



PROPOSED NEW §113.52, AMERICAN INDIAN/NATIVE STUDIES

The Texas State Teachers Association offers the following comments to the State Board of Education, Committee of the Full Board, regarding agenda item #5: Discussion of Proposed New 19 TAC Chapter 113, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies, Subchapter C, High School, §113.52, Ethnic Studies: American Indian/Native Studies.

The Texas State Teachers Association applauds the leadership of the State Board of Education for its principled initiative in bringing ethnic studies coursework to Texas students. This board has led the way nationally in its support of comprehensive social studies education, and we encourage you to round out the commitment you made in 2019 to consider new TEKS for ethnic studies that represent so many of our young Texans.

In 2018 the SBOE approved a course in Mexican American Studies, and the following year a course in African American Studies was approved making Texas just the third state in the country to do so. TSTA encourages the board to continue this important work and adopt TEKS for an American Indian/Native Studies course that reflect the innovative course approved by the commissioner this year. This course was developed in collaboration with tribal leaders, academic experts, and community members, and it has been a proven success in classrooms this academic year.

The innovative course in American Indian/Native Studies was approved in July by Education Commissioner Mike Morath, and in August the Committee on Instruction requested the opportunity for the full board to consider adopting TEKS for this course and adding it to the list of approved social studies courses. The innovative course was developed over three years and with the guidance and expertise of twenty-four community members from Grand Prairie ISD, including Native peoples, parents, educators, and content experts. In addition to monthly meetings, this community consulted tribal leaders and representatives to ensure content accuracy and ethnic sensitivity.

During the recent social studies TEKS rewrite, many of these individuals were selected to serve on workgroup E, and through all these collaboratives, the innovative course framework emerged and was submitted to TEA through an innovative course application. It has been available to districts statewide this academic year.

TSTA urges the SBOE to move forward with adopting TEKS for an American Indian/Native Studies social studies elective, and we support TEKS that reflect the course design as it was approved by Commissioner Morath in July of this year. It was through SBOE foresight that a rule was amended to require comprehensive ethnic studies courses be considered for inclusion in the TEKS, and this is an exciting opportunity for the board to advance Texas preeminence in K-12 social studies education.