President’s Message

The state of Social Studies education in Connecticut has improved remarkably over the past couple of years. Thanks in large part to the steadfast advocacy efforts by many members of the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies, we have witnessed the development and approval of our new state Frameworks, the appointment of Steve Armstrong as the Social Studies consultant with the Connecticut State Department of Education, and the endorsement of a Position Statement on Comprehensive Social Studies Education for All Students by the State Board of Education. Our advocacy experiences have strengthened our ties with various like-minded organizations and associations throughout the state, and together we have made a difference. CCSS has emerged as a recognized, effective, and respected change agent in the state’s political and educational communities.

In addition to successes in the policymaking realm, we have been actively creating, presenting, and implementing a variety of pedagogical supports and strategies to bolster our teaching expertise. The emphasis on inquiry-based learning promises to reinvigorate our work and further engage our students. We have offered numerous professional development opportunities for teachers, curriculum specialists, museum educators, and other stakeholders. To further support classroom teachers, a companion document to the Connecticut Social Studies Framework will be available soon. Moreover, we continue to recognize and validate educational excellence through our robust awards program. Within the classroom and beyond, these have been tremendously positive developments for social studies educators, our students, and the social studies community in Connecticut as a whole.

We certainly have taken impactful and significant strides to ensure that social studies education is no longer

Editor’s Note

We’re back after a hot summer and ready for an exciting year. The list of announcements and professional activities in the latter part of this issue (pages 11-15) speaks to some of the opportunities generated for teachers and students in the region and the nation. In addition, State Social Studies Consultant Steve Armstrong has been organizing additional programs to bring all of us up to speed on the Connecticut Frameworks (see page 4).

CCSS has been no less active. After a year off to accommodate the NCSS conference in Boston last fall, we are again presenting an exciting state conference on October 27. Last year, we told you Boston was close and urged you to get there. OK – how about Cromwell? It’s in the middle of OUR state, just off of I-91; you can’t get any closer than that! Get to your administrators, get permission - and be there. (See page 3 for a brief description. A registration form can be found on the CCSS website: CTSocialStudies.org.) The session promise to be very useful and there has been a special attempt to include more sessions for elementary teachers. Please, if you have contact with elementary teachers in your district, urge them to join us on the 27th.

There are two major discussion in this issue. We have included several points of view on the 2015 revisions to the 2014 revisions of the AP program. (See pages 5-7) It is likely we have not heard the last on the program changes And as AP history has become a source of controversy, we have a long report on issues around teaching controversial issues – pages 8-9 To stir that pot a bit we have added a political cartoon should you be inclined to use it as a springboard for a lively discussion – page 9. All of this is in keeping with the development of the Connecticut Frameworks that place so much greater emphasis on inquiry, discussion and the use

(continued on page 2)
President’s Message continued

marginalized. Nevertheless, our work is not done. As social studies educators, we must continue to embrace and model the very values and dispositions that we seek to cultivate in our students: critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and innovation, collaboration, and active and engaged citizenship. The Connecticut Council for the Social Studies is our state’s primary organization for social studies educators to collectively enrich our practice and to enhance our advocacy and policy endeavors. Those who have become more involved in CCSS activities have found them to be invigorating and empowering.

As the new President of the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies, I am privileged to work alongside so many passionate and talented educators who consistently seek to enrich our profession, our practice, and our students’ lives. Following in the footsteps of exceptional Past Presidents such as Dan Coughlin and John Tully, and working closely with Gene Stec, our new Vice President, I promise to continue to promote and reinforce CCSS’s mission of advocating and advancing the study and teaching of social studies, promoting the professional interests of social studies educators, encouraging and supporting meaningful social studies pedagogy, and serving as a vehicle for professional activities and interaction for our social studies community. I am excited to continue learning from, and collaborating with, the many veteran members of CCSS and our Board of Directors, as well as our newly elected Board members: Sandra Clark from New Haven Public Schools, Nora Mocarski from Canton High School, Jennifer Murrihy from ACES, Justin Taylor from Bulkeley High School in Hartford, and Melissa Thom from the Renzulli Academy in Hartford. With such an esteemed group, there is no doubt that we will continue to build on our previous achievements.

Thank you for all that you do to elevate social studies education in our state, and please continue to both emphasize and exemplify this vital work.

David
Mark your calendars. Do not miss this year’s Fall Conference. Keynote speakers include Commissioner of Education, Dr. Dianna Wentzell, Executive Director of the Old State House, Sally Whipple, and noted author and Professor of History, at Central Connecticut State University, Professor Matthew Warshauer.

This year, we have included a wide variety of interesting and informative workshops across three sessions and multiple grade bands that bring to light the inquiry arc, interesting and meaningful content, and effective classroom strategies that promote content literacy skills. We have also worked in plenty of time for you to network with colleagues and renew old friendships, but be sure to spend time with our exhibitors and museum friends, as well. You will be amazed at what they have to offer. Visit www.ctsocialstudies.org for Registration and Conference information or email stecg@trumbullps.org if you have any questions.

