



State of New Mexico
House of Representatives

State Capitol
Santa Fe

February 24, 2022

The Honorable Kurt Steinhaus
Cabinet Secretary
New Mexico Public Education Department
300 Don Gaspar Avenue
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Dr. Steinhaus:

We are writing once again to express our strong opposition to the final rule implementing new K-12 social studies curriculum standards for New Mexico's public schools and other state educational institutions. Our continued opposition to these final standards is based on our belief that they incorporate the fundamentally flawed concepts of Critical Race Theory (CRT), plus they impose a progressive/liberal bias in regards to historical and societal events that are being mandated to be taught to New Mexico students. In addition to outlining our concerns to the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED), we intend to share our opposition regarding these new standards with the NM School Superintendents' Association, the NM School Boards Association, various parents' groups, and other organizations to initiate future efforts to eliminate CRT and the liberal/progressive bias inherent in these final curriculum standards.

We would also like to voice our extreme disappointment with PED's decision to announce these final standards during the waning days of the recent 30-day legislative session when legislators were preoccupied with last minute legislative business. Such an intentional effort to avoid immediate reactions from legislators to these objectionable standards is contrary to PED's self-proclaimed mission of "equity, excellence and relevance." While PED's leadership team is more than willing to state these final standards contain no CRT components, the dubious timing of the release of these final standards makes it clear PED recognizes these standards are highly controversial as they do contain CRT elements. Equally important, it is also quite clear the calls from many concerned citizens requesting the elimination of CRT from these standards fell on deaf ears.

As our November 9, 2021 public comment letter to PED stated, social studies education should be focused on teaching students why the U.S. and state constitutions are the pillars of our republic and how and why these documents are fundamental to fulfilling the American ideal that all people are created equal. Students should also learn about how our governmental structures work and why governmental authority is dispersed among three separate, but co-equal branches. In addition, social studies instruction must include how our free-enterprise system has resulted in a standard of living that is the envy of people across the globe and which provides a beacon of economic opportunity for all.

Sadly, these final K-12 social studies standards fall short of these essential elements as there is, instead, an undeniable desire to indoctrinate students with the false theology that our country offers privilege or systemic inequity; all things can be described in terms of "unequal power relations;" and our capitalistic

system must be replaced with a paternalistic economic system that is somehow more just and equitable.

While the final standards have been modified somewhat, primarily with the addition of personal financial literacy requirements, the fundamental focus of these standards remains the same as before as they continue down the path of progressive/liberal historical revisionists who want to degrade and criticize our great nation. We can only wonder as to the ultimate purpose of mid-November's public comment period if PED had no real intention of making significant changes to the proposed standards which were clearly outside of the mainstream of New Mexico's values and traditions. We can only assume PED was pleased to give proponents of CRT and other like-minded advocates a public opportunity to create the false impression these standards have considerable support throughout the state.

We continue to have strong objections to a significant number of these final K-12 social studies standards, including the specific items listed below which are clearly the most problematic:

