science museum or organization with a specific area of focus or specialty are invited by the VDOE to review standards and offer input
 - b. **Historians and Professors:** Staff of Institutions of Higher Education (PhDs) are selected by recommendations and invitations; they are invited to check the accuracy of the feedback provided by all previous committees and to ensure there are opportunities for exploration of diverse perspectives.
 - c. **External Parent Advisory:** Open invitation is extended to division representatives of the Virginia Parent Teacher Association.
 - d. **CTE/Business Leader Advisory:** Regional representatives serve on the established advisory board.
- ii. For more information:
 1. See: [Virginia’s standards revision process Information page](#)
 - iii. Any questions can be directed to:
[Christonya Brown](#), VDOE History and Social Studies Coordinator

b. Which agency adopts Virginia’s social studies standards

The Virginia State Board of Education approves academic standards ([Va. Code Ann. §22.1-253.13.1-B](#)).

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

a. How are the members appointed?

The Board of Education consists of nine members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Virginia General Assembly ([Va. Code. Ann. § 22.1-9](#)).

b. How is the Virginia State Superintendent of Public Instruction appointed?

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is appointed by the Governor, after consultation with the Board of Education, and is confirmed by the Virginia General Assembly ([Va. Code. Ann. §22.1-21](#)).

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

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

As part of the review and revision process, the public can review and comment on current Virginia statewide social studies standards on the [Virginia Department of Education Website](#); the ability for the public to provide comment on a Virginia DOE website (including its own) is required by [Va. Code Ann. §22.1-253.13.1-B](#).

- i. During the current 2022 Review, the public comment period was announced through a Superintendent's Memo ([Memo 025-21](#)).

To provide further opportunity for input from the general public, the Board of Education holds public hearings before adopting revised social studies standards. Thirty days before these hearings take place, the Board both publishes its intention to revise standards in the [Virginia Register](#) and gives notice of the date, time, and place of the hearings to all local school boards and other interested parties requesting to be notified of the hearings ([Va. Code Ann. §22.1-253.13.1-B](#)).

As it specifically relates to the 2022 Virginia social studies standards revision cycle, the general public is anticipated to have two additional opportunities to provide public comment on the proposed revised Standards: Community Engagement Roundtable Discussion sessions and Public Hearings.

- ii. The Community Engagement Roundtable Discussion sessions are an opportunity for public comment prior to the Board of Education's First Review of proposed revisions to standards.
- iii. The Public Hearings will be held after the Board's First Review, but prior to final approval.

Once the Department has carried out the Review and Revision process, the drafts of proposed revisions to Virginia's social studies standards are posted on the [Virginia Board of Education's website](#) where the public can once again provide feedback and comment.

- iv. Any questions can be directed to:
[Christonya Brown](#),
VDOE History and Social Studies Coordinator