

# Resolutions Passed by the 2007 NCSS House of Delegates

*The NCSS House of Delegates, which met on November 30 and December 1, during the NCSS Annual Meeting in San Diego, passed the following resolutions.*

## **07-01-1: NCLB Action Plan for NCSS Advocacy**

Supported by: California, Georgia, Massachusetts, Middle States, New Mexico, New York State, North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Texas

Rationale: The NCSS Position Statement on NCLB needs to be supported by an action plan, which will assist and guide the NCSS leadership in working with U.S. representatives and U.S. senators to draft and pass legislation that modifies NCLB to include social studies.

Whereas, the implementation of NCLB has caused a narrowing of the curriculum, which includes a diminished role for social studies nationally and across all grade levels; and

Whereas, social studies education is key to providing our children a civics education; and

Whereas, social studies provides our nation's children with an understanding of the history of our roots in Greek democracy, and the republic of Rome, the governing principles embodied in our Constitution, and our American heritage; and

Whereas, social studies is essential in building the critical thinking skills needed by all our citizens to address key social issues; and

Whereas, social studies provides the content knowledge of geography and economics required to prepare students to engage successfully as productive citizens in a global society;

BE IT RESOLVED that the NCSS Board leadership will develop proposals for specific changes to NCLB legislation, which will ensure the inclusion of social studies in the educational mandates of NCLB.

## **07-01-2: Support for NAEP Assessments in Core Social Studies Disciplines**

Supported by: Colorado Council for the Social Studies, Georgia, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Texas

Rationale: The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) sets policy for the administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), known as the nation's report card. NAGB has determined that a number of scheduled tests related to NCLB-designated core content areas would be eliminated or scaled back without adequate resources.

Whereas, NAGB has eliminated U.S. history and civics in grades 4 in 2010 and 2014 from the NAEP assessment schedule, postponed geography from 2010 to 2014, and eliminated economics and world history scheduled for 2012;

Whereas, changes in planned testing and administration of the NAEP require significant lead time to accommodate the lengthy process of crafting test questions, selecting representative samples of schools and students, and other preparations, including a decision on whether to proceed with the geography test by February 2008;

Whereas, members of Congress have recognized the need for expanded testing and are considering a proposal to administer tests in more states with larger sample sizes in U.S. history and civics to provide comparative data similar to other NAEP assessed subjects;

Whereas, research has well established the impact of assessment on instructional time, including the documented marginalization of social studies teaching and learning in our nation's classrooms and schools;

BE IT RESOLVED that the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the

NCSS membership and the Council's board contact their congressional representatives to request that funding for NAEP assessments assures that those related to NCLB-designated core social studies content areas are administered according to the original schedule.

## **07-01-3: NCSS Early Childhood Education Position Statement Update Committee**

Supported by: Arizona, California, Connecticut, Georgia, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas, Wisconsin

Rationale: The current NCSS position statement should be reviewed and updated since it was published in June of 1988. New research in the last 18 years and an increased focus on the importance of early childhood education nationally compels NCSS to review and develop an updated position statement.

Whereas, NCSS has recommended more outreach to early childhood and elementary education; and

Whereas, NCSS has an outdated position statement regarding early childhood social studies education; and

Whereas, NCSS and other organizations are in the process of reviewing their standards; and

Whereas, there is a wealth of recent research concerning how young children learn and their capabilities of learning social studies content, skills and concepts;

BE IT RESOLVED that the National Council for the Social Studies convene a body to develop a new position statement on social studies for early childhood education.

## **07-01-4: Fostering Effective Communication among Social Studies Communities**

Supported by: California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York State, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin

Rationale: Numerous organizations including economic councils, historical councils, geographic alliances, and civic education communities currently exist and independently work toward a common goal. However, the communication between these distinct groups is often inarticulate, informal, or ineffectively shared.

