President’s Message

I have long been proud of CCSS’s efforts and achievements for Connecticut’s social studies educators. Our work over the years delivering effective professional development, writing and implementing the Social Studies Framework, and supporting districts adopting inquiry-based instruction has contributed to cohesive, effective curricula throughout the state. Our vision, like that of NCSS, is for a world in which all students are educated and inspired for lifelong inquiry and informed civic action. We hope to create empathetic, informed and active citizens and the earlier we start, the better!

Toward that end, we are embarking on a project with the State Department of Education to develop a curriculum for K-5 educators based on the State Framework. This is an exciting prospect, and one that will involve close coordination with elementary school educators and administrators to be sure the end project is useful and user-friendly. Keep an eye out for, or be in touch about, opportunities to be involved in this critical endeavor.

Creating informed, empathetic citizens is also one of the goals of the genocide unit in my school’s 7th grade social studies curriculum. We use young adult historical fiction as the vehicle for studying conflicts across time and place. We have found this makes the events accessible to our students. After the first week or so of reading they are hungry for background information: Where is this place? Who were these people and why were they fighting? Exploring the historical contexts for each tragedy allows students to recognize patterns: how one set of historical events can impact another; common factors that might contribute to conflicts; and how “othering” behaviors can become dangerous if left unchecked. They begin to recognize the influence that governments and the media wield.

(continued on page 2)

Editors’ Note

The beat goes on: more activism from state entities in defining, deleting or requiring social studies content. The good news is that Connecticut has been quiet of late and allowing a curriculum group led by Steve Armstrong to manage recent curriculum proposals/mandates. Throughout this issue you will find reports from other states where some interesting (some might say “strange”) developments are underway.

While the developments described above are mixed, we share two other developments that are particularly disturbing. An article in The New York Times dated January 20, 2020 reports a study of differentiated high school history texts – in Texas and California. Too large, and somewhat restricted for copying, we cannot print it here. While hardly surprising the state-approved “interpretations” open up the question of how we address conflict and interpretation of historical events. Indeed, can we say that Americans share a common history?

A second article notes the increasing problems with the National Archives preserving the mass of material generated by the federal government. Increasingly underfunded, the National Archives has announced that it will no longer maintain any more presidential libraries. It has also allowed officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to destroy some records. The New York Times report, dated February 4, 2020, is somewhat politically charged and we are able to copy only a small part of it. We share the information because it raises a fundamental concern. As the Times’ article concludes, “So what are we supposed to believe, when we no longer have the capacity even to preserve a record of the past, much less learn anything from it?” (see page 6)

You will note some promotional material on NERC 50 on pages 4-5. The Northeast Regional Conference was started by the MCSS in Massachusetts and for many years it has been a wonderful opportunity for those of us in “greater New England” (add New York and New Jersey) to encourage professional growth. CCSS has hosted these conferences every four to five years. Of late, for any number of reasons...
President’s Message - continued

and how people can be manipulated into persecuting a group. Students better understand the importance of seeking out new perspectives, learning about others, and avoiding letting fear dictate their (re)actions.

As money, media and unkindness influence so much more of politics these days, critical thinking skills, empathy and awareness of past manipulations become ever more important. The future depends, as always, on learning lessons from our past. The earlier we start teaching this, the better. Making the connections between our past and our future is what we do every day in social studies classrooms. It’s how I remain hopeful that our students will make this world a better place for all.

Join CCSS . . .
And be eligible for reduced rates for conferences
See Membership Form on page 16

Editor’s Note - continued

including restrictions on released time for teachers to attend a multi-day conference, NERC has struggled to draw sufficient numbers to cover costs. It is possible that NERC 50 could be the swansong for what has been a great run. With all that mind, we urge you to take a day to attend the conference in Boston – April 6-7. Stand up for Social Studies! Information on the conference including registration can be found on pages 4-5 and on the MCSS website – masscouncil.org

Finally, we have included several articles on various approaches to “civics”. We find it somewhat interesting that some legislatures and teachers appear to believe that a course in government/civics should be the “fix” for whatever ails the American politik. While information about how our government works is important we would suggest that that the entire school curriculum ought to be a model for good citizenship: how we communicate with others, how we manage reasonable disagreement, how we address cultural difference, how we encourage service - in short – how we work together. Tell us what you think.

Tim thomas.weinland@uconn.edu
Dan danielcoughlin@charter.net
I. The Connecticut State Department of Education is sponsoring a number of upcoming webinar series that will be of interest to teachers. To sign up for any of these series, or if you have questions, contact Connecticut Department of Education Social Studies intern Yesenia Karas at SocStudiesIntern2.CSDE@ct.gov. All webinars begin at 4:00

1. **Series on Teaching the Women’s Suffrage Movement.** This series will be conducted by a combination of scholars and expert teachers. Sponsored by CSDE, Secretary of State’s Office, and Connecticut Council for the Social Studies.
   - 3/12: History of the Suffrage Movement
   - 3/24: The Suffrage Movement from an International Perspective
   - 4/1: The Suffrage Movement in Connecticut

2. **Webinar on Venture Smith and the new book Venture Smith’s Colonial Connecticut.**
   - 3/25

3. **Series on the Teaching of Genocide.** This series will be conducted by a combination of scholars and expert teachers. Sponsored by CSDE and Voices of Hope.
   - 4/2: Genocide in Rwanda
   - 4/9: Genocide in Bosnia
   - 4/30: Overview on the Teaching of Genocide
   - Webinar on Genocide in Armenia TBA

4. **Webinars on the Use of Music in the Social Studies classroom.** This webinar series will be conducted by a combination of scholars and classroom teachers. Sponsored by CSDE 4/21, 4/28

II. The CSDE, CCSS, and the Old State House will be sponsoring a series of “Salons for Teachers”, where teachers can get together to discuss issues important to them. More details forthcoming.

