

ON THE ALLEGED DEMISE OF SOCIAL STUDIES: THE ECLECTIC CURRICULUM IN TIMES OF STANDARDIZATION—A HISTORICAL SKETCH

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Social studies is a survivor, enduring as a mainstay of the American curriculum for nearly 100 years. Its longevity is not a tribute to its curricular power nor can we credit a cadre of finely trained professionals for maintaining its influence. Rather, social studies' remarkable survival is due to the near-universal acceptance of the idea that this chameleon-like entity allows practitioners to cast and recast its form and substance into whatever shape desired. This flexible-all-inclusive-eclectic nature of social studies stems from its first "official definition" issued in 1916.

The social studies are understood to be those whose subject matter relate to the organization and development of human society, and to man as a member of social groups.¹

At the turn of the century, in looking toward the future, all that America had become (i.e., its inventive genius, its unlimited resources harnessed, its great commercial and industrial power, its magnificent cities and its teeming humanity) rested on the ability of "man as a member of social groups" to negotiate the issues, problems, and concerns that such modernity created. In the face of these realities, the curricular needs of American society could only be met by attending to "man's" contemporary social aspects, not his past. Here, the engine of American education would be enlisted to serve the people. As children were freed from their bolted down nineteenth century seats, social studies, a new flexible and unregimented twentieth century curricular program, was invented to meet the demands of this progressive new society.

In practice, social studies "content" would be drawn from the whole of human experience and was purposely not tied to any specific content area. And, what was the purpose of studying this content? According to the seminal 1916 Committee on Social Studies, which introduced the field to American educators:

The social studies differ from other studies by reason of their social content rather than in social aim; for the keynote of modern education is 'social efficiency,' and instruction in all subjects should contribute to this end....[F]rom the nature of their content, the social studies afford peculiar opportunities for the training of the individual as a member of society....[S]ociety may be interpreted to include the human race ... The social studies should cultivate a sense of membership in the 'world community,' with all the sympathies and sense of justice that this involves as among the different divisions of human society.²

Throughout the twentieth century, educators applied this loose concept of social studies as the basis for creating experimental curricula. Often in strong opposition, another cast of "social studies" figures drew inspiration and content from the older traditional history curriculum introduced at the end of the nineteenth century. Like any other educational innovation, social studies was not created in a vacuum. Its invention was as much a reaction to prevailing curricula as it was an innovation. For citizenship education purposes, what existed in most high schools prior to social studies was a history-centered program introduced by the Committee of Seven, in 1899, calling for formal studies in ancient, medieval, modern and American histories as gateways toward effective citizenship.³

Issued under the authority of the American Historical Association, the four-block program for high schools was designed to furnish students "as citizens of a free state" with the "mental equipment" to

comprehend the “political and social problems that will confront him in everyday life.”⁴ “The greatest aim of education,” the Committee of Seven claimed, “was to impress upon the learner a sense of duty and responsibility, and an acquaintance with his human obligations.”⁵ The Committee was adamant that the curriculum include:

four years of work, beginning with ancient history and ending with American history...and recommend that they be studied in the order in which they are set down, which in large measure accords with the natural order of events, and shows the sequence of historical facts.... No one of these fields can be omitted without leaving serious lacunae in the pupil’s knowledge of history.⁶

Although the Committee of Seven report did not contain the amount of specific content as found in modern state history standards from such states as California, Massachusetts, or Virginia, or even the recently condemned *National Standards for History*, publishers nonetheless supplied textbooks well-stocked with dates, events, personalities and issues all chronologically arranged and largely standardized throughout the industry. In 1935, when the textbook was the curriculum, Rolla Tryon wrote that “the fact of the matter is that a textbook intended for high school use in history published between 1900-1915 had hard ‘sledding’ if it failed to claim that it conformed to the report of the Committee of Seven.”⁷ Tryon also noted that “for at least two decades after [the Committee of Seven report appeared], high school courses in history in the United States were almost 100 percent dictated by it. Even today [1935] more than a generation after the publication of the report, its influence is dominating in probably one-third of the high schools of the country.”⁸

