

**Notes and Recommendations to the Colorado Department of Education
and Social Studies Committee**

**Following an Independent Review of the Draft of
Social Studies Standards**

Review Completed between June, 24th and July, 13th, 2009

By

Dr. Mary A. McFarland

Social Studies Consultant

To: Dr. Angela Norlander, Principal Consultant, Office of Standards and Assessments. Colorado Department of Education

Dr. Brenda Barr, Social Studies Content Specialist
Colorado Department of Education

From: Mary A. McFarland, Ph.D.
Consultant Reviewing the Colorado Social Studies Standards

Date: July 13, 2009

Subject: **Report with Recommendations to the Colorado Department of Education and Social Studies Committee Following an Independent Review of Social Studies Standards, Completed between June, 24 and July, 13, 2009**

Developing social studies standards in the 21st century for the students of Colorado is an important task if they are to become knowledgeable, productive, and caring citizens who are able to preserve and improve our democratic republic. The Social Studies Committee has obviously used the time they had available to develop this draft of the Colorado standards document by applying their professional judgment to the task. Working on standards takes time and usually results in revising several drafts before the document is at the point the state and committee members want it to be for publication and use.

I appreciate the opportunity to review the draft standards and to offer comments and recommendations. The period for this outside review has been brief--approximately fourteen workdays (June 24-July 13). I also realize that no outside reviewer can see the standards in light of local issues and needs and that my role is, instead, to bring my experience in standards development with other states and at the national level to bear on the Colorado draft document as parameters of this review permit. Thus, I make the recommendations below that seem best in my professional judgment, given the parameters set by the Colorado draft standards, and hope that my suggestions will be of help to social studies colleagues and students of Colorado as the standards development process continues.

Context for the Review:

Parameters to be applied to the study as I received draft documents include the following.

- Dr. Brenda S. Barr, Social Studies Content Specialist, Colorado Department of Education, provided me with state requirements related to social studies:
 - Students must have the opportunity to say the pledge of allegiance each day
 - Students must learn about the flag, the Constitution, and Colorado History
 - Students must take a course on United States History and Civics
 - Students must gain financial literacy—recent legislation in Colorado requires the state to develop standards in financial literacy that are embedded in the economics and mathematics content areas, and assessable in mathematics.
 - Standards must be grade-by-grade—beginning with pre-kindergarten and extending to post secondary and workforce readiness at the mastery level.
- Dr. Barr indicated that Colorado supports local control of curriculum and there is no required state scope and sequence but did provide a suggested sequence. The reviewer was directed to review the scope and sequence as it is presented in the draft standards.
- 21st century skills are to be an important part of the standards document.

Definitions that Guided My Review:

Definitions that guided my review were developed from the Colorado Department of Education's website, documents provided to me as context for the review (see a list in the Reference Notes at the end of this report).

Standards and Standards Revision: The definition of standards as it is found on the Colorado Department of Education's website, is:

“State academic standards are the expectations of what students need to know and be able to do. They also stand as the values and content organizers of what Colorado sees as the future skills and essential knowledge for our next generation to be more successful...”
“Additionally, state standards will reflect workforce readiness and 21st century skills such as problem solving, information literacy and innovation. The ability to take responsibility for additional learning, self-direction and interaction with others to learn new information quickly and more naturally is the new emerging direction of our work.”ⁱ

Further specification by the Colorado State Department of Education addresses differences in the current standards revision. “The important differences in this version of state standards will include four changes: 1) adding 21st century skills, 2) ensuring fewer, clearer and higher standards, 3) addition of early childhood, postsecondary and workforce readiness expectations, and 4) mastering concepts and skills.....not just facts.”ⁱⁱ

As a reviewer of state and national standards, I know that typically, standards specify what students need to know and be able to do, and provide the topical organization of academic content areas.

Dr. Barr provided me with the following suggested sequence of grade topics:

PK	Groups/community
K	Groups/community
1	Community
2	Neighborhood
3	Regions
4	Colorado
5	United States
6	Western Hemisphere
7	Eastern Hemisphere
8	United States

Grade Level Expectations: What do students need to know? -- the content and skills of a standard.

