



California Council for the Social Studies Newsletter

A Message from our President

As the new school year begins, I want to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the California Council for the Social Studies. Whether you're returning to the classroom, leading at the district level, working in higher education, or supporting social studies education in another capacity, we thank you for your dedication to preparing students to be thoughtful, informed, and active participants in our democracy.

Each fall marks a new opportunity to inspire curiosity, foster civic learning, and help students connect the past to the present in meaningful ways. In a time when our communities and our country are navigating complex social and political challenges, your role as social studies educators is more vital than ever. You are not only teaching content-you are nurturing the skills of inquiry, empathy, critical-thinking, and civic engagement that are essential for the future of our society.

This year, CCSS remains committed to supporting you in this vital work. Our 65th annual conference will be held March 13th-15th in Garden Grove in the spring and will continue to serve as a premier gathering for collaboration, professional learning, and celebration of our shared mission. This year's theme is Local Roots, Global Reach, inviting educators to explore the vital connection between community-based learning and global responsibility. We are accepting proposals for the conference through September 30th. Additionally, we are expanding our virtual offerings, including four webinars to make professional development more accessible throughout the year. Be sure to follow us on social media and watch for our newsletter so you don't miss out on any opportunities.

CCSS remains involved in advancing high-quality, inclusive, and equitable social studies education for all California students. From curriculum policy to teacher preparation, our voice is strong-because it is informed by the experiences and expertise of members like you.

As you plan your lessons, design civic action projects, or explore new teaching strategies, remember that you are part of a vibrant and supportive community. I encourage you to connect with fellow educators through our networks, contribute your insights and successes, and reach out if you ever need guidance or encouragement.

This year, let us all strive to model the very values we aim to instill in our students: curiosity, resilience, compassion, and civic responsibility. Let's remind our students-and ourselves-that social studies isn't just about understanding the world; it's about shaping it for the better.

Thank you for your continued commitment, passion, and leadership. Wishing you a rewarding, energizing, and impactful school year ahead.

In partnership and with gratitude,

Dawniell K. Black





Stay Connected

Your Guide to Upcoming Events and Meetings



September

- 3rd - Proposal Writing Webinar
- 8th - Equity, Inclusion & Social Justice Meeting
- 8th - Government Relations/Partnership Development Meeting
- 15th - Executive Committee Meeting
- 24th - AI & Media Literacy Webinar
- 29th - Board of Directors Meeting
- 30th - Deadline for Proposal Submissions



AI & Media Literacy

SEPTEMBER 24, 2025
6:00 - 7:00 PM PT

JOIN US FOR CONVERSATION AND COLLABORATING DURING HIGH SCHOOL VOTER EDUCATION WEEKS, AND PREPARING FOR DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP WEEK, AND MEDIA LITERACY WEEK, WITH NEW STRATEGIES AND LESSONS!

Panel Featuring:

ALFREDO SILVA ADAM JUAREZ KATHERINE GOYETTE DR. JENNIFER ELEMEN

Facilitated by:

DAWNIELL BLACK

JOIN US!
REGISTER TO
ATTEND

MEDIA LITERACY WEEK

CCSS California Council for the Social Studies

WEBINAR



October



- 6th - Executive Committee Meeting
- 20th - CCSS General Committee Meeting



November

- 3rd - Executive Committee Meeting
- 5th - K-8 Civics Education Webinar
- 12th - Government Relations/Partnership Development meeting
- 17th - Board of Directors Meeting



National History Day - California



National History Day in California engages students through authentic historical inquiry on a topic of their choice, fostering the amplification of the diverse voices of our past. California History Day connects students to local, national, and global history by engaging them in discovering how the historical, cultural, and social significance of the past is relevant. All resources available on the [NHDCA.org](https://nhdca.org) website are free for any teacher to use with their students.

Student research, analysis, and interpretations are brought together to become their final projects, which may be displayed at school showcases. Student projects entered into county contests may be selected to compete at the NHD-CA State Finals, May 1 - 3, 2026 at Sacramento State University.

To volunteer as a judge, participate as a teacher, or learn more, go to nhdca.org or email nhdca@scoe.net.



