



California Council for the Social Studies
AN AFFILIATE OF NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

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March 5, 2011

Arne Duncan
United States Secretary of Education
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

The California Council for Social Studies (CCSS), an affiliate of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), is the leading professional organization for social studies educators in California. Unfortunately, we find the current focus on English-Language Arts and mathematics has resulted in the neglect of equally important areas of education: social studies, science, visual and performing arts and career technical education. We therefore, strongly urge you to promote rigorous well-rounded education in our state and nation.

Our educational mission is to prepare young people for college, career, and citizenship by fostering educational excellence and ensuring that all students have equal access to a well-rounded education. Social studies in particular, is key to creating an informed, responsible, actively engaged citizenry yet our current generation of students is sadly lacking competence in civics, economics, geography, and history education.

A recent survey conducted by NCSS, the largest social studies education organization in the nation, found that elementary teachers across the United States spend only 14 minutes per week on social studies. In addition, most secondary students complete only one semester of civics and economics. As a result, our children are not acquiring the foundational knowledge, concepts, and skills necessary to participate in a democratic life and compete in a global economy. Should this area of curriculum continue to be neglected, our students will continue to be unprepared to make important decisions as responsible citizens and unable to meet the political, social, and economic challenges of the 21st century.

Your voice plays a pivotal role in determining the scope and direction of our nation's educational system. Therefore, we urge you to promote

- social studies education as a priority in our nation to prepare students for college, career and citizenship;
- more funding, classroom instructional time and professional development dedicated to improving social studies, science, visual and performing arts, and career technical education, K-12; and
- social studies to be included in any application for state or federal funding of education.

We thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Greg Spielman
President