

The Making of California's History-Social Science Standards: Enduring Decisions and Unresolved Issues

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ON OCTOBER 16, 1995, California officially adopted standards-based reforms for public education when Republican Governor Pete Wilson signed into law Assembly Bill 265, the Leroy Greene California Assessment of Academic Achievement Act. The legislation called for a new state system of standards-based tests and created the Academic Standards Commission to develop content and performance standards for math, English-language arts, science, and history-social science. Once adopted, standards would serve as the basis for state tests, textbooks, professional development, and curriculum frameworks.

Over the course of three years, and after two extended deadlines, the Academic Standards Commission fulfilled its charge of creating content standards for each subject. The twenty-one member group split into subject area sub-committees to develop, as directed by law, standards in math and English-language arts first, followed by science and history-social science. Political appointments to the commission led to protracted, pedagogical battles over the math standards and charged debates that almost derailed the Science Committee. By comparison, the adoption of the history standards

proved less contentious. The nine members of the History-Social Science Committee met nine times between November 1997 and June 1998 to draft the standards. On July 1, the committee presented a final draft of the history standards to the larger Academic Standards Commission. After some final revisions, the State Board of Education officially adopted *The History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools* on October 1, 1998.

Today, over fifteen years removed from their adoption, California's history standards remain intact and unchanged, relics of the Goals 2000 era of standards setting. California's Education Code mandates the revision of state curriculum frameworks every seven years; however, no protocol exists for updating the content standards. Even after adopting the Common Core Standards, which focus on math and English-language arts but include history-social science literacy standards, the state continues to use the *History-Social Science Content Standards* to "encourage the highest achievement of every student, by defining the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level."¹

To describe the California history standards as influential understates the impact they have made on the teaching and learning of history. The scope and sequence of the history content defined in the standards has driven the development of curriculum frameworks and materials, textbook adoptions, and assessments in California since 1998. Open any textbook in the state and you are likely to see one of standards in a sidebar to indicate alignment. Sample unit and lesson plans in schools and districts from Sacramento to Los Angeles and you will find relevant standards identified somewhere between objectives and materials. Further, from 2001 to 2013, the California Department of Education (CDE) helped leverage the implementation of the standards with the California Standards Tests for History-Social Science. During this time, over 17 million students took these multiple-choice tests to demonstrate their knowledge of the history standards. Most recently, the CDE has incorporated the standards, as they were written in 1998, into the new draft of the *History-Social Science Framework* currently under review.

Despite their impact and staying power, relatively little has been written about the California history standards. Much of the literature comes from the Fordham Foundation. In February 2011, Fordham released the latest in its series of reports on state history standards,

this time focused on standards for U.S. history. As it had in 2000, 2003, and 2006, the report upheld California's standards as "models to be emulated by the rest of the nation's school systems."² The authors awarded the standards high marks for "rigor," "clarity," and "specificity," and upheld their focus on chronological history and lack of bias. "Most states," the report concluded, "would be well advised to consult the efforts of California, a state that has been at the forefront of the history-standards movement for decades."³

The efforts of California in developing history standards, however, remain largely overlooked. Brief analysis of this process appeared in a report commissioned by the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation (CSE) in 1999 to examine the "democratic nature" of the Academic Standards Commission. The authors concluded that the history standards "were prepared with little controversy" because members of the History Committee accepted the state's popular *History-Social Science Framework* (1988) as a guide to their work and that, unlike the Academic Standard Commission's other sub-committees, there were "no major differences in curricular philosophy" between committee members.⁴ Journalist Joanne Jacobs echoed these conclusions in her cursory, and celebratory, account of the history standards that appeared in the 2006 edition of the Fordham Foundation's "State of State Standards" report.⁵ Relying on a few interviews with committee members, Jacobs described the history committee as "tranquil" and concluded that "they did their best to find a teachable balance [of content], and finished without igniting a history war."⁶

For a document as enduring as the *History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools*, these characterizations fall short. They are incomplete at best, and superficial and misleading at worst. In this article, I provide an account of the how the California history standards were created that, in many respects, runs counter to what has been written about this process. Focusing on the work of the Academic Standards Commission's History-Social Science Committee and the small group of consultants who drafted the standards between November 1997 and July 1998, I chronicle many of the questions and decisions that drove the development of the standards. This narrative challenges claims that the standards were developed by consensus, with little debate, and with considerable public oversight. Rather, I detail a process with clear winners and losers and show how a small handful of consultants and politically

appointed committee members—none of them history educators—navigated charged political and pedagogical issues, often below the public’s radar, to determine the content of the standards. Further, I highlight unresolved issues regarding the content, organization, scope and sequence, and assessment of the California history standards that continue to impact history-social studies education in California and the rest of the country today.

This work builds upon research on standards-based reforms conducted over the past twenty years—in particular, work focused on the California curriculum reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, the ill-fated National History Standards of 1994, and the history education reform movement that emerged in the wake of *A Nation at Risk*.⁷ Further, unlike extant accounts of the California history standards, this portrait is drawn primarily from a rich archive of materials on the work of the History-Social Science Committee located in the state archives: detailed minutes from all nine committee meetings; six different drafts of the history standards; memos from the writing team and committee members; over sixty “expert reviews” of different drafts; full transcripts of five public hearings regarding the history standards; lists of edits made by the State Board of Education; and newspaper coverage from around the state. Additionally, I conducted several interviews with committee members and state department employees that inform this paper’s analysis. Interviews focused on the issues surrounding the creation of the history standards and the decision-making process.

The Academic Standards Commission’s History-Social Science Committee

The Assessment of Academic Achievement Act of 1995 marked a sea change for education policy in California. The legislation was part of a “back to basics” education initiative spearheaded by Republican lawmakers who took control of the State Assembly in 1994. Prior to standards, curriculum frameworks—developed largely within the Department of Education by teachers—provided the basis for aligning assessments and instructional materials. State frameworks, however, came under fire in the wake of the ill-fated California Learning Assessment System (CLAS), which featured performance assessments. Governor Wilson vetoed the reauthorization of CLAS in September 1994 after only two years of implementation. The veto

resulted, in large part, from the spirited opposition of conservative groups critical of the language arts assessment's multicultural content and focus on students' personal beliefs in addition to charges that the CLAS tests lacked sufficient reliability.⁸ As a result, the Academic Achievement Act limited the power of the Department of Education and asserted the authority of the Governor and State Board of Education in developing standards and standards-based assessments.

These larger political changes were manifest in the Academic Standards Commission. For one, the commission worked independently from the Department of Education and answered directly to the State Board. Further, Governor Wilson appointed twelve members to the commission, whereas State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin, a Democrat and no friend of Wilson, appointed six. The state legislature appointed the remaining members. Only five teachers, working and retired, served on the commission, which consisted primarily of academics, consultants, administrators, and members of the business community.

The nine-member History-Social Science Committee was an eclectic mix and, notably, did not include any history educators. Three members were academics: Eastin appointees Robert Calfee, a psychologist from the School of Education at Stanford University; and Raymund Paredes, an English professor at UCLA; and Wilson appointee Jerry Treadway, a literacy specialist teaching at San Diego State University. Education consultant Judy Coddling was the third and final Eastin appointment on the committee. Coddling, a former principal and, at the time, director of the National Alliance for Restructuring Education, had worked with state and local education systems in developing standards and assessments. Other members of the committee appointed by Wilson included Judith Panton, co-founder and director of Del Mar Pines Elementary school in Southern California; Alice Petrossian, a former elementary school teacher and President of the California Community College Board of Governors; and LaTanya Wright, a mother of three who homeschooled her children and was a member of the Separation of School and State Alliance. The only teacher on the committee was senate-appointed Kate Simpson, a multiple-subject sixth-grade teacher from Sacramento. Intellectual property attorney Lawrence Siskind, who had worked in President Reagan's Justice Department, served as the chair of the committee.

