

It's almost that time again...time to reinforce the importance of social studies in students' education and to feel reinvigorated as an educational professional.

The **Northeast Regional Conference (NERC) on the Social Studies** will take place in **Sturbridge, MA** on **April 3-5, 2012**. NERC is an excellent opportunity to learn, to share, to develop strategies for continuing our important work, and to network in a professional and stimulating setting. Our theme, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning: The Role and Future of the Social Studies*, will ensure that the social studies continues to stay ahead of the changes taking place in our schools and society.

Each day of NERC presents its own opportunities for social studies educators.

- **Exhibitors** from publishing houses, museums and other organizations will have materials and information available.
  
- There are a number of exciting **half and full day workshops available on Tuesday, and over 70 presenters leading sessions and clinics between Wednesday and Thursday**. Topics range from Woody Guthrie to Wikis and from the elementary school classroom to pre-service preparation. Human Rights Institute director Richard Wilson will share how countries have turned from violence and hatred to justice and reconciliation, while others will discuss ways to use literature and technology to enhance our students' 21<sup>st</sup> century social studies knowledge and skills. It is an enticing schedule with knowledgeable and engaging presenters.
  
- There are many wonderful **educational and social events** in store over the three days of the conference. Some highlights:
  - o Tuesdays' clinics provide a mix of topics from graphic novels to genocide. Sign up early to ensure participation. We will be celebrating NERC and state award winners at an evening reception.
  - o Wednesday sessions begin with State and National Council presidents hosting a discussion on the "state of social studies" that promises to challenge all of us to action. At the New England History Teachers Association (NEHTA) luncheon, the **Kidger Award** will be presented. Craig Hodgkiss will start our evening fun with some **baseball history**, followed by Steve Armstrong's ever popular **music trivia** contest. In addition, there are over 30 options for learning and discourse throughout the day.
  - o Thursday invites newcomers (to NERC and/or teaching) to meet over a breakfast just for you. Julia de la Torre will kick off Thursday's sessions by talking about the significance of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and strategies to make it a reality. Connecticut's **Secretary of State Denise Merrill** will be speaking at a Connecticut Council for the Social Studies (CCSS)-sponsored luncheon on Thursday about the importance of civic education. The rest of the day includes almost 40 clinics and sessions for attendees.

Basic workshop summaries and registration forms are now available online at the CCSS website:

[www.ctsocialstudies.org](http://www.ctsocialstudies.org). More detail will be made available closer to the conference. Participating in NERC gives you a chance to learn, to share your expertise and energy with other education professionals, and to reinforce the importance of social studies in students' education. Take the chance. Spread the word. Join us on April 3-5 in Sturbridge.