Whereas, local and regional institutions such as historical societies, museums, and archives serve as valuable potential resources for social studies educators; and

Whereas, multiple and varied positions currently exist and communication between these groups is inconsistent and informal; and

Whereas, social studies communities working independently can develop a myopic view to their immediate concerns in the absence of a greater discussion; and

Whereas, communication among colleagues is imperative and necessary; and

Whereas, national, state, and regional conferences are excellent ways for professionals to communicate and share ideas; and

Whereas, it is important that NCSS take a lead role to support and promote national, state and regional conferences; and

Whereas, conferences are excellent venues to advance and promote social studies education;

BE IT RESOLVED that, in order to improve the quality of social studies teaching and learning in every classroom, the NCSS national, state, regional, local councils and special interest communities relating to social studies, will open a clear dialog between these diverse groups through joint endeavors including conferences, publications, and/or sponsorships to better address a theoretical, practical and standards-based approach to the teaching of social studies.

#### **07-01-5: Joint Membership Recruitment**

Supported by: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee and Wisconsin  
Rationale: In an effort to increase joint membership, state councils and NCSS would benefit greatly from the exchange of membership database information.

Whereas, sharing membership database will benefit both organizations increasing our advocacy efforts for quality social studies K-16; and

Whereas, there is strength in numbers; and

Whereas, currently, NCSS provides to affiliates a list of state NCSS members only at the time of the affiliation process; and

Whereas, most state councils do not provide NCSS with a usable electronic database to recruit joint members; and

Whereas, state councils have limited power compared to the power of a national organization such as NCSS to advocate for quality social studies K-16 locally;

BE IT RESOLVED, NCSS provide state councils with electronic membership information quarterly;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, state councils provide NCSS with an electronic copy of state member database for joint membership recruitment only.

#### **07-01-6: Support for the Development of a Revolving Membership System and Process**

Supported by: Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, and Tennessee

Rationale: The development of a process for enrollment and renewing state membership is more effective if it is similar to the NCSS process.

Whereas, it is to the advantage of NCSS and state councils to exchange membership database information; and

Whereas, it will benefit both organizations; and

Whereas, it aids in increasing state membership; and

Whereas, as state membership grows so will the ability of states to aid in the growth of NCSS membership;

BE IT RESOLVED that NCSS provide and aid state councils in the development of a process that will allow revolving membership enrollment and renewal.

#### **07-01-7: Support for Increased Pre-Service Teacher Recruitment**

Supported by: Arkansas, ATSS/UFT-NYC, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, Middle States, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, New York State, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin

Rationale: The membership of NCSS should reflect the changing demographics of American society. Therefore, active recruitment in pre-service social studies teacher education programs should be strengthened and continued.

Whereas, NCSS recognizes that diversity adds to the strength of the organization; and

Whereas, NCSS has a historic commitment to diverse membership; and

Whereas, ethnic minority graduates, urban colleges, and minority organizations frequently enter the teaching profession without being actively recruited into NCSS;

BE IT RESOLVED that the NCSS Taskforce on Underrepresented Groups actively

recruit and initiate partnerships with institutions of higher education to increase membership of people from underrepresented groups.

#### **07-01-9: On-Demand Professional Development**

Supported by: California, Connecticut, Michigan, New Mexico, New York State, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin

Rationale: NCSS professional development initiatives serve an increasingly diverse community that demands excellence at a cost effective price point. New technologies and nationwide interest in on-demand, anytime, anywhere professional development compels NCSS to seek partnerships and develop digital tools for the 21st century.

Whereas, NCSS serves teachers in every state, district, and school in the United States; and

Whereas, NCSS has relied on traditional delivery systems for its professional development products; and

Whereas, NCSS's professional development products are an underused resource that generates a modest revenue stream; and

Whereas, NCSS and other organizations have common if not universal goals to support school improvement, accomplished social studies teaching, and student success; and

Whereas, there are proven and effective models for distance learning and online professional development; and

Whereas, preK-12 social studies teachers deserve and desire an array of options and opportunities for on-demand professional development from exemplary scholars and master teachers that reflects current research and best practice which could include information provided by keynote speakers at the National Conference.

BE IT RESOLVED, the National Council for the Social Studies convene a body to investigate the research, design, implement, and evaluate online, anytime, anywhere professional development programs through streaming video for effective social studies instruction in an era of standards based learning and high stakes testing.

#### **07-01-10: Federal Support for Social Studies Professional Development**

Supported by: Illinois, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin

Rationale: Due to continuing challenges impacting the social studies classroom, social studies teachers need to be involved in continuing education and training.