Fall Conference Dates to Remember

Oct 2 - New England History Teachers
Providence, RI
Oct 8 - Global Health Workshop
West Hartford, CT
Oct 24 - Global Education Symposium
Cambridge, MA
Oct 27 - CCSS Fall Conference
Cromwell, CT
Nov 13 - 15 - NCSS National Convention
New Orleans, LA
The Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks: The Next Phase

It has been very exciting over the past several months to work with a number of districts that are using the state social studies frameworks to help change their social studies curriculum and the teaching that goes on in social studies classrooms. In many districts curriculum leaders and teachers are moving past the stage of learning about the frameworks to the stage of using the frameworks in a very practical way. Many districts are introducing inquiry into social studies instruction at all grades. It is incredibly refreshing to work with districts who, in a number of cases, are redoing their elementary school social studies curriculum for the first time in many years. Things are on the move in social studies: all in a very positive way.

I hope that you and your district will want to be actively involved in the excitement surrounding social studies. Several of the ways to do this are:

1. Attend the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies conference on October 27. Come hear about the ways that teachers are using the frameworks in their classrooms and how museum educators and teachers are successfully collaborating on a number of projects. For registration information, go to www.ctsocialstudies.org.

2. Attend the “Putting the Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks into Action” session at Mystic Seaport on Wednesday, September 30 from 4-6 pm. During this session you will hear about the frameworks and their implications in the classroom and then learn about how to utilize inquiry in the classroom from an expert global education consultant and a great museum educator from Mystic Seaport. For additional information contact Krystal Rose: Krystal.rose@mysticseaport.org or at (860)572-0711, ext. 5025.

3. Look for the companion document, which will be up on the Connecticut Department of Education website in October. Throughout this document we will be delving much deeper into the content and instructional methodologies at each level of the frameworks, as well as having specialized essays on Teaching Labor History, The African American Experience in Connecticut, and other meaningful topics. Watch for it!

4. Take part in the webinar series on the frameworks. Beginning in October, there will be an eight-part webinar series on all aspects of the social studies frameworks. Using the frameworks in the elementary grades, teaching through inquiry, and other critical topics will be covered. These webinars will be “done live”, and will be archived as well. A schedule will be announced shortly.

5. Go to the C3teachers.org site and look at some really great stuff. At the top click on “IDM” and you will see a great model for doing inquiry activities as well as a whole series of fantastic inquiries that were designed using that model. I will guarantee you will find useful material on this site.

6. Schedule and in-service session for your school or district. If you want to have a session at your school on the frameworks, on inquiry, on taking informed action, or on any other aspect of the frameworks, contact me and we can schedule something. I am at Stephen.Armstrong@ct.gov

As you can see, there is a lot going on right now in social studies in Connecticut. If you and your school are not involved already, get yourself onboard!

Stephen Armstrong, Social Studies Consultant
Connecticut Department of Education
Past President, National Council for the Social Studies

Stephen.Armstrong@ct.gov; (860) 712-6706
The College Board, which has been under fire during the past year from conservatives for revisions it made to the AP U.S. History course, released a new version Thursday that it says responds to “principled feedback” from critics.

“This new edition addresses the legitimate concerns expressed about the 2014 framework,” Zachary Goldberg, a spokesman for the College Board, wrote in an e-mail. “Every statement in the 2015 edition has been examined with great care based on the historical record and the principled feedback the College Board received. The result is a clearer and more balanced approach to the teaching of American history that remains faithful to the requirements that colleges and universities set for academic credit.” The new version will take effect in the coming school year.

Conservatives, including the Republican National Committee and 2016 GOP presidential hopeful Ben Carson, slammed the 2014 Advanced Placement history course, saying it overemphasized negative aspects of U.S. history, portrayed historical events as “identity politics” — a series of conflicts between groups of people as opposed to explaining historical events through shared ideals — and did not fully explore the unique and positive values of the U.S. system.

Carson told a gathering in September that the framework is so anti-American that “I think most people, when they finish that course, they’d be ready to sign up for ISIS.” The chief complaint was that the 2014 AP history course taught the story of the United States as “identity politics” — a series of conflicts over power and control between various groups, as opposed to explaining historical events through commonalities and shared ideals of the American people.

Peter Wood, president of the National Association of Scholars, a group of academics created to “confront the rise of campus political correctness,” commended the College Board for the 2015 revisions but said there is room for improvement. “It’s definitely better than 2014 in a number of ways,” said Wood, who met Wednesday with College Board President David Coleman. “When we started raising criticisms about this in July last year, the pushback from the College Board was arrogant and dismissive. And they stayed in that tone before they began to see that maybe a better way to handle this is to look at the content of the criticism. I think the College Board is taking the position that it has something to learn from its critics.”

