

Agenda is available here: <http://www.esc4.net/default.aspx?name=ss.downloads>.

1. Welcome and Introductions
  - a. New Region 4 Advanced Academics Specialist, Andrew McBurney: Andrew has background in teaching and working with AP Social Studies courses and tests. He serves in the Math department.
  - b. Updates on districts' staff
    - i. Houston ISD: Angela Miller retired as of January 30, and Montra Rogers has filled her position. Frank Whiteside, the Elementary Social Studies Curriculum Manager, passed away on January 5. Houston ISD is in the process of filling Frank's position as well as Montra's specialist position.
    - ii. Faith Longoria, formerly from Crosby ISD, has taken the Goose Creek ISD coordinator's position. Taunya Breaux has taken a job with Pearson Learning.
2. TEA Updates
  - a. There are no updates from TEA.
  - b. The TETN meetings for 2015 have not yet been scheduled. Julie Brelsford, Statewide Social Studies Coordinator at TEA, retired in October 2014. Chris Dolejs is the new English/Social Studies Manager.
  - c. 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature is currently submitting bills. Several links to organizations or publications watching education activity are listed on the agenda. Some issues to watch:
    - i. Elimination of writing tests in grades 4 and 7 and social studies test at grade 8.
    - ii. Elimination of all tests except those required by NCLB. The federal government is considering adding social studies testing to the new version of NCLB, including a 5<sup>th</sup> grade test. Santa Fe ISD is working with their elementary schools to support student achievement on the STAAR and EOC by identifying correlations between the elementary grades' content and those two courses.
    - iii. SB 149 provides for a process for students who have failed an EOC assessment twice to still graduate. If passed by two-thirds majorities in both houses, the law will take effect 2014-15 school year.
    - iv. A mandatory Constitution course in addition to the current social studies curriculum.
  - d. State Board of Education: There are no TEKS yet for the semester course elective on Personal Financial Literacy. Pat Hardy, SBOE member, wants to put the course in Grade 8. The Global Studies course also has not yet been developed.
3. New Region 4 Products and Services
  - a. Geography by Design: All six volumes are now available.  
(<http://www.region4store.com/Catalog.aspx?catid=1138239>)
  - b. Region 4 will hold Grade 8 American history and U.S. history institutes on July 13.
    - i. There will be four breakout sessions for each course, and participants will attend all four sessions. Lunch is included.
    - ii. Laura Breaux from Dickinson suggested we add a component for 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
    - iii. Possible topics include:
      1. Literacy using primary and secondary sources
      2. Skills
      3. Engagement strategies
      4. Review strategies to help prepare students for STAAR/EOC
    - iv. If you have one or more excellent teachers who you could recommend to present, let us know. Presenters will be paid a stipend.

- c. Encountering Texas History Conference, February 12-13, 2015 at Region 4. The next conference is in November, 2015. These dates are set by the Texas State Historical Association; they rotate the three conference themes around the state each year.
  - d. The Ninth Annual Region 4 Social Studies Conference will be held on January 30, 2016. We are accepting entries for the conference theme. The winner will receive a free registration for the conference. We had two winners for the conference last month.
4. Instructional Materials Discussion: The coordinators who attended this meeting discussed their experiences and processes in reviewing and making decisions about social studies instructional materials for Proclamation 2015. Some highlights of the discussion include the following:
- a. Some districts are looking exclusively at the online materials.
  - b. Some of the vendors do not have completed products to review.
  - c. Houston ISD is choosing pieces that will integrate with the Learning Management System.
  - d. There is concern about the reading level for the materials; some are lower than the grade level where they would be used. One vendor has an option to lower the reading level on the digital text. Administrators could turn off this option if desired. Another vendor has various reading levels across grades that don't match.
  - e. There is concern in using digital resources since some students do not have access to the Internet, even if they have devices, including the 1-1 initiatives in some districts.
  - f. One vendor's elementary books are exactly the same as the previous adoption, with a few additions for new TEKS.
  - g. There is concern about who will train the teachers to use the online/digital resources that districts may purchase.
  - h. Some discussed whether or not they were bundling (using one publisher for a grade band) resources/textbooks.
  - i. Some coordinators wondered if there would be the opportunity to negotiate prices with the publishers.
  - j. Some of the subscriptions are charged per students with an annual renewal, and some charge per teacher per year.
  - k. Coordinators discussed how codes for digital resources would be disseminated to students. A suggestion was made that district technology staff be enlisted to help.
  - l. There is still a struggle to get social studies taught in elementary schools. A suggestion was made to partner with literacy teachers to integrate ELA and social studies. If reading teachers are not using social studies readings for teaching informational text, why wouldn't they use them? Writing expository pieces fit well with social studies.
  - m. Coordinators said they were either making final decisions in February or March.
5. Resources
- a. Lisa Watkins, Mock Trial Coordinator with the Dallas Bar Association, is a Houston-area lawyer. She was joined by attorney Chris Tritico. They shared information about the Houston-area Mock Trial Competition and the impact it can have on student confidence. Private schools are the largest number of participants, and they want to include more public high schools. Lisa will provide a link to send out to the committee members.
  - b. Jenny Sweeney, National Archives and Record Administration, Fort Worth provided information about the repository and services she can provide. She provided documents which are posted on the Region 4 Social Studies Download area (<http://www.esc4.net/default.aspx?name=ss.downloads>) containing an overview of the NARA in Fort Worth and Docs Teach.

6. Sharing
  - a. Robin Sabo from Clear Creek ISD shared some documents she has developed and used with her teachers. One takes STAAR/EOC items and provides a framework for analyzing them. The other document addresses Comprehensible Input Strategies, developed by social studies teachers and ELL coaches.
  - b. Plan to share more strategies for STAAR/EOC at our next meeting, which will be October 6. The Advanced Academics Advisory Committee will meet on the same day in the afternoon.