At the History Committee's first meeting, Siskind proposed that education consultant Sue Pimentel work as the lead writer for the history standards. Pimentel, a co-founder of StandardsWork based in Virginia and the "Senior Standards Adviser" to the Standards Commission, had assumed a similar role for the language arts committee. Pimentel held a J.D. and a B.S. in early childhood education, both from Cornell. She had worked as a policy advisor to Maryland Governor William Schaefer and as a special counsel to the Superintendent of Public Schools in Prince George's County. Siskind nominated Pimentel based upon her work developing the language arts standards, and after the Standards Commission received only one other proposal—deemed inadequate—to write the history standards. Ellen Clark, a colleague of Pimentel assisted in developing drafts of the standards along with Sheila Byrd, a commission staff employee.

The Academic Standards Commission set an ambitious schedule for the adoption of the history-social science and science standards. Faced with a January 1, 1998 deadline to finish all of its work, the commission planned to develop the history and science standards in eight months, between November 1997 and July 1998. The commission scheduled eight monthly concurrent meetings for the history and science committees during this time. The plan was to approve first drafts of both standards documents by each committee's sixth meeting on April 1, to then distribute the drafts for expert review, and conduct a first round of public hearings across the state between April 28 and May 1. The writing teams would incorporate comments into second drafts followed by another round of public hearings at the end of May. The committees were to finalize a draft during their closing to present for approval by the full Academic Standards Commission on July 1. After making any necessary final edits, the commission planned to submit final drafts of the history and science standards to the State Board of Education on August 1, 1998.

Getting Started

The first meeting of the History Committee began with a presentation by Ellen Clark on the state's graduation requirements for history education. Since 1983, as mandated by the landmark Hughes-Hart education reform act, California has required that students take three years of history-social science education, along

with one semester of economics and one semester of government or civics in order to graduate from high school. The conversation turned quickly to the 1987 *History-Social Science Framework*.

Unlike other state frameworks, the *History-Social Science Framework* was, as Lawrence Siskind noted, highly regarded by teachers, administrators, and policymakers. The framework, written in large part by Diane Ravitch and Charlotte Crabtree, an education professor at UCLA, marked an early and impressive victory for the history education reform movement that emerged in the wake of *A Nation at Risk* (1983). It was the first state curriculum to place history at the center of the social sciences and detailed, through narrative course descriptions, a common course of study for all students in California.

In a survey conducted by the Academic Standards Commission, school districts across the state gave the *History-Social Science Framework* favorable ratings and reported following its scope and sequence for their history programs: California history in fourth grade; American history in grades five, eight, and eleven; world history in grades six, seven, and ten; an elective in ninth grade, and government and economics in twelfth. Based upon this evidence, the History Committee decided to use the framework as a foundation for developing standards.

One of Sue Pimentel's first assignments was to identify and report on "the best resources" for developing standards. By 1998, twenty-six states had developed either history or social studies standards.⁹ Moreover, voluntary national standards had been developed for history, civics, and geography. Pimentel focused on the Massachusetts and Virginia standards and, at the second committee meeting, presented a chart comparing the grade level sequence of topics in each state document with that of the California framework. The former, she claimed, combined good depth and complexity, while the latter was strong in content and had an easy to use format.¹⁰ Siskind suggested that Pimentel create a preliminary standards draft combining the basic structure of the framework with the "content of Virginia and Massachusetts standards," while continuing to gather resources.¹¹

The selection of the Virginia and Massachusetts standards as models for the History Committee was an early indication of how California's standards would develop. Both documents were history

centered—products of the same history reform movement that had created the 1987 *History-Social Science Framework*. And, both developed in the fall-out over the National History Standards. Conservatives including Lynn Cheney and Rush Limbaugh attacked the standards as too multicultural and overly focused on the darker chapters of American history. Virginia’s *History and Social Science Standards of Learning* provided a more traditional, western-centered narrative than the National Standards—one characterized by consensus and progress.

The History Committee’s lack of public discussion of the National History Standards was to some extent by design. During the committee’s first two meetings, as noted in meeting minutes, Lawrence Siskind acknowledged “turbulence surrounding the work of the Commission” and expressed his confidence that the committee could avoid the rancor that marred the math adoption.¹² The group, now almost two years into their service on the Academic Standards Commission, shared Siskind’s desire. Members agreed to identify and work constructively through controversial issues. However, political and pedagogical differences did remain between committee members and were evident throughout the committee’s work. At the end of first meeting, for example, Raymond Paredes suggested the committee hear from Gary Nash, who ran the National History Center at UCLA and played a primary role in creating the National Standards. LaTanya Wright followed Paredes by recommending that John Fonte address the committee. Fonte, a member of the American Institute of Research, had served on Lynne Cheney’s Committee to Review the National Standards and had authored a report excoriating Nash’s history standards. Siskind questioned the worth of hearing from either Nash or Fonte and rejected both suggestions. In avoiding what promised political and pedagogical debate, Siskind set a precedent for keeping potentially controversial voices out of committee meetings. Both Nash and Fonte, however, would end up contributing to the standards in ways less visible to the public.

Preliminary Drafts

By early January, Pimentel’s team had completed a first “preliminary draft” of the content standards. As she noted, the forty-

one page document followed the framework's course sequence and used the Massachusetts and Virginia standards to fill in content for elementary grades. For grades four through twelve, the drafting team relied heavily on the framework for content, but also referenced standards from Massachusetts, Virginia, New York, Washington D.C., and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to "benchmark" the draft. The Virginia standards served as a model for formatting the draft. Each grade level included between seven and thirteen primary standards defining the major topics and concepts to study, along with several bullet points elaborating on content related to each standard. Grade level standards were organized primarily by chronology. Most of them related to historical topics; some grades, however, included separate geography, economics, civics, and historical analysis standards.

Presenting the draft to the committee, Pimentel explained that Paul Gagnon had contributed several comments and suggestions. Gagnon, a French historian at the University of Massachusetts Boston and principal author of the Bradley Commission Report (1988), was enthusiastic about the draft. He endorsed the format and content, but stressed that teachers "should not have to think that they must treat all bullets with equal emphasis." With this in mind, Gagnon suggested adding even more details for each main standard to help teachers "make judgments for the design of their courses and lessons more easily."¹³ He cautioned, however, that any assessment tied to the standards focus explicitly on the main standards, so that teachers did not feel compelled to cover all bullet points.

The committee's discussion of the preliminary draft focused on the progression of topics, rather than specific content. Robert Calfee raised the issue of "developmentally appropriate" material. He questioned the seventh-grade curriculum, in particular, which like the framework covered world history from 500 C.E. to 1789, and suggested an alternative sequence where students study U.S. history in sixth and seventh grade and then focus on modern world history in eighth grade. Committee members followed with a flurry of suggestions for alternative sequencing. Citing the framework's lack of alignment with AP courses, Judy Coddington recommended devoting ninth and tenth grade to world history and eleventh and twelfth to U.S. history; Kate Simpson suggested studying U.S. history in eighth and ninth grade; Judith Pantan encouraged including California

history as part of the eighth-grade curriculum; Raymond Paredes recommended an entirely different approach, creating thematic, interdisciplinary standards. A majority of committee members recommended eliminating the ninth-grade elective. Overall, the committee agreed that sequencing should be “logical,” but did not reach consensus over what logic should guide their decision making process. Ultimately, the writing team either rejected or ignored the committee’s suggestions for alternative sequencing models.¹⁴

Between January and the end of March, Pimentel presented three additional, “preliminary” drafts of the content standards to the History Committee. The basic structure and scope of the standards remained unchanged throughout these drafts. The writing team, however, made dozens of edits: moving, splitting, combining, adding, and eliminating standards; revising the wording of the document; and adding and eliminating people, events, verbs, and skills to the bullet points under each standard.