The College Board, the nonprofit company that owns the SAT, relies on committees of college professors and high school teachers to write frameworks for AP courses. Many of the people who wrote the 2014 framework also worked on the new version. The 2014 framework was endorsed by the American Historical Association, whose chief executive, James Grossman, defended it as a choice between “a more comfortable national history and a more unsettling one.”

But the pushback from conservatives was immediate. In August 2014, the Republican National Committee accused the College Board of developing a “radically revisionist view of American history that emphasizes negative aspects of our nation’s history while omitting or minimizing positive aspects.” In the fall, conservative school board members in Jefferson County, Colo., said they wanted to review the course because it wasn’t sufficiently patriotic, triggering protests from students and parents accusing the school board of censorship. Lawmakers in Oklahoma considered banning the class but dropped the effort.

Rick Hess, director of education policy at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, was critical of the 2014 version but said Thursday that the newest edition was “surprisingly good” and free of bias of either a liberal or conservative nature. “I expected to be disappointed — I thought the last version was horrific,” said Hess, a onetime high school social studies teacher. “But what I see is … fair-minded, reasoned, and coherent, and I would be very comfortable teaching U.S. history with this.”

Still, a leading conservative dismissed the changes as more cosmetic than substantive. “The College Board continues to be under the influence of leftist historians,” Stanley Kurtz, a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, wrote in an e-mail. He has argued that the College Board wields too much influence over American education through its AP courses and tests. “Ultimately, I think the College Board is making superficial changes as a way of stifling competition,” he wrote. “Only competition in AP testing can restore curricular choice to states and school districts.”

More than 460,000 students took the AP U.S. history exam last year, hoping to score high enough to earn college credit.

Wood said conservatives around the country are interested in developing alternatives to the College Board. “That opposition is not going to go away,” he said. “It’s become self-organizing, with a legislative presence in some states. There’s a will to break the College Board’s monopoly on this.”
Dozens of academics, calling themselves “Scholars Concerned About Advanced Placement History” have published an open letter opposing the College Board’s new framework for the AP U.S. History course, saying that it presents “a grave new risk” to the study of America’s past, in large part because it ignores American exceptionalism.

The College Board and other historians have defended the framework, which was written by history teachers and historians, since it was released in 2014 for the 2014-15 school year, but the controversy has been renewed with the new letter that says the framework promotes “a particular interpretation of American history” that “downplays American citizenship and American world leadership in favor of a more global and transnational perspective.” And the letter says that it is time for policymakers to explore alternatives to “the College Board’s current domination” of AP testing....

Here’s the text of the new letter opposing the 2014 APUSH [AP U.S. History] Framework, and after that is the framework itself:

The teaching of American history in our schools faces a grave new risk, from an unexpected source. Half a million students each year take the Advanced Placement (AP) exam in U.S. History. The framework for that exam has been dramatically changed, in ways certain to have negative consequences.

We wish to express our opposition to these modifications. The College Board’s 2014 Advanced Placement Examination shortchanges students by imposing on them an arid, fragmentary, and misleading account of American history. We favor instead a robust, vivid, and content-rich account of our unfolding national drama, warts and all, a history that is alert to all the ways we have disagreed and fallen short of our ideals, while emphasizing the ways that we remain one nation with common ideals and a shared story.

The Advanced Placement exam has become a fixture in American education since its introduction after the Second World War, and many colleges and universities award credits based on students’ AP scores. In fact, for many American students the AP test effectively has taken the place of the formerly required U.S. history survey course in colleges and universities, making its structure and contents a matter of even greater importance from the standpoint of civic education. Many of these students will never take another American history course. So it matters greatly what they learn in their last formal encounter with the subject.

Educators and the public have been willing to trust the College Board to strike a sensible balance among different approaches to the American past. Rather than issuing detailed guidelines, the College Board has in the past furnished a brief topical outline for teachers, leaving them free to choose what to emphasize. In addition, the previous AP U.S. History course featured a strong insistence on content, i.e., on the students’ acquisition of extensive factual knowledge of American history.

But with the new 2014 framework, the College Board has put forward a lengthy 134-page document which repudiates that earlier approach, centralizes control, deemphasizes content, and promotes a particular interpretation of American history. This interpretation downplays American citizenship and American world leadership in favor of a more global and transnational perspective. The College Board has long enjoyed an effective monopoly on advanced placement testing. The changes made in the new framework expose the danger in such a monopoly. The result smacks of an “official” account of the American past. Local, state, and federal policymakers may need to explore competitive alternatives to the College Board’s current domination of advanced-placement testing.

The new framework is organized around such abstractions as “identity,” “peopling,” “work, exchange, and technology,” and “human geography” while downplaying essential subjects, such as the sources, meaning, and development of America’s ideals and political institutions, notably the Constitution. Elections, wars, diplomacy, inventions, discoveries—all these formerly central subjects tend to dissolve into the vagaries of identity-group conflict. The new framework scrubs away all traces of what used to be the chief glory of historical writing—vivid and compelling narrative—and reduces history to an bloodless interplay of abstract and impersonal forces. Gone is the idea that history should provide a fund of compelling stories about exemplary people and events. No longer will students hear about America as a dynamic and exemplary nation, flawed in many respects, but whose citizens have striven through the years toward the more perfect realization of its professed ideals. The new version of the test will effectively marginalize important ways of teaching about the American past, and force American high schools to teach U.S. history from a perspective that self-consciously seeks to de-center American history and subordinate it to a global and heavily social-scientific perspective.