2026 Conference Update

The California Council for the Social Studies is excited to open our call for proposals for the 65th annual conference. We are excited to host hundreds of presenters who will share their innovative ideas and instructional strategies that align with this year's theme: *Local Roots, Global Reach*

We are looking for dynamic and engaging sessions that will challenge our attendees to think deeply about their practice and the content shared with students. We are seeking proposals that amplify the voices of historically marginalized communities. Additionally, we hope sessions increase students' engagement in civic activism re-imagining a world that is just and equitable. We want you to ask questions about whose histories are included and find ways to include the voices of those that have been silenced. Students all at all grade levels (TK-12) need more opportunities to examine and tell their own stories while also learning about their peers. Successful proposals will highlight the intersection of identities and the interdisciplinary nature of the social studies. The 2026 CCSS conference will support social studies educators to work alongside students in building inclusive democratic spaces and narrating tomorrow's history.



We invite you to nominate exceptional educators who demonstrate excellence in social studies education. Our Teacher Awards honor those who inspire students, contribute to the profession, and make a lasting impact in their communities. Submit your nomination today and help us recognize outstanding achievement in our field at the conference.

Nominations are due by
OCTOBER 19, 2025

**SUBMIT YOUR
PROPOSAL BY
SEPTEMBER 30TH!!**

How to Write A Great Proposal Webinar

If you would like to attend a free webinar on Writing & Submitting a proposal, [register here](#).

Wednesday, 9/3/2025 @ 5:00 pm



Fall Quarter 2025 Legislative Analyst Report

Dramatic Reforms & Controversial Implementations

As anyone in the HSS field knows well by now, our disciplines have seen dramatic reforms in California the past couple of years, primarily with Ethnic Studies and Personal Finance. Beyond these two subject-matters we've seen ongoing attention paid to the Civic Seal of Engagement, while efforts to advance more robust Civics have continued to stall in the Legislature. Here's a quick run-down of where we are currently and how we got here.

Ethnic Studies

While the Legislature and Governor passed a law (AB 101) a couple of years ago mandating a single semester of Ethnic Studies as a condition for a high school diploma, a small provision was added to that legislation that made the mandate conditional on state appropriations. In a nutshell: that state funding effort stalled this year, meaning there is no statewide mandate beginning next school year.

However, nothing prohibits individual districts from adopting their own ES mandate at the local level. And several large districts (including LAUSD) have done just that. It just means the state isn't obligated to fund these costly endeavors, nor are any districts required to implement an ES course requirement.

The reason for Sacramento balking on funding the state mandate boils down to the controversy over how the Jewish people (specifically Israel) has been dealt with in some district-adopted curricula. Perceived anti-semitism led Sacramento policymakers into months of negotiations over the idea of setting state "guardrails" on such ES curricula, but those deliberations eventually met intractable opposition despite a series of policy and budgetary attempts.

This controversy will continue in Sacramento next year, but until a resolution is forthcoming, the primary work will either be done by local districts still willing to pursue local course mandates and curriculum adoption, or ignored by districts unwilling to tackle the controversy given they are no longer under a state requirement to do so.

Personal Finance

Then there's the other high school mandated course that was passed into law last year. Keep in mind the historic nature of these reforms. Prior to AB 101's Ethnic Studies passage, the state hasn't required any additional course mandates since the 1980's ... and now they've passed not one but two in just the past three years, both in our wheelhouse!



Fall Quarter 2025 Legislative Analyst Report cont.

The origins of this new Personal Finance course requirement is sordid, but in brief: backers qualified a clean, stand-alone course mandate to be voted upon by all Californians in a statewide ballot initiative. Sacramento politicians and special interest gatekeepers panicked over the prospect of setting curricular decisions through popular vote, and quickly scrambled to cut a deal with the ballot backers. That deal, AB 2927, was signed into law just one day before the deadline for the initiative sponsors to pull it from the next statewide ballot.

