

INTRODUCTION

During the 2019 legislative session, the Rhode Island legislature authorized a new round of standards review ([RIGL 16-22-30](#)). Based on this legislative directive, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) initiated a series of steps in the fall of 2019 that began with the formation of the Rhode Island History and Social Studies Advisory Committee (RIHSSAC). The RIHSSAC is a group of Rhode Island educators from the K-12 and postsecondary systems. It includes representation from various community, civic, and historical organizations and continues to meet.

In 2019, the first task of the RIHSSAC was to review the existing RI Social Studies Grade-Span Expectations (GSEs) against the criteria set by the legislature and to recommend to RIDE whether the GSEs be kept, revised, or replaced. To fulfill this task, starting in late summer of 2020, the RIHSSAC developed an interactive process to engage diverse communities throughout Rhode Island to provide input on the skills, content, and equity focus for the new standards, and to offer feedback on other content for inclusion in the curriculum frameworks. Participants providing input were encouraged to do so via a survey that RIDE developed. This process included proactively reaching out to individuals, organizations, associations, and groups representative of Rhode Island's ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and identity-based communities. This process was purposeful and included historically silenced or erased communities. In addition, the intent was to develop an active feedback process that engaged communities rather than a more traditional and passive approach to soliciting feedback. Thus, as part of this process, communities had options to participate in virtual feedback sessions using a presentation and survey provided, as well as to share the survey itself with their own memberships.

During this engagement process, the RIHSSAC received over 900 survey responses from communities, organizations, and individuals across Rhode Island, which were analyzed and summarized in a report provided to the RIHSSAC. Based on this activity, the RIHSSAC found that, although the GSEs met all the criteria to some extent, significant revisions were needed. In particular, the advisory committee recommended that the revised standards decrease the total number of standards, emphasize depth over breadth, and be more culturally responsive.

In the fall of 2021, RIDE convened a sub-committee of the RIHSSAC to begin developing a draft of revised social studies standards. These standards were designed to be fewer in number and to repeat at each grade level. They were also designed to be culturally responsive. To achieve this, the revised standards were designed to emphasize inquiry-based skills essential to helping students learn a wide range of social studies content. These standards were also designed to be part of a more comprehensive social studies curriculum framework that would provide scope and sequences of content from kindergarten through high school.

The development team completed a draft set of standards in the spring of 2022. Once these standards were completed, RIDE began the task of developing scope and sequences of social studies content for each grade level from kindergarten through middle school and for five courses in high school. In the fall of 2022, initial drafts of the scope and sequences were completed.

Once there were complete drafts of the standards and scope and sequences of content, RIDE began to share the drafts with and solicit feedback from a wide range of stakeholder groups through in-person and virtual sessions. A variety of stakeholder groups were consulted throughout the course of reviewing the standards and the scope and sequences of content. This included the following:

- The Rhode Island History and Social Studies Advisory Committee (RIHSSAC)
- Classroom educators
- RI Civic Learning Coalition
- Holocaust and Genocide Education Commission
- Civics Task Force
- Commissioner’s Student Advisory Group
- RI Civic Learning Coalition - Youth Ambassadors
- Rhode Island Historical Society Teen Advisory Board
- General public

As part of this feedback process, a variety of revisions were made. One substantive revision was to reorganize the standards and scope and sequences into anchor standards and content standards respectively. Next, the complete draft of the revised Rhode Island Social Studies standards was available for public review and input from November 21, 2022, to December 19, 2022. The standards were posted on the RIDE website and a feedback form was provided for stakeholders to share their feedback.

Based on the feedback provided by stakeholders and the public input, RIDE made numerous revisions and changes. As mentioned above, it is important to know that these standards are designed to be a component of the Social Studies Curriculum Framework that is yet to be developed. Included with the standards below is additional guidance on how to read and understand how the anchor standards and content standards work together to be the Rhode Island Social Studies Standards. Additional guidance documents will be developed to support districts and teachers in implementing the Rhode Island Social Studies Standards.

What is provided in this document is the culmination of all of this work: The complete set of Rhode Island Social Studies Anchor Standards and Content Standards.