There are notable political or ideological biases inherent in the 2014 framework, and certain structural innovations that will inevitably result in imbalance in the test, and bias in the course. Chief among these is the treatment of American national identity. The 2010 framework treated national identity, including “views of the American national character and ideas about American exceptionalism” as a central theme. But the 2014 framework makes a dramatic shift away from that emphasis, choosing instead to grant far more extensive attention to “how various identities, cultures, and values have been preserved or changed in different contexts of U.S. history with special attention given to the formation of gender, class, racial and ethnic identities.” The new framework makes a shift from “identity” to “identities.” Indeed, the new framework is so populated with examples of American history as the conflict between social groups, and so inattentive to the sources of national unity and cohesion, that it is hard to see how students will gain any coherent idea of what those sources might be. This does them, and us, an immense disservice.

continued on page 7
**“Historians Blast... continued from page 6**

We believe that the study of history should expose our young students to vigorous debates about the nature of American exceptionalism, American identity, and America’s role in the world. Such debates are the warp and woof of historical understanding. We do not seek to reduce the education of our young to the inculcation of fairy tales, or of a simple, whitewashed, heroic, even hagiographical nationalist narrative. Instead, we support a course that fosters informed and reflective civic awareness, while providing a vivid sense of the grandeur and drama of its subject.

A formal education in American history serves young people best by equipping them for a life of deep and consequential membership in their own society. The College Board’s 2014 framework sadly neglects this essential civic purpose of education in history. We can, and must, do better.

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**Will Fitzhugh**

The Concord Review 9 September 2015

The College Board and Atlantic Magazine, recently joined their forces to lower standards for academic expository writing in the English-speaking world. Although their efforts did not match in scope and daring those of groups like InBloom, Amplify, and others, they persuaded 3,000 secondary students to meet their contest guidelines. They asked for papers of less than 2,000 words, on a single document, and published the “winner,” a piece from a student in New Zealand on the benefits of Martin Luther King’s *I Have a Dream* speech for better relations with the Maori.

High School students interested in being published in *The Concord Review*—the only journal in the world for the history papers of secondary students—must understand that their serious academic history research papers could not meet the guidelines for The College Board and Atlantic Magazine. Essays in the Fall 2015 issue, for example, (#106), averaged 7,400 words in length, with endnotes and bibliography, not on one speech, but on dozens of sources—books, articles, and others. Their topics included the *Tape v. Hurley* case in California, Abraham Lincoln’s changing attitudes about Christianity, Margaret Sanger’s fights with feminist groups of her day, Augustus’ imperial cult in Rome, varying identities among the Manchus in the Qing Dynasty, the records of women in combat in ancient Greece and China, relations among Nietzsche, Wagner and Mahler, the influence of Friedrich Hegel, Footbinding in China, the denial about AIDS in the South African government, and the development of the Socialist Parties in France.

Clearly, they were not limited to a single document or prevented from writing a paper longer than 2,000 words, as The College Board and Atlantic Magazine demanded for their submissions. Some years ago one of *The Concord Review*’s authors wrote:

“I am extremely honored in having my paper on Chinese Communism published in the *The Concord Review*. I truly thank you for providing the wonderful opportunity and motivation for students like me passionately to pursue research and history.

“I wrote this paper independently, during my own time out of school. My motives for doing so were both academic and personal. Although history has always been my favorite subject, I had never written a paper with this extensive research before. After reading the high quality of essays in *The Concord Review*, I was very inspired to try to write one myself. I thought it was a significant opportunity to challenge and expand my academic horizons. Thus during the summer before my Senior year, I began doing the research for my own paper.

“Choosing the topic of Chinese Communism was not difficult. As I briefly mentioned in my biographical information, my own Chinese heritage greatly influenced me to study this subject. My own family past has been touched by the often scarring effects of Communism. For instance, my paternal great-grandmother—the wife of a landlord—was a victim of the Communists’ “authorized” land redistribution. Like many members of China’s property classes, she and my grandmother were thrown off their land and survived the next few years by begging on the streets. From the chaotic Cultural Revolution to the outrageous Tiananmen Massacre in 1989, I have often been told firsthand of the devastating effects of Communism. From all of these background experiences, a singular and upsetting question emerged in my mind: if Communism has had so many damaging effects on the Chinese people, why and how did it succeed in taking over the country in the first place? As in many cases, only the past provided the answers. It was the determination to find them that empowered me to write this paper.