Despite the virtual lock on schools, the history-centered curriculum was attacked by social studies insurgents for more than a decade before the 1916 Committee on Social Studies completed its work. In reaction to a growing number of critiques that held the history curriculum as unsuited to the pressures and realities of modern life, historian John Bach McMaster responded confidently in 1905, that in the “process of Americanizing the foreigner [and all other children] we must fill their minds with the facts of American history which they may not understand, but which they must take as so much medicine.”⁹

In contrast, social worker Jane Addams, well acquainted with settling recent immigrants in Chicago, argued in 1907 that “the usual effort to found a new patriotism upon American history is often an absurd undertaking.”¹⁰ Between these two positions, the hard-edge of Americanization applied to children and the softer progressive position that worked from the needs and interests of children, the social studies movement emerged.

Although social studies theorists had argued persuasively enough to gain the support of the U.S. Bureau of Education as well as the sponsoring National Education Association in advancing social studies, the history curriculum did not disappear. In fact, as Tryon noted, the Committee of Seven’s history program survived intact in many schools through World War II. Moreover, this author can attest that traces of the four-block scheme continued into the 1960s as his high school offered the Committee of Seven’s four-block program. Despite history’s resiliency, the critics’ point that history’s contribution to the modern curriculum could only be useful if it cast light on contemporary problems proved potent, if not commanding. Although the stewards of history sought to maintain the traditional history curriculum to “train the intellect,” social studies practitioners relentlessly pressed their demands that every content area must pass the test of social utility as a subject area that contributed to understanding and resolving contemporary social problems.

Given the flexibility of school systems to determine their own methods and programs for citizenship education, in time, some came to see social studies as history, geography, civics and government, economics, and other content areas loosely constructed around the teaching of citizenship. Others saw social studies as a unique field in its own right where young citizens learned the process-skills and methodologies necessary for citizenship. Until the 1990s, when the standards movement took hold in most states, it did not matter if a local school district followed a history-center approach to citizenship education or if it adopted any one of dozens of social studies approaches to citizenship.

Thus, before the state standards movement, these two or three traditions of the field—to be content-centered or process-centered or some combination of both—fit neatly under the big tent of social studies. Programs and curricula may have differed from school to school, but all were identified by the

same name: social studies. With the push for greater specificity and accountability in the standards-based movement instituted at the end of the twentieth century, those who wished to maintain social studies as a term of eclectic convenience were confronted with public policies and state regulations that demanded a specific curriculum with defined content and skills to be taught, learned, and assessed for all schools within state authority. One hundred years ago, educators and policymakers had instituted a prescriptive program in history education. Taking up the educational philosophy of John Dewey, some eighty years ago, social studies advocates instituted a loosely constructed citizenship program that marginalized history. In turn, by the late twentieth century many states adopted a standards-based model that reinstated prescriptive curricula. We had traveled full circle.

While some state standards reflected a renewed interest in history-centered (and other discrete subject matters) and dropped social studies by title, many others simply converted their curricula into content-centered standards with social studies remaining as the masthead. Still others retained the eclectic social studies.

The question of whether or not history-centered models will return in force or the eclectic social studies will recover ground lost in the standards-based movement remains to be answered. However, one thing is clear throughout the past century: It does not matter if history-centered models were couched as social studies or if social studies programs presently appear subdued by history-centered initiatives, neither history nor social studies has fully disappeared in schools. The question posed here is not the fact that social studies survives in such places as public schools, textbooks, or teacher certification programs, but whether social studies should survive?

This is not the place to recount the myriad battles between social studies and history nor to feature the many curricular models that were issued as social studies curricula (readers may consult other accounts for such treatments).¹¹ Suffice to say, that as the eclectic wing of social studies continued to drift from one curricular fad to another, the field's history-centered, disciplinary-focused wing remained entrenched in certain quarters, poised to return.

Inevitably, as the standards and accountability movement gained traction in the closing decades of the twentieth century, the eclectic social studies theorists scrambled to maintain their field's relevance in the schools at the policy level. As parents and policymakers demanded a clearly defined curriculum complete with mechanisms to measure the results of teaching, the loose construct of social studies became a problem. Suddenly, the very characteristics that had sustained social studies over the years—its flexibility, its adaptability, its contemporary orientation, its absence of a coherent core of knowledge—became liabilities.

