Social Studies and a Well-Rounded Education: Talking Points for Our Profession

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www.socialstudies.org
@NCSSNetwork
What Do Our Students Care About?

- What’s a question that you overheard a student ask in the past week?

- What curriculum ideas could students explore to answer that question?

- What discipline(s) address that question?

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

**ALL OUR STUDENTS CARE ABOUT IS SOCIAL STUDIES!**
What Exactly is “Social Studies”?

NCSS defines social studies as "the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence."

Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences.

In essence, social studies promotes knowledge of and involvement in civic affairs. And because civic issues--such as health care, crime, and foreign policy--are multidisciplinary in nature, understanding these issues and developing resolutions to them require multidisciplinary education.

**NCSS STRATEGIC PLAN**
Approved by the NCSS Board of Directors on November 30, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority #1</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCSS collaborates and engages with stakeholders to prepare students for civic life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Engage social studies professionals in identifying, exploring, creating, adopting, and implementing high quality, research-based social studies educational practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Collaborate with all internal NCSS entities, including institutions and individual members, to provide leadership and support for social studies educators.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Convene, collaborate and support governmental entities and non-governmental organizations, such as policymakers, educational agencies, for-profit, non-profit, professional organizations, parent organizations, and others to provide leadership, service, and support for social studies education.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Priority #2</th>
<th>Communication</th>
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<tr>
<td>NCSS communicates best practices in content knowledge and pedagogy to support social studies educators and prepare students for civic life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Improve and increase the variety, accessibility and quality of print and digital resources to promote best practice, research, and advocacy for social studies.</td>
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<td>b. Produce and disseminate digital and print publications focused on best practices and high quality research in social studies.</td>
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<td>c. Expand opportunities to share information, resources, and research among members, media, policymakers, and others that promote empirical best practices and high quality research in social studies education.</td>
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<td>d. Broaden and deepen public understanding of the purpose and critical importance of social studies as part of a well-rounded education of a civically engaged member of society.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Priority #3</th>
<th>Innovation</th>
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<td>NCSS responds to challenges and changing needs through innovative practices, policies, and solutions to prepare students for civic life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Identify changing needs and challenges faced by constituents and stakeholders.</td>
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<td>b. Assess existing policies and practices regularly to ensure alignment with challenges and changing needs.</td>
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<td>c. Engage in innovative approaches and solutions to address challenges and changing needs in an informed, responsible manner.</td>
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<th>Priority #4</th>
<th>Inclusiveness</th>
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<td>NCSS encourages, promotes and ensures inclusiveness that reflects society and strengthens civic life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Provide opportunities for multiple viewpoints to be shared, supported and respected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Develop and regularly review policies and practices to ensure opportunities for underrepresented groups to actively participate in NCSS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Support efforts that ensure the social studies teaching profession is inclusive and diverse.</td>
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<th>Priority #5</th>
<th>Influence and Leadership</th>
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<tr>
<td>NCSS leads by example and seeks to influence educators, researchers, communities, and policymakers to strengthen civic life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Provide high quality professional development, resources, and materials that influence teacher effectiveness and student learning.</td>
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<td>b. Lead and support advocacy efforts for social studies in policymaking and educational settings.</td>
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<td>c. Increase community awareness of how a well-rounded social studies education prepares students to engage in the practices of citizenship.</td>
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3 Talking Points About Social Studies

1. Social Studies is **relevant**.

2. Social Studies is **needed**.

3. Social Studies is **wanted**!
Talking Point # 1: Social Studies is Relevant

- Social Studies is deeply important to the success of our schools and our nation.

- Social Studies prepares all students for college, career, and civic life.

- Social Studies can be part of a well-rounded education in every state ESSA Plan.
6 National Education Goals:

“American students will leave grades four, eight and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, history and geography.”

Goals 2000:
President Bill Clinton (1993-2001)

“American students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, art, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation's modern economy.”