Inquiry Questions: What questions can frame learning? – broad essential questions written for student investigation. Their purpose is to stimulate observation, investigation, evidence-based explanations, justifications, reflection, and refining of ideas.

Application in Society and Using Technology - Can students demonstrate understanding in real world contexts?--statements written to focus on using what is learned to help students see why civics, economics, geography, and history are important for life in society, especially including applications in technology.

Nature of the Subject: Are students learning the characteristics innate to the disciplines? (civics, economics, geography, and history) —statements written to support teachers in helping students engage with major concepts, tools, and processes used by experts in the fields of civics, economics, geography, and history. The purpose is to provide age-appropriate knowledge and learning

experiences that are as close to the knowledge, tools, and processes used by experts in the discipline as is possible.

Evidence Outcomes: How do we know that a student is learning? --statements that indicate that students are learning the standards, 21st century skills, and will be postsecondary and workforce ready at the mastery level.

Caveat from the Committee: The evidence outcomes are examples of ways students might demonstrate understanding, but educators are not limited to these examples.

Mastery level: Mastery involves learning that produces command to the level of application of whatever content and processes are expected in a subject area and at a grade level .

Deliverables: Summary of Tasks Requested of Reviewer by the Colorado Department of Education:

- 1) Understand the context of this standards revision work as it relates to the revision of Civics, Economics, Geography, and History**
- 2) Provide CDE with recommended improvements to content and structure, including:** the use of appropriate language, continuity, parallelism, vertical and horizontal alignment and coherence in and between the four content areas (Civics, Economics, Geography, and History), the viability of implementation and practice at the elementary level, the sequence that has been developed in these draft standards, the identification of missing concepts or skills, including the inclusion of 21st century skills, the appropriate levels of rigor, depth, and clarity,
- 3) Provide CDE with recommendations on content specific questions from civics, history, economics, and geography**

Deliverables, Reviewer's Process, Recommendations, and Responses to Subject Area Questions and General Questions from Committee Members:

Organization of the Report: The **deliverables** for review of draft Colorado Academic Standards in Civics, Economics, Geography, and History, as provided by Angela Norlander, Principal Consultant, Colorado Department of Education, are followed by the **ways I addressed each** and my **recommendations related to each. Questions asked by members of the committee** from each subject area and **general questions** are addressed within the appropriate section of the report.

Deliverable 1) Understand the context of this standards revision work as it relates to the revision of Civics, Economics, Geography, and History:

- a) The mandates of Senate Bill 08-212, including the alignment of early childhood education with K-12 education and K-12 education with higher education, the development of preschool standards, and the infusion of 21st century skills into the revised standards
- b) Colorado 21st Century Skills (draft)
- c) Colorado Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (draft)
- d) State Board decisions that affect revisions: grade-by-grade articulation in lieu of grade spans; mastery-based standards in lieu of proficiency-based standards; standards are to represent academic content and skills; standards are not curriculum and therefore do not require scaffolding.
- e) Understand the nomenclature, structure, and design of the draft standards

Addressing Context: I studied all of the documents provided to me (see text above and Reference Note 3)ⁱⁱⁱ, visited the Colorado Department of Education state website, and reviewed other standards initiatives and related materials (Reference Note 4).^{iv}

Reviewer Recommendations Related to Context Documents:

- The reviewer was not asked for recommendations related to context documents.