Social studies had invested its capital in a series of fads: life adjustment, expanding environments, inquiry teaching, values clarification, issues-centered education, reflection, critical thinking, and dozens of others. Some of these programs featured a transmission of culture and history; others the critical study of the social sciences; still others sought to replicate social science scholarship. Some of the programs featured personal development through life experiences; others were meant to use these models to study social problems or help students to be more reflective; still others sought to induce social activism out of students.

None, however, managed to command the field and few survived beyond the life-span of its creators. Typically, led by university gurus and small armies of devoted followers, these eclectic innovations, seductive in theory, proved unworkable in sustained practice. At the end of his career, Larry Metcalf, the dean of 1950's "reflection" models, lamented that "social studies [innovations] never failed, they were never tried."¹² The reality of the situation was that given the license to invent social studies in your own image, each generation of social studies practitioners simply reinvented the wheel. The only tradition of social studies was to start anew.

Yet, the name social studies hung on through all those decades because of its infinite adaptability, its capacity to adjust to the curricular needs and interests of students as well as the changing ideas of educators.¹³ Social studies could be transformed into whatever a school might want. With one curricular foot in a scattering of subject matters and the other in a multitude of processes, social studies were everything and nothing. By the 1990s, however, its fluid, ephemeral nature reached a saturation point. At

this time, any experimental, free-form field was challenged by the introduction and spread of “standards.” This demand provided an opening for surviving content-based programs to emerge. The ideal of standards-based curricula required core content that spelled out what should be taught and learned—what every child should know and be able to do. This turn of public policy was better suited for content-centered programs with specific and detailed standards.

The time had come to retool school curricula and many policymakers turned to the older, traditional history concept for a roadmap. Many states renamed their programs, reflecting the content-centered nature of their state standards. For example, Pennsylvania dropped the term social studies altogether for state certification, favoring instead the more descriptive “citizenship education” as the masthead of its content-centered standards in history, geography, civics and government and economics. Other states transitioned to content-based standards, but still retained the term social studies. Nonetheless, several states such as Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Washington maintained the older, loose definition of social studies in their state standards.

If the state standards movement has impacted the way social studies is taught and is thought of in the various states, it would be instructive to review how this field, seemingly imperious to change, has changed in the past two decades.

The most potent attack on the eclectic nature of social studies was launched in the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*. Here, policymakers challenged educators to reinstate subject-based instruction. By specifically calling for “improved teaching and learning” in history, geography and economics, the authors of *A Nation at Risk*, members of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, leveled their criticisms upon the supposed cause of the “rising tide of mediocrity that threatened our very future as a Nation and a people:” ineffective, “diluted and diffused,” “smorgasbord” curricula “that no longer ha[d] a central purpose.”¹⁴ That critique fit social studies to a T.

Only seven years earlier, social studies theorists themselves noted the mounting problems of maintaining a curricular form that had expanded beyond the ability of practitioners to recognize and articulate the mainlines of this ethereal social stew. Anticipating *A Nation at Risk*’s critique, Robert Barr, James Barth, and Samuel Shermis observed:

The field of social studies is...caught up in ambiguity, inconsistency, and contradiction.... The confusion in the field is apparent.... The content of the social studies is a smorgasbord.... For twelve years many future social studies teachers are teased and tormented with an incoherent set of experience...with results that they enter their profession uneasy and confused. We seem to be in deep trouble.¹⁵

In recognizing what many theorists in social studies already knew as flaws in the field, authors of *A Nation at Risk* sought to reintroduce “rigorous” curricula, directly connected to “excellence” and accountability. The report ushered in the notion of “common experience” and “high educational standards.” The critical moment for social studies came six years later in Charlottesville at the 1989 education summit. Here, President George H. W. Bush and the nation’s governors, led by Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, prescribed proficiency in the traditional content areas of history and geography (as well as English, math and science) as essential national education goals. They never even mentioned social studies. While the direct impact of *A Nation at Risk* on social studies may have been initially superficial, the Charlottesville identification of history and not social studies was surely a watershed moment.