III. The CSDE and CCSS will be co-sponsoring a project to construct a model K-5 Connecticut social studies curriculum. If you are interested in participating, contact Yesenia Karas.
Preparing Students to Hold the Office of Citizen
April 6-7, 2020

EARLY REGISTRATION FOR NERC50 IS NOW OPEN! @ Masscouncil.org

This year, NERC50 will be a two-day event: Monday, April 6, 2020, and Tuesday, April 7, 2020. Members of Mass Council and the following social studies state councils (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York State, New Jersey) and National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) are able to register to NERC50 at regular individual rate.

A program fee ($15-$25) for Tuesday’s off-site workshops will be added to the Tuesday’s 1-Day Conference initial fee to cover expenses such as visitor admission fee, van or bus transportation services, operational and preparation expenses, and reimbursements.

Preparing Students to Hold the Office of Citizen

The theme of NERC50 is “Preparing Students to Hold the Office of Citizen.” Social Studies is a large academic field that includes history, geography, economics, civics and government, archaeology, and the behavioral sciences such as psychology and sociology. Collectively, Social Studies is intended to prepare students to hold the “Office of Citizen” and is essential for responsible citizenship in areas such as history and government, geography, economics, sociology, and communication. Social Studies creates opportunities for students to apply critical thinking and content knowledge to analyze information on complex issues and to seek solutions to real-world problems.
Monday, April 6, 2020

Monday, April 6, 2020 will be a day-long conference that will consist of a general session and concurrent 1-hour and 2-hour workshop sessions in the morning and afternoon, similar to our fall one-day conference schedule. We have added a fourth session in mid to late-afternoon. At this time, we are planning 7 concurrent workshops per session.

A full listing of workshops and schedule will be coming out shortly!

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

For NERC50, we are trying something different. On Tuesday, April 7, 2020, in addition to morning workshops at the Revere Hotel, Mass Council will offer some workshops at participating host sites in Boston and eastern Massachusetts:

- Minute Man National Historical Park in Concord/Lexington.
- Tsongas Industrial History Center in Lowell.
- John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston.
- Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the U.S. Senate in Boston.
- Commonwealth Museum in Boston.
- Old State House in Boston.
- Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.
- Massachusetts Historical Society and Leventhal Map Center at Boston Public Library in Boston.
- Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth.
- Old North Church and Paul Revere House in North End, Boston.
- African Meeting House and Black Heritage Trail on Beacon Hill, Boston
- History Learning Lab at North Andover High School in North Andover.
- Revolutionary Boston Under Siege Bus & Walking Tour will start at Royall House and Slave Quarters in Medford, Longfellow House in Cambridge to Shirley-Eustis House in Roxbury, to Dorchester Heights and then a walking tour along Boston Freedom Trail from North End to Boston Common.

REVERE HOTEL BOSTON COMMON
200 Stuart Street, Boston, Massachusetts
Why You May Never Learn the Truth About ICE

By Matthew Connelly
Dr. Connelly is a professor of history at Columbia.
Feb. 4, 2020  The New York Times

Last month the National Archives found itself in the middle of a firestorm after it put a doctored photograph of the Women’s March on Washington on display. Even if the photo was not part of the National Archives’ own collection, the exhibit distorted history, and David S. Ferriero, the archivist of the United States, soon apologized.

This was only the latest example — and hardly the most important — of a great and growing threat to our nation’s capacity to protect and learn from history. The press and the public have focused on the immediate, obvious problems, like this president’s exaggerated claims of executive privilege and national security to conceal information. But less appreciated is the fact that vital information is actually being deleted or destroyed, so that no one — neither the press and government watchdogs today, nor historians tomorrow — will have a chance to see it.

President Trump has long made it a practice to tear up his papers and throw them away. It is a clear violation of the Presidential Records Act, which is supposed to prevent another Watergate-style cover-up. When the National Archives sent staff members to tape these records together, the White House fired them.

In 2017, a normally routine document released by the archives, a records retention schedule, revealed that archivists had agreed that officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement could delete or destroy documents detailing the sexual abuse and death of undocumented immigrants. Tens of thousands of people posted critical comments, and dozens of senators and representatives objected. The National Archives made some changes to the plan, but last month it announced that ICE could go ahead and start destroying records from Mr. Trump’s first year, including detainees’ complaints about civil rights violations and shoddy medical care.

It’s not just ICE. The Department of the Interior and the National Archives have decided to delete files on endangered species, offshore drilling inspections and the safety of drinking water. The department even claimed that papers from a case where it mismanaged Native American land and assets — resulting in a multibillion-dollar legal settlement — would be of no interest to future historians (or anyone else).

As state eyes more civic participation for students, some NYC high schoolers are already getting a dose


Sadhar Khan talked rapidly one morning about why students should not be required to take the Regents, New York’s high school exit exams. “What teachers do is they rush through the entire school year just because they want to cover all the topics that’s on the Regents. They skip a few topics and don’t spend enough time on it to the point where you completely understand,” Khan, a 17-year-old senior at Manhattan’s Union Square Academy, said during an interview last month. “It’s like a competition or a race towards the Regents.”

Khan is an unlikely education activist, admittedly never paying too much attention to school policy before this. But his AP government class spent the last several months on a project for Civics Day on Dec. 9, hosted by advocacy group Generation Citizen, giving students a forum to present their projects. Now, Khan said he feels passionately about wanting to change the system because it’s something that he can relate to.

Khan’s class is an example of civics education in action. He and his classmates chose to look into the topic of testing, then read news stories and researched graduation rates at schools where students don’t have to take most Regents. They invited a city education official to brief them on standardized testing, developed advocacy tactics, and brainstormed questions to ask state education policymakers. After debating and figuring out their talking points, the students began calling and emailing members of the Board of Regents, asking them to allow more “consortium” schools, which can tie graduation to student work and projects instead of scores on Regents exams.

