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In accordance with the policy of the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools, a Social Studies Curriculum Guide revision is being published in spring 2015. Classroom teachers from several schools served on the review committee. The work of this committee was based on the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines (April, 2010), and used as additional resources the Handbook of Research in Social Studies Education (2011), the National Council for Social Studies (Expectations of Excellence, 1994), the National Standards for Civics and Government ([www.civiced.org](http://www.civiced.org)), the National Council of Economics Education ([www.ncee.net](http://www.ncee.net)), the National Center for History in Schools ([www.sscnet.ucla.edu](http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu)), and the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) Social Studies Standards ([www.mcrel.org](http://www.mcrel.org)). The committee reviewed the following state standards for Social Studies educations: Colorado, Texas, New York, California, and Ohio.

The review process revealed that a change in the 2010 curriculum standards created a significant misalignment with state standards. Colorado State Standards as well as the other state standards reviewed in this process focus fifth grade learning standards on the founding of the United States and early United States history. The Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools 2010 curriculum had moved from similar standards to a focus on early world civilizations, a topic addressed in most sixth grade curricula. This misalignment creates difficulty for schools to find grade appropriate text support for content. Additionally, a significant number of students tend to exit the Catholic school system after completing the fifth grade. If the learning objectives are not aligned with major state systems there is a chance those students may miss these fundamental learning targets in their Social Studies education. Therefore, the curriculum review committee has adjusted the curriculum objectives for the fifth through seventh grades to reflect the national trends in standards. Schools should begin the process of shifting instructional objectives to the recommended grade levels by the beginning of the 2016 school year and completing the process by the end of the 2019 school year.

High school courses consist of required courses and electives. The level of the course is indicated in the introduction to each section. Elective offerings usually depend on availability of qualified staff and student interest. Their inclusion in this document does not guarantee that they will be offered every year.

Many thanks to the committee for their professional and diligent service in completing the following document and to their schools for generously allowing them the time to accomplish this task:

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The Social Studies Curriculum Guideline should serve as the basis upon which all instructional resources and teaching depend. It is designed to comprise a spiral of learning that includes all the paradigms of the social studies. These paradigms assist students to view their world with an ever broadening vision, so that they can understand their place and their influence on the activities and events in the world. The strands included in this guide include geography, economics, civics, history, and social, cultural, religious, and world perspectives. Social justice issues and current events are integral learning components in every grade. The social studies should be integrated with literature, the arts, and religion.

**The Social Studies curriculum enables students to:**

- explore and apply the growth and influence of Catholic traditions, principles, and values to all aspects of political, personal, and spiritual life
- use the process of historical inquiry to understand the past, develop a sense of the present, and build perspectives on the future– these studies will contribute to the development of the student’s historical self
- develop and use geographic knowledge and concepts to understand the relationships between human and physical geography
- examine the ideals, purposes, and characteristics of political systems to identify how people have organized and governed themselves throughout history and analyze the history of American democracy in order to develop a sense of civic responsibility
- examine economic choices, principles, and systems in order to make informed economic decisions for themselves and their society
- study the cultural elements of historical and current societies of the world in order to interpret the present and plan for the future
- analyze historical, political, economic, and social connections among world societies in order to interpret the present and plan for the future

Students should develop an inclusive welcoming of all peoples and cultures and the variety they represent, seeing them all as children of God. Understanding the past will contribute to a fuller understanding of the present as a foundation for building the world’s future. Probing all the social studies will enable students to see the web of interconnectedness of all peoples. The ultimate goal of Social Studies in education is to prepare students to make a significant contribution to society and make the world a better, more Christ-like place for the human family.