Source: https://www3.nd.edu/~rbarger/www7/goals200.html.
No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act:
President George W. Bush (2001-2009)

- “States must test students in reading and math in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school. And they must report the results, for both the student population as a whole and for particular “subgroups” of students, including English-learners and students in special education, racial minorities, and children from low-income families.
- States were required to bring all students to the “proficient level” on state tests by the 2013-14 school year, although each state got to decide, individually, just what “proficiency” should look like, and which tests to use.
- Schools are kept on track toward their goals through...“adequate yearly progress” or AYP.
- States to ensure their teachers are “highly qualified,” which generally means that they have a bachelor’s degree in the subject they are teaching and state certification.”


- **Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grants in Title IV** can be used to support traditional American history, civics, economics, geography, and government education.
- **Title II** establishes National Academies for teachers and students to learn more about history and civics.
- **Title II** also establishes competitive grants to non-profit organizations for the development of innovative, engaging instruction in history, civics, and geography, particularly for underserved students.
ESSA Possibilities

• Ensuring that social studies is included in state plans for a well-rounded education.

• Multiple potential new sources of funding for the social studies (FY 2017 decisions not final):
  • American History & Civics National Programs: $6.5 million
  • Congressional & Presidential Academies: $1.8 million
  • Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grants: $1 billion

Source: FY 2017 and FY 2018 Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations bills
NCSS Advocacy Resources

• Advocacy and Policy webpage:
  http://www.socialstudies.org/advocacy

• VoterVoice form (open to all):
  https://www.votervoice.net/NCSS/campaigns/49475/respond

• Deadline around late February for constituent requests.

• Congress already beginning work on FY 2018 while settling the FY 2017 budget.
Talking Point # 2: Social Studies is Needed

✓ Social Studies was not defined under our previous Federal education law.

✓ Social Studies instructional time has been greatly reduced at the elementary level – where it should provide a foundation for student exploration of the world around them.

✓ Social Studies achievement has largely stayed the same on international benchmark assessments.
The Marginalization is Real

“88 percent of the elementary teachers noted that it was considered a low priority and 63 percent of the elementary school principals noted that history education's importance paled in comparison to subjects such as reading and mathematics.”

“Third-graders in public schools spent more time—in terms of both the amount and the percentage of time—on English than did eighth-graders. Meanwhile, third-graders in public schools spent less time on social studies and science than did eighth-graders. No statistically significant differences were found in the amount or percentage of time that third-graders and eighth-graders in private schools spent on English, mathematics, social studies, or science.”

The Marginalization on Time

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<tr>
<th>Grade / Subject</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 8</th>
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<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>30.2% (public)</td>
<td>19.4% (public)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25.5% (private)</td>
<td>21.2% (private)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>8.6% (both)</td>
<td>12.5% (public)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.7% (private)</td>
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The Marginalization on Achievement

“Nationally, eighth graders' average scores on the NAEP U.S. history, geography, and civics assessments showed no significant change in 2014, compared to 2010—the last assessment year. However, several student groups have made gains. In 2014, eighteen percent of eighth-graders performed at or above the Proficient level in U.S. history, 27 percent performed at or above the Proficient level in geography, and 23 percent performed at or above the Proficient level in civics.”

18% Proficiency is a “Gain”

“Grade 8 score in U.S. history increases from 1994, but no significant change in score from 2010”
https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/#history

“No significant change in the average geography score of eighth-graders since 1994”
https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/#geography

“Grade 8 score in civics increases from 1998, but there is no significant change in the average score from 2010”
https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/#civics

“There was no significant change in the overall average economics score of twelfth-grade students from 2006 to 2012.”
https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/economics_2012/
Talking Point # 3: Social Studies is Wanted!

✔ Students report that Social Studies strengthens their academic skills and civic knowledge.

✔ Students request more Social Studies courses and programs.

✔ Educators request more funding, professional learning, and collaboration to increase student achievement in Social Studies.
Our Survey

www.socialstudies.org

- Conducted by My College Options®. In the fall of 2016, social studies educators were invited to lead an activity in the classroom encouraging students to register for the My College Options College Planning Program. As part of that process, students and educators provided their attitudes and interests related to social studies, as well as their involvement with NCSS.

