



# Overview of Academic Standards: Health and Social Studies

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# Ten Minnesota Commitments to Equity

1. **Prioritize equity.**
2. **Start from within.**
3. **Measure what matters.**
4. **Go local.**
5. **Follow the money.**
6. **Start early.**
7. **Monitor implementation of standards.**
8. **Value people.**
9. **Improve conditions for learning.**
10. **Give students options.**

*Item 8 is emphasized.*





## Academic Standards Overview

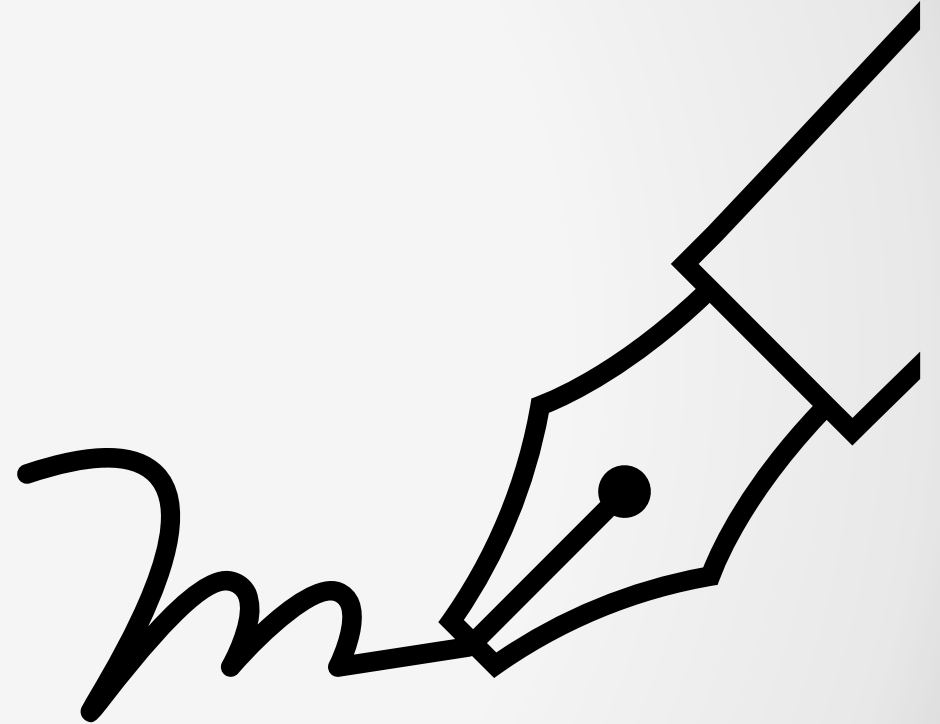
# Purpose of All Standards and Benchmarks

- Set expectations for achievement of students at each grade in math, arts, science, language arts, physical education, social studies & health.
- Provide a progression of learning
- Define the requirements for credit in courses required for graduation

# 120B.021, Subd. 2. Standards Development

## **(b) Academic standards must:**

- (1) be clear, concise, objective, measurable, and grade-level appropriate;
- (2) not require a specific teaching methodology or curriculum; and
- (3) be consistent with the Constitutions of the United States and the state of Minnesota.



# Legal Requirements of Academic Standards

## Definitions

- Minnesota Statutes 120B.018:
- Subd. 2. Academic standard. “Academic standard” means a summary description of student learning in a required content area under section 120B.021 or elective content area under section 120B.022.
- Subd. 3. Benchmark. “Benchmark” means specific knowledge or skill that a student must master to complete part of an academic standard by the end of the grade level or grade band.

## Assessable

- Standards must be objective and measurable. What teachers are expected to assess, and what students are expected to be able to do centered in the anchor standards.
- Measurable verbs in the 2025 standards are consistently used.

## Actionable

- The 2025 Standards are organized into six strands with eight anchor standards. This allows the vertical progression of each anchor standard to be clearly followed from K-12.
- Vertical alignment allows districts, schools and teachers to plan learning progression more thoughtfully, and allows families to follow student learning more clearly.

# Career and College Readiness and Contributions

## 120B.021, Subd. 4. **Revisions and Reviews required**

(a) ...the commissioner also must examine the alignment of each required academic standard and related benchmark with the knowledge and skills students need for career and college readiness and advanced work in the particular subject area. The commissioner must include the contributions of Minnesota American Indian Tribes and communities, including urban Indigenous communities, as related to the academic standards during the review and revision of the required academic standards. ...

