



2023 Legislative Impacts on Minnesota Social Studies Education [Updated April 11, 2024]

The 2023 Minnesota legislative session resulted in historic legislation being passed in education—including changes in state statutes which directly impact K-12 social studies education. This is an overview of these changes.

Citizenship and Government Changes

Summary of change: Students will be required to take a course for credit in citizenship and government in 11th or 12th grade beginning with students entering 9th grade in 2024-25 school year. This course is part of the existing 3.5 credits in social studies, and does not increase credits required to graduate. Students can substitute an advanced placement, international baccalaureate, or other rigorous course on government and citizenship for this requirement.

Students transferring from schools outside of Minnesota with credit for citizenship and government, civics or other related classes completed in 9th or 10th grade will be required to retake a course in citizenship and government in 11th or 12th grade in order to meet graduation requirements.

To meet the requirement, the 11th or 12th grade course must center and prioritize the citizenship and government standards and benchmarks. All other standards from other disciplines that are incorporated into this course must support and enhance the citizenship and government standards and benchmarks. It is imperative that all students are taught and given the opportunity to demonstrate learning in all of the Social Studies benchmarks.

Districts are no longer required to administer the civics test to high school students.

Effective date: Course requirement is effective beginning with the students entering 9th grade in the 2024-25 school year, to coincide with the intended implementation date of the 2021 Academic Standards in Social Studies in 2026-27.

Citizenship and government test repeal effective July 2023.

Statutory references: [Minnesota Statutes 2022, Section 120B.024, subdivision 1 \(4\)](#)

Ethnic Studies Course Requirement

Summary of change: Districts will be required to offer a course in Ethnic Studies. It is not required that all students take this course, and this requirement does not increase credits required for graduation.

Relation to the 2021 K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies: The 2021 K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies include an Ethnic Studies strand in addition to the Citizenship and Government, Economics, Geography and History strands. Students are required to meet **all** academic standards and benchmarks in the 2021 Social Studies Standards, including those in the Ethnic Studies strand. The Ethnic Studies course requirement is separate from the Social Studies academic standards. An Ethnic Studies course can only fulfill the requirement of the 2021 K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies if all students take the course, and the course additionally implements the Ethnic Studies Framework.

Ethnic Studies Framework: The Ethnic Studies Framework, to be created by the Ethnic Studies Working Group, will help districts create stand-alone Ethnic Studies electives in a variety of subject areas. A course will be considered to meet the requirement of an Ethnic Studies course if it meets the content area standards and benchmarks, or locally developed elective standards, and implements the Ethnic Studies Framework.

Credit Equivalencies: (g) An ethnic studies course may fulfill a social studies, language arts, arts, math, or science credit if the course meets the applicable state academic standards. An ethnic studies course may fulfill an elective credit if the course meets applicable local standards or other local requirements.

Effective date: Course changes effective beginning 2026-27 to coincide with the intended implementation date of the 2021 Academic Standards in Social Studies.

Statutory references:

- Credit Equivalency- [Minnesota Statutes 2022, Section 120B.024, subdivision 2 \(g\)](#)

Ethnic Studies Working Group

Summary of change: MDE will convene a working group on Ethnic Studies. The group will primarily be responsible for the creation of a framework to help districts create ethnic studies courses. The framework will align with, but is not the same as, the Ethnic Studies strand in the 2021 K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies. Additionally, the working group will advise on the creation of grant criteria for Ethnic Studies grants to be administered by MDE, and make recommendations for professional development.

Effective date: The working group must be appointed by April, 2024.

Ethnic studies instruction requirement

Summary of change: Districts are required to offer instruction in ethnic studies in grades K-8. Instruction is required to meet state standards for Ethnic Studies, meaning the Ethnic Studies strand in the 2021 Social Studies

Standards. The effective date for this requirement is after the intended implementation date for the 2021 K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies. Districts will meet this requirement by implementing the 2021 K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies fully.

Effective date: K-8 schools must include Ethnic Studies instruction by the 2027-28 school year.

Education on the Holocaust and Genocide of Indigenous Peoples and Other Genocides Working Group

Summary of change: MDE will convene a working group on Holocaust and genocide of Indigenous peoples and other genocide education. The group's work will align with the 2021 K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies, and does not create additional new requirements beyond implementation of the standards. The working group will be primarily responsible for identifying and sharing resources related to professional development and classroom resources on Holocaust and genocide of Indigenous peoples and other genocides education. These resources will be publicly available after the group completes its work.

Effective date: The working group must be appointed by April 1, 2024.

Personal Finance

Summary of change: Districts will be required to have a course in personal finance. Students who enter ninth grade in 2024-25 will be required to take this course to graduate when they are in 10th, 11th, or 12th grade.

The course can be taught by licensed teachers in agricultural education, business education, family and consumer science, social studies, or math, or an out-of-field permission in one of these fields.

This course requirement is separate from the required 3.5 credits in social studies.

For more information: [Frequently Asked Questions: Personal Finance Legislation](#)

Support for Teaching About Members of Protected Classes in Relation to Standards

Summary of change: "No school district or charter school may discriminate against or discipline a teacher or principal on the basis of incorporating into curriculum contributions of persons in a federally protected or state protected class when the included contribution is in alignment with standards and benchmarks."

Effective Date: This was effective the day after the bill was signed into law.

Statutory references:

- Minnesota Statutes 2022, Section 120B.101

Contact Info

If you have questions about teaching licensure, please email PELSB@state.mn.us. For all other questions related to social studies education state policy and guidance, contact Brittany Rawson Haeg, MDE Social Studies Specialist, at mde.academic-standards@state.mn.us.