Many of the changes made to the preliminary drafts of the standards appear to have originated as suggestions solicited from a variety of content experts and educational organizations. In the Second Preliminary Draft, for example, the drafting team added several civics and economic standards across grade levels based upon the comments of Charles Bahmueller, the founder of the Center for Civics Education and co-author of the National Civics Standards, and Jim Charkins, the executive director of the California Council of Economics Education.¹⁵ Bahmueller and Charkins’ suggestions resulted in new and revised standards for the twelfth-grade government and economics sequence, along with additional, main standards in fourth, eighth, and eleventh grade.

Diane Ravitch critiqued the Second Preliminary Draft of the standards. Ravitch endorsed the draft, referring to it as “superb” and even “the best and most coherent in the nation.” Ravitch’s only suggestions were to add Greek myths and biographies about “important men and women” to the elementary grades, and to “acknowledge the important role of Ronald Reagan in hastening the collapse of the USSR, the end of the Cold War and the advance of freedom in the world.”¹⁶ Additionally, Ravitch recommended more emphasis on India in the sixth grade. The writing team applied elements of all Ravitch’s suggestions to the Third Preliminary Draft of the standards.

The California Council for the Social Studies (CCSS) was one of the organizations that influenced the preliminary drafting of the standards. The CCSS submitted two response papers that included grade-by-grade analysis of the drafts and recommendations for edits and additions. Overall, the reports were positive—particularly about the eighth-, tenth-, and eleventh-grade standards. However, the CCSS claimed that several standards and concepts in the sixth- and seventh-grade curriculum were too advanced and questioned whether the seventh-grade sequence was “doable in the single academic year.”¹⁷ As they would with other reviews, the writing team implemented some of the CCSS’s recommendations and rejected others. For example, they eliminated a bullet point in standard 6.4 that called for students to analyze and compare “the patterns of social and political interaction in Athens and Sparta” after the CCSS questioned the “developmental appropriateness” of the standard for sixth graders. The CCSS made a similar claim about a seventh-grade standard where, in studying Medieval Europe, students would “analyze the connection in Europe of feudalism to the origin of government by contract.”¹⁸ In this case, however, the writers retained the bullet point.

When presenting *Preliminary Draft #3* to the History Committee, Pimentel noted that her team’s edits were, in part, responses to “comments from Diane Ravitch, the CA Council for the Social Studies and other groups.”¹⁹ One of these “other groups” was the Council for Islamic Education (CIE). Founded in 1990 and based in Southern California, the CIE employs Muslim and secular academics to review education materials for world history. The CIE presents itself as a mainstream organization. Critics (including Diane Ravitch), however, have questioned the group for political advocacy. By not mentioning the Council’s recommendations, Pimentel, similar to Siskind’s decision against inviting Nash and Fonte to speak, steered the history committee away from a potentially polarizing series of issues and debates.

The CIE issued two twenty-page, single-spaced critiques of the sixth-, seventh-, and tenth-grade standards. These were the most detailed and critical reviews of the standards drafts. The CIE called into question the basic organization and format of the standards, which they claimed offered “a set of purported facts and fixed interpretations that are to be absorbed without question.” The

reports criticized the Western focus of the standards for neglecting other parts of the world, and also for providing shallow treatment of Western Civilizations. Overall, they dismissed the standards as “topically and chronologically disjointed...haphazard...and downright eccentric in places.”²⁰ The writing team overlooked most of the CIE’s criticisms. They did, however, appear to make several edits based upon the Council’s suggestions. These included re-ordering the bulleted sub-standards in the sixth and seventh grade to place them in chronological order and re-wording parts of standards. The Council’s most direct contribution came to the seventh-grade standard on Islam in the Middle Ages. The writing team adopted most of the Council’s suggestions for the standard, in some instances, almost word-for-word (**Figure 1**). The only part of standard 7.2 not suggested or endorsed by the CIE was the reference to “military conquests” in 7.2.4. The Council wrote a three-page, single-spaced rebuke of the sub-standard and provided an alternative. The writers, however, did not take up the suggestion.²¹

Throughout the drafting process, the Academic Standards Commission met in conjunction with the science and history committees. Committee chairs presented updates to the full commission on committee work. Siskind made his first report to the commission at the February meeting, briefly stating that the History-Social Science Committee was making good progress. Commission members then commented on the draft standards. Judy Codding again questioned the coherence of the American history sequence split across fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade and Raymund Paredes stated the standards should be aligned with standards in other subjects, primarily English-language arts. Although the commission had the power to make changes to the content standards, they refrained from making any specific recommendations for the history standards until their final meeting on July 1.

The History-Social Science Committee made relatively few contributions to the standards’ initial drafts as well. Throughout their first five meetings, most of the committee’s discussions focused on broad, organizational matters. Committee members raised several issues—the length, complexity, and flexibility of the standards, the need to avoid ideological biases, and the balance between content and skill—but made few specific decisions regarding the content of the standards. The committee did agree with Judy Codding that

First Preliminary Draft ²²	Final Committee Draft ²³
<p>7.1: Students describe and analyze the conditions and forces for change and continuity in the development of the Arab civilization between the seventh and tenth centuries, with emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the origin, traditions, customs, beliefs, and spread of Islam; the life of Mohammed; and the influence on daily life in the region, the code of ethics, and rule of law • the expansion of the Arab Empire, including the conquered areas and policy toward conquered peoples • geographic and economic significance of the trade routes between Asia and Europe • the influence of geography on the economic, social, and political development of the empire through the Middle East, through North and sub-Saharan Africa, to Spain, and east through Persia to India and Indonesia 	<p>7.2: Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of civilizations of Islam in the middle ages, in terms of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>the physical features and climate of the Arabian peninsula, its relationship to surrounding bodies of land and water and the relationship between nomadic and sedentary ways of life</i> 2. <i>the origins of Islam and the life and teachings of Mohammed</i> 3. <i>the significance of the Qur’an and the Sunnah as the primary sources of Islamic beliefs, practice and law, and their influence in Muslim’s daily life</i> 4. <i>the expansion of Muslim rule through military conquests and treaties, emphasizing the cultural blending within Muslim civilization and the spread of Islam and the Arabic language</i> 5. <i>the growth of cities and the trade routes created among Asia, Africa, and Europe and the products and inventions that traveled along these routes (e.g., spices, textiles, paper, steel, new crops)</i> 6. <i>the intellectual exchanges among Muslim scholars of Eurasia and Africa and the contributions Muslim scholars made to later civilizations in the areas of science, geography, mathematics, philosophy, medicine, art, and literature</i>

Figure 1: Edits made to Standard 7.2 (in italics) suggested by the Council of Islamic Education (CIE).²⁴

the preliminary draft was “too knowledge based” and should focus more on “skills.” They recommended, therefore, that the writing team add verbs to all bulleted points under the main standards.²⁵

Early on in the committee’s work, LaTanya Wright suggested that the group determine a system for deciding what constitutes “essential content.” Later, she urged the committee to establish, as noted in meeting minutes, some “criteria for cutting content from the standards.”²⁶ According to members of the committee, however, there was no agreed upon, consistent procedure for making changes to preliminary drafts. Sometimes, the committee voted on decisions; often, they did not. Ultimately, the writing committee made most of the edits and additions. In order to allow the committee to track changes, they underlined additions and redacted the cuts made to drafts of the standards.