# Requirements of All Standards Committee Membership

## [Minnesota Statute 2025, section 120B.021 Subd. 2.](#)

### Subd. 2. **Standards development.**

(a) The commissioner must consider advice from at least the following stakeholders in developing statewide rigorous core academic standards in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, including history, geography, economics, government and citizenship, health, and the arts:

- (1) parents of school-age children and members of the public throughout the state;
- (2) teachers throughout the state currently licensed and providing instruction in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health, or the arts and licensed elementary and secondary school principals throughout the state currently administering a school site;
- (3) currently serving members of local school boards and charter school boards throughout the state;
- (4) faculty teaching core subjects at postsecondary institutions in Minnesota;
- (5) representatives of the Minnesota business community;
- (6) representatives from the Tribal Nations Education Committee and Tribal Nations and communities in Minnesota, including both Anishinaabe and Dakota; and
- (7) current students, with input from the Minnesota Youth Council.

# Components Included in all Academic Standards

Career, College, and  
Community Readiness  
(CCCR)



Minnesota American  
Indian Tribes and  
communities, including  
urban Indigenous  
communities



Embed Technology and  
Information Literacy  
Standards



Embed Ethnic Studies





## Health Standards

# Health Standards Creation Legislation

## **Section 120B.021, subdivision 1(a):**

(a) The following subject areas are required for statewide accountability:

(1) language arts;

(2) mathematics, encompassing algebra II, integrated mathematics III, or an equivalent in high school, and to be prepared for the three credits of mathematics in grades 9 through 12, the grade 8 standards include completion of algebra;

(3) science, including earth and space science, life science, and the physical sciences, including chemistry and physics;

(4) social studies, including history, geography, economics, and government and citizenship that includes civics;

(5) physical education;

(6) health; and

(7) the arts.

# Health Standards Development/Consultation Requirements

## [House File 5237, Chapter 115, Article 2, Section 21, Subd. 1](#)

The commissioner of education must begin the rulemaking process to adopt statewide academic standards in health in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, chapter 14 and section 120B.021.

The commissioner must consult with the commissioner of health and the commissioner of human services in developing the proposed rules. The rules must include at least the expectations for student learning listed in subdivision 2, and may include the expectations in subdivision 3, in addition to other expectations for learning identified through the standards development process.

# Required Content for Health Standards



Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)  
**(grades 7-12)**



Vaping Awareness and Prevention  
**(at least once in grades 6-8 and strongly encouraged for 9-12)**



Cannabis use and substance use, including but not limited to the use of fentanyl or mixtures containing fentanyl  
**(middle and high school)**



Prevention of sexually transmitted infections and diseases, including but not exclusive to human immune deficiency virus (HIV) and human papilloma virus (HPV)



Mental health education that includes resources on suicide and self-harm prevention  
**(grades 4-12)**

# Other possible health-related subject areas:



Child sexual abuse prevention (“Erin’s Law”)

Violence Prevention Education (grades k–12)

Character Development Education

Safe and Supportive Schools Education

Other Expectations for Learning



# Cannabis Legislation (120B.215)

Subdivision 1. **Model program.** The commissioner of education, in consultation with the commissioners of health and human services, local district and school health education specialists, and other qualified experts, shall identify one or more model programs that may be used to educate middle school and high school students on the health effects on children and adolescents of cannabis use and substance use, including but not limited to the use of fentanyl or mixtures containing fentanyl, consistent with local standards as required in section 120B.021, subdivision 1, paragraph (a), clause (6), for elementary and secondary school students.

The commissioner must publish a list of model programs that include written materials, resources, and training for instructors by June 1, 2025.

## [List of Cannabis Model Programs for School District or Charter School Consideration](#)

Subd. 2. **School programs.** (a) Starting in the 2026-2027 school year, a school district or charter school must implement a comprehensive education program on cannabis use and substance use, including but not limited to the use of fentanyl or mixtures containing fentanyl, for students in middle school and high school.

# Mental Health Legislation (120B.21)

**Mental Health Education.** Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, school districts and charter schools must provide mental health instruction for students in grades 4 through 12 aligned with local health standards and integrated into existing programs, curriculum, or the general school environment of a district or charter school.

MDE and NAMI MN have co-created a guidance document that serves to provide guidance to districts, schools, and charter schools in complying with this statute, and offers suggested mental health education curricula.

You can visit the MDE School Mental Health page for more information and to find: [The Guidance on Mental Health Education Guide is available.](#)



# Public Engagement in Rule Drafting



# Public Engagement in Rule Drafting (cont'd)



# Standards Review Process

1. Local and National Review: Identify and compare current standards locally and nationally, including in other states and countries and national reports of significance. Utilize initial public survey about current implementation.
2. Draft One – Career and College Ready Statement and Anchor Standards (base structure of strands and anchor standards for all grades)
3. Public review and comment period
  - Online feedback

# Standards Review Process (cont'd)

4. Draft Two – Standards and Benchmarks
5. Public review and comment period
  - Online feedback
  - Targeted feedback
6. Third version submitted to Commissioners (MDE, MDH & DHS) for Rulemaking
7. Rulemaking process including public feedback opportunities, including hearing

# Need and Reasonableness of 2025 K-12 Standards

Based on the most recent research in how students learn health, the proposed standards:

## **Center “Skill Standards” for students.**

Designed to build essential health skills coordinated with content

## **Streamline requirements for districts.**

Helping districts streamline the required implementation of at least 10 separate health education related statutes.