- In Ethnic, Cultural and Identity Studies --- 6.29.11.16(E)(2)(l), 6.29.11.20(E), 6.29.11.21(C)(1)(j), and 6.29.11.23(A)(1)(d): These standards require students to assess how social policies and economic forces "offer privilege or systemic inequity in accessing social, political, and economic opportunity..." These same Ethnic, Cultural and Identity Studies sections also ask students to investigate how society addresses "systemic inequity." Such language is classic CRT as it creates and perpetuates the false premise of so-called white privilege and systemic inequity. Rather than teaching division and racism, these standards should focus on unity and establishing a shared commitment to the ideals of equality and opportunity.
- Kindergarten and Elementary Grades 1-6 --- 6.29.11.8(F)(3)(a), 6.29.11.9(F)(4)(a), 6.29.11.10(F)(4)(a), 6.29.11.11(F)(5)(a), 6.29.11.12(F)(4)(a), 6.29.11.13(F)(5)(a), and 6.29.11.14(F)(5)(a): These standards encourage kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, and sixth grade students to "take informed action" to address local, regional and/or global problems. While this standard may have an altruistic intent, it could result in a situation where these young students are exploited for various political or public policy reasons by adults who want to create the impression their cause is so just that even elementary students support their idea. These young students are highly impressionable and their "support" for any effort to address social problems can easily be manipulated by teachers and others for their own political/policy benefit. Students who are five, six, seven, eight, nine or ten years old should never be placed in a situation where they would serve as props in a photo-op organized by activists. It is clear these standards are nothing more than an inappropriate attempt to use children to achieve political and social agendas that these young people cannot fully comprehend.
- Throughout the entire social studies standards for grades K-12, there are Ethnic, Cultural and Identity Studies sections which have no real relevance to the teaching of traditional social studies as these sections are simply designed to preach the ideology of "unequal power relations" as the cause of this so-called "systemic inequity"--- another clear component of the false CRT narrative. These sections create a platform to focus on the differences, rather than the similarities, among various groups of people. It also provides an opportunity, such as in 6.29.11.15(E)(8) and 6.29.11.23(A)(3)(c), for a teacher to impose a singular notion of "unequal power relations," and "racial social constructs," although such terms are highly subjective and open to many interpretations. As with many aspects of these final standards under the ethnic,

cultural, and identity rubric, this area is rife with mandates that impose a certain set of values and beliefs that are not universally shared by all New Mexicans.

- High School U.S. History --- 6.29.11.21(B)(1)(c): This standard calls on students to “evaluate what an efficient, equitable, and just economic system would look like in the U.S.” Such a requirement sounds eerily similar to the principles of CRT in terms of stressing “equity” and a “just economic system.” Plus, who gets to define what these terms mean and what specific actions or steps satisfy whatever definition is utilized? Once again, rather than teaching students the principles embedded within our current capitalistic free enterprise system, there is an obvious effort to encourage students to support some idealistic economic system that may never be healthy for the country. This standard should have been eliminated and replaced with a standard that provides students with a balanced discussion of the U.S. economic system.
- High School U.S. History --- 6.29.11.21(B)(3)(c), 6.29.11.21(B)(3)(r), 6.29.11.21(B)(3)(u), 6.29.11.21(B)(3)(aa), and 6.29.11.21(B)(3)(ee): All of these standards relate to how gender norms were changing during the 19th Century, the 1920s, during World War II, between 1945 and 1975, and between 1968 and 2008. We fail to comprehend the rationale for why high school students are required to learn about how gender norms were changing or staying the same during various historical periods and how is this perspective essential to a student’s understanding of U.S. history during these periods. In addition, why does every student have to examine the activities of the LBGTQIA+ community? 6.29.11.21(B)(3)(cc) If individual students have an interest in LBGTQIA+ history, those students can conduct independent research in those related subjects. To require all students to do so, however, appears to be another example of trying to mold students towards acceptance of a personal or social agenda that is highly controversial.
- High School U.S. History --- 6.29.11.21(B)(1)(i), 6.29.11.21(B)(3)(j), 6.29.11.21(B)(3)(k), 6.29.11.21(B)(3)(n), 6.29.11.21(B)(4)(b), 6.29.11.21(B)(4)(c), 6.29.11.21(C)(1)(f), and 6.29.11.21(C)(1)(g): The apparent preoccupation with the history of the progressive era and movement --- the precursor to the current progressive agenda in today’s political environment – is evident by the eight individual standards that students must explore regarding the policies, outcomes, and impact that period had on various groups of people. Yet, within U.S. History, there are no standards requiring students to understand why America fought to gain its independence from England or how our new country struggled with determining its self-governance with both the Articles of Confederation and the U.S. Constitution. As the old saying goes, it is not always important to realize what is included in a history lesson, but rather it’s more important to realize what is not being included that matters. This obvious bias towards a specific period of our history because it suits a specific political ideology is just further proof how these final standards are designed to enhance a political agenda more than educating our students.