Charlottesville led to the “Goals 2000: Educate America Act” of 1994. This ambitious legislation included the hopeful assertion that “All children will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.”¹⁶ Again, social studies did not make the cut.

Knowing that standards in history, geography, civics and government, and economics would be written without their direct involvement, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) leaders shrewdly opted to create and finance its own standards, *Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, in 1994. Adopting an “If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em” approach, the NCSS standards were designed to complement the four traditional disciplines within social studies. The NCSS standards were pitched to

schools as a mechanism to unite the four major subject areas (history, geography, civics and government and economics) with other social studies areas (e.g., sociology, anthropology, archeology, psychology). The once eclectic social studies, now forced to be more standard-like, also sought to highlight multicultural themes and concepts.

As much as the NCSS tried to hold its audience, its advocates could not stop from shooting themselves in the foot. As the educational world moved closer to standardization and testing accountability, the NCSS moved further in the opposite direction with its kitchen-sink like definition of social studies that was diametrically opposed to the sort of content focus many states had opted for their state history, geography, civics and government, and economic standards. As featured in the NCSS standards:

Social studies is 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, archeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world¹⁷

Obviously, such an all-and-nothing definition mounted a daunting, if not impossible, obstacle for standards writers attempting to nail down a curriculum. Despite this unwieldy definition, the NCSS standards might have gained scant traction, but for the unexpected debacle of the proposed *National Standards for History*, released in October 1994. Touted as “the first milestone in the development of standards of excellence for the nation’s schools,” this document came under a withering barrage of criticism led by former Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Lynne V. Cheney, who had helped its creation.

Although the authors of the *National Standards of History*—based at UCLA’s National Center of History in Schools—insisted that their work represented a “national consensus” on American history, the standards turned out mainly to be a “consensus” among multicultural and leftist interpretations of American history. By January 1995, the criticism had grown so intense that Congressional leaders began to backpedal on the whole idea of national standards in any field (the English and math standards had also proven deeply controversial). The nails went into the national standards coffin when the U.S. Senate condemned the *National Standards for History* on January 18, 1995. Consequently, the Clinton administration’s Goals 2000 program shifted its focus from national to state standards.

When the *National Standards for History* took its well-deserved lumps, the poorly constructed ten-strand NCSS social studies standards passed under the educational radar completely unnoticed. Suddenly, just as the national standards-based movement appeared to bury eclectic, unanchored social studies models, the come-back kid of the school curriculum was given a new lease on life.

Namely, the demise of the *National Standards for History* left a void in school curricula that the NCSS standards quickly filled—proof that the social studies remained a viable element of school life. Capitalizing on this opening, as the state standards movement spread, the NCSS pressed to maintain its presence within the standards movement as well as its influence over the one area of the educational system left untouched by state policy regulations, control of state teacher certification programs in colleges and universities. Still, the NCSS standards had problems of their own. The field’s practice of basing content on contemporary concerns worried policy makers seeking to return to basic knowledge and skills with a more descriptive curriculum.

While flying the flag of eclectic social studies, many social studies leaders remained less concerned with teaching history and civics than with using their version of the past to promote ideological agendas. The influx of multicultural themes, those that highlighted particular cultures, ethnicities, sexual orientations, class and other human characteristics rooted in modern political contexts, swamped any pretext of political neutrality and objectivity. If the patent patronizing to minorities groups (to curry political capital) was not bad enough, teachers were inundated with over-stuffed “cultural” and “social justice” curricula spread a mile long and an inch deep.

Earlier critics of social studies had worried that social studies ignored chronology and historical context, not that it was ideologically tilted. After all, one quality of social studies was that its adaptable and inclusive nature was non-judgmental. All sides of issues were open to scrutiny and debate and ideologically charged “answers” were recognized and condemned as propaganda.¹⁸ Though proselytizing for social justice is often couched in terms of promoting diversity, in fact, such efforts cause social studies to violate its own eclectic nature by rejecting the tenet of neutrality and openness that was once part of its credo.