Deliverable 2) Provide CDE with recommended improvements to content and structure, including:

a) The use of appropriate language:

Addressing Appropriate Language:

- In some instances the language did not see clear. I have attempted to make the language clear, closely related to language usage in civics, economics, geography, and history standards and more uniform in “voice,” as is common in standards documents. The exception to the third person practice is the inquiry section in which “first person” questions may be closer to students. Since questions in the inquiry section are to focus student exploration, there may be a mix of voice in these questions.
- The language in learning expectations is not always at the same level of generality. In some cases, in the tracked standards documents for each subject area, I recommend combining a very specific learning expectation with another that is closely related but at a more general level of expression (I have made such edits in the document for the sake of example).
- In some instances, especially in the early grades, the language of the learning expectation has been broadened to include more potential for learning (e.g., the 4th grade study of Colorado would better serve the learners if it is expanded to encompass attention to Colorado’s place in the United States and world.).
- Whenever possible, especially in the case of the early primary grades, the language should be clear, using technical terms that are necessary and age-appropriate concepts, but avoiding highly technical terms. Highly technical terms may not be age-appropriate and may be more confusing to very young learners than helpful (see edits in specific subject areas and grade levels).
- The stem in the documents, “Concepts and skills students know include:” does not make a grammatically accurate statement when linked to the statement of learning expectation. For example, at pre K the first statement would read as it now stands, “Concepts and skills students know include explain that individuals have unique talents but also work with others as part of groups, communities, and nations.” This could be corrected by dropping the word “include” and making the stem, Concepts and skills students know: or by changing verbs in the statements to read: “Concepts and skills students know include **explaining** that individuals have unique talents but also work with others as part of groups, communities, and nations.”

Reviewer’s Recommendations related to language usage:

- Eliminate the word “include” from the stem, “Concepts and skills students know include...” or change the verb in the statements that follow to the gerund (ing) form to create a grammatically accurate statement. I did not make either of these changes in edits—not knowing which you might prefer or whether you will decide to make the change.
- Check the uniformity of voice among the sections of a grade level (with the exception of using first person in the Inquiry Questions section to bring these questions closer to the students.) I attempted to address this through edits.
- Work for consistent level of generality throughout the document (within and across grade levels and subject areas). I began the process of addressing this through edits.
- Include examples in the “applying” sections to provide more clarity on what these statements mean by providing examples. In edits, I have added more detail in the form of examples in all subjects and grade levels.
- Consider adding a glossary of specific terms and necessary technical terms related to each subject area—defining them as you are using these terms in the document (e.g., words such as command economy, monetary policy, fiscal policy, GPS, media literacy, etc.). If an electronic version of your standards document is eventually created, defined words could be linked to the glossary definitions.

b) Continuity, parallelism, vertical and horizontal alignment and coherence in and between the four content areas (Civics, Economics, Geography, and History)

1. **VERTICAL**—progression from one grade to the next in each area (civics, history, economics, geography)

Addressing Vertical Parallelism, Alignment, and Coherence:

In reviewing the grade-by-grade continuity, I proceeded as follows:

- Edited the expectation statements for subjects at various grade levels to attempt to develop a progression of concepts and skills from one grade to the next.
- Renumbered some of the expectation statements to develop the same order for similar types of stem statements from grade to grade (e.g., placing concepts in the first position; next tools and skills; and next any other types of statements such as financial literacy for economics).
- Noticed that a few of the expectations were at a much more specific level than the others. I have noted that in the tracked copy of the standards and have offered an example of how related expectations might be combined should you decide to do so.
- Noticed that some of the language in expectations and the scope of expectations for younger learners seemed too limited. In edits I have expanded the concepts and skills for young learners.
- Reviewed each section (Inquiry, Applying, Outcomes) to check continuity from one grade to the next and edited to work toward greater continuity and a more even level of generality.

Reviewer’s Recommendations Related to Vertical Parallelism, Alignment, and Coherence

To increase vertical parallelism, alignment and coherence I recommend the following:

- Position the same type of expectation in the same position in every grade level to make connections from one grade to the next more easily identified (e.g., economics related to the content/topic of the grade level first, tools and skills expectation next, financial literacy next—keeping the same order in each grade; or content of geography first, then tools and skills, etc.
 - It is best, in my view, to let “tool” and “process” expectations follow “content” expectations. The implication is that the tools and processes are available to help students learn the content that is identified above. In some instances in the tracked documents, I have recommended a different order for learning expectations.
 - Within the sections of a grade level (inquiry, applying, outcomes) position the same types of items as nearly as possible in the same position. For example: Inquiry – even though these questions are for the most part meant to engage students by being open ended, the questions may begin with any definitional questions then progress to the open-ended questions. In the “Applying X in Society and Using Technology” section, position technology related items after other items in the “application” section. I have done this in edits.
 - I would recommend keeping the number of learning expectations to a limit of one or two for younger learners and three or so at the maximum for higher grade levels so connections within a grade level and from one grade to the next are easier to determine and the expectations in one subject area are more similar in number to those in the other areas.
 - I have noted this in the tracked copy of the standards and have offered examples in various grades of how related expectations might be combined (e.g., in grade 1, combining expectations so as not to have too many for young learners).
 - Combining expectations has the advantage of helping educators see more relationships and integrate more related ideas into instruction.
 - HOWEVER, you may decide to follow a contrary path and to leave some expectations as separate items (if they are at the same level of generality) instead of combining expectations. This is the better course of action if you believe that eventually you may decide to assess expectations.
 - Continue checking the level of generality of expectation statements and within the sections of an expectation (inquiry, applying, outcomes). I have attempted in edits to make the level of generality within a grade level and from one grade level to the next more similar.
 - I recommend increasing scope of expectations for young learners and expanding the potential to learn. Many young children come to school with much knowledge of the world due to the influence of media. I have increased the scope of the suggested sequence topics (below) and included more concepts and skills in edits.
2. **HORIZONTAL**—alignment of civics, history, economics, and geography across each grade level.

Addressing Horizontal Parallelism, Alignment, and Coherence:

In addressing horizontal parallelism, alignment and coherence, I:

- Examined the expectations and the details of each section (i.e., the inquiry, applying, and outcomes sections) and edited to begin to increase alignment.

- Noted that similar expectations were in different positions within a subject from grade to grade and edited some of the numbering of expectations to better align their position within the grade (e.g., it is best if content expectations come first, methods, skills, and tools expectations come next, and another others after that).
- Added edits to bring about greater attention on the suggested topic for the grade level as a way to emphasize more relationships across subject areas.
- Made suggestions about combining some expectations to bring about greater parallelism among the subjects at each grade level. You may, however, decide to leave the expectations separate to better assess them at some later time.
 - In cases where there were many more expectations within a subject area at a certain grade level, some of those expectations were at a much more specific level of generality.
 - The expectations need to be at the same level of generality. While it is not overly important that each subject have exactly the same number of expectations per grade, it is inadvisable for any subject to have a great many more expectations at a grade level than other subjects.

Reviewer’s Recommendations Related to Horizontal Parallelism, Alignment, and Coherence

In addressing horizontal alignment across each grade level, I recommend the following:

- Positioning the same type of expectation in the same position in every grade will make the document much easier to follow across the subjects (e.g., Content expectations first, tools and processes expectations next, and any other expectations following after that (e.g., economics may need a financial literacy expectation at each grade after the primary grade years so it is easily identified).
- Even though topics at each grade level are not assigned by the state, I have used the recommended topic of the grade level as a way to relate some of the detail under learning expectations across subject areas at a grade level to increase horizontal alignment.
- Some of the areas had much more detail and many more learning expectations than others (e.g., economics). In the tracked documents, I have worked to provide examples of combining some of the expectations that seem very related to make the academic areas more even in the number of expectations and to increase alignment horizontally.
 - Keeping the number of expectations in the early primary grades, PreK through grade 3 to one or two and a maximum of two or three in all of the subject areas will support alignment as well as encourage greater integration in the elementary grades.
 - I recommend combining or renumbering some of the learning expectations as follows, usually because the one or more of the expectations seems to be a more specific sub-set of other expectations at that grade level. You will find examples of how combining could work in the tracked copies of the document.
 - For example in Economics: I combined expectations for Kindergarten, High school economics and in

Grade 3, renumbered so as to make financial literacy the last expectation at each grade level.

