

I read the draft of the Minnesota standards for history and social studies and want to commend you for the careful work that went into them. The old standards for Minnesota were simply dreadful. They were vague generalities that provided no guidance to teachers, students, parents, or anyone else. The new standards, however, are clear and crisp. They identify what students will be expected to learn in each grade. There are a few grades in which I believe the content should be pared down a bit, but on the whole the standards are definitely better than what they replace.

One thing is abundantly clear: The new standards will put Minnesota in the same league with other states that are widely applauded for the quality of their standards. States like Massachusetts and California, for example, have been hailed by rating agencies that span the ideological spectrum, including the American Federation of Teachers and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

If Minnesota adopts the new standards in something like their current form, it will be a huge step forward for teaching children in the state about the USA and other major civilizations of the world.

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