In order to prepare an official draft for the first round of public hearings, the History Committee scheduled its sixth meeting to take place over the first two days of April. The agenda called for a comprehensive, grade-by-grade review of the Fourth Preliminary Draft of the content standards. Committee members discussed a range of topics, but limited their decisions to a few additions and small edits to the standards. For example, Raymond Paredes suggested that Marianno Guadalupe Vallejo be added to standard 4.3’s list of people to study in order to understand the effect of the Gold Rush on California, a list that already included John Sutter, Sam Brannan, and Phoebe Aperson Hearst. During public comment, Priscilla Porter, a history professor at California State University, Dominguez Hills, recommended the re-insertion of Abigail Adams and the cutting of Molly Pitcher, in standard 5.4’s analysis of “role of individuals” in the Revolutionary War. The committee also recommended numbering the bullet points under each main standard to help focus public comments and reviews. The writing team made all four changes.

Part of the History Committee’s opening day meeting involved a discussion on the Analysis/Skills standards. Throughout the drafting process, the writing team had stripped these standards of content. The committee debated whether or not to keep them at the end of each grade level, move them to the beginning, or integrate them throughout the content standards. Without making a decision, the conversation quickly turned to the topic of verbs used in the content standards. Pimentel noted that, in line with the

committee's suggestion, she had attempted to eliminate the verbs "identify" and "define," as they implied lower-level thinking skills. She pointed out that the most common verbs in the draft were "describe," "explain," and "analyze."²⁷ Highlighting the subjectivity of verb/skill taxonomies, Raymond Paredes added that he associated "describe" and "explain" with "rote learning" and preferred the verbs "consider" and "examine."²⁸

The committee concluded the April 1 meeting by discussing the issue of flexibility in the world history sequence. Committee members agreed to allow for some choice in the tenth grade, modifying standard 10.4 to read, "Students analyze patterns of global change in the era of western nationalism and imperialism in at least two of the following countries: Africa, Southeast Asia, China, India, Latin America, and the Philippines."²⁹ The next day, however, they split over a similar element of choice in the sixth- and seventh-grade curriculum. The committee was unable to decide whether to include more content and allow for teachers and schools to decide what to focus on, or to scale back on content, with the assumption that teachers and students would cover all of the information in the standards.

The History Committee's limited and inconsistent decision making during these meetings was due, in part, to sporadic attendance. Only four members, less than half of the full committee, attended the meetings: Panton, Paredes, Petrossian, and Treadway on the first day; and, Calfee, Paredes, Simpson, and Treadway on the second. In fact, meeting attendance was uneven throughout the development process. Not one of the History Committee meetings was fully attended; and, most drew five or fewer members. It appears that, having served on the Standards Commission for over two years—traveling from throughout the state to Sacramento on a near monthly basis—committee members were suffering from standards fatigue. As Robert Calfee recalled, by the time the commission turned its attention to history, members were "getting tired."³⁰ Sparse attendance may have restricted the decision making power of the committee, but it also facilitated the process by minimizing debate. Having worked through its agenda, the committee was able to hold the second day of the meeting to a brief, two-hour morning session.

The History Committee's limited actions on the standards mirrored that of the larger Academic Standards Commission. Throughout the development process, the science and performance standards

pushed history-social science to the back of the full commission's agenda. Disputes over selecting a contractor sidetracked the Science Committee and consumed much the full commission's attention. Debate over performance standards also proved time-consuming. Faced with pending deadlines, the commission focused on different options for developing performance standards. This led to heated discussions that further diminished time spent on history standards. The history standards were not discussed at all during the commission's March meeting. At the April meeting, Alice Petrossian, filling in for Siskind, provided a brief overview of the History Committee's work, followed by a short discussion where commissioner Judith Panton applauded the rigor of the preliminary draft, but questioned whether the standards were "reasonable and attainable." She recommended that "experts in childhood development" review future drafts.³¹ According to meeting minutes, Panton's comments were the only remarks made regarding history standards at full commission meetings between February and May.

First and Second Official Drafts

On April 6, after four preliminary drafts, the Academic Standards Commission released the first official draft of the *History-Social Science Content Standards* to the public. The commission asked 118 people to review the draft. Of this group, sixty-two agreed, and forty actually wrote reviews, although only twenty-five were submitted by the requested deadline of April 20.³² The commission also scheduled four public hearings across the state to allow for public comment on the science and history standards between the April 28 and May 1. In all, sixty-three people publicly commented on the history-social science standards at these meetings.

Public comments and expert reviews of the draft were mixed. Of the twenty-three critiques submitted to the Standards Commission, twelve were very positive. Endorsements came largely from conservative academics who had led the attack on the National History Standards. Walter McDougall, John Fonte, and Sheldon Stern, for example, all enthusiastically supported the draft. Many of these reviews reiterated arguments surrounding the National Standards debate. McDougall, a professor of European diplomacy at the University of Pennsylvania who had blasted the National

Standards,³³ commended the draft for its “excellent balance... between a concentration on the origins and evolution of American government and society, and an explanation of how other world cultures have evolved over time.” He warned against modifying too much of what he considered a strong draft.³⁴ Fonte echoed these sentiments, but called for even more focus on Western civilizations. Sheldon Stern offered “kudos to the authors of the standards” for mentioning the slave trade amongst Sub-Saharan Civilizations in the sixth-grade standards, noting that “the national standards left out ‘slaves’ in a pathetic politically correct distortion of African history before the European slave trade.”³⁵

Gary Nash, on the other hand, found the first draft of the standards “very defective.” He claimed that the standards “were out of date” and appeared developed by “persons not well-read in the last forty or fifty years of historical scholarship...and from the vantage point of someone not acquainted with California or the West.” Focusing on the American sequence, Nash contended that the standards were “deeply marred by inattention to Native American, Asian American, and Hispanic American history.” He also argued that the treatment of African Americans and women throughout the document was lacking and concluded that “these standards ignore the attempts of the *California History Social-Science Framework* to provide a more multicultural curriculum that is relevant to the lives of the state’s public school students.”³⁶

While most expert reviews came from academics, speakers at the public hearings were primarily district administrators, teachers, and parents. Few people at these meetings fully endorsed or rejected the standards. Most offered suggestions for content to add. However, the two most common criticisms were that the standards contained too much content and that they did not include enough minority and non-western perspectives. Some found the standards rigorous, while others, primarily teachers, questioned their developmental appropriateness—the third most-frequent criticism heard at public hearings.³⁷

On May 6, the History-Social Science Committee met to discuss critiques of the draft standards. Siskind and Pimentel opened the meeting by introducing questions raised at the public hearings for the committee to address. These included: Was there too much material in the standards? Should the committee include review standards

at the beginning of each grade? Was geography properly integrated throughout the standards? Should there be more California history? How should skill standards be presented? Should there be more emphasis on religion? Were civil rights adequately addressed? Was the treatment of Native Americans adequate? In addition, how should the committee determine which examples to include in the document?³⁸

Once again, sparse attendance limited the committee's range of discussion and decisions. Only four of nine members attended the meeting: Siskind, Paredes, Simpson, and Wright. The group, moreover, addressed some but not all of the questions that Siskind and Pimentel raised in a meeting lasting less than two hours. Rather than determine specific content to cut, the committee recommended "eliminating any redundancies" in the standards. Siskind suggested adding a statement to the introduction stressing that the "lists of exemplars"—usually appearing in parentheses within the sub-standards—were "illustrative, not exclusive." Moreover, the committee decided to insert "e.g." rather than "i.e." before these lists in order to convey the suggestive nature of the content (**Figure 2**).