- Civics: I combined some expectations (draft item # 4 with item #1 at the high school level).
- History: I combined some of the expectations at the high school level—see tracked document.
 - You may, instead, determine that expectations will be more easily assessed as separate expectations—in which case the level of generality needs to be the same for learning expectations.
- The area of economics has the added challenge of representing both the academic field of economics and, by law, financial literacy. Even so, it may be possible to organize the economics sections by beginning with economics and (after the early primary grades in which there is only one or two broad economics expectation) having a learning expectation that deals with financial literacy.
- **Civics: A question from the civics committee members** was whether there should be a separate learning expectation for the justice system. As important as this area is, I believe that keeping the number of learning expectations fewer is better and keeping the expectations at the same level of generality. The expectation about the justice system is more specific than the others. As an example, I have edited what was expectation 3 to be more inclusive so that the justice system is represented there. As noted in other parts of this report, you may decide to leave expectations separate, but all of the learning expectations need to be as close as possible at the same level of generality.
- **Civics: Another question from the civics committee members** was whether there is enough emphasis on democratic participation in the draft. I did see evidence and also added some. I agree with you about the importance of participation as a strong component of your civic expectations and recommend that you continue to look at the grade levels for additional opportunities to include meaningful civic participation.
- **Geography: A question from the geography committee members** was whether there was enough physical geography in high school. I reworded a learning expectation and added some emphasis to physical geography in the inquiry and apply sections in the high school.
- **Geography:** The geography expectations are always labeled (e.g., Space and Place; Globalization and Connections, etc.). You may want to decide whether this subject area should delete the labels or other subject areas should adopt this idea. You also included a couple of expectations about what geographers do which no other subject did. These ideas may really be part of the section in each grade that discusses how the ideas from the inquiry, apply, and outcomes sections describe what geographers do. I believe it is better to do something like you did in the geography expectation in Grade 5, “1.Using multiple geographic tools and various sources to answer geographic questions about the United States” which focuses on students using the tools of geography.
- All of the expectations across all of the subjects for high school are at a rather general level (to allow them to apply in a variety of different

courses), but you may want to add more examples in the “apply” sections to add as much clarity as possible.

- **Economics: A question from the economics committee members** was whether careers should be part of economics at 6th grade. In researching recommendations for financial literacy, careers can be included as part of what students consider. It seems most appropriate in learning expectation 2, “Identify the relationship of education, training and skills to lifetime income and goal setting in a personal financial plan.

c) **The viability of implementation and practice at the elementary level**

1. The main question for each grade level (elementary and beyond) is: How do the civics, history, economics, and geography expectations work together in units and lessons?
 - The key to implementation at any level is selecting the major focus topics and seeing how the civics, history, economics, and geography expectations work together to accomplish what the standards set forth. For example, even one lesson on the beginning of the American Revolutionary War can naturally draw on ideas about justice, diversity, freedom from civics; causes and effects from history; location, resources, and culture from geography; and economic differences between Britain and the colonies. One academic area may be “driving” the instruction at a given point in time, but others will clearly intersect and help students to meet the standards.
 - Another key to the viability of implementation at every level, including the elementary, is for educators to determine how many focus topics will be addressed during the year and at what depth (e.g., in considering what to teach about the American Revolutionary war, the decisions about depth, resources to use, and goals of the study will be very different from one grade level to another. Viability seems less a function of the standards (as a framework), than curriculum and instruction decisions about how the learning expectations in the standards are addressed in curriculum planning and instruction.
 - Identifying some detail in standards as indications of the kind of depth you are suggesting is helpful to the users (e.g., identifying the eras in history, giving a few examples in the “applying” section...). I have included more of this kind of detail in edits.

d) **The sequence that has been developed in these draft standards**

Addressing Sequence Suggested in these Draft Standards:

- I have been requested to review the sequence as provided below as Colorado’s decision about sequence in these draft standards.
- **Reviewer’s Recommendations Related to Sequence Provided in these Draft Standards**
 - The suggested sequence of grade topics in these draft standards is:

PreK	Groups/community
K	Groups/community

1	Community
2	Neighborhood
3	Regions
4	Colorado
5	United States
6	Western Hemisphere
7	Eastern Hemisphere
8	United States
9-12	Courses (US History, civics are required)

- As per a telephone conversation with Dr. Barr, I would recommend broadening the topics at the elementary level to provide more opportunity to learn and more opportunity to “practice” with the content and skills at increasing levels of sophistication across the grades.
- Since neighborhood is less abstract than community, I would recommend that you consider reversing the sequence for grades 2 and 3 --making “neighborhoods” the topic for grade 2 and “community” the topic for grade 3, but have confined my edits, as requested, to the sequence as it is in your draft document.
 - Even though topics at each grade level are not required by the state, I recommend using a suggested sequence.
 - A sequence is extremely helpful in allowing for opportunity of learning across grade levels.
 - Sequenced topics allow teachers to expend their instructional energy and encourage learners to continue to build on prior experience and knowledge.
 - A suggested sequence of the grade level emphasis as a way to link some of the detail under learning expectations across subject areas and add more coherence across subject areas and vary the concepts and skills learned across grade levels.
 - I would recommend that neighborhoods precede community since the topic of neighborhoods is a sub-set of community and closer to the immediate experience of first grade children. Community could easily move to second and is very often taught as the topic of focus in the primary grades.
 - Even when the focus of a grade level is mainly a specific topic (e.g., community) attention should to be given to introducing some ideas that will become the more specific focus of later grades—especially in this age when students have access to so much information outside of school about the nation and world. Expanding the topics is a way to build in the opportunity to “practice” with the content and skills of social studies in increasingly significant ways across grades.
 - **Question from Committee Members Working on History:** Provide phrasing feedback on the 5th Grade Level Expectation that states “Determine the significance of individuals, groups, ideas, eras & themes in the North American past from 1491 to the American Revolution, and their relationships with one another.” Given your decision to split U.S. history between 5th and 8th and the examination of other state standards that split U.S. history, I would recommend that you extend the time frame to the 1800s—before the Civil War.

e) The identification of missing concepts or skills, including the inclusion of 21st century skills

Addressing the Identification of Missing Concepts or Skills and the Inclusion of 21st Century Skills in the Draft Standards:

In reviewing the draft:

- I have edited to expand the concepts and skills in grade levels where they seemed too limited (see tracked documents).
- The 21st century skills are found in the draft document any time the standards are referring to higher order critical thinking (e.g., analyze, synthesize, interpret, evaluate); having students ask questions; using civic/political science, historical, geographic, creating/developing; information, media, technological literacy. Using economic tools and methods of inquiry, applying; and connecting to the broader community, nation, and world. Collaboration is also one of the 21st century competencies and I began to incorporate it in edits in a grade level or two and then decided not to interject that into your document. Collaboration is more accurately an instructional application of what educators find in the standards.

Reviewer's Recommendations Missing Concepts or Skills and the Inclusion of 21st Century Skills in the Draft Standards:

- It would strengthen the document to add further references to 21st century skills as your work on the draft proceeds. I did this through edits as much as possible.
- The technology applications at the end of each "applying" section may need additional emphasis and more variety to extend what I added in edits..
- Whatever level of detail in the examples in the "applying section" will help users of the standards to see what is suggested at grades below, their own, and above. I worked to add this type of detail through edits.

f) The appropriate levels of rigor, depth, and clarity

Addressing the Levels of Rigor, Depth, and Clarity in the Draft Standards:

- In reviewing the draft, I felt that there needed to be more rigor and depth to assure sufficient opportunity to learn in the lower elementary grades (with the exception of economics ideas, some of which seemed too technical for very young learners).

Reviewer's Recommendations Levels of Rigor, Depth, and Clarity in the Draft Standards:

- The edits in the tracked documents represent my effort to increase the rigor, depth, and clarity of the standards draft.
- Adding examples in the "applying" section is another way I tried to add clarity and suggest the idea of depth.

