



February 1, 2021

North Carolina State Board of Education
301 N. Wilmington Street
6302 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825

By: Individual Email to State Board Members

Dear Members of the North Carolina State Board of Education:

The North Carolina Family Policy Council is writing to express concern over the Proposed Standards Revisions for K-12 Social Studies currently pending before the State Board.

During the past year—due to the coronavirus pandemic and related matters—our state and our students have experienced increasing educational challenges because of the limitations of virtual instruction, the lack of personal interaction between students and teachers, and other factors that have had a detrimental impact on the mental, physical and psychological health of many in our statewide school system. Testing for years leading up to the pandemic has shown that too many students are not at grade level in the basic skills of reading and math, so these subjects need to continue to be primary focus areas.

Social studies is also an extremely important aspect of our students' overall education, but should not be a subject that wrongly describes and divides our nation.

Many of the troubling concepts in the current Social Studies proposals are addressed in a December 2020 Heritage Foundation report entitled *Critical Race Theory, the New Intolerance, and Its Grip on America*. (see at: <https://www.heritage.org/civil-rights/report/critical-race-theory-the-new-intolerance-and-its-grip-america>). A summary of the report states:

“Critical Race Theory (CRT) makes race the prism through which its proponents analyze all aspects of American life—and do so with a degree of persistence that has helped CRT impact all of American life. CRT underpins identity politics, an ongoing effort to reimagine the United States as a nation riven by groups, each with specific claims on victimization. In entertainment, as well as the education and workforce sectors of society, CRT is well-established, driving decision-making according to skin color—not individual value and talent. As Critical Theory ideas become more familiar to the viewing public in everyday life, CRT’s intolerance becomes “normalized,” along with the idea of systemic racism for Americans, weakening public and private bonds that create trust and allow for civic engagement.”

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Several examples of what appears to be the incorporation of Critical Race Theory in Draft 4 of the proposed Social Studies Standards include:

(For NCDPI State Course Code - 4318 - NORTH CAROLINA STANDARDS FOR THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND NORTH CAROLINA: CIVIC LITERACY)

CL.B.1.4 Explain how individual values and societal norms contribute to institutional discrimination and the marginalization of minority groups living under the American system of government.

CL.H.1.6 Exemplify ways individuals have demonstrated resistance and resilience to inequities, injustice, and discrimination within the American system of government over time.

(For NCDPI State Course Code - 4311 - NORTH CAROLINA STANDARDS FOR AMERICAN HISTORY)

AH.E.1.4 Compare how some groups in American society have benefited from economic policies while other groups have been systemically denied the same benefits.

The use of charged terms like “institutional” and “systemically” along with “the American system of government” can be read to suggest that the United States of America is, at its core, unresponsive, indifferent, and insensitive to the racial inequities and challenges that have faced our nation. This fails to recognize many of the important advancements our country has made in these areas over the years. In addition, many of the proposals call for a “critique” of certain areas of study, which can be read to imply or suggest a negative or critical perspective. Instead, we suggest replacing this word with “evaluate,” which would encourage a more neutral, open-minded approach.

With the challenges currently facing our state and our students, now is no time to introduce controversial content that is so divisive and that many find to be inaccurate, not factual, and driven by an anti-American sentiment.

We, therefore, urge you to remove these specific provisions from the Proposed Standards Revisions for K-12 Social Studies and also review the entire Proposed Standards in an effort to identify and remove any other components that may cause these concerns.

Sincerely,

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