As social studies forswears its traditional eclecticism, the cycle of reform has come full circle. With the implementation of statewide standards, social studies advocates in many states could no longer count on flexibility or rely on opportunistic lessons drawn from the supposed needs and fleeting interests of students and teachers.¹⁹ This position favors the return of history-centered (content centered) models. Still, to many policymakers, although the ideal of state standards demands that all children receive rigorous, essential knowledge and skills in various school subjects, including history, geography, civics and government, and economics, the truth is that not all states have taken up this reasonable cause. While a number of states continue to cling to social studies in name, the state standards movement has put a significant dent in the eclectic social studies. However, with many states promoting the NCSS’s multicultural and morally relativistic curricula, we certainly have yet to see a strong movement within the educational establishment back to rigorous history standards.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, on one end of the policy-making spectrum, we find ourselves returning to the prescriptive curricular model that once prevailed at the end of the nineteenth century. On the other end of this spectrum, we find proponents of the NCSS standards, fiercely defending their turf. The issue for us is, will the movement to replace social studies with history and civics gain momentum and force curricular change?

In 1899, the teaching of American history served as the gateway to citizenship education. To illustrate just one bit of the big picture, in 2001, Congress authorized the Teaching of (traditional) American History grant program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Its purposes are

(1) to carry out activities to promote the teaching of traditional American history in elementary schools and secondary schools as a separate academic subject (not as a component of social studies).

(2) for the development, implementation, and strengthening of programs to teach traditional American history as a separate academic subject (not as a component of social studies) within elementary school and secondary school curricula, including the implementation of activities.²⁰

Social studies advocates can hardly miss the handwriting on this Congressional wall: The focus of this grant features American history “not as a component of social studies.” Although the success of American history as the centerpiece of citizenship education within the context of a state standards model remains to be proven, the fact that social studies lobbyists have consistently failed to persuade policymakers to retain their program suggests that there might be some serious chinks in the social studies grip on public schooling.

Still, would that the dead be buried with their bones. As the eclectic social studies may appear to be in a serious tailspin among select policymakers (and much of the public hardly knows it even exists), its influence hangs on. Social studies standards persist in nearly a third of state education standards. In addition, teacher certification programs that guard the gateway to public school teaching are manned by social studies stalwarts. State departments of education also defer to colleges and universities whose social studies professors continue to train the square pegs of social studies to fit in the round holes of history-centered state standards. Finally, “nervous nellies” in the textbook industry continue to publish social studies curricular materials unanchored to state history standards, hopeful that the disconnect between policy makers, higher education, and public schools will not leave them with warehouses of useless products. While we should not write the eulogy for social studies, considering that the twentieth

century began with a history focus for citizenship education, in time it might be more accurate to say that history-centered citizenship education is the real survivor...for what goes around is finally coming around again.

