



TEXAS SOCIAL STUDIES REDESIGN

WHY A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL BEST SHOWCASES DIVERSE CULTURES AND HISTORY

MAIN POINTS:

- Low-income students are disproportionately disadvantaged by poor social studies instruction.
- Effective social studies instruction equips students for high academic performance and encourages community and civic participation
- Option 3, the comprehensive Model, weaves culture throughout historical events, leading to a deep appreciation for the ideas, people and connections that created Texas and America.

POOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM DENIES OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS

Students in low-income communities have less access to social studies instruction in elementary school.

Nationally, teachers reported only spending 3 hours a week on social studies.

Students who receive effective social studies instruction are more likely to vote and discuss politics at home and four times more likely to volunteer and work on community issues.

TEACHING STUDENTS HISTORY PREPARES THEM FOR SUCCESS

Content knowledge makes weak readers better readers. 2nd graders who had 60 lessons of literacy-rich social studies instruction scored 23% better on reading assessments.

Sequencing events, comparing past and present, and using new vocabulary grow critical thinking.

Background knowledge is key to reading comprehension and academic success. Students are excited by real people and places, not abstract concepts.

THE COMPREHENSIVE MODEL EFFECTIVELY TEACHES THE CULTURE OF TEXAS AND AMERICA

Stories of leadership, fairness, and cooperation show that citizens can make a difference.

Smaller time periods means more time for content, including Texas and culture.

Chronological sequencing shows how culture and peoples evolved over time.

COMPREHENSIVE MODEL IN ACTION

Grades 3–7

The evolution of Texas culture — from **Native** to **Spanish** to **Mexican** to **Texan** — is revisited with greater depth at each grade. Students see the **progression and blending of cultures** that shaped the Texas identity in connection to U.S. and world history.

Grade 8 (Capstone Year)

A full year of Texas history serves as the **capstone**, pulling together earlier grades. Students revisit key people, events, and traditions, from vaqueros and cowboy culture to Tejano music and Tex-Mex foods to see how Texas identity developed over time.

REPETITIVE MODEL IN ACTION

Grades 3–7

Students see **snapshots** of events across wide time spans. Texas is mentioned but without continuity. Because each grade covers such a large sweep of history, events compete for attention, leaving the Texas story **watered down** and fragmented.

Grade 8 (Capstone Year)

With no dedicated Texas history year, the chance to **pull the story together** is lost. Students repeat isolated facts (like missions or cattle ranching) but don't see how they fit into the larger development of Texas identity.