Their project is one example of what schools could do to give their students a richer understanding of civic participation, a state education task force believes.

continued on page 7
Last month, the 33-member task force recommended the state adopt three changes: create a definition for civics education, allow students to earn a “seal of civic readiness,” which they can use to fulfill diploma requirements, and be able to complete a capstone project like Khan’s, which could count toward a required credit in “Participation in Government.”

Their work comes in the midst of an ongoing national conversation about the state of civics education, much of it stemming from concern about the political polarization on display after the 2016 presidential election.

In New York, state education policymakers have pointed to low voter participation and lack of basic constitutional knowledge. More than half of the nearly 23% of eligible voters who cast ballots in New York’s November 2019 thought that undocumented immigrants had no constitutional rights, according to the education department. About three-quarters of those voters could not name all three branches of government.

But much of the conversation has also turned on what must be done to ensure students can become active citizens in their communities. With that idea in mind, New York City has spent about $7.8 million on the Civics For All program over the past two years. It was launched in 2018 to provide resources, programming, and teacher training to all city schools who want to go beyond current credit requirements for social studies.

Generation Citizen, which creates teaching models that schools can use to set up action-focused civics classes, estimated it would cost $10.8 million annually to create action civics courses across the state. The state Board of Regents largely lauded the task force’s work last month, signaling they would likely accept those recommendations, which still could be revised as the state solicits public comment on the proposals.

There’s “increased energy” around making sure students understand and know how to participate in government, said Sen. Shelley Mayer, a Yonkers Democrat, who chairs the Senate’s education committee. She sponsored a bill to encourage more high school students to register to vote, and another to create student governments in schools where they don’t exist. “My personal experience is that students are not being taught adequately about government,” Mayer said. “They do not know, including seniors in high school — including seniors in advanced classes — what’s the difference between a state senator and a U.S. senator. We dropped the ball for a good number of years here.”

The task force is not calling for the state to require classes around capstone projects, or asking to replace any courses with it. So, the immediate impact of its recommendations, if adopted, might not be significant. An incentive to complete a capstone project, the task force said, would be earning a seal of civic readiness, which students could use toward their Regents exam requirements. New York students must take five Regents exams to graduate, or they can take four plus take an alternate assessment, such as a three-part technical test for career and technical education programs. A seal in civic readiness would be an additional alternate pathway, if approved.

In New York City last year, just 3,743 students who graduated chose alternative pathways to graduation. The task force decided against requiring schools add the capstone to their offerings because they did not want to create an “equity issue” if they gave schools an unfunded mandate, explained Michael Rebell, the task force’s chairman and director of Columbia University’s Center for Educational Equity at Teachers College.

“The fact is, many school districts in New York City and around the state don’t have the resources they need to support kids on a serious capstone project,” Rebell said, who helped lead the legal battle that created the state’s Foundation Aid formula, which sends extra dollars to high-needs districts. “It takes teacher mentoring, it takes teacher time, with all the state mandates, with all the things that teachers in high-need districts have to do.” Even though the task force’s job is done for now, Rebell said he’ll continue to push for changes to civics curriculum through Democracy Ready New York, a coalition of more than 25 organizations that he’s leading. Members include the state teachers union and the League of Women Voters.

Khan’s teacher David Edelman used a teaching model from Generation Citizen to prepare his students, whose project was recognized on Civics Day with the Action Award, for using a variety of different tactics to achieve their goal. Edelman thought that the work he’s doing at Union Square Academy could expand by having teachers like himself share notes and collaborate with other educators interested in having similar classes. “It’s a struggle to do this, but I feel most passionate about doing this. This is why I got into teaching,” Edelman said.

Even though they’ve wrapped up the project, Edelman said some students are still calling and emailing members of the Board of Regents to advocate for their project. Some may attend one of the state’s meetings as the board starts a multi-year process rethinking the state’s diploma requirements, which could include an overhaul of Regents exams.

Even though Khan has taken his required Regents exams, and any eventual changes won’t affect him, he’s still advocating for a change. He has two younger brothers in high school who will also take Regents, not to mention, countless other students, he noted. “It’s one of the major issues for New York state students, for high school students,” Khan said.
Everyone agrees civics education needs redefining, but the concept is becoming too broad—and some new initiatives may lead to further polarization. Instead of rethinking civics, we need to rethink basic assumptions about teaching and learning.

The 2016 election sparked a wave of concern over civics education that is still gathering strength. The Chief Justice recently bemoaned the fact that “civics education has fallen by the wayside.” At the same time, there’s no shortage of attempts to bring it back. Impeachment is being seen as a “teachable moment,” and civics lessons are even showing up in math classes. The federal government has awarded $650,000 to iCivics, along with some universities, to improve the teaching of both history and civics. And as documented in a recent 99-page report, the landscape of current civics education efforts is dizzying.

While there’s a plethora of initiatives, the common refrain is that the old approach to civics—a high school class that lasts at least a semester, required in most states—just doesn’t cut it these days, if it ever did. The developments of the last few years have been catalogued in an engaging book by education journalist Holly Korbey called Building Better Citizens: A New Civics Education for All, published this fall. The “new” civics includes everything from media literacy to character education to lessons in having a civil conversation. And as Korbey notes, if you want high-schoolers to grasp civics, it’s crucial to start building their knowledge of history in elementary school. [Disclosure: Korbey quotes me in her discussion of that issue.]

But the definition of “new” civics is so broad it verges on being meaningless. Korbey’s book encompasses the stories of a student with autism who speaks out on behalf of others with special needs; a program that has kids visiting nursing homes; and the reinvention of a library as a community center where teenagers surf the internet in one corner while retirees chat over coffee in another.