Acknowledging the trade-off between inclusiveness and manageability, Siskind introduced the topic of diversity by recommending that "for every piece of content added, something needs to be removed."³⁹ Committee suggestions, however, only involved a few additions. Both Paredes and Siskind suggested that contributions of African Americans be added to the eighth-grade standards on the Civil War and Western Expansion and LaTanya Wright urged a greater emphasis on religious issues throughout the standards. Just before concluding the meeting, Siskind recommended, and the three other committee members agreed, that the analysis standards should appear throughout the document in "spans" rather than "grade-by-grade."⁴⁰

The writing team applied most of Siskind, Paredes, and Wright's suggestions to the second draft of the standards. These additions, however, were a small fraction of the changes the writers made to the first draft. Most of their revisions appear to have come from expert reviews of the standards, and were never discussed by the History-Social Science Committee, or the full Academic Standards Commission. While some "expert reviewers" contributed more than others, the writing team incorporated at least one suggestion

8.8.3: drawing from biographies, journals, and diaries and other original documents, describe the role of pioneer women and the new status that western women achieved (e.g., Sacagawea, Annie Bidwell, slave women gaining freedom in the west, Wyoming granting suffrage to women in 1869)⁴¹

Figure 2: Example of “Exemplars” list in the second draft of the standards.

from most of the reviews that the Commission received and balanced revisions across the political spectrum. In line with recommendations from Gary Nash, for example, they developed two new primary standards for the eighth grade focused on African and Native Americans along with sub-standards on “federal Indian policy” and the labor movement during the Industrial Era.⁴² The team also made several edits that mirrored recommendations by John Fonte. They created, for example, a new opening standard in seventh grade on the Roman Empire, which included a sub-standard on Orthodox Christianity; they also added a sub-standard on the Reconquista to the Medieval Europe standard and noted in standard 7.2 that the expansion of Muslim rule during the Middle Ages happened “through military conquests,” which, as previously mentioned, drew strong rebuke from the Council for Islamic Education.⁴³ In the eleventh grade, the writing team included a sub-standard on the Americanization movement, after Fonte suggested that “students should understand the success of the Americanization policy when studying the large scale immigration of this period.” In his rationale for this addition, Fonte added, “perhaps nothing illustrates the success of the 20th century Americanization movement more than American unity in World War II, when Japanese-Americans, Italian-Americans, German-Americans, Hungarian-Americans fought shoulder to shoulder with other Americans against the Axis powers.”⁴⁴

One of the biggest changes between the first two drafts of the standards was the addition and editing of religious content. The writing team added primary standards on religion in fifth, eighth, tenth, and eleventh grade. The new opening standard in tenth grade, for example, read, “Students understand the moral and ethical principles in ancient Greek philosophy, in Judaism and Christianity,

relating their influence on the development of democratic thought.”⁴⁵ Moreover, they cut standard 11.2 on the development of the American monetary system and replaced it with “Students analyze the important role that religion played in the founding of America, its lasting social and political impact, and issues regarding religion and free exercise of religion.”⁴⁶

For standards on Christianity, Pimentel’s team appear to have been influenced, in part, by recommendations submitted from David Barton, the former Vice-President of the Texas Republican Party and founder of WallBuilders—an organization focused on promoting history that depicts the United States as a Christian nation. In line with one of Barton’s comments, the writing team added the descriptor “divinely bestowed unalienable” to sub-standard 11.1.2 in describing “the natural rights philosophy of the founding founders.” Further they revised standard 7.10.1, which mentioned “Jewish and Muslim science” as “roots of the Scientific Revolution,” to read “Jewish, Christian, and Muslim science.”⁴⁷ Barton’s influence can also be seen in standard 8.1, crafted for the second draft of the standards, which read, “Students understand the major events preceding the founding of the nation and relate their significance to the development of American democratic institutions founded in Judeo-Christian thinking and English parliamentary traditions.”⁴⁸

The team also incorporated most of the seventeen suggestions submitted by the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco (JCRC). Founded in the 1940s, the JCRC belongs to a network of advocacy groups under the larger Jewish Council for Public Affairs. Jackie Berman, the group’s Education Specialist, submitted recommendations primarily aimed at the sixth-, seventh-, and tenth-grade standards. “Most of our requested changes,” Berman pointed out, “are for the purpose of inserting a Jewish dimension by adding a word or phrase to the existing material.” The council was also interested in modifying the sixth-grade standard on Ancient Hebrews “for the purpose of a more accurate portrayal of early Judaism.”⁴⁹ The writing team applied the JCRC’s suggestion almost word-for-word in re-writing standard 6.3 (**Figure 3**).

From the remaining expert reviews, the writers adopted various suggestions for editing the standards, some with clearly defined rationales, others without. For example, they followed Joy Hakim’s advice to add “Jefferson’s Statute for Religious Freedom” to the

First Draft ⁵⁰	Second Draft ⁵¹
<p><u>Ancient Hebrews</u></p> <p>Therefore, students:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. explain the significance of Judaism as a monotheistic religion 2. draw from ethical teachings and the Torah to explain the ancient Hebrew’s concepts of wisdom, righteousness, law, and justice (e.g., the Commandments, Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Naomi, David, psalms, and proverbs) 3. explain the settlements and movements of Hebrew peoples, including movement to and from Egypt 4. explain the significance of Exodus story to the Hebrew and later people in history 5. explain how the Hebrew traditions are reflected in the moral and ethical traditions of Western civilization 	<p>Ancient Hebrews</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. explain the origins and significance of Judaism as <i>the first monotheistic religion that developed the concept of one God who sets down moral laws for humankind</i> 2. <i>describe the sources of the ethical teachings and central beliefs of Judaism (the Hebrew Bible and the Commentaries) and explain the belief in God, observance of law, practice of concepts of righteousness and justice, and importance of study</i> 3. explain how Abraham, Moses, Ruth, Naomi, David, <i>and Johanan ben Zacai influenced the development of the Jewish religion</i> 4. locate and explain the settlements and movements of Hebrew peoples, <i>including the Exodus, the movement to and from Egypt and the significance of the Exodus experience to the Jewish people as well as to other people in history</i> 5. explain how <i>the ideas of the Hebrew traditions are reflected in the moral and ethical traditions of Western civilization</i> 6. <i>explain how the practice of the Jewish religion was modified after the destruction of the second Temple in 70A.D., and describe the dispersion of the Jewish population from Jerusalem and the land of Israel</i>

Figure 3: Edits made to Standard 6.3 (in italics) suggested by the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC).

eighth-grade standard on the Constitution after Hakim justified the inclusion by pointing out that “Bernard Bailyn—Harvard’s great American historian—has called it ‘the most important document in American history, bar none.’” The writing team also included “Robert Elliot’s speech before Congress” in standard 8.4.2’s list of famous speeches, which Hakim simply stated that “every student should know.”⁵² In a move that would later prove controversial, the team added “explain the significance of the Aryan invasions” to the sixth-grade standard on India as recommended, without a rationale, by Stanley Burstein, a history professor at California State University, Los Angeles.⁵³

One of the goals for the second draft of the standards was to solicit recommendations for how to organize the sixth- and seventh-grade content. In order to draw attention to the issue, the writing team included a note at the beginning of each grade that read, “The commission is considering the addition of standards that would allow for the choice of a more in-depth study of one or more of the civilizations noted here. We are interested in your comments on this proposal.”⁵⁴ The writing team reformatted these standards to indicate what this type of approach might look like.⁵⁵ However, no one at the public hearings and only a few expert reviewers addressed the topic of choice and depth in sixth- and seventh-grade standards. Both the Council for Islamic Education and the Jewish Community Relations Council were against the idea. The CIE argued that it would make statewide assessments difficult, and the JCRC claimed that it would result in uneven instruction and encourage teachers to overlook certain topics. Four reviewers—John Fonte, Mary Ann Long, Walter MacDougall, and Joan Clemons, the Co-Director of the UCLA History-Social Science Project—favored the idea, each citing the virtues of studying material in depth. Nonetheless, the writing team eliminated the option for choice in the second official draft of the standard without, according to meeting minutes, drawing further attention to the issue at either committee or commission meetings.

