Social Studies Collaborative

The Social Studies Collaborative harnesses the collective wisdom of state, district and department social studies supervisors and consultants to explore opportunities and address challenges within the field of social studies. The Social Studies Collaborative’s work focuses on identifying, developing, and sharing high-quality educational resources that support student and professional learning through rigorous standards, engaging curriculum, balanced assessments, effective professional development and attention to equity. The Collaborative also raises awareness of legislative trends and policy issues that are likely to impact social studies so that state leaders are equipped to plan for or respond effectively.

2018-2019 Highlights:

- Published a brief entitled the Marginalization of Social Studies – A Matter of Equity which has been shared thousands of times on social media, that serves as a resource for members to explain the importance of social studies at the elementary level;
- Collaborated with Nell Duke (University of Michigan) to develop a video entitled “Speaking Up for Science and Social Studies” in which Professor Duke argues the value of social studies to advancing literacy;
- The Marginalization brief and “Speaking Up…” video have been highlighted in National Council for the Social Studies publications, and is being used to educate SEA and LEA leaders about the vital links between social studies content and literacy achievement, and to point out inequities involving instruction;
- Peter Levine (Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Lincoln Filene Professor of Citizenship & Public Affairs in Tufts University’s Jonathan Tisch College of Civic Life) presented an overview of national initiatives in the area of civics education, including early drafts of the CivXNow Civics Education System Map;
- CCSSO’s Chief Equity Officer Annie Holmes shared an equity lens toolkit that members can use to guide efforts to achieve equity in social studies;
- The Social Studies Collaborative entered into cross-collaborative discussions with the Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (FAST) and English Language Arts (ELA) collaboratives to develop discipline specific formative assessments, and to explore ways to advance literacy through integrated social studies/ELA work.

2019-2020 Goals

CCSSO is committed to ensuring every child, across all backgrounds, graduates ready for college, careers, and life. The Social Studies Collaborative focuses on identifying, developing, and sharing high-quality educational resources that support student and professional learning through rigorous standards, engaging curriculum, balanced assessments, effective professional development and attention to equity. Members of the Social studies collaborative tend to be state specialists for social studies within the state education agency.

During the 2019-2020 membership year, the Social Studies Collaborative will work toward these ends by:
• Continue developing advocacy resources and strategies that help overcome the marginalization of social studies, particularly at the elementary level;
• Completing development of a civics education brief that focuses on better preparing schools and students for engagement with 21st Century civic life;
• Developing an equity brief that draws attention to the instruction, achievement, and empowerment gaps associated with civics education, and that recommends ways to reduce those gaps;
• Offering opportunities for professional learning guided by nationally recognized experts in social studies;
• Engaging members in analyses of, and guided practice with, quality social studies instructional materials that might inform professional learning back in their home states;
• Collaborating with the Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (FAST) collaborative to develop discipline-specific formative assessments;
• Working with the English Language Arts (ELA) collaborative to identify cross-cutting strategies for improving instruction and increasing student achievement in the areas of social studies and literacy.

Anchor documents

- Leading for Equity
- The Marginalization of Social Studies: An Issue of Equity for All Students
- “Speaking Up for Science and Social Studies”

Biography of Advisor:

Fran O’Malley taught middle and high school social studies for twenty-four years before arriving at the University of Delaware where he now serves as Project Director for the Institute for Public Administration’s Democracy Project and Acting Director of the Partnership for Public Administration. At the state level, Fran served on the commission that developed the Delaware Social Studies standards, and works closely with the Delaware Department of Education to assist with the development of Delaware’s Recommended Curriculum and state assessments. His initiatives include Delaware History Day, the Delaware’s Mock Trial competition, the Social Studies Coalition of Delaware, and the Delaware Law-Related Education Project. Fran is also a past President of Delaware’s Council for the Social Studies and served previously on NCSS’s publication committee. Fran’s awards include being named Delaware Teacher of the Year and Delaware History Teacher of the Year. He is also the recipient of a Middle States Council for the Social Studies Harry J. Carmen Award, a James Madison Fellowship, and a summer Fulbright Fellowship (China).

CCSSO Liaison:

Steve Bowen joined CCSSO in 2013 and is serving as the Deputy Executive Director, State Leadership. In his role, he directs the activities of the membership services, leadership academy, advocacy, communications, data and information services, and the Collaboratives teams. Steve oversees the development, support, and implementation of programs and services designed to support
our primary member groups (chiefs, deputies, federal liaisons, communications directors and public information officers) and ensures all membership events and services are aligned with state priorities. Prior to becoming Deputy Executive Director, Steve served as a senior advisor for CCSSO, working directly with chiefs and their senior staffs, in collaboration with the Leadership Academy and other Council teams, to improve the performance and effectiveness of their state agencies. Steve also previously served as the Strategic Initiative Director for Innovation, where he worked to support states as they advanced promising innovations to improve student outcomes, aligned data and information systems to ensure educators and school leaders had the tools necessary to better meet the needs of students, and worked to improve state agency and state leadership capacity and capabilities. Steve is also a former state chief, having served as the Commissioner of Education in Maine from 2011 to 2013. Steve holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from Drew University and a master’s degree in secondary education from George Mason University.

2018-19 State Members Included:

DC, DODEA, DE, IL, IN, IA, KY, MD, MI, MO, NE, NC, OH, SC, UT, WY.