Utilized anchor standards across K-12, allowing for a clearer vertical progression of content and skills. This approach is consistent with other content areas.

## **Prepare students for college, career and civic life.**

Intentionally integrating the essential health skill standards such as analyzing influences, accessing reliable information, communicating effectively, making decisions, setting goals, applying healthy practices, and promoting wellbeing equips students with transferable skills that extend far beyond the health classroom.

# Academic Standards and Benchmarks

## Academic Standard (Anchor)

Summary descriptions of student learning in a content area. They are broad descriptions of major concepts and skills that are repeated at multiple grade levels because they represent the “big picture.”

## Benchmark

The learning that is to be mastered by the end of a particular grade (in grades K–8) or grade band (in grades 9–12) in order to complete part of an academic standard.

([Minnesota Statutes 2024, 120B.02](#) )

# Anchor Health Standards

Use **functional health knowledge** to enhance health and wellbeing.

**Analyze influences** that affect health and wellbeing.

**Access valid and reliable information**, products, and services to enhance health and wellbeing.

Demonstrate interpersonal **communication skills** to enhance health and wellbeing.

Demonstrate **decision-making skills** to enhance health and wellbeing.

Demonstrate **goal setting skills** to enhance health and wellbeing.

Demonstrate **practices and behaviors** to enhance health and wellbeing.

**Promote** health, safety, and wellbeing of **self and others**.

# Benchmark Organization

## Grade-Level Benchmarks

K – 20

1 – 23

2 – 24

3 – 26

4 – 24

5 - 30

Grade Band 6-8

58 Benchmarks

Grade Band 9-12

60 Benchmarks

# Benchmark Organization (cont.)

## Strands (Standard 1)

Food and Nutrition K-12

Human Growth and Development K-5 *and*

Human Growth and Development and Sexual Health 6-12

Mental and Emotional Health K-12

Personal Health and Wellness K-12

Personal Safety and Violence Prevention K-12

Substance Use Awareness and Prevention 6-12

*Skill Standards 2-8 \*These benchmarks use the number 7 to represent the skill standards, and it is locally determined where they are applied with strands 1-6.*

# Questions?



## Social Studies Implementation

# Content Shifts in the 2021 Social Studies Standards



Centers Student Inquiry



Emphasizes Disciplinary  
Literacy



K-8 Fully Interdisciplinary  
(no identified “lead  
disciplines”)



Adds Ethnic Studies  
Strand

# Skills or competencies to focus professional development

## Content-Rich

- Understanding context, causes, and impact on the present day

## Curriculum development

- Lessons that meet benchmarks without overwhelming teachers.

## Engaging learners

- Strategies for making content relevant to students' lives.

## Difficult conversations

- Leading discussions on challenging topics with sensitivity and respect.



## Culturally responsive

- Incorporating Indigenous and marginalized voices into social studies education.

## Critical thinking

- Teaching students how to analyze and evaluate primary sources.

## Classroom strategies

- Developing time-efficient lesson plans that still have impact.

# The Inquiry Design Model Blueprint

**Depth Over Breadth:** Students cannot and should not be expected to learn everything about every important topic in the social sciences. The IDM focuses on key inquiries that lead to deep understanding of essential historical patterns, concepts, and human experiences in content rich ways, rather than coverage of many facts and events.

**Developmentally Appropriate:** The IDM structure supports scaffolding, allowing students to build knowledge and skills over time and engage with challenging material in age-appropriate ways.

**Centering Critical Thinking:** Students explore evidence, consider multiple perspectives, and construct their own arguments and interpretations. This empowers students to analyze causes, impacts, and responses to historical, geographic, economic, and civic topics.

**Focus on Civic Responsibility:** Social studies education is not only about understanding the past—it is about equipping students to recognize patterns of history today and to take informed, responsible action in their communities and beyond.

**Aligns with Minnesota Standards and Statutes:** The IDM helps to fulfill the revised 2021 Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies by embedding benchmark-aligned learning into inquiry-based units.

# Navigating the U.S. History Eras

## Program Overview

- A yearlong professional learning series presented in partnership between MDE and the Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC), supporting implementation of Minnesota's social studies standards, offering a combination of live Zoom sessions and an on-demand Canvas course.