Pimentel did not mention the origins of any specific edits or additions to the standards when sending the official Second Draft to the History Committee prior to their final meeting. Rather, she noted that “responding to the feedback (from experts and public testimony) was the focus of the edits this time around.” She also pointed out that, “remarkably (and fortunately), the experts were

largely in accord with one another.”⁵⁶ Whether or not the suggestion that experts agreed over these issues was a fair characterization of the reviews, it marked another instance of reducing the likelihood for debate and controversy by keeping conflicting perspectives and potentially controversial issues off the History-Social Science Committee’s public agenda.

Final Drafts

In a memo sent to all commissioners on June 2, Ellen Wright, the chair of the Academic Standards Commission, stressed the significance of the full commission meeting scheduled for June 11. As she pointed out, this would be the last meeting before final edits to the science and history standards. “It was extremely important,” she noted, for commissioners to “take another good look at both drafts and offer...suggestions for improvement.”⁵⁷ Two weeks earlier, however, on May 18, Governor Wilson, citing time constraints, ordered the commission to cease working on performance standards.⁵⁸ This decision drew strong rebukes from several commissioners.

Debate over how to respond to the governor consumed most of commission’s attention at the June 11 meeting. Eastin appointees—led by Judy Codding, Robert Calfee, and Raymund Paredes—argued that performance standards were equally, if not more important than content standards. More conservative members, Bill Evers, of the Hoover Institute, and Jerry Treadway among them, downplayed the performance standards and contended that the commission could fulfill its charge by simply defining performance levels, which it had done the previous year. After lengthy debate over of the commission’s statutory duties and a series of motions regarding the performance standards, discussion of the history standards—the final item on the meeting’s agenda—was reduced to a thumbnail “walking tour” of the latest draft’s organization. Siskind concluded his final presentation to the full Standards Commission, according to minutes for the meeting, by “encouraging the commissioners to spend time reading the standards, so the commission can debate them.”⁵⁹ No one commented on Siskind’s report and the meeting adjourned.

Later that afternoon, the History-Social Science Committee met for the last time. The five committee members in attendance

made four recommendations for a final commission draft of the history standards. First, after some debate over the original intent of the Founding Fathers, they agreed to reinsert references to the separation of church and state, but to add parentheses around the phrase. Next, the committee decided to limit the number of “exemplars” listed parenthetically in some sub-standards to between three to five examples; they did not, however, select any specific examples to cut, or develop any rationale for including or excluding examples. The group also decided, after a brief discussion where committee members once again differed over skill levels associated with verbs, to reverse an earlier decision and remove all of the verbs from the sub-standards. Finally, Siskind recommended that overviews of “skill expectations” should be placed at the “mile post grades of 5, 8, and 10.” These recommendations marked the History Committee’s final decisions, although several more changes remained for the standards before their publication.

On June 18, Ellen Clark sent summaries of twenty-seven expert reviews on the second draft of the history standards to all members on the Academic Standards Commission. Many of these evaluations came from people who had commented on the first draft. Several reviewers indicated that revisions had, in the words of Gary Nash, resulted in “major improvements.”⁶⁰ The Council for Islamic Education, which submitted a final eight pages of recommendations, claimed the new draft was now closer to promoting “academic excellence, civic responsibility, and global understanding.”⁶¹ Most reviews were limited to suggesting small edits and additions to the draft. As a result, the writing team made less than half the number of edits to the second draft than they did to the first.

However, the team did make a few notable changes to the content of the final standards draft. In line with a recommendation of the First Amendment Center, they cut the phrase “founded in Judeo-Christian thinking” from standard 8.1. They also cut reference to “the divinely-bestowed unalienable rights of citizens” in standard 8.1.2, though they kept similar phrasing in standard 11.1.2.⁶² To increase the diversity of the final draft, the team added a new sub-standard on civil rights in the eleventh grade that called for students to analyze how advances by African Americans “influenced the agendas, strategies, and effectiveness of the quest of American Indians, Asians, and Hispanics for civil rights and equal opportunities.”⁶³

Ross Dunn, professor of world history at San Diego State University, began his review of the draft by commenting on standards cut from the first draft of the sixth- and seventh-grade curriculum. A major contributor to the National History Standards, and third author on Nash's book-length account of the fight over National Standards, Dunn had been out of the country during the review period of the first draft when the decision was made against allowing for choice in the sixth- and seventh-grade curriculum. He questioned why the standards asking students to compare civilizations and consider "larger issues of change" over time were cut from the second draft and encouraged a comparative approach to world history focused on "patterns and processes" of change.⁶⁴ The committee never discussed the world history standards and the writing team disregarded most of Dunn's suggestions. Notably, Dunn encouraged the committee to cut standard 6.5.2 on the "Aryan Invasion" in Ancient India, arguing that "none of the recent scholarship" indicated it occurred, and that "Indo-Aryan is now much preferred to Aryan owing to Nazi appropriation of the later term in the 20th century."⁶⁵ The standard remained unedited and helped contribute to a 2005 lawsuit that the Hindu American Foundation brought against the State Board of Education over the depiction of Ancient India in state-approved textbooks.

On July 1, the Academic Standards Commission met for the final time to vote on adopting the science and history standards. Judy Coddling was the only member of the History Committee not in attendance at the meeting. Before calling for a final vote, the commission discussed and voted on four motions. These were the only formal votes that the Academic Standards Commission took on the history-social science standards.

Bill Evers made the first motion to remove the parentheses from references to separation of church and state in standards 8.2.5 and 11.3.5. After brief debate, the motion passed, eleven to three, with one abstention. Raymund Paredes introduced the next motion by stating that the sixth- and seventh-grade standards still included too much content. Revisiting an issue discussed by the History Committee, he proposed adding language to increase flexibility and choice for these grade levels. Robert Calfee seconded the motion, but it was voted down, ten to three, with two abstentions. Paredes was able to pass

another motion, however, calling for an additional standard in grade twelve that addressed “the role of identity and cultural diversity in contemporary American culture.”⁶⁶ Evers then made the final motion on the history-social science content standards. He proposed that the commission accept eight edits to the document. These included five minor wording changes and three specific suggestions on content: deleting the Yamasee War in South Carolina from standard 5.2.3’s list of antebellum Indian conflicts; replacing John Ross with Sequoia in standard 5.2.6’s examples of influential leaders of the early national period; and substituting Hypatia for Sappho in standard 6.4.10’s list of important Ancient Greek figures in the arts and sciences. All of Evers’ recommendations passed, with the exception of replacing Sappho with Hypatia, which was voted down eight to three. After these minor changes, the commission voted unanimously to adopt the final commission draft of the history standards.