One anecdote describes a high school teacher in New Orleans who brought her students to the Mississippi River, which borders the city, only to discover that none of them could name the body of water they were looking at. Having some experience of high-poverty high schools—where it’s not uncommon to find students who can’t locate the city they live in on a map of the United States—the only thing that surprised me about this story was that the problem is portrayed as a failure of civics education (and the solution a form of it called “place-based education”). Why not see it as a failure to teach basic geography? Towards the end of the book, in a discussion of the need to enable students to distinguish reliable information on the internet, Korbey quotes researchers who caution that “online reasoning shouldn’t be limited to just civics or politics, but a given part of every classroom subject, including science and math.” That’s true of many other aspects of learning now being swept under the umbrella of “civics.” We don’t just need a new approach to civics; we need a new approach to school. Among other things, we need to jettison the mistaken idea that if kids can Google something, there’s no reason to teach it.

But there’s a basic truth at the heart of these sometimes frantic efforts to turn teenagers into engaged citizens: civics as traditionally conceived is boring. Unlike history, which can be presented as a series of stories involving characters and conflict, civics covers dry abstractions like the three branches of government. If you don’t know basics like the difference between a city and a state—the situation in which many high school students find themselves because of deficiencies in our education system—these concepts will be hard to grasp. Even if you do, you may find your eyes beginning to close.

The initiative that’s getting the most buzz is “action civics,” which is covered in Korbey’s book—and its close cousin “youth participatory action research” or YPAR, which isn’t. Both of these approaches are supposed to inculcate the kind of knowledge that civics courses try and generally fail to impart, but to make the process more engaging by hitching it to “action” or advocacy. “Action Civics turns traditional civics upside down,” one activist in the movement has explained. “Instead of starting at the top with the Constitution and how a bill becomes a law, our hands-on teaching starts with a community or personal issue and works up through local government and politics and then to the federal system.”

Students are encouraged to identify an issue they care deeply about and perhaps know from personal experience. One description of YPAR gives as examples “issues of oppression” like “Islamophobia in America” and “Black girls’ experience in the school-to-prison pipeline.” In Korbey’s book, a class with many immigrant students decides to work on making it easier for undocumented people to get drivers’ licenses. Research is supposed to be involved, but the key element is action—perhaps lobbying or protesting. In a sign of how widely accepted the idea is becoming, one of the largest school districts in the country is now permitting students in 7th grade and above to take one day off each year for “civic engagement activities.”

It’s not hard to see how this approach could lead to political controversy: what if a student at a generally progressive school wants to advocate for an issue like gun rights? Beyond that, it’s not clear action civics will give students what they need to be responsible citizens. It’s generally agreed that the goals for civics include reducing political polarization, fostering critical thinking, and teaching students to evaluate evidence. Having kids choose a topic they already have strong feelings about may not be the best way of achieving those objectives. It’s well established that when people have a strongly held belief.
they’re more likely to accept evidence that supports that belief and dismiss evidence that conflicts with it. One commentator has argued that civics should enable students to “to defend a position on an issue that they don’t themselves hold.” Action civics is more likely to further entrench them in their preexisting perspectives.

Action civics is also designed to show students they have the power to effect change. But in our system of checks, balances, and generally sluggish legislative processes, many projects are likely to end in disappointment. Not every teenager can attract attention at the level of a Greta Thunberg or a David Hogg—and even they don’t yet have much to point to in the way of concrete change. Students whose “action” fails to lead anywhere could just end up cynical and disillusioned.

But there may be another way of engaging kids in civic activities that avoids these pitfalls—and also helps address a different but equally serious civics-related problem: the precipitous decline of local journalism. In the last 15 years, more than 1,800 local print outlets have gone out of business, and at least 200 American counties have no newspaper at all. Even where newspapers and radio stations survive, they’ve cut back on staff. The result has been termed “a crisis in local news coverage” that has “damaged political and civic life.”

In some areas, college newspapers are filling the void, covering city council and school board meetings. Why not have high school students do that too? True, there are obstacles—not the least of which is that our deeply flawed approach to writing instruction has left many teenagers unable to express themselves well in writing. But with the right kind of support from adults, perhaps including laid-off journalists, they might acquire crucial writing skills while performing a public service—and gain an understanding of how government works. Kids who really struggle with writing could produce a news podcast.

And instead of acting on a preconceived notion of what needs to change, students might learn to stand back from an issue and see another side. One student in a high school journalism class produced a story revealing that the school had used prison labor to refurbish its auditorium. While he started from a position of outrage, his teacher helped him learn to “find journalistic balance,” and he ended up modifying his views.

Having teenagers serve as amateur journalists isn’t the only kind of “action” that can have this kind of effect. Debate also has potential, especially if students don’t just take positions they already support. But the bottom line is that we can’t expect “civics,” new or old, to address all the issues that prevent kids from becoming engaged and responsible citizens. They go much deeper than that, and call for more pervasive solutions.

Utah high schoolers will have to keep passing a stand-alone civics test before graduating after a bill attempting to repeal that requirement failed in the Utah House on Friday.

Rep. Elizabeth Weight, D-West Valley City, sponsored the repeal legislation and argued that the five-year-old testing requirement has failed to connect with students, and instead has detracted from civics education while frustrating educators. Keeping the requirement, she said, means that students will continue to be pulled out of class to complete a multiple-choice exam that can be forgotten once it is successfully completed. “They will not be encouraged to vote,” Weight said. “They will not be encouraged to be engaged participants in their communities.”

Weight attempted to shore up support for her bill by sponsoring amendments that would have seen the test incorporated into the existing U.S. History curriculum for eighth grade students, as well as creating a civics and history task force to look at the state’s educational approach on those topics. Her amendments came in response to a substitute bill by Rep. Steve Christiansen, R-West Jordan, that would have created a legislative study group on civics education in addition to maintaining the graduation requirement.

