

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study is the Thomas B. Fordham Institute’s first review of the quality of state U.S. history standards since 2003. Key findings include:

- A majority of states’ standards are mediocre-to-awful. The average grade across *all* states is barely a D. In twenty-eight jurisdictions—a majority of states—the history standards earn Ds or below. Eighteen earn Fs.
- Just one state—South Carolina—has standards strong enough to earn a straight A.
- Six other states—Alabama, California, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York, and the District of Columbia—earn A-minuses, and three more received grades in the B range. Still, this means just ten states—or about one in five—get honors marks.

The study also reviewed the framework for the National Assessment of Educational Progress’s (NAEP) U.S. history examination and found it deserving of an A-minus. Thus, there are several national models—from the strongest state standards to the NAEP—that lagging states could and should emulate going forward.

TABLE ES-1 • 2011 GRADES FOR U.S. HISTORY STANDARDS

Ranked from best to worst

State	2011 Grade				
South Carolina	A	Minnesota	C	Colorado	F
Alabama	A-	Nebraska	C	Connecticut	F
California	A-	New Jersey	C	Delaware	F
District of Columbia	A-	Tennessee	C	Idaho	F
Indiana	A-	Utah	C	Iowa	F
Massachusetts	A-	Virginia	C	Maine	F
NAEP	A-	Arkansas	D	Mississippi	F
New York	A-	Illinois	D	Missouri	F
Oklahoma	B+	Kentucky	D	Montana	F
Georgia	B	National Average	D	New Hampshire	F
Michigan	B	Nevada	D	North Carolina	F
Arizona	C	New Mexico	D	North Dakota	F
Florida	C	Ohio	D	Oregon	F
Hawaii	C	South Dakota	D	Pennsylvania	F
Kansas	C	Texas	D	Vermont	F
Louisiana	C	Washington	D	Wisconsin	F
Maryland	C	West Virginia	D	Wyoming	F
		Alaska	F	Rhode Island	N/A