State Board Edits

The Assessment of Academic Achievement Act specified that the State Board of Education hold regional hearings for the public to comment on the standards. The law also gave the board power to modify any of the standards before adoption. After five sparsely attended public hearings across the state in late August and the beginning of September, the board indicated it would “probably adopt the standards” at its October meeting “with few changes.”⁶⁷

Overall, the State Board of Education made ninety-six edits to the commission draft of the standards. Forty-seven of these edits were additions, seven included cutting information, and forty-two involved re-wording standards.⁶⁸ Most of the additions involved adding people or events to lists of examples. These included inserting Sally Ride, Sitting Bull, and Golda Meir to the second-grade standards; Anne Hutchinson in third grade; Louis B. Meyer and John Wayne in fourth grade; the Wright Brothers and Leland Stanford in eighth grade; Sun Yat-Sen and Louis Pasteur in tenth grade; and, the Second Vatican Council in eleventh grade. The few state board cuts included replacing Sacagawea with Laura Ingalls Wilder in standard 8.8.3’s list of “pioneer women” and deleting Sappho from standard 6.4.8 and replacing her with Hypatia, thus overruling the Standards Commission’s vote. On Friday, October 9, 1998, the board voted

unanimously to adopt to *History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools*, one month ahead of schedule.

Discussion

In a press release announcing the Academic Standards Commission's adoption of the *History-Social Science Content Standards*, commission chair Ellen Wright claimed "our process welcomed public debate, excluded no one, and forged consensus."⁶⁹ McDonnell and Weatherford's (1999) study of the Academic Standards Commission echoed this characterization in their short analysis of the History Committee. Explaining why the history standards were developed with "little controversy," McDonnell and Weatherford claimed that "there were no major differences in curricular philosophy that needed to be resolved" and that "most criticisms of the standards were marginal."⁷⁰ They attributed this primarily to a "pre-existing consensus" over the *History-Social Science Framework*. In 2006, the Fordham Institute offered a similar characterization. Author Joanne Jacobs referred to the History Committee's work as the "great peace" and quoted Lawrence Siskind referring to the group as "polite" and "harmonious."⁷¹ While some agreement over the framework and the courtesy of committee members certainly facilitated the development of the history standards, these characterizations offer little insight into this important, yet largely overlooked process.

Historical institutionalist Paul Pierson argued that timing is instrumental to understanding cases of policy making.⁷² History matters, Pierson contended, to identify preceding events that help shape the decision-making context. Beyond the adoption of the 1987 *History-Social Science Framework*, three preceding events in particular influenced the development of the history standards. Most immediately, the contentious and protracted development of math standards consumed time and energy of the commission. By the time the commission formed a History-Social Science Committee, they were nearly two years into an exhausting, three-year process. Further, the California standards were developed in the wake of the National Standards and other state history standards—most notably, Virginia. These events produced history standards veterans who had participated in controversial adoptions and could anticipate,

and in some instances, avoid issues promising to prolong or derail the development process. The Virginia standards along with other state standards, moreover, provided templates for formatting and content—resources that facilitated the drafting of the California history standards.

Other contextual factors influenced the committee's work. The charge of the commission to develop both content and performance standards for all subjects led to a situation where science, performance, and history standards were being developed concurrently. The science and performance standards proved contentious and drew time, attention, and energy from the history standards.

Committee chair Lawrence Siskind and lead writer Sue Pimentel, furthermore, helped limit the public agenda of the History-Social Science Committee. Siskind, who largely approved of Pimentel's work, steered the committee through some debate, but overall refrained from questioning the basic approach and specific content of the standards. Pimentel served as a gatekeeper of sorts on issues discussed by committee. Drawing committee members' attention to a select number of questions raised by expert reviews and specific edits made to each draft of the standards, Pimentel helped limit debate by keeping various contentious issues and decisions off the committee's agenda.

Most of the decisions made in developing and revising drafts of the standards—without being discussed by either the committee or the commission—lacked clear consensus. Many of these came in the form of small edits and proved hardly noticeable to committee members: adding “divinely-bestowed” to describe the types of rights envisioned by the Founders in standard 11.1.2, or referring to the expansion of Muslim rule in the Middle Ages as “military conquests.” Others proved contentious in time, as with the sixth-grade sub-standard on the Aryan Invasion, or had a dramatic effect on grade level curriculum—for example, the addition of sub-standards on the American Revolution, Civil War, Reconstruction and nineteenth-century religious movements that extended the scope of the eleventh-grade standards well beyond their original starting point in the Progressive Era. Other issues discussed in public were never endorsed by a clear quorum of commission or committee members. The decision not to allow teacher choice and flexibility in the sixth and seventh grade, for example, fell off the history

committee's agenda and was only briefly addressed by the full commission. More reviewers actually supported rather than opposed the idea of choice in these grades. Furthermore, some decisions made consensually or democratically by the History Committee or the Standards Commission were overturned by the State Board of Education or overlooked by the writing team. Notably, the board's decision to replace Sappho, the Greek poet from the sixth century B.C.E., with Hypatia, the Greek mathematician born at the end of the fourth century C.E. in the sixth-grade standard on "the early civilizations of Ancient Greece" called into question the standard's historical integrity. Finally, after the Standards Commission adopted the history standards, the writing team put verbs back into the sub-standards, a decision not discussed in public.

Although the Standards Commission presented the final draft of the standards as the "essential content that every student should know," neither the History-Social Science Committee nor the commission ever defined what made content essential.⁷³ They never agreed to a rationale for determining rigor of standards or what constitutes developmentally appropriate material, despite the fact that several commentators raised the issue repeatedly. Instead, the committee addressed these topics with a few, general decisions. They placed "e.g." in front of parenthetical lists of examples and decided to limit these lists to three to five "exemplars" per sub-standard. They also attempted to include a progression of verbs, from lower to higher order, across the standards; however, the committee never fully agreed upon the skills associated with different verbs. This approach resulted in eighth- and eleventh-grade American history standards and seventh- and tenth-grade world history standards with commensurate amounts of content and little to distinguish them conceptually beyond what chronological slice of history they cover (**Figure 4**). There are sixty-one content standards for seventh grade, sixty-nine for eighth grade, forty-eight for tenth, and seventy for eleventh.

Some committee members, public commentators, and expert reviewers provided rationales for their suggested edits and additions; many, however, did not. The majority of rationalizations addressed issues of representation or disputed historiography. The few that mentioned essential content often connected it to citizenship. These recommendations were largely resigned to standards focused on

7.6.8: Understand the importance of the Catholic Church as a political, intellectual, and aesthetic institution (e.g., founding of universities, political and spiritual roles of the clergy, creation of monastic and mendicant religious orders, preservation of the Latin language and religious texts, St. Thomas Aquinas’s synthesis of classical philosophy with Christian theology, and the concept of “natural law.”).

10.3.2: Examine how scientific and technological change and new forms of energy brought about massive social, economic, and cultural change (e.g., the inventions and discoveries of James Watt, Eli Whitney, Henry Bessemer, Louis Pasteur, Thomas Edison).

Figure 4: Sample seventh- and tenth-grade Standards.⁷⁴

America’s democratic ideas and institutions—for example, including the Magna Carta, Mayflower Compact, and English Bill of Rights to standard 8.2’s analysis of the “political principles underlying the U.S. Constitution.” The lack of an over-arching rationale or criteria for determining content led to several additions and subtractions of events and people that appear more arbitrary than essential. This was particularly evident in the lists of exemplars (**Figure 5**).

If a consensus did form around the history standards, it was due largely to support from people or groups who submitted recommendations that were incorporated into the standards. This type of additive consensus led to endorsements from a range of organizations and people—from the Center of Islamic Education, to David Barton, and the Jewish Community Relations Council. The writing team balanced suggestions from across the political and religious spectrum, which is evident throughout the standards. Take, for example, the development of standard 7.10.6 on the Scientific Revolution (**Figure 6**) and its treatment of science (italicized).