He said the stress of testing can be beneficial, as it helps students learn to cope with everyday anxieties. “School is intended to help prepare our children for life,” he said. “And quite frankly, they will face — virtually every day — stress and a need to succeed.”

The House voted 41-29 to replace Weight’s bill with Christiansen’s legislation, despite Weight’s objections. But that action was soon followed by a resounding 50-18 vote opposing the new bill, effectively ending discussion on the topic for the current legislative session and leaving in place the existing graduation requirement.

Rep. Marie Poulsen, D-Cottonwood Heights, spoke against the creation of a legislative panel to consider improvements to civics and history education, arguing that is the role of the elected state school board. “Whose job is it to dictate curriculum to our public schools?” Poulsen said. “We’re the Legislature, but we’re not the super-school board.”

But other lawmakers had argued against repealing the test requirement, saying it promotes a basic level of civic knowledge and referring to the inability of an average resident to correctly identify the three branches or government or the rights protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. “I don’t understand why we wouldn’t want every citizen to be able to pass the citizenship test” said Rep. Brady. Brammer, R-Highland.
For now, W.Va. Board of Education won’t enact social studies curriculum changes
by Kailee E. Gallahan STAFF WRITER. Jan 27, 2020. WVNews, Clarksville, WV

CHARLESTON — The West Virginia Board of Education faced significant criticism over the past month after placing a state school policy out for public comment. While the policy contained a myriad of provisions, the proposal to decrease social studies requirements received the most feedback. State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steven Paine said after the vigorous response from the public that centered primarily on the proposed changes to the social studies credits, he plans to recommend to the state school board to keep the number of social studies graduation requirements at four credits rather than adopting the proposed three-credit plan.

“We had such a strong sentiment about the social studies credit provision that it was very clear to us that the majority of stakeholders had spoken and that they were not in favor of making changes to the four social studies credits,” he said. “I will not move forward to recommend to the state board that we decrease our number of social studies credits.”

Paine said due to the overwhelming response and number of comments received, he also notified the West Virginia Board of Education president and vice president of his plan to not move forward with the social studies provision in Policy 2510. The original intent behind the provision was to provide students with a “flex” credit to allow them to take a class of their choice, whether it was computer science, finance or world history, Paine said.

“This is why the state board has comment periods,” he said. “We want to hear from the people that we represent, and they have spoken very clearly regarding the social studies provision of the policy, as we received an overwhelming response from citizens, social studies teachers, legislators, parents and students.” Policy 2510, Assuring the Quality of Education, sets regulations for education programs as “repeal and replace efforts to reformat, reorganize, address code changes and broaden flexibility and definitions,” the submitted proposal states.

“Policy 2510 guides PK-12 education,” the proposal goes on to say. “Collaboration with stakeholders over the last five to 10 years (has) resulted in many changes. The proposed changes bring the collaboration to the forefront by allowing counties more flexibility in scheduling and personalizing education for each student. The proposed changes assist in addressing the academic, career and social and emotional needs of each student.”

The proposal states that only three social studies credits will be required to graduate, including one year of civics, one year of U.S. Studies and an additional course to be selected from any of the optional courses, including world studies, geography, contemporary studies, economics, financial literacy, psychology, U.S. studies, sociology, social studies college courses, dual credit courses or JROTC.

This has been the state school board’s third attempt in recent years to reformat high school graduation requirements for social studies, said Dr. Hal Gorby, teaching assistant professor and director of undergraduate advising in the Department of History at West Virginia University’s Eberly College of Arts & Sciences. “Every time that the state school board has rolled this out, nothing significant has changed from the previous time it was proposed,” Gorby said. “I have never heard anyone say that they thought this was a good idea, but rather that it would create challenges for our students in West Virginia.” When the state began to phase out social studies testing in 2013-14, Gorby said students already weren’t testing “proficient” in social studies classes.

In addition the elimination of content, Gorby said he has heard concerns that the policy provision would be “dumbing down requirements, resulting in our students learning less than students in other states.” “Teachers are already having a difficult time covering early America to present day. If the school board were to condense courses anymore than they are, we would lose or brush over large parts of American history,” he said.

Gorby said the adoption of a provision of this kind could result in a dangerous outcome for the state and its students. In addition to seeing a lack of understanding in critical reading and source material, Gorby said de-emphasizing social studies would prevent students from thinking critically about situations and historical events. “Social studies provides students with a sort of core set of practical skills that help them in more than just their history class,” he said. “To be able to grasp concepts, think about the cause, effect and impact of an event, and to have basic empathy and understanding are among just a few of the skills that social studies helps to develop.”
Teachers Fight To Keep Prehistoric Humans In NC Social Studies Curriculum

By ANN DOSS HELMS • JAN 30, 2020.. WFAE-FM. Charlotte, NC

The Bradshaw Rock Paintings in Australia are an example of Paleolithic Era art that might not be taught in North Carolina’s new social studies curriculum. TIMJN1 / FLICKR / SHAREALIKE 2.0 GENERIC (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Human evolution and prehistoric times would vanish from North Carolina’s social studies curriculum under new proposed standards. But some teachers are fighting to keep the Paleolithic Era alive in classrooms.

Kenneth Dailey teaches sixth-grade social studies at Quail Hollow Middle School in south Charlotte. That means he’s responsible for introducing students to a time more than 10,000 years ago, when Neanderthals and early Homo sapiens shared the planet.

“The Paleolithic Era would be where people were more tribal,” Dailey said. “They’re hunting and gathering, they’re nomadic, they’re moving around; you know, looking for food, looking for game. It’s a period that figures creatively if not always accurately – in pop culture. Think “The Flintstones,” “Land of the Lost” and the Geico caveman.