NOTES

1. From the 1916 Committee on Social Studies Report, as reprinted in David Warren Saxe, 1991, *Social Studies in Schools: A History of the Early Years* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 204.
2. *Ibid.*, 204-05.
3. American Historical Association, *Report of the Committee of Seven* (New York: Macmillan, 1899).
4. *Ibid.*, 16.
5. *Ibid.*, 35.
6. *Ibid.*, 34-35.
7. Rolla M. Tryon, *Social Sciences as School Subjects* (New York: Charles Scribners, 1935), 27
8. *Ibid.*, 24.
9. John Bach McMaster, in American Historical Association, "Conference on Public School History Teachers," (Washington, D.C., United States Government Printing Office, 1905), 3-4.
10. Jane Addams, "Influence of Foreign Population on Teaching History and Civics," In *Proceedings of North Central History Teachers Association* (Chicago: NCHTA, 1907), 3-4.
11. I have covered the origins of social studies in a number of other publications. Scholars might review the following as necessary: David W. Saxe, "American Social Studies and Traditional History," in Hans Albin Larsson, ed., 1998, *Historiedidaktiska Utmaningar* (Jönköping, Sweden: Jönköping University Press, 1998); David W. Saxe, *Social Studies in Schools*; David W. Saxe, "Social Studies Foundations: A Brief View of the Social Education Debate, c.1910s," in James L. Barth, ed., *Foundations of Social Studies Bulletin* 1 (January 1989): 20-30; David W. Saxe, "Salient Dates of Social Studies: 1857-1940," *International Journal of Social Education* 6, no. 2 (Autumn 1991): 11-18; David W. Saxe, "An Introduction to the Seminal Social Welfare and Efficiency Prototype: The Founders of 1916 Social Studies," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 156-178; David W. Saxe, "Framing a Theory for Social Studies Foundations," *Review of Educational Research* 62, no. 3 (Fall 1992): 259-77; and David W. Saxe, "Establishing a Voice for History in Schools: The First History Methods Textbooks, 1896-1902," *Theory and Research in Social Education* 22, no. 4 (Fall 1994): 482-514.
12. As quoted in David Warren Saxe, "Whatever Happened to the Socials Studies?" *International Journal of Social Education* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 54.
13. I refer readers to the following who might seek more detail on social studies in the 20th century to David Jenness, *Making Sense of Social Studies* (New York: Macmillan, 1990) and to explore social studies in the context of 20th century educational reform, Diane Ravitch, *Left Back* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
14. Terrance Bell, *A Nation at Risk* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1983).
15. Robert Barr, James Barth, and Samuel Shermis, *Defining Social Studies*, (Arlington, Va.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1977), 1-4.
16. *Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1994), 70.
17. National Council for the Social Studies, *Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* (Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1994), vii.
18. See Shirley Engle and Anna Ochoa, *Education for Democratic Citizenship* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988).
19. See David Warren Saxe, *The State of State History Standards in 37 States and the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 1998); and also, David Warren Saxe, "State of State History Standards," in Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Michael J. Petrilli, eds., *State of State Standards* (Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham, 2002).
20. Teaching of American History Grant *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (2001), United States Department of Education, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 2001).

Table One:

A Thumbnail Sketch of the Rise of Social Studies

1900-1916	Theorists present the rationale for social studies, critics attack prevailing curricula	Thomas Jesse Jones and Arthur Dunn introduce the idea that modern problems should be the focus of citizenship education; Led by David Snedden, critics argue for replacement of history-centered curricula.
1913-1916	Outline of the Social Studies: National Education Association's Committee on the Social Studies	With U.S. government backing, social studies is introduced to American schools.
1921	Organization established to promote social studies	National Council for the Social Studies founded by Harold and Earl Rugg, Edgar Dawson.
1922-1930s	Publishers introduce textbooks and materials in support of social studies	Harold Rugg publishes his "scientifically-based" social studies series.
1922-1930s	Indicating the acceptance of social studies in state policy, state agencies and local school districts institute social studies programs as the official/authorized curriculum	Two states lead the way: New Jersey (1917) by recommending a course of study and Pennsylvania (1921) by instituting a state level office in social studies.
1926-1932	Opposition to social studies is marginalized as one-time opponents come into tent	Social studies is legitimized by the American Historical Society, which accepts it as a school subject; AHA co-sponsors the Commission on Social Studies, which advances social studies as the main curricular vehicle for citizenship education.

Table Two

A Thumbnail Sketch of the Alleged Demise of Social Studies

1980s	Curricula in the eclectic nature of social studies are judged as ineffective.	<i>A Nation at Risk</i> report (1983) calls on policymakers to return to essential content with accountability.
1989	Policymakers join to demand more effective programs for public education, calling for solid content in history and geography. The National Council for the Social Studies is ignored.	Education Summit in Charlottesville; approves the framework for Goals 2000.
1994	Government pays for development of national academic standards. The NCSS develops its own independent “content” standards.	Goals 2000 Act is signed into law by Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton.
1995	Some states with strong history-centered standards feature a return to disciplinary focused school curricula tied directly to state assessment	Publication of the Virginia state history standards
1994-2003	Policymakers re-center citizenship curricula on history, geography, civics and government, and economics.	Congress authorizes \$250 million for teaching traditional American history (“not social studies”), first grants awarded in 2001; President George W. Bush introduces “We the People” initiatives to invigorate citizenship education.