- Student Sample: 52,525
  - Estimated Population: 13,226,875
  - Margin of Error (MOE-99%): +/- 0.06%

- Educator Sample: 827
  - Estimated Population: 197,000
  - Margin of Error (MOE-99%): +/- 4.5%
Top 5 Challenges
Reported by Social Studies Educators

- Limited funding/decreasing budgets. (16%)
- Shift in focus to standardized testing/high stakes testing. (16%)
- Larger class sizes. (16%)
- Marginalization of social studies. (14%)
- Lack of scheduled time for collaboration with colleagues. (12%)

Source: National Center for College and University Admissions, NCSS 2016-2017 Annual Research Findings.
Challenges?

• A decrease in instructional time (elementary grades) and leadership positions (professional organizations, districts).

• The lack of a **consistent vision** for social studies education that is **enacted coherently** in a K-12 program.

• “We’ll just Google the facts”: social **media** replacing social **studies**.
Opportunities!

FROM OUR STUDENTS:
TOP ACADEMIC SKILLS GAINED IN SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Ability to form and support opinions. (65%)
2. Critical thinking. (61%)
3. Ability to evaluate concepts/ideas. (57%)
4. Reading comprehension skills. (55%)
5. Ability to navigate online and text sources to find information. (53%)
6. Ability to present information in a clear and concise manner. (44%)

Source: National Center for College and University Admissions, NCSS 2016-2017 Annual Research Findings.
Civic Benefits of Social Studies

• Gaining knowledge of world events. (83%)
• Understanding about their roles as citizens. (54%)
• Ability to understand politics. (48%)
• Understanding related to career options and the economy. (48%)
• Interest in becoming involved in the community. (28%)

Overall, students in higher income households and higher income high schools, as well as those with a parent who attended college, are more likely to report having gained multiple civic benefits as a result of social studies learning.

Source: National Center for College and University Admissions, NCSS 2016-2017 Annual Research Findings.
Our Students Recommend ...

- More field trips to museums/historical sites. (80%)
- New guest speakers from the community. (31%)
- More service learning/community service opportunities. (26%)
- More course offerings. (about 23%)

Source: National Center for College and University Admissions, NCSS 2016-2017 Annual Research Findings.
Course Offerings

- **History** is the social studies course type that is most commonly offered in high schools – 38% report the availability of four or more history courses. Almost 90% of educators report two or more history classes are required in their high schools.

- Only one course is offered in **Civics** (67%), **Economics** (71%) and **Geography** (68%), and only one course is required (94%, 91%, and 67% respectively).

- 14% of social studies educators say that there are no **Geography** courses available to their students. Nearly 30% say there are no **Geography** requirements in their schools.

Source: National Center for College and University Admissions, NCSS 2016-2017 Annual Research Findings.
National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

10 Themes of Social Studies

1. Culture
2. Time, Continuity and Change
3. People, Places and Environments
4. Individual Development and Identity
5. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
6. Power, Authority, and Governance
7. Production, Distribution, and Consumption
8. Science, Technology, and Society
9. Global Connections
10. Civic Ideals and Practices

Published by the National Council for the Social Studies in 2010.
http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/curriculum
Published by the National Council for the Social Studies in September 2013.

College, Career and Civic Life = “C3”
C3 Inquiry Arc

- **Dimension 1**: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries
- **Dimension 2**: Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts (Civics, Economics, Geography, and History)
- **Dimension 3**: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
- **Dimension 4**: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action
### What Questions Are Worth Asking?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Discipline(s)</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does where you live matter?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why is Springfield the capital of Illinois?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can words lead to war?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do individual votes really count?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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C3 Resources
http://www.socialstudies.org/c3/

The Framework (PDF)
Related NCSS Bulletins
Sample Inquiries and Resources

C3 Literacy Collaborative
Webinars, Learning Modules, Professional Learning Resources,
Unpacking C3 for Administrators, Professors, Policymakers
National Standards for Social Studies Teachers

http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/teacherstandards

Our 97th Annual Conference

#NCSS 2017

Expanding Visions/Bridging Traditions

November 17-19, 2017
Pre-conference meetings November 15-16
Moscone West
800 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA

http://www.socialstudies.org/conference
THANK YOU!

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