## The Need

- Only 1 in 5 secondary social studies teachers nationally has engaged in content-based PD in the past five years ("American Lesson Plan," The American Historical Association (AHA))
- Over half of that learning is self-funded and outside contract hours (AHA)
- Most available materials are supplementary, not comprehensive core curriculum (EdReports, AIR)

## Eras Series is helping fill the gap

- Monthly deep dive into one of the nine defined eras in the Minnesota Academic Standards in Social Studies
- Content sessions with Minnesota-based historians framed around the benchmarks of the era
- Pedagogy sessions modeling standards-aligned instruction using the IDM
- Partnership with MHC provides structured collaboration for teachers in developing curriculum

## Impact so far

- Began in September 2025
- 116 active educators statewide
- Around 200 hours of monthly engagement in the Canvas course
- Building sustained teacher capacity in content knowledge tied directly to instructional practice

# Statewide Partnership

## MDE Conference Presentations Supporting Implementation

- Geofest with the Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education (MAGE)
- Multiple summer institutes and school year sessions with the Minnesota Council for Economic Education (MCEE), primarily focused on elementary and middle school
- History Fest and Northern Lights Academy with the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS)
- Minnesota Council for the Social Studies (MCSS) annual conference and school year webinars

## Partnership with Minnesota Humanities Center

- In-person workshops at three service co-ops
- Elementary leader summer institute and ongoing development (LESSI)
- Planned expansion of Eras to World history

# Social Studies Curriculum Leader Network

## Purpose

- Build district and school-level capacity to implement the standards with coherence and consistency.

## Structure

- Meets monthly during the school year (9 virtual sessions + 7 in-person sessions)
- Statewide network of district and school leaders, charter networks, co-ops, and partner organizations

## Multi-Year Focus

- SY 2024-25: Unpacked revised standards by strand, Introduced key support partners: MCSS, MNHS, MCEE, YMCA Center for Youth Voice, MHC
- SY 2025-26: Building Standards-aligned curriculum using the IDM, Resource development being supported partnership with MHC

## Reach (2025-26)

- 70 school districts
- 4 service co-ops
- 20 charter schools/networks & private schools
- 8 social studies organizations and pre-service programs

# Minnesota's Definition of Ethnic Studies

"Ethnic studies" means the **interdisciplinary** study of **race, ethnicity, and indigeneity** with a focus on the **experiences and perspectives of people of color** within and beyond the United States. Ethnic studies analyzes the ways in which **race and racism** have been and continue to be **social, cultural, and political forces**, and the **connection of race to the stratification of other groups**, including stratification based on the protected classes under Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 363A.13. *Minn. Stat. 120B.25*

# Ethnic Studies Course Requirement

Under Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 120B.251, subdivision 2, high schools must offer an ethnic studies course beginning school year 2026-2027

- No increase in graduation credit.
- Credit equivalency may fulfil a social studies, language arts, arts, math, or science credit if the course meets the applicable state academic standards.
- May also fulfill an elective credit if the course meets the applicable local standards or other local requirements.
- May focus specifically on a particular group of national or ethnic origin.

Courses meeting graduation requirements must cover all required standards and benchmarks in each content area, and all students must take the course.

# Ethnic Studies Work in 2024

April 2024 – Oct. 2024 (Ethnic Studies Working Group)

October 2024 (Ethnic Studies Working Group gathered, reviewed and incorporated public feedback informing Ethnic Studies)

November 2024 (Drafted Ethnic Studies grant program alongside Grant team partners for leadership review and approval)

# Ethnic Studies Work in 2025

January 2025 (Submitted Ethnic Studies Grant round 1 for review and approval, grant would serve to support the development and implementation of ethnic studies courses)

April 2025 – Ethnic Studies Grant posting and application released

May – June 2025 – Ethnic Studies Grant applications reviewed with grantees selected

June 30, 2025 – December 2025 – MDE Ethnic Studies specialist provide technical assistance and support to selected grantees (Hmong College Prep Academy (HCPA), Lakes International Language Academy (LILA), Rochester Public Schools, Community School of Excellence, St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS) and Sejong Academy

December 2025 – Updated the following from grantee feedback, ethnic studies course, FAQ, professional development planning, school survey, essential components of ethnic studies, reflection tool of sustaining ethnic studies implementation, and ethnic studies instructional materials guidance documents completed for leadership review and approval.

December 2025 – Ethnic Studies Round 2 grant application approved for January 2026 posting

# Ethnic Studies Course Development for Grades 5-12: Community-Centered Knowledge Grant

The purpose of the grant is to support districts and charters in the development, evaluation, and implementation of grades 5-12 ethnic studies courses.

## Background

Under [Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 120B.251](#), starting in school year 2026-2027, all districts and charters must

- Offer a high school ethnic studies course
- Provide ethnic studies instruction in elementary and middle schools
- Ensure K-12 ethnic studies instruction meets the 2021 K-12 Academic Standard in Social Studies

## Grant Information

- All proposed grant projects must align with Minnesota's definition of ethnic studies as stated in [Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 120B.25](#).

# Thank You!

**Questions?**