

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** School Administrators, Educators, Curriculum Directors, School Counselors  
**From:** Office of Academics  
**Date:** July 30, 2020  
**Re:** National Social Justice Standards and the Indiana Academic Standards

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) recommends that educators and schools reflect on social justice education in the context of Indiana's Academic Standards (IAS) and student instruction. IDOE has identified key places where social justice education and IAS intersect for intentional instruction.

### **Overview of the National Social Justice Standards**

Teaching Tolerance (Southern Poverty Law Center) created National Social Justice Standards (SJS) that were released in June 2019. There are 20 standards that are grouped into four overarching topics: [Identity, Justice, Diversity, and Action](#). These 20 standards are not content-based but rather based on skills of action and student self-awareness. Culture, citizenship, and advocacy are woven throughout these standards.

### **Indiana's Academic Standards (IAS)**

An analysis of IAS with the SJS would indicate that there are many entry points for the inclusion of SJS into the instruction of IAS.

### **Starting from the Social Justice Standards**

Items A-D below are suggestions for a connection between SJS and IAS:

- A. Identity SJS and IAS: IAS for Sociology and World languages have several standards that associate with cultural groups and a sense of cultural identity. Culture standards in IAS World Languages are essential and thus very prominent in those standards. Culture is also a component of the grade 6 and grade 7 social studies standards. Additionally, IAS for social studies in kindergarten through grade 2 contain an academic strand known as Human Systems and Roles of Citizens. These strands intersect with SJS Identity.
- B. Justice SJS and IAS: The possible links for the justice SJS have more entry points in US History courses and US Government courses.
- C. Action SJS and IAS: The logical links between the two sets of standards would be the IAS for the US Government course with its civics education. It also makes sense to link SJS to the service learning options of Graduation Pathways.
- D. Diversity SJS and IAS: Again, IAS for World Languages standards contain a set of standards known as Comparison proficiencies where students are asked to compare one's

own culture with the culture of the target language. Indiana's Ethnic Studies course makes a strong connection to the SJS Diversity standards. Additionally, IAS for social studies in kindergarten through grade 2 contain an academic strand known as Human Systems and Roles of Citizens. These strands intersect with SJS Diversity.

### **Starting from the Indiana Academic Standards**

Items E-G below are starting points for a connection between IAS and SJS:

- E. *IAS Chronological Thinking, Historical Comparison, Analysis and Interpretation, and Research*: This thematic strand is intentionally identified within the IAS for social studies beginning in grade 3 and requires students to analyze historical events. The SJS framework could effectively be embedded within the instruction of *Chronological Thinking, Historical Comparison, Analysis and Interpretation, and Research* standard indicators.
- F. *IAS Social Studies Literacy Standards*: Many of the SJS standards could be addressed efficiently in the IAS Social Studies Literacy Standards with the content of the IAS being studied in a course. IAS Social Studies Literacy Standards may be located at the conclusion of any set of [social studies standards](#).
- G. *IAS English/Language Arts Standards (ELA)*: A logical entry point for SJS standards into ELA is a standard that reads similarly across grade levels: "Analyze and evaluate works of literary or cultural significance in history for the way in which these works have used archetypes drawn from myths, traditional stories, or religious works, as well as how two or more of the works treat similar themes, conflicts, issues, or topics, and maintain relevance for current audiences." Additionally, many SJS standards may be addressed through the use of high-quality children and young adult texts. The actions of characters, the setting, events in the plot, and dialogue of the books may serve to address multiple SJS standards.

Please direct questions about the Indiana Academic Standards and the National Social Justice Standards to J. Matthew Walsh, Academic Specialist ([jwalsh1@doe.in.gov](mailto:jwalsh1@doe.in.gov)).