“Furthermore, by choosing a topic so intimate to my own family background, I was able to experience history on a new and more exciting level. Exploring places and events which once had involved my own ancestors gave history an almost magical sense of life and vivacity. All in all, writing this paper has definitely been a rewarding experience in every way. By exploring China during the 1930s and 1940s, I am now better able to understand and bond with my grandparents (who have been constantly impressed—and a bit surprised—that their American granddaughter can tell them the exact route of the Long March).

“Next year, I will be attending Columbia University as a John Jay National Scholar—an honor given to incoming students who demonstrate a variety of achievements and independence in thinking. I plan to major in Economics-Political Science and/or East Asian Studies. Given Columbia’s excellent humanities departments, I cannot imagine a better choice for me. Needless to say, I am very excited about starting my college career, one that will no doubt be happily filled with many history classes and continued research.”

Fortunately, this young lady was better prepared for college because she did not have to shrink her research and her academic expository writing in history to the dumbed-down requirements of The College Board and Atlantic Magazine. Nevertheless, by asking for and publishing the short paper they made their “winner,” these two organizations have only limited the academic horizons of the many secondary students they have been able to reach with their “contest.” Other students have been able to read, see, or hear of *The Concord Review*, and they know there is a place with the high academic standards that more than 1,000 of their peers from 41 countries have met since 1987, and quite a few of them still decide that they would like to meet those standards for themselves.
The Confederate flag. The Supreme Court ruling on gay marriage. Policing minority communities. Nuclear weapons and Iran. Summer often brings a lull in the news, but not this year. And, come September, students are going to want to talk about these headlines. But how should teachers navigate our nation’s thorny politics? Do politics belong in the classroom at all, or should schools be safe havens from never-ending partisan battles? Can teachers use controversial issues as learning opportunities, and, if so, to teach what? And then, the really sticky question: Should teachers share with students their own political viewpoints and opinions?

In their book, *The Political Classroom: Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education*, Diana E. Hess and Paula McAvoy offer guidelines to these and other questions, using a study they conducted from 2005 to 2009. It involved 21 teachers in 35 schools and their 1,001 students. Hess is the dean of the school of education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and McAvoy is the program director at UW-Madison’s Center for Ethics and Education. Schools, they conclude, are and ought to be political places — but not partisan ones. I talked with them recently about how, in today’s highly polarized society, teachers can walk that very fine line.

Sometimes it seems there’s a belief that schools should be political ... sort of. With students taking on issues — like smoking — that are political but not too political. Did you find that in your study?

**Hess:** You’re absolutely right, there are a number of schools that encourage students to get involved in political campaigns, but they tend to be political campaigns that really aren’t very controversial. They’ll encourage kids to form a campaign about something that everyone agrees should be done. For example, that we should clean up the litter that’s around our school, or that it’s important for people to eat healthy food... We have evidence that kids learn a lot from doing that. It’s not necessarily a terrible thing. My view is that if you’re going to have students involved in authentic politics, then it’s really important to make sure you have issues for which there are multiple and competing views, and you don’t give students the impression that there’s a political view that they should be working toward.

**McAvoy:** How political do we want students to be? That’s really a question that a lot of communities struggle with and a lot of teachers struggle with. And the point of the book is to say that, in general, to be able to talk about politics is a skill that people need to learn. And it would be great if it were learned in school because these are great moments in which you bring a group of young people together who are forming their political views. They can really learn to engage across their differences and to start to see that political conflict is a normal part of democratic life.

A key point in your book is that, while teachers are teaching about the issues — immigration or same-sex marriage — they’re also teaching students how to have these discussions. They’re teaching the process of democracy.

**McAvoy:** Right. The “political classroom” is a classroom in which young people are learning to deliberate about political questions. It really is the process of deliberation that is the major skill being taught. And then, through deliberation, students are learning about the issues. They’re learning how to form arguments, how to weigh evidence. So there’s social studies content that is being learned in a process that is, at its heart, democratic.

Are there issues that are, or should be, completely off the table?

**Hess:** One of the things we talk about in the book is the distinction between issues that we called “settled issues” and issues that are “open”. It’s a little complicated, but, in a nutshell, we suggest that there are some issues that are settled and should be taught as settled and to not do that is being dishonest with young people. For example, the question about whether climate change is occurring — that’s a settled issue. The question is, What to do about climate change? That’s an open issue. We wouldn’t suggest that teachers engage kids in talking about whether climate change is occurring, but we strongly encourage teachers to engage in discussion about what should be done about climate change.

You mention in your book policies that might allow students to opt out [of a controversial topic or discussion]. Which raises questions about whether that’s a good thing, to just allow students to sit out.

**McAvoy:** The philosopher in me thinks there’s not a really good way to defend the view that students should always be able to opt out. We don’t allow students to opt out of writing essays because they don’t like writing essays. At the same time, democracies allow us, when we’re in the public sphere, to walk out of a discussion if we don’t like what’s happening or if we’re being offended. Classrooms are unusual in that we’re compelling students to be there. Teachers do need to weigh [whether] there might be times when a particular student has a good reason for wanting to pass on a comment... Opting out because I feel uncomfortable sharing my views or talking out loud in class is a skill that can be taught and overcome. Opting out because this discussion is really hard for me given my religious background — that might be a reason that you let a student pass on a discussion.