3) Provide CDE with recommendations on the following content specific questions:

Geography: The elementary grade expectations for social studies may be our biggest challenge; how well are the social studies balanced across the disciplines so that an elementary teacher will see the greatest utility and least amount of confusion?

Reviewer Response: The edits I have made in the tracked documents and suggestions for combining and reordering some of the learning expectations are aimed at addressing the balance across disciplines and adding a consistent organization that will make it easier for elementary teachers (and all teachers) to see what is being recommended in the standards at their grade level, but also those above and below the one at which they teach.

History: Provide phrasing feedback on the 5th Grade Level Expectation that states “Determine the significance of individuals, groups, ideas, eras & themes in the North American past from 1491 to the American Revolution, and their relationships with one another.”

Reviewer Response: Given the Colorado decision to split US history between 5th and 8th grades, I would recommend extending the period that is introduced to 5th grade learners to the 1800s before the Civil War and beginning 8th grade with a brief review of historical highlights as a way, in Grade 8, of introducing the eras from Civil War forward.

Civics: Is there a balance between civics/citizenship concepts and functions of government? Do you see evidence of participatory citizenship?

Reviewer Response: I do see evidence of civics concepts (e.g., plans for government via constitutions, organization, structures and institutions and processes). The draft document also contained opportunities for participatory citizenship and I have added others. I agree with the spirit of your question, that the more students can become engaged in applying what they learn in the area of civics in active participation, the more meaningful the learning becomes and the greater the carry over into full participation as a citizen.

Economics: Is this a natural progression of mastery? The 6th grade questions regarding careers-Is this economics?

Reviewer Response: The progression of concepts seems natural, although, in some cases, the technical terms, in the draft, seemed to be too technical—especially for young learners (e.g., in grade 2 the idea of financial institutions). If the emphasis on career exploration isn’t too consuming, it seems an appropriate topic related to financial literacy and financial planning.

General: Our committees lacked sufficient diversity. Do our draft standards reflect a substantive cultural lens?

Reviewer Response: In many grades, the word “culture” was used to introduce diversity—often successfully. In adding edits, I also attempted to add material that will reflect regard for the significance of learning about diversity (e.g., cultural, ethnic, racial, etc.) and the contributions members of diverse communities and diverse cultures have made to the history and culture of the US and world.

Other General Questions Submitted to the Reviewer:

- **Did we hit the mark with appropriate developmental levels?** For the most part the standards address developmental levels appropriately. In cases where concepts or skills seemed to easy or difficult, I have made tracked suggestions in the draft.
- **Are there gaps and overlaps- are we asking for something at 6th /7th grade that they are not prepared for?** Tracked suggestions offer ideas for gaps that I believed were in the draft. I believe the idea of some deliberate overlap is very positive. Learners need to see ideas in different contexts and experience them at different points as they mature in order to build needed foundation learning as young learners and practice sufficiently with key ideas (mastering them at each level as is appropriate for that level). The progression toward

grades 6 and 7 seem to me to be aimed at providing the background that learners need to succeed at these levels.

- **Are the GLEs clear?** I felt that the GLEs were not always clear. Some were more specific than others and GLEs did not always match the elaborations in the inquiry, apply, and outcomes sections. I worked in the track draft to strengthen this and to attempt to express the GLEs at the same level of generality.
- **Do we have a balance at elementary between rigor and achievability?** I believe the elementary needs more opportunity to learn foundation content and have added suggestions in the tracked documents. The standards seem perfectly achievable if educators see the relationships across subjects and plan to integrate the standards and learning expectations with one another into meaningful units and lessons.
- **Do the content areas have the same type of specificity? In other words, do they look similar or is one more specific or one too broad?** I don't believe the content areas were as similar in organization nor breadth as they need to be. I have attempted to address this in the tracked version of the documents by editing, suggesting less technical language in some grades, combining learning expectations, attempting to write learning expectations at a similar level of generality, reordering some of the learning expectations to suggest a consistent pattern across grade levels, and checking the consistency of the inquiry, apply, and outcomes sections in relationship to the GLEs.