To refer to the content standards as a consensus document, however, is an oversimplification. There were clear winners and losers in this process and a number of groups and people remain critical, if not dismissive, of the *History Social Science Content Standards*.⁷⁵ Where the Fordham Foundation awarded the standards “A” grades for clarity, rigor, and lack of bias, Gary Nash gave them a “B-.”⁷⁶ Contrary to McDonnell and Weatherford’s depiction, moreover, there were “philosophical differences” both within the

First Draft

8.9.5: Draw on biographies to explain the abolitionist movement and its leaders including Theodore Weld, William Lloyd Garrison, David Walker, Frederick Douglass, John Brown, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charles Redmond, and Sojourner Truth.

Second Draft

8.9.1: Draw on biographies to explain the abolitionist movement and its leaders (e.g., role of the Quakers and Anthony Benezet, Benjamin Rush and the First Abolition Societies, John Quincy Adams and his proposed Constitutional Amendment, John Brown and the armed resistance, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, William Jay, Theodore Weld, William Lloyd Garrison, David Walker, Frederick Douglass, John Brown, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charles Redmond, Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, Crispus Attucks, Phyllis Wheatley, Benjamin Banneker).

Final Draft

8.9.1: Describe the leaders of the movement (e.g., John Quincy Adams and his proposed constitutional amendment, John Brown and the armed resistance, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, Benjamin Franklin, Theodore Weld, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass).

Figure 5: The evolution of Standard 8.9.1.⁷⁷

History-Social Science Committee and amongst reviewers and public commentators regarding the standards. Dunn's vision of global history, Paredes' suggestions for a thematic, cross-disciplinary approach, Coddling's appeals for skill-centered standards, and various committee members and reviewers' recommendations for flexibility and teacher choice all constituted alternative visions and directions not taken by the History Committee and Standards Commission.

Furthermore, while most who participated in the development process contributed something to the final draft of the standards, several groups did not participate. For example, advocates for Hindus, Sikhs, Koreans, and other Asian groups did not submit public comment or expert review to the History Committee or Standards Commission, nor did any labor organizations. As a result, there are few examples of Asian Americans in the history standards, and labor

First Draft

“Describe the roots of the scientific revolution (e.g., Greek rationalism, *Muslim science*, Renaissance humanism, and new global knowledge)”

Second Preliminary Draft

“Describe the roots of the scientific revolution (e.g., Greek rationalism, *Jewish and Muslim science*, Renaissance humanism, and new global knowledge)”

Final Draft

“Discuss the roots of the scientific revolution (e.g., Greek rationalism; *Jewish, Christian, and Muslim science*; Renaissance humanism; new knowledge from global exploration)”

Figure 6: Additive consensus.⁷⁸

movements only receive brief mention in three sub-standards. All of these groups went on to lobby the Department of Education for more representation following the State Board’s adoption of the standards.

Compared to the adoption of the 1987 Framework that drew over 500 commentators, and the Virginia standards that attracted nearly 5,000 people to statewide adoption hearings, the development of the California history standards was a sparsely attended process. Scott Hill, who became the Executive Director of the Standards Commission during the debate over math standards, attributed the low turnout at History Committee meetings and hearings to a lack of awareness over “how important the standards were going to be in driving the fundamental behavior of education.” Many people “who would have been involved, such as teacher groups, school boards, and administrators,” Hill maintained, “did not have a sense... that the standards were likely going to change the daily practice and behavior of educators in California.”⁷⁹ Indeed, between *The Sacramento Bee*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *San Jose Mercury News*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, only seven short articles covered the development of the history standards throughout 1998.

Finally, it is important to note that the work of the Standards Commission was cut short and considered by some to be incomplete. Not attempting to develop performance standards significantly lightened what turned out to be the commission’s unrealistic

workload. Detailed levels of student understanding of history-social science content and concepts simply never materialized. Developing and describing levels of performance for the standards would have shifted the commission's focus from content to assessment. By not developing performance standards, the commission ceded its influence on how the content standards would be assessed.

The Academic Standards Commission's lack of involvement in the development of the California Standards Tests, first fully implemented in 2003 and in place until the 2013, proved problematic. These tests ended up realizing concerns voiced by History Committee members. Developed by the Education Testing Service (ETS), the criterion-referenced California Standards Tests for History-Social Science consisted of three multiple-choice exams. The eighth-grade test included seventy-five questions aligned with the standards for grades six through eight, while the tenth grade "end of course" and eleventh-grade exams each included sixty questions. The tests focused on the recall of information and drew from content across all grade level standards. Many test questions featured items from the lists of exemplars that the History Committee stressed were "illustrative" (**Figure 7**). In doing so, the California Standards Tests held teachers and students accountable for the hundreds of historical figures, groups, events, and phenomena that appear in the standards. Such testing, when combined with state's accountability policies, fundamentally changed the nature of the standards—from suggested to prescribed content.

Questions Moving Forward

No standards setting initiative is perfect. Few, however, have no recourse for revision. With each passing year since their adoption, California's history standards have become increasingly dated. The final, eleventh-grade American history standard—calling for students to analyze contemporary American society—ends with the Clinton Administration. In this regard, the California history standards are historical artifacts. They are products of a particular time and place when, for myriad reasons, a small handful of consultants and politically appointed committee members were able to navigate charged political and pedagogical issues to determine the content for all public school history-social science courses in California.

11.6.4: Analyze the effects of and the controversies arising from New Deal economic policies and the expanded role of the federal government in society and the economy since the 1930s (e.g., Works Progress Administration, Social Security, National Labor Relations Board, farm programs, regional development policies and energy development projects such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, California Central Valley Project, Bonneville Dam)

What New Deal program employed large numbers of artists and writers during the Great Depression?

- a) National Recovery Administration (NRA)
- b) Agriculture Adjustment Administration (AAA)
- c) Works Progress Administration (WPA)
- d) National Youth Administration (NYA)

Figure 7: Standard and Question from 2005 test.⁸⁰

In September 2014, Governor Jerry Brown rejected Senate Bill 1057, which called for updating the standards, claiming that the ongoing revision of the *History-Social Science Framework* would sufficiently update history curriculum in California. However, as defined by the Department of the Education, state curriculum frameworks are guides for teaching the standards and, by design, should align to the standards, as the latest draft of the framework does. The new framework is scheduled for further review and adoption in 2015. Exactly how it addresses some of the questionable decisions and unresolved issues that were part of the standards development—particularly in regards to amount, organization, and sophistication of standards across grade levels—remains to be seen. The Academic Standards Commission and the History-Social Science Committee never adequately addressed several important questions: What is essential historical content? What constitutes a rigorous standard, or developmentally appropriate material? What is the most effective scope and sequence for teaching and learning history across grade levels? What is the proper balance between skills and content? How can you measure student achievement of the standards? And, what does achievement look like? If California hopes to remain a leader in history-social studies education, these are questions in need of answers.

Notes

1. California State Department of Education, "Content Standards," <<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>>.
2. Sheldon M. Stern and Jeremy A. Stern, *The State of State U.S. History Standards 2011* (Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2011), 32.
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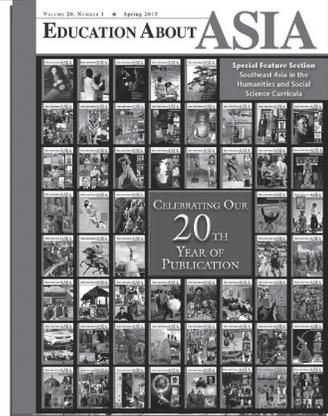
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