You note the challenges and dangers of teaching both in mixed classrooms — with students of varied racial and economic backgrounds — and homogenous classrooms. How should teachers adapt to these different scenarios?

**Hess:** In many ways the more difference you have within a classroom the better. We want to make sure that we have as many multiple competing views as we possibly can ... So difference is a good thing, something that can be used and primed as opposed to something to be feared and quelled. One of the challenges of lots of differences is, difference often causes high emotions and often can cause breaches of civility. So teachers who are in classrooms that have lots of naturally occurring difference often have to go to great lengths to make sure that students understand what it looks like to participate in a civil manner...

In classes where there’s a lot of sameness, the first thing we learned is that, though it might appear that there’s a lot of sameness, there’s always some difference. So when teachers say, “Well all these kids think alike,” we’re almost sure — all the time — that the teachers are wrong, that in fact not all the kids do think alike. That being said, there are classes that are more similar than they are different, and teachers have to use a lot of strategies to bring differences into the discussion. Those strategies might include bringing in guest speakers or making sure the materials the kids are using to prepare for discussion are full of multiple and competing ideas.

Students really seem to like this stuff – to engage in issues that are current and relevant to their own lives.
“Politics...” continued from page 8  

**Hess:** Absolutely. There are two things going on here: In many schools, students still spend most of the day listening to teachers talk. One reason we think kids like these issues is they finally get a chance to talk themselves. More than that, we did find that the content of these political issues was really interesting to kids. Especially when they were hearing multiple and competing views. Students would report that in discussions where there was a lot of shared opinion, those were not as interesting as in discussions where there were differing views... They were really responding to the fact that it’s quite interesting to hear what your peers think about things. And not just that they have different points of view but what they’re supporting those points of view with.

**What advice do you have or does your study have for teachers considering how to talk about [breaking events such as] Baltimore or Ferguson, Missouri?**

**Hess:** One of the problems with discussing events that just happened is that often we don’t know enough about what happened. There’s a distinction between current events... and discussions about controversial political issues where kids are preparing in advance and being deliberative. In the best-case scenario, teachers are able to take advantage of current events and use them as opportunities to get kids to talk about controversial political issues. There’s a big difference in talking about, “What do you think happened?” and talking about a policy issue like “Should police officers be required to wear video cameras?”

**McAvoy:** Young people need to see these as moments within their historical context – need to understand some of the history. It’s difficult to have those materials at the ready when things sort of erupt as they have in the last year or so with Baltimore and Ferguson. Good teachers start building curriculum about the history of redlining in cities or how cities become segregated. [To] put these moments within the context is much better than having young people just reacting to “What do you think about what you’re seeing on television today?” Young people really need to study these issues in depth.

**OK, the big elephant in the room: the question of whether teachers should talk about their own personal beliefs to their students. Should they?**

**Hess:** What we found is that there were teachers who were doing an excellent job who shared their own views with students, and there were teachers doing an excellent job who didn’t share their views. So we don’t believe that there is one right answer to this. And we think empirically we can show that there’s not. That being said, we think that there are times when it’s probably better for teachers to share than other times when it’s better for them not to share. That depends in large part on the context — on who’s in their class and what their goals are.

One thing we were really intrigued by was that a lot of the teachers we interviewed talked about changing their minds on that question over time. Some of them would say, “Well, it used to be that I would never share, but now I do only in these circumstances.” Other teachers would say, “I used to be really prone to share a lot, and now I don’t and here’s why.” We think it’s all a matter of professional judgment. Teachers need to think about this very carefully...

I sometimes worry that, even though there can be really good ethical reasons for teachers to share, in a very polarized time that sharing can be misinterpreted. And if it’s misinterpreted by the public or by parents as teachers trying to get kids to adopt their beliefs, then I think we could have a big problem. That being said, we have no evidence from the study of teachers who were actively and purposely trying to indoctrinate kids to a particular point of view... We think that this feeling that the public seems to have that teachers by definition are trying to push their political views on students is just false.

**You were critical of the notion — that teachers would do that.**

**Hess:** What we learned from students when we interviewed and surveyed them is that they make a really clear distinction between a teacher sharing his or her own view and a teacher trying to push his or her own view. Students not surprisingly report that they don’t like being pushed.