Unfortunately the deal the Legislature cut contained a cost-cutting provision the proposed ballot referendum did not: it allowed students the right to opt-out of the single-semester Econ course after completing the Personal Finance course (but not a similar, reverse opt-out of the PF course). This placed our Economics course in a zero-sum game with Personal Finance, something no Econ teacher wanted (in fact, most Econ teachers consistently tell me they've included Financial Literacy elements in their Econ course for many years, so they've already embraced both).

After expressing our concern with this student opt-out, I'm pleased to report the Governor and Legislature included a small cleanup provision within a recently passed Budget trailer bill that raises the opt-out question to the district level, rather than allow each student to make this decision on a pupil-by-pupil basis. The revised law now includes this important line (my emphasis added):

"Commencing with pupils graduating in the 2030-31 school year, a local education agency may exempt a pupil who completes a separate, stand-alone one-semester course in personal finance, that is not combined with any other course, from the requirement to complete a one-semester course in economics ..."

This means districts/schools are authorized to either provide the opt-out or not. So it's incumbent on our teachers and others who support the ongoing teaching of economics to lobby their LEA leaders (Principals, Superintendents and Trustees) to save our Econ course!

Civics

Most of the recent statewide action in Civics has been focused on the State Seal of Civic Engagement. As the latest example, AB 422 (Jackson) is moving it's way through the Legislature and would require students to demonstrate understanding of the vital institutions of democracy, including the free press, access to public libraries, compulsory education and the federalist system.

For the second year in a row, Senator Limon's measure to drive Seal activities down to the K-8 level stalled out. Interestingly enough, the author's colleagues just elected her their new leader beginning next year, so we'll see whether the new Senate Pro Tem will have the stomach to push a third time to get such legislation over the finish line with her new-founded clout.



Fall Quarter 2025 Legislative Analyst Report cont.



Curricular Reforms

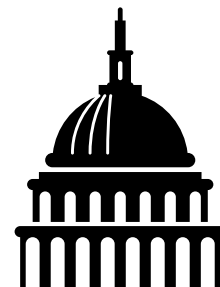
Every year there are usually a half-dozen bills introduced to mandate or alter what is taught in HSS curriculum, and this year was no exception. The only one such bill that didn't stall out this year just passed the Senate Appropriations Committee's notorious "Suspense File" on August 29 and looks like it will make it to the Governor's desk by next month.

AB 908 (Solache) previously would've incorporated the FAIR Act (historical/contemporary contributions of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities) into the SPI's Coordinated Compliance Review Manual (which currently requires districts to be compliant with the state's sexual harassment/discrimination laws). However, the bill was dramatically scaled back in July to require the CDE to ensure general compliance with state/federal anti-discrimination laws when reviewing/approving instructional materials.

I'm monitoring other less consequential bills but the above are the most meaningful and potentially impactful legislative efforts and battles this past year. As CCSS's legislative advocate, I continue to give voice to our mission to strengthen HSS instruction throughout our public education system so that all pupils have the opportunity learn their historical and geographic context, given the tools to expand their personal and economic worth, and be actively engaged citizens in our pluralistic society.



FRED JONES
Legislative Advocate
Law Offices of Fred Jones
fredjones@jps.net



CDE Resources



C



Committee Updates



Committee Work is Underway – Join Us!

This month, our committees came together to kick off the year with thoughtful planning and strategy sessions. Each group is focused on setting meaningful goals and creating action steps to accomplish them. It's inspiring to see the energy and dedication our committee members bring to the table as we work toward strengthening our organization and supporting our mission.

We would love for you to be a part of this important work! Joining a committee is a great way to share your voice, connect with fellow members, and make a real impact. Whether you have a little time or a lot, your contributions are valuable and welcome.

If you're interested in joining a committee, reach out today—we'd love to have you involved.

MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Chairs: Charley Gilmore & Robert Medrano

TEAM
EFFORT

EQUITY, INCLUSION & SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Chairs: Marika Manos & Ricky Aguirre



PUBLICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE

Chairs: Ben Foley & Brian Saucedo

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION & ASSESMENT COMMITTEE

Chairs: Carly Donick

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Chairs: Michelle Herczog & Mia Bray



California Council
for the **Social Studies**