Whereas, the federal government has supported professional development in No Child Left Behind and a number of other education-related endeavors; and

Whereas, a number of federal laws impact the social studies classroom and teachers; and

Whereas, the federal government often has resources beyond what state and local government can provide for preK-12 educators; and

Whereas, the federal government with a national perspective and economies of scale can support and provide professional development alternatives beyond what is currently available;

BE IT RESOLVED that NCSS encourage Congress to include ample and diverse professional development opportunities with adequate participation incentives and employer support to strengthen the knowledge and skills of teachers.

#### **07-01-12: Regional Council Assistance Teams**

Supported by: Florida, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Texas, and Wisconsin

Rationale: NCSS has a responsibility to develop and maintain strong affiliate councils.

Whereas, state organizations have disappeared in several states; and

Whereas, some state organizations are experiencing difficulties in maintaining membership, conducting conferences, producing publications and managing finances;

BE IT RESOLVED that NCSS encourage the development of regional council

assistance teams, by calling on individuals in each region with talent and expertise in key areas of council development to assist states/councils in need of support.

#### **07-01-13: Impact of NCSS's Conferences on States and Regions**

Supported by: California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin

Rationale: It is in the interest of NCSS to have the maximum flexibility in selecting national conference sites. Sites need to be selected on the basis of maximizing opportunities for attendance, exposure to underserved regions, and providing attractive venues.

Whereas, the presence of a national conference may have a negative effect on a state or region; and

Whereas, some states or regions refuse or are reluctant to host a national conference;

BE IT RESOLVED that NCSS Board of Directors explore additional mechanisms to minimize the financial and leadership impact of national conferences on host states or regions.

#### **07-01-14: NCSS to Encourage and Support the Establishment of Legislative Liaisons at the Affiliate Levels by Providing Training at National Conference**

Supported by: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Prince George's County (Md.), Texas, and Wisconsin

Rationale: The current NCSS body is in need of legislative liaisons who identify and monitor critical issues and engage in pro-active media and public relations in a timely manner as they relate to educational policy and programs that impact social studies education on the local, state, and national levels.

Whereas, it is essential to have communication between NCSS and the state and local affiliates on critical issues to support the advancement of social studies as they relate to educational policies; and

Whereas, training is essential to the creation of effective legislative liaisons;

BE IT RESOLVED, NCSS should encourage and support the establishment of legislative liaisons at the affiliate levels who will monitor critical issues and engage in pro-active media and public relations in a timely manner as they relate to educational policy and programs that impact social studies education by providing training sessions for legislative liaisons at the annual conference facilitated by NCSS staff.

#### **07-01-15: Increasing Awards Nominations**

Supported by: California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New England History Teachers Association, New Mexico, New York State, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin

Whereas, all state and regional councils have outstanding teachers and teaching programs; and

Whereas, few nominations are received for most of the NCSS national awards; and

Whereas, some nominations do not meet NCSS minimum requirements when they are submitted; and

Whereas, some councils never submit nominations;

BE IT RESOLVED that NCSS will encourage and assist state and regional councils in significantly increasing their applications for NCSS awards:

- By suggesting that councils with House of Delegates representation have a designated person who will be responsible for publicizing, soliciting, and mentoring their state award winners or programs of excellence;
- By disseminating information throughout the year about NCSS winners and criteria for each award to individual state/regional newsletter editors and encouraging them to publicize awards;
- By encouraging states to recognize their state award winners at their state and regional conferences;
- By offering a training session for liaisons at the Houston 2008 NCSS, led by Awards committee members;

- By putting edited examples of award winners' projects online for potential applicants and other teachers to view; and

- By soliciting other ideas from the House of Delegates, the NCSS Board of Directors, and state leadership for increasing applications of all NCSS Programs of Excellence.

#### **07-01-16: Support for the Continuation and Development of Scholarships for First Time Attendees to the National Conference**

Supported by: Arkansas, ATSS/UFT-NYC, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Middle States, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, New York State, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin

Rationale: In 2007, NCSS instituted the First Timer's Scholarship Fund to enable teachers from diverse ethnic groups and teachers in high-poverty schools to attend the NCSS National Conference, a premier professional development opportunity. With limited resources at the national level, state councils need to support this program as well.