**You seem to draw a pretty firm line that teachers should not be advocating for their own beliefs.**

**McAvoy:** What we argue in the book is that what’s most important is that teachers create a culture of fairness in the classroom. That means being fair and reasonable to all the competing views that are in the classroom and that are being represented in the public. The practice that we found most troubling, from the study, is what we referred to in the book as political seepage: teachers who make sarcastic comments, who use partisan humor. It’s these offhanded comments that are sort of biting and mean-spirited about the political climate that I think is problematic. Because it creates a climate not of fairness, but it creates a kind of insider/outside feeling. If you get the humor that I just said or, “Do you agree with me that that politician’s a big idiot?” That invites the most divisive parts of the partisan climate into the classroom.
Did slavery cause Civil War? Many Americans don’t think so

BY SAMANTHA EHLINGER  shelinger@mcclatchydc.com  WASHINGTON

A century and a half after the war ended, Americans still fundamentally disagree about slavery’s role in the Civil War and what to teach schoolchildren about it, according to a new McClatchy-Marist Poll. Some 54 percent of respondents think slavery was the main reason for the Civil War. A sizable minority, 41 percent, do not think slavery was the main reason, the national survey found. Echoing that divide, they also are split over what to teach children. A majority, 54 percent, believe schools should teach that slavery was the main reason for the war; 38 percent think they should not teach that.

How Americans view this, particularly in the wake of bipartisan movements to take down Confederate flags after a horrific mass murder inside an historically black church in South Carolina, underscores how much these basic opinions of slavery and race still split the country. “These are not issues that America has apparently come to grips with in overwhelming numbers,” said Lee Miringoff, director of the Marist Institute for Public Opinion in New York, which conducts the poll. “This is still, to some degree, a nation divided.”

Faced with questions about the role of slavery, Americans don’t just divide overall. They view it differently based on where they live, what political party they like and, of course, their race. Rodney Fox, 31, a postal carrier from Boise, Idaho, who describes himself as a Democrat, is among those who thinks slavery was the main cause of the Civil War and that it should be taught that way in textbooks. He said he felt like his school in Washington state “breezed” by the issue when he was growing up. Fox added that many aspects of America’s history with Native Americans is also missing from textbooks. “We cherry-pick and shape what we want to put in our textbooks to show how we want to be perceived to our children,” he said.

In each geographic region but the South, poll respondents say slavery was the main reason for the war:

By a large percentage, respondents in the West say slavery was the main reason, 67-27 percent.
– In the Midwest, 56-39 percent say slavery was the main reason.
– In the Northeast, 50-43 percent say slavery was the main reason.

But the response changes for Southerners, who say slavery wasn’t the main reason for the Civil War, 49-45 percent.

People of different party affiliations also responded differently to the question. Democrats by 62-33 percent say slavery was the main reason for the war. Independents nearly reflected the national average, 53-43 percent. Republicans were more divided, 49-45 percent, that slavery was the main reason. And a majority of tea party supporters do not think slavery was the main reason for the Civil War. Of those who said they support the tea party movement, 52 percent said slavery was not the main reason for the Civil War and 43 percent said it was. “That’s a fairly sizable group of people who don’t think slavery was the primary reason,” Miringoff said.

Retired teacher Tom Laney, 63, of Odessa, Texas, is among those who say slavery was not the main reason for the Civil War. Laney is a tea party supporter. “Slavery was a reality, both in the North and the South. But states’ rights, the right to secede, was the reason for the Civil War,” Laney said. “And the North’s reason was really economic. They couldn’t afford to lose the Southern states.” Schools should not teach students that slavery was the reason for the war, Laney said. He said teaching the war that way is “a falsehood.” “Rewriting of history is all too common nowadays in our school history textbooks and I’m totally opposed,” he said.

Those who wish to take down Confederate symbols like flags and statues say those symbols are tied to slavery, or a defense of slavery, said Theresa Runstedtler, an associate history professor at American University in Washington. She said that those who celebrate the Confederacy say they are respecting their heritage, not advocating for hate or racism. “And the crux of the disagreement has to do with these competing narratives of slavery in the Civil War,” Runstedtler said. “One version that places slavery at the center of the history of the Civil War, and the other which erases slavery as the cause of the Civil War.”

Poll respondents by 51-42 percent favor taking down Confederate flags from government buildings. Those most in favor of taking it down include minorities over whites, women over men, those age 45 and older, college graduates over nongraduates, Democrats over Republicans, and those making more than $50,000 a year. The Midwest and the South are more opposed than the West and the Northeast.

And the respondents are divided over race relations, with 47 percent saying race relations are getting worse, 35 percent thinking they’re staying about the same, and 16 percent saying they’re getting better.

Read more here: http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/politics-government/article30101748.html#storylink=cpy

Don’t Forget

CCSS Fall Conference - October 27

Register at CTSSocialStudies.org
CONNECTICUT’S KID GOVERNOR 2015 PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

Connecticut’s Kid Governor 2015 is a program that will engage 5th graders in real-life lessons about our government, how it works and the importance of civic engagement…all from the comfort of the classroom! The program comes with easy-to-use, Frameworks-based teaching modules that can be used to guide students through the election of Connecticut’s first kid governor OR to run a candidate from their class or school. Timed to coincide with the 2015 local elections, invited schools from around the state will be eligible to enter one 5th-grade candidate into a race that other 5th graders will vote in.

Kid Governor candidates will submit campaign videos to Connecticut’s Old State House that outline why they want to be governor, their leadership qualities, community issues that they would like to solve, and a three-point plan that other 5th graders can follow to make a difference around a specific issue. Classes will watch the videos created by the top candidates, determine whose platform they want to support, and vote for the candidate they think can help them make a difference. The winning student will serve as Connecticut’s Kid Governor for a year, taking part in programs at Connecticut’s Old State House, encourage students across the state to take action on their selected issue through video messages, and more!

Brief 30-minute videos on the three branches of government, on how elections and voting work, and on how to create a campaign platform will be available at www.ct.kidgovernor.org; these videos are designed to prepare students for the campaign and election. These lessons can be easily incorporated into curriculum and are aligned with the new Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks. The team at Connecticut’s Old State House will be available to answer any questions teachers have throughout the program. A meeting will take place explaining how the program works on Wednesday, September 23 at 4:30: details to follow. The Old State House is very excited to launch this program, and is inviting teachers and students to participate, either in just the voting process or by putting forth a candidate and voting.

Connecticut’s Kid Governor 2015 program is free to all Connecticut 5th grade classes and home school groups. For additional information, contact Brian Cofrancesco, Head of Education at Connecticut’s Old State House, at (860) 522-6755, extension 28 or at Brian.Cofrancesco@cga.ct.gov.

Cultural Jambalaya

Cultural Jambalaya, a non-profit, is a great, free teaching tool to ignite conversation about cultural barriers though video and study guides. Hopefully you had a chance to preview the trailer and check out their website. A picture is worth a thousand words, especially in the classrooms of America’s youth.

Gail Shore, founder of Cultural Jambalaya, has solo-trekked for over 40 years, photographing some of the most culturally unique places on the planet. Her self-funded experiences have resulted in the production of national award-winning educational videos that serve as a creative teaching tool to broaden world views of students. Just one of the unique highlights of this nonprofit is that it offers its videos and study guides for FREE to break down cultural barriers by focusing on our cultural similarities as well as our differences.

Improved cultural understanding is critically important in our classrooms, in our communities and in our society. I am hoping you will consider a story about this one-of-a-kind nonprofit, which is helping to ignite discussion and critical thinking in the classroom to help shatter stereotypes. Cultural Jambalaya believes the more we know about each others’ background, history and religion, the more respectful we can become of one another.

Latin America series CulturalJam.org
Alissa Edgren McFarland Communications
608 2nd Avenue South, Suite 129 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402 952.649.9068

National Council for History Education
I’m the Director of Conference & Events with the National Council for History Education and I’m in charge of our 2016 NCHE Conference in Niagara Falls, NY.

Our 2016 Conference will be held in Niagara Falls on April 21-23, 2016. The theme of the conference is “Crossing Borders” and more information can be found at: www.nche.net/conference. We would love to see your teachers take advantage of the professional development opportunity that is so close to home.

John Csepegi, Director of Conferences & Events National Council for History Education 13940 Cedar Road, #393 University Heights, OH 44118 (240) 696-6612 john@nche.net

Professional Opportunities
The Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History

The Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History is happy to announce our new Self-Paced Course series.

Each self-paced course includes:
- Video seminars with an eminent historian
- Digital labs and pedagogy sessions
- MP3 audio files of each seminar for on-the-go listening
- Featured primary sources and readings
- An online quiz and certificate of completion
- The opportunity for teachers to earn contact hours credits

Would you be interested in sharing this news with your members through the Connecticut Council for Social Studies Yankee Post newsletter or on the CCSS website? I would be happy to provide more information on the Self-Paced Course series if needed.

We are currently offering four courses:

- **The Global Cold War** with Professor Jeremi Suri, University of Texas at Austin
- **The American Civil War** with Professor Allen C. Guelzo, Gettysburg College
- **The South in American History** with Professor Edward L. Ayers, University of Richmond
- **Amazing Grace: How Writers Helped End Slavery** with Professor James G. Basker, Barnard College

Anna Khomina
The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History  49 West 45th Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10036  
khomina@gilderlehrman.org

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Save the date

**NEW ENGLAND GLOBAL EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM**

Where: Saturday, October 24, 2015
Where: EF Education First  
Two Education Circle, Cambridge, MA 02141

Understand. Practice. Advocate.

You’ve been invited to join us for a Global Education Symposium focused on empowering educators to cultivate global citizens through authentic learning experiences. This free educational symposium is being developed in cooperation with the New England Teachers of the Year and will explore:

- Global citizenship through its competencies and habits of mind
- Educational experiences to help your students broaden their global perspectives
- Building your educational support team to create meaningful change

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**Professional Opportunities**
History and Social Studies Educators -

- Do you want to increase use of primary sources with students, but can’t find the right sources to support your lessons?
- Do you aim to have students do more of their own searches?
- Do you sometimes get lost in the big national online archives (Library of Congress, National Archives, etc.)?

Join me September 30 - 7:00pm - for a FREE 50-minute webinar – “So Many Sources, So Little Time: Successfully Searching the Library of Congress Online” – and find what you want, when you need it