Deliverable 3) Utilize your own research and considerable work on standards to draw comparisons, conclusions and recommendations that confirms logic, rigor, comparability and competitiveness of the draft standards in Civics, Economics, Geography, and History.

Response: I have drawn on my experience in developing standards at the national level and in working with other states in reviewing the Colorado draft document. The parameters of the study were to review the draft as it is currently structured and organized. The Colorado draft document offers a good beginning in pursuing one approach to organization and in indentifying rigor for Colorado learners. As work on the draft documents proceed, the committee will want to continue:

- To develop ways that the format can guide users. You may want to make headings for each expectation bold in order for users of the document to see more clearly the overall organizer for the expectation. (E.g., in civics -- Comprehend rights, roles and responsibilities of citizens and engage in practices involved in being a citizen.)
- Checking to see that what follows addresses that header (e.g., the learning expectation).
- Checking to see that there is internal consistency of sections under learning expectation—inquiry, applying, and outcomes sections.
- Offering enough detail in examples to allow educators to have an idea of what is being learned in previous grades, what they are being asked to address at their own grade level, and what will be learned in the next grade in civics, history, economics, and geography.
- I have used resources listed in the reference note section of the report to guide my recommendations to the extent permitted as set forth by the parameters for the Colorado draft standards.

Deliverable 4) Reviewer agrees to track changes throughout document, as appropriate; provide a single, report that includes general and content specific components.

I have tracked changes in the documents and created an addendum for 3rd grade civics because one frame was pasted on top of others and could not be separated. I also created an addendum for one GLE in high school history to see if that would help reduce the “crashes” of the program.

Deliverable 5) Reviewer agrees to grant CDE permission to cite name as outside reviewer and editor of individual standards.

The Colorado Department of Education has permission to list my name as outside reviewer and editor of the draft standards.

Summary:

I wish those involved in the continuing process of refining the standards every success. I appreciate this opportunity to work with educators and citizens of Colorado to develop standards that will support educators in their efforts to strengthen and improve opportunities to learn civics, history, geography, and economics for Colorado students.

REFERENCE NOTES

ⁱ Colorado Department of Education Website, Unit of Academic Standards. [Online] (Accessed June 24, 2009; Available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/UAS/index.html>)

ⁱⁱ Colorado Department of Education Website, Standards Review. [Online] (Accessed June 24, 2009); Available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/UAS/standardsreview.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Materials reviewed from the Colorado Department of Education include:

- a) The mandates of Senate Bill 08-212, including the alignment of early childhood education with K-12 education and K-12 education with higher education, the development of preschool standards, and the infusion of 21st century skills into the revised standards
- b) Colorado 21st Century Skills (draft)
- c) Colorado Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (draft)
- d) State Board decisions that affect revisions: grade-by-grade articulation in lieu of grade spans; mastery-based standards in lieu of proficiency-based standards; standards are to represent academic content and skills; standards are not curriculum and therefore do not require scaffolding.
- e) Understand the nomenclature, structure, and design of the draft standards

^{iv} Some of the additional materials reviewed included:

- a) NCSS Curriculum Standards Update Draft Available for Comment at <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/taskforce/fall2008draft>
- b) 21st Century Skills Map-Social Studies at http://21stcenturyskills.org/documents/ss_map_11_12_08.pdf
- c) 21st Century Skills Map- Geography at http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/21stcskillsmap_geog.pdf
- d) National History Standards for Grades K-4
- e) National United States History Standards for Grades 5-12
- f) National World History Standards for Grades 5-12
- g) National Standards for Civics and Government, 9-12
- h) Geography for Life: The National Geography Standards
- i) National Content Standards in Economics
- j) National Standards in K-12 Personal Financial Education @<http://www.jumpstartcoalition.org/guide.html>