It is not just the CRT components we find objectionable, it is also the overall progressive/liberal slant or bias these standards are clearly designed to impart during the teaching of social studies in grades K-12. Within the proposed standards, there are numerous examples of classic progressive/liberal doctrine being promoted and all of these instances should have been eliminated from the final standards to ensure New Mexico’s students are not subjected to a slanted view of our nation’s/state’s heritage.

Specific examples include:

- Examine and evaluate the rules, laws, and authorities that keep people “safe” in New Mexico, but, of course, there is no mention within these standards as to which rules, laws and authorities keep New Mexicans “free.” [6.29.11.12(A)(1)]
- Demonstrate an understanding of how inequity throughout the history of the U.S. and its connection to conflict that arises today. [6.29.11.13(D)(5)]
- Discuss the impact of significant legislation and judicial precedents in formally perpetuating systemic oppression. [6.29.11.16(A)(2)(d)]
- Examine the impact of historical, cultural, economic, political, religious, and social factors, which resulted in unequal power relations among identity groups. [6.29.11.16(E)(2)(b)]
- Analyze the patterns of colonization, exploration, destruction and creation that came with the occupation of the Americas by Spaniards. [6.29.11.15(D)(3)(c)]
- Examine United States imperialist policies and practices. [6.29.11.21(B)(1)(e)]
- Brainstorm ways in which New Mexicans might heal from past and current injustices. [6.29.11.15(E)(8)]
- Evaluate the role of race and racism in the acts of land redistribution during the territorial period. [6.29.11.20(D)(4)(b)]
- Describe how white supremacist organizations in the U.S. arose with the intention of maintaining the oppression of specific groups through informal institutions. Of course, no reference is made in any standard regarding the violence and intimidation provided by radical left groups like Antifa, Black Lives Matter, Weather Underground, The Earth Liberation Front, etc. [6.29.11.16(D)(5)(a)]
- Examine the short and long-term effects of CIA involvement in Latin America, yet there is no requirement to explain to students how communist rule in Cuba has been negatively impacting that country for decades. [6.29.11.21(B)(1)(p)]
- Evaluate the role of McCarthyism on the civil rights movement. [6.29.11.21(B)(1)(t)]
- Analyze major trends, issues, and advances to address healthcare disparities in the past, present, and future. [6.29.11.21(B)(1)(aa)]
- Analyze the current state and health of American democracy. [6.29.11.21(B)(4)(k)]
- Analyze US government policies to reduce climate disruption. [6.29.11.21(B)(4)(o)]
- Using economic data to evaluate the positive and negative aspects of American capitalism in relation to other economic systems. [6.29.11.18(A)(2)(e)]

Of course, we fully realize PED’s leadership has and will continue to deny that CRT is present in any of these final social studies standards or that there is a bias towards a progressive/liberal agenda. However, the continual inclusion of various words and phrases, such as “inequity,” “oppression,” “unequal power relations”, “racism,” and “injustice” are implicit admissions by PED that these final standards do echo CRT and its flawed vision of America.

As mentioned earlier, we intend to actively oppose these final standards and will encourage our local boards of education to adopt K-12 social studies curriculums and educational materials that are consistent with New Mexico morals and values, not the CRT and progressive/liberal tenets embedded within these final standards. There is nearly 18 months until the start of the 2023-2024 school year, and we will utilize that time to educate all New Mexicans about how these final K-12 social studies standards fail to provide our students with an opportunity to learn about the fundamental principles on

which our republic was founded, as well as failing to give a respectful appreciation of our country's history and political and economic systems.

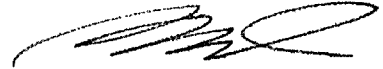
Respectfully yours,



James G. Townsend
House Republican Leader



Rod Montoya
House Republican Whip



Rebecca Dow
Caucus Chair

cc: NM School Superintendents' Association
NM School Boards Association