Whereas, NCSS recognizes that diversity adds to the strength of the organization; and

Whereas, NCSS has a historic commitment to diverse membership; and

Whereas, the institutionalization of the First Timer's Scholarship Fund confirms NCSS's values; and

Whereas, state councils' commitment to attract diverse members through scholarships should be wide spread;

BE IT RESOLVED that NCSS should encourage state and local councils to contribute to the First Timer's Scholarship Fund and/or institute similar scholarships at a local level in order to attract first time attendees to the NCSS National Conference.

#### **07-01-17: Resolution Supporting the Chicago 2016 Olympics**

Supported by: Connecticut, Great Lakes Council for the Social Studies, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin

Rationale: We recognize the unparalleled educational opportunities provided by hosting the Olympics in the United States to promote NCSS values of diversity, sportsmanship and international understanding. Hosting the Olympics will offer an avalanche of teachable moments to fulfill the role of social studies education in our classrooms and communities.

Whereas, Chicago is the official nominee of the United States Olympic Committee to host the Summer Olympic Games in 2016; and

Whereas, no city has been designated as the host for the 2015 NCSS Annual Meeting; and

Whereas, we have a unique opportunity to have our 2015 NCSS Annual Meeting in a setting where it can take advantage of the international environment represented by the Olympic games; and

Whereas, as social studies professionals, our support for Chicago as the host for the NCSS will encourage its selection as the host of the 2016 Olympics by the International Olympic Committee in 2009;

BE IT RESOLVED, NCSS endorses Chicago's effort to host the 2016 Summer Olympic Games and we encourage the NCSS Convention Committee and Board of Directors to seriously consider selection of Chicago to host the 2015 NCSS Annual Meeting.

#### **07-04-1: A Call for a Public Stand**

Submitted by: The Rouge Forum and the following members of NCSS: E. Wayne Ross (University of British Columbia\*), Timothy Cashman (University of Texas, El Paso), Rudolfo Chávez Chávez (New Mexico State University), Margaret Smith Crocco (Teachers College, Columbia University), Ron Evans (San Diego State University), Kristi Fragnoli (College of St. Rose), Stephen C. Fleury (Le Moyne College), William Gaudelli (Teachers College, Columbia University), Rich Gibson (San Diego State University), Neil O. Houser (University of Oklahoma), David Hursh (University of Rochester), Curry Malott (D'Youville College), Perry M. Marker (Sonoma State University), Valerie Ooka Pang (San Diego State University), Marc Pruyn (New Mexico State University), Cesar Rossatto (University of Texas, El Paso), Alan J. Singer (Hofstra University), Brenda Trofanenko (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign), Kevin D. Vinson (University of Arizona)

Rationale: NCSS standards documents and position statements consistently

identify citizenship education as the primary purpose of K-12 social studies. These statements argue that concern for the common good and citizen participation in public life are essential to the health of our democratic system. If, as NCSS consistently argues, effective social studies education prepares young people to identify, understand, critically analyze and take action to solve the problems facing our diverse nation in an increasingly interdependent world, then it is incumbent on social studies educators and their primary professional organization to take actions in the public arena that are consistent with the stated purposes of the profession. Whereas, NCSS's *National Standards for Social Studies Teachers* emphasizes the importance of social studies teachers' knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to organize and provide instruction at the appropriate school level for the study of Power, Authority, and Governance<sup>1</sup>; and

Whereas, the *National Standards for Social Studies Teachers* state that "understanding the historical development of structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary U.S. society and other parts of the world is essential the development of civic competence"; and

Whereas, in exploring the theme of "Power, Authority, and Governance" the *National Standards for Social Studies Teachers* encourage teachers to have "learners confront such questions as: What is power? What is legitimate authority? How are governments created, structured, maintained and change? How can we keep government responsive to its citizens' needs and interests? How can individual rights be protected within the context of majority rule?"<sup>2</sup>; and

Whereas the *National Standards for Social Studies Teachers* state that teachers should: provide opportunities for learners to examine issues involving the rights, roles, and status of individuals in relation to the general welfare; enable learners to describe the ways nations and organizations respond to forces of unity and diversity affecting order and security; have learners explain conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations; help learners to analyze and explain governmental mechanisms to meet the needs and wants of citizens, regulate territory, manage conflict, and establish order and security; challenge learners to apply concepts such as power, role, status, justice, democratic values, and influence to the examination of persistent issues and social problems; and guide learners to explain and evaluate how governments attempt to achieve their states ideals at home and abroad,<sup>3</sup> and