Dailey said it’s important for students to think seriously about what we know – and don’t know – about an era that predates civilization. The fact that there are no historic documents to consult makes it a better learning opportunity, he said. “I want them to have access to the scientific, the genetics, the geography, the archeology – I want them to have all of that,” he said.

Dailey says he was shocked when he saw the state’s proposed social studies standards. They call for sixth-grade world history to start with the Neolithic Era – the time when humans had started farming and building civilizations. The Paleolithic Era is just … gone.

In July, the General Assembly ordered the state Board of Education to review and revise its K-12 social studies standards. Lawmakers mandated specific changes in high school, where students will have to pass classes in personal finance and civic literacy to graduate. Educators and state Department of Public Instruction staff drafted changes for elementary and middle schools.

Evolution can be controversial. Some who embrace a biblical account of creation take issue with scientific theories. DPI hasn’t explained why the Paleolithic Era was eliminated, and the official in charge of the review didn’t answer when WFAE asked for an explanation. Dailey said it makes no sense to just skip prehistory. “If we did just start with ‘Here’s a civilization,’ I mean, almost inevitably the kids are going to say, ‘What’s going on before that?’” he said. “They always ask for the evidence.”

So, he said he did what he’s always telling his kids to do: He mustered his evidence and wrote an essay, which he sent to state officials and the local school board. “The new standards as written represent a bias, intentional or otherwise, away from science and remove a valid and evidence-driven explanation for early modern man’s development of both self and civilization,” he wrote.

A statewide teachers’ group called Red4EdNC reviewed the standards and came to a similar conclusion. The group’s analysis says the new standards would deprive North Carolina children of important theories about the origin of humanity. “We cannot understand modern humans and their behavior without understanding tribal humans and their culture,” the analysis says.

Lori Major Carlin, the state education official in charge of the social studies curriculum, says her team plans to address the Paleolithic Age in the next draft of the standards. The state will take public comments on the first draft through Feb. 15. The second draft should go public sometime in March. Dailey will be waiting eagerly. He said he doesn’t care so much about telling his students what to think about the birth of humanity … but he does want to teach them how to think about it.

Special Notice on Membership Dues and NERC Registration

Membership in CCSS runs from July 1 to June 30th each year. Members who are current on their dues for the 2019-2020 year will be sent a discount code for registration for NERC. To be eligible for reduced rates for the NERC conference, please be sure to renew your membership as soon as possible. Dues may be sent to CCSS, PO Box 5031, Milford, CT 06460.
Twelve New Jersey schools will begin piloting a new LGBTQ-focused curriculum this month, the first wave of a new requirement that will soon be mandated across the state, bringing another front in the culture wars straight into Garden State classrooms.

The pilot sites to be announced by the state Tuesday — including schools in Hackensack, Morristown, Newark and Asbury Park — are intended to be proving grounds for new lessons in history, economics and even grammar designed to improve awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender contributions and issues. The instruction, approved by the state last year, will be a requirement for all of New Jersey’s public schools starting in the fall.

“We want students to see themselves in the stories that are told,” said Ashley Chiappano, safe schools and community education manager for Garden State Equality, the advocacy group leading the pilot program. “We want to make sure they are getting accurate, appropriate and historically relevant information about the community and the strides that have been made.”

The law requires that middle and high school students learn about the social, political and economic contributions of LGBTQ individuals, but leaves it up to local districts to determine how to teach those lessons. School boards must update standards in time for the 2020-21 school year. New Jersey became the second state in the nation after California to require such lessons after Gov. Phil Murphy signed the measure into law Jan. 31. Supporters say the move reflects an inclusive history and promotes understanding; opponents decry it as a violation of religious and parental freedom.

“We’re all human and need to respect each other, but there’s a religious view that sexuality doesn’t define us,” said Shawn Hyland, director of advocacy for the Family Policy Alliance of New Jersey, a conservative Christian organization. Hyland said he was concerned that the lessons would “normalize or promote certain desires and attractions that violate one’s religious and moral beliefs.”

Which schools are part of the pilot?

The schools joining the pilot include Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in Asbury Park; Forrestdale School in Rumson; the middle and high school programs at Haddon Heights Junior-Senior High School; Highland Park School; Millburn Middle School; Arts High School in Newark; and Pinelands Regional Junior High School in Tuckerton.

Three charter schools — public schools that are independently managed — are also participating: Bergen Arts and Science Charter School in Hackensack, which has a middle and high school; Charter Tech High School for the Performing Arts in Somers Point; and Unity Charter School in Morristown.

Garden State Equality received 50 applications and chose schools that represent geographic and racial diversity, those that showed a strong interest and those with the greatest need for the lessons, the group said. Participants will get curriculum coaches, site visits and training. Those that applied but weren’t chosen will be given access to the curriculum online.

Teachers and administrators from the pilot schools will gather for training at Union County College in Elizabeth on Tuesday. Under the program, educators will get three to four lessons for each grade level and subject. The intent of the law is for material to be weaved across subjects rather than taught as a stand-alone history lesson, said advocates and legislators who supported it, including Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle, D-Englewood, one of the primary sponsors. “We didn’t want this to be a heroes-and-holidays curriculum. We didn’t want there to be a lesson on just the historical contributions,” Chiappano said.

Among the topics are gay victims of the Holocaust, who were forced to wear pink triangles, and whose stories have often been overlooked, according to a review of the proposed curriculum. Another lesson would include discussions about the memoir of a boy forced into gay “conversion therapy” and grammar lessons about using pronouns that reflect identity. The curriculum is intended as a model for other schools and will eventually be available online for all schools, according to Garden State Equality.

The group and Make it Better for Youth, an organization co-leading the pilot program, will host parent information sessions at each site. They’ll emphasize that inclusive learning helps the mental health of LGBTQ students, who face higher rates of suicide, suicide attempts and bullying, Chiappano said. “We want families to know: Here is what LGBTQ youth face when not being included and not being seen and that this is why the curriculum is so important,” she said.

Support and criticism

The Bergen Arts and Science Charter School in Hackensack announced in June that it would be part of the program, amid controversy after the school painted over a student’s LGBTQ mural at the request of the Catholic church that owned...
the building. At the time, school leaders said they wanted to show they were committed to inclusiveness.

“The curriculum test-pilot will be an opportunity for us to become a leader in this work, to create a model for other public schools. We’re proud to participate with Garden State Equality to do that,” Nihat Guvercin, chief executive officer of iLearn Schools, a charter management organization that operates Bergen Arts and Science, said at the time.

Teachers there are looking forward to attending Tuesday’s training session, Yani Hage, iLearn’s chief academic officer, said in an e-mailed statement Monday. In Newark, school board member Reginald Bledsoe advocated for applying to the pilot program. Four local schools applied, and Newark Arts High School was chosen. “God knows if I had the opportunity to learn a little more about myself, the sky would have been the limit for me,” Bledsoe said, adding that he identifies as a gay man. «It’s very important that all kids see themselves in what they are learning."

The law has provoked strong reactions from supporters, who say it’s about respecting rights and teaching a full picture of history, and opponents, who say it will take away power from parents and may encourage kids to question their sexuality. The Family Policy Alliance of New Jersey has collected more than 3,500 signatures on a petition calling the law a violation of religious liberties that “forces sexual ideology” onto children. The petition asks the state to give parents the choice to opt their children out of lessons about LGBTQ history.

“This law violates the fundamental and constitutional rights of parents to direct the moral and educational upbringing of their children,” the petition states. “It was written with no protections for families — families cannot opt their child out of the content for any reason, not even if they have religious or moral objections!” The law, as written, does not have an opt-out provision. Lawmakers and advocates who backed the legislation said it wasn’t an option because the lessons are supposed to be integrated into New Jersey’s curriculum throughout the year across subjects.

Under the law, each school board is expected to adopt policies, curriculum changes and textbooks aligned with the new standards. The state Department of Education will issue policy guidelines for local school boards outlining the steps they need to take. Bledsoe said he expects some pushback, and that boards need to explain that the lessons are not about sex. "No one is teaching kids about sex, but more so teaching about contributions of LGBTQ figures," he said.

**Special Opportunities for Social Studies Students and Faculty**

Apply for a two week stipend-supported Summer Institute integrating technology and history!

**July 20-July 31, 2020 NEH Summer Institute for Teachers**

Apply to join history, science and technology teachers from across the United States for a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for Teachers: The Cold War Through the Collections of the Intrepid Museum! The Summer Institute will immerse participating teachers in scholarly research as well as the artifacts and oral histories in the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum’s collection that embody the Cold War era. Integrating content exploring the historical context of technological innovation, the Institute will serve a national group of 25 teachers in order to deepen their understanding and increase confidence in their ability to explore the subject thoroughly, critically and engagingly with their students.

These projects are designed principally for full-time or part-time teachers and librarians in public, charter, independent, and religiously affiliated schools, as well as home schooling parents. Museum educators and other K-12 school system personnel—such as administrators, substitute teachers, and curriculum developers—are also eligible to participate. Applicants must be United States citizens, residents of U.S. jurisdictions, or foreign nationals who have been residing in the United States or its territories for at least the three years immediately preceding the application deadline.

Each participant receives a stipend of $2,100 for the two week institute. For more information and application instructions - [https://www.intrepidmuseum.org/cold-war-collections](https://www.intrepidmuseum.org/cold-war-collections)

**TEA-NCTA 2020 Summer Institute**

Applications now available for the TEA-NCTA 2020 Summer Institute, Considering Early Modern East Asia through Maritime History. July 5-9, 2020. University of Colorado Boulder. From the 14th to 19th centuries, the sea closely linked countries of East Asia as they engaged in rich economic, diplomatic, and cultural exchange and war. Using the lens of maritime history, this institute offers secondary social studies teachers an opportunity to work with scholars and specialists to re-center historical studies of early modern East Asia from national histories of China, Japan, and Korea to narratives focusing on the sea-based, transborder people, institutions, and practices that connected the region. In this four-day institute, teachers will gain an understanding of the political, economic, and cultural systems of the early modern East Asian world and reconsider narratives of encounters and conflicts with European imperialist powers. The institute will be held on the CU Boulder campus and application is open to secondary social studies teachers nationwide. Teachers selected for the programs will receive a travel stipend, room and board, and resource materials. Application deadline is March 16, 2020. [https://www.colorado.edu/ptea/ncta/ncta-summer-institutes-and-programs-asia](https://www.colorado.edu/ptea/ncta/ncta-summer-institutes-and-programs-asia)
Special Opportunities for Social Studies Students and Faculty

Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding - Customized Workshops

Islam is a subject about which whole libraries have been written, yet many teachers perceive it as one of the most difficult topics in the curriculum. It has been required in state standards for well over a decade, along with content on all the world religions, and in the wake of the September 11, 2001 and increased US involvement in Muslim regions of the globe, knowledge about Islam and Muslims is at a premium. It is a daunting task for teachers to prepare material that fits into the limited time available, that meets constitutional guidelines for teaching about religion, is correlated to standards, and is appropriate for various grade and ability levels.

The Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding offers free professional development workshops at the venue of organizers’ choice. The speaker’s honorarium and all travel expenses are paid by the ACMCU. The workshops can be customized to meet the needs of the organizer—a school district, community center, university department, or private school. These workshops address the needs of teachers for content knowledge, teaching resources, and constitutional requirements, giving them confidence that they are on solid legal and pedagogical ground.

