



The Tennessee Coalition for Truth in Our Classrooms is a group of students, education advocates, and over 25 organization leaders across Tennessee who believe in honoring and valuing the diversity of our state's students, staff, and communities and promoting the teaching of truthful history in our schools. Through the Tennessee State Board of Education's Social Studies Standards review process, the Coalition hopes to see the following values reflected in the revised standards:

1. Promoting Students' Culture Awareness & Understanding

Across Tennessee, our schools serve approximately 1 million students with unique backgrounds and [growing racial and ethnic diversity](#). Our Coalition believes that at all grade levels, it is important for students to have meaningful opportunities to reflect on their own and appreciate others' unique cultures, identities, and values. As Tennesseans, it is essential that students learn and understand that our state, country, and world are composed of many different communities which allows us to work together more effectively.

Improving students' racial and cultural awareness can enhance their critical thinking abilities, sense of belonging, and interpersonal skills. Research shows that students who see themselves as contributors to their communities [experience academic progress](#). Moreover, [engaging educators in professional learning that enables them to activate students' assets lead to positive outcomes for both teachers and students](#). With that in mind, **we recommend keeping standards across all grade levels that encourage cultural awareness and understanding, such as:**

- **K.02:** Compare and contrast family traditions and customs; including: food, clothing, homes, and games
- **1.01, 1.02, & 1.03:** Describe cultural aspects of a place; Define multiculturalism as many different cultures living within a community and state; Compare and contrast family traditions and customs among different cultures within a student's community and a state
- **2.01, 2.02, & 2.03:** Identify various cultural groups; Compare & contrast the beliefs, customs, ceremonies, and traditions of various U.S. cultures; Distinguish how people from various cultures in the community and nation share principles, goals, and traditions
- **CI.22:** Explain multiculturalism, and analyze trends in acculturation and assimilation
- **P.43, P.44, P.55, P.56:** Define culture and diversity; Examine cultural change, including variations within and across nations, and consider the following factors using psychological research: gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and societal norms; Explain how social power structures relate to stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination; Examine how perspectives influence stereotypes and the treatment of minority and majority groups in society
- **S.10; S.14:** Compare and contrast various cultures of the world; Identify and evaluate the functions of social institutions (e.g., family, education, religion, economy, government)
- **WG.20; WG. 28:** Define the concept of culture and its components; Analyze how cultural characteristics link and/or divide regions or societies

2. Promoting the Teaching of Truthful History

Schools have the responsibility to provide students with thorough history classes as a means of addressing misinformation, avoiding mistakes of the past, and expanding students' worldviews. To do so, schools must teach fact-based lessons, and students need to engage with a challenging social studies curriculum. By creating honest, supportive classrooms, students are more prepared to address some of the world's most complex issues. With that in mind, **we recommend keeping the standards that encourage the teaching of truthful history, such as:**

- **4.07:** Contrast how the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence clashed with treatment of different groups including: women, slaves and American Indians
 - **Note: We recommend to edit to “slaves” to “enslaved people” in any referenced Social Studies Standards in all subjects/grades.**
- **US.82:** Analyze how the American Indian Movement, Chicano Movement, and Feminist Movement are related to the Civil Rights Movement in advancing equality across the broader spectrum of American society during this period.
 - **Note: This could also include other movements that intersected with the Civil Rights Movement, such as the Asian American and LGBTQ+ Liberation Movement.**

Additionally, when teaching about multiple perspectives both in history and today, we also want to ensure that students are not taught to equate individual people or entire communities (e.g., Black or Muslim individuals) with conflict, terrorism, violence, or other negative stereotypes based on their identity.

- **CI.09:** Analyze the causes and effects extremism, and identify the historical roots of terrorist attacks (e.g., PLO, IRA, Al-Qaeda, Taliban, ISIS, the Black Hand, KKK).
 - **Note: We recommend including other domestic extremist groups when discussing extremism, such as the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers.**

Overall, when students engage thoughtfully with various historical concepts, current issues, and diverse curricula, they build crucial problem solving and practice critical interpersonal skills. Through promoting students’ cultural understanding and promoting the teaching of truthful history from multiple perspectives, our students are set up successfully to participate as effective citizens and inclusive leaders in diverse settings beyond the classroom.

We hope to see the TN Coalition for Truth in our Classrooms’ recommendations reflected in the revised versions of Tennessee's Social Studies Standards.