Whereas the NCSS position statement on "A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in Social Studies: Building Social Understanding and Civic Efficacy" states that "Social studies teachers need to treat the social world realistically and address its controversial aspects"<sup>4</sup>; and

Whereas NCSS's statement "Essentials of the Social Studies" notes that concern for the common good and citizen participation in public life are essential to the health of our democratic system;<sup>5</sup> and

Whereas the NCSS position statement "Academic Freedom and the Social Studies Teacher," states: "A teacher's academic freedom is his/her right and responsibility to study, investigate, present, interpret, and discuss all the relevant facts and ideas in the field of his/her professional competence. This freedom implies no limitations other than those imposed by generally accepted standards of scholarship. As a professional, the teacher strives to maintain a spirit of free inquiry, open-mindedness, and impartiality in the classroom. As a member of an academic community, however, the teacher is free to present in the field of his or her professional competence his/her own opinions or convictions and with them the premises from which they are derived."<sup>6</sup>

Whereas, NCSS is an endorser of the American Association of University Professors' "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure"; and

Whereas, the NCSS "Revised Code of Ethics for the Social Studies Profession" states that: "The social studies professional should acknowledge the worth

and tentativeness of knowledge. He or she should engage in a continuous search for new knowledge, retaining both the right and the obligation as a student scholar to doubt, to inquire freely, and to raise searching questions";<sup>7</sup> and

Whereas, the "Revised Code of Ethics for the Social Studies Profession" also states "It is the ethical responsibility of social studies professionals to foster the understanding and exercise the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States and of the responsibilities implicit in those rights in an increasingly interdependent world."<sup>8</sup>

Whereas, during the war in Iraq and the so-called war on terror, the administration of George W. Bush has violated the above-mentioned standards and principles through the following practices:

- excluding well-recognized foreign scholars;
- condemning as "revisionism" the search for truth about pre-war intelligence;
- re-classifying previously unclassified government documents;
- suspending in certain cases the centuries-old writ of habeas corpus and substituting indefinite administrative detention without specified criminal charges or access to a court of law;
- using interrogation techniques at Guantanamo, Abu-Ghraib, Bagram, and other locations incompatible with respect for the dignity of all persons required by a civilized society;

Whereas, "The fundamental values and beliefs taught in social studies are drawn from many sources, but especially from the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution with its Bill of Rights. These beliefs form the basic principles of our democratic constitutional order. They depend on such practices as due process, equal protection, free expression, and civic participation, and they have roots in the concepts of liberty, justice, equality, responsibility, diversity, and privacy."<sup>9</sup>

BE IT RESOLVED that the National Council for the Social Studies urges its members, associated groups and communities:

To take a public stand as citizens on behalf of the values and goals taught in social studies and necessary to the practice of our profession; and  
To do whatever they can to bring the Iraq War to a speedy conclusion

\* Institutions for identification purposes only.

#### Notes

1. See Standard VI, page 27 in: *National Council for the Social Studies, National Standards for Social Studies Teachers* (revised), volume 1 (Silver Spring, Md.: NCSS, 2002). Available online: [www.ncss.org/teacherstandards/](http://www.ncss.org/teacherstandards/)
2. Ibid.
3. *National Standards for Social Studies Teachers*, 27-28.
4. National Council for the Social Studies, *A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies: Building Social Understanding and Civic Efficacy* (Silver Spring, Md.: NCSS, 1992). Available online: [www.socialstudies.org/positions/powerful/](http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/powerful/)
5. Ibid., see section 1.B. "Social Studies Purposes and Goals."
6. National Council for the Social Studies. *Academic Freedom and the Social Studies Teacher* (Silver Spring, Md.: NCSS, 1969). Available online: [www.socialstudies.org/positions/freedom/](http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/freedom/)
7. National Council for the Social Studies. *Revised Code of Ethics for the Social Studies Profession* (Silver Spring, Md.: NCSS, 2003). Available online: [www.socialstudies.org/positions/ethics/](http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/ethics/)
8. Ibid.
9. *A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies: Building Social Understanding and Civic Efficacy*, Section 1.B.

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