The varied content of a full-day or half-day workshop or multiple day series provides basic knowledge about Islamic beliefs and practices, issues in world history and geography curriculum, integration of arts and sciences, material culture and trade across the centuries. Content modules are designed with state standards and the needs of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses in mind. The benefits to teachers and students go beyond the topic of Islam, addressing general issues and resources for teaching about all of the world religions in history, as well as providing thought-provoking ideas about teaching world history, world geography and world cultures. Every topic in the flexible, customizable workshops is paired with teaching material that is readily available in print or online, correlated to national and state academic standards. The teaching resources meet accepted guidelines for constitutionally appropriate instruction about religion. The lessons are designed to help learners engage with excellent scholarship in the field, so that in addition to content knowledge, they develop the critical thinking and geography skills required in every state and district program.

Customized Workshops

Workshops are not one-size-fits-all. In consultation with the presenter, professional development coordinators, curriculum specialists, and outreach coordinators select from the modules to create a half-day, full-day, or even multiple day education development program. Four groups of modules—consisting of basic information, core content, extended content and cross-curricular lessons—offer a menu of presentation material that can be combined to meet the needs of the teacher population to be served within the allotted professional development time. Workshop modules are described under Program and Content Modules below. The documentation and online resources will enable workshop attendees to share what they learned with their colleagues and administrators, ultimately benefitting teachers and students.

Fill in the form and attach it to an e-mail message to Susan.Douglass@georgetown.edu or fax the form to (202) 687-8376. To confirm, please call 571-723-2817 or send your contact information in an e-mail to the above address and we will call to confirm. Please allow at least three weeks’ notice to get the dates you want.

Education workshops are fully funded and free of charge. The Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding offers these workshops at no cost to the hosting institution. ACMCU also provides an allowance to cover lunch for the participants (catering costs must be arranged and approved before the workshop). Hosting organization’s responsibilities: The hosting organization is responsible for providing an audience of at least 25 registered participants. The host is also responsible for providing a venue for the workshop, with AV equipment such as overhead projector, an LCD projector, microphone if necessary, and a video/DVD player by arrangement. The host organization will provide refreshments for participants during breaks. Assistance with identifying local accommodations convenient to the venue site and/or airport will be appreciated.

- Teaching Resources: Each participant will receive a Teaching Resource CD and access to a teacher resource website. Institutional hosts will provide b/w photocopies of a few materials for hands-on use during the workshop. Any additional materials will be supplied by the presenter.

- Workshop Registration: Download the Teaching Workshop Request Form (in MS Word format). Fill out the information section completely. Please be sure to name the contact person organizing the workshop, with a reliable phone number and e-mail address, and cellphone for contacting the organizer upon arrival if possible.

- Customizing Workshops: Using pages two and three of the Workshop Request Form, organizers of full-day workshops select from the various categories of presentation modules, or modules can be combined, customized, or even specially developed to meet audience needs. Suggested programs include one or both basic modules; and two to five content modules per one-day workshop. Two listed topics in the Mini-modules count as one module. See the charts and module combinations to build a sample program, using the downloadable Program and Content Modules and Workshop Request Forms below. Half-day and multiple-day workshops or institutes will be developed in consultation with the organizers. For further information, or for help in selecting modules, contact Susan Douglass for a personalized consultation.

- Cancellation Policy: If the host needs to cancel the workshop for any reason, at least two weeks’ notice is required.
Award season is upon us and the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies is now accepting applications for the following awards:

Excellence in Social Studies Education (Two Awards: Grades K-8 & Grades 9-12) - [Nomination Form]
Bruce Fraser Friend of Social Studies Award - Nomination Form
CCSS Service Award - Nomination Form
Pre-Service Teacher Award (Two Awards: Grades 4-8 & Grades 9-12) - May 1 Deadline - Nomination Form
Louis Addazio Award (Selection by previous Addazio award recipients)
John Stedman Passion Award - May 1 Deadline - APPLICATION
Pamela Bellmore Gardner Social Studies Leadership Award - Nomination Form (You must email two letters of support to complete the nomination process to ctsocialstudies@yahoo.com)
Special Projects Award - Nomination Form

Read More about each award...

For inquiries email: ctsocialstudies@yahoo.com
For inquiries about the John Stedman Passion Award please email Yesenia Karas at SocStudiesIntern2.CSDE@ct.gov
CONNECTICUT COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES
MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership in CCSS entitles you to:

- Reduced Registration for the CCSS Fall Conference
- Reduced Registration for the Northeast Regional Conference for the Social Studies (NERC)
- Free subscription to the Yankee Post, the CCSS newsletter
- Opportunity to apply for “mini-grants’ of up to $500 for innovative curriculum in social studies and other special projects
- Opportunity to meet colleagues and develop a network of professional friends and associates
- Ability to keep up-to-date with developments in the social studies.

If you have always wanted to become a member of NCSS, now is the time to act. **New** membership subscriptions to NCSS will also give you membership benefits from Connecticut Council for the Social Studies for one year—a $20 savings. This offer applies to only **new** NCSS Regular or **new** Comprehensive members only who send in their form to CCSS. Joint member benefits include:

- All CCSS benefits
- Regular and Comprehensive membership in NCSS includes a subscription to Social Education or Social Studies and the Young Learner
- NCSS Comprehensive membership also includes all bulletins published during the membership year.

Please complete membership form. Make checks payable to CCSS and mail this form to CCSS, P.O. Box 5031, Milford, CT 06460.

Name_________________________________email__________________________________________
Home Address___________________________City_____________________State_______Zip______
School Name__________________________________________________________________________
School Address__________________________City_______________________State_______Zip_____
Home Phone___________________________Work Phone_____________________________________
Position_________________________________Level of Instruction_____________________________
Areas of Special Interest_____________________________________________________

**NEW** NCSS Membership

CCSS Membership (July 1- June 30) ______Regular* $75
______Regular $20 ______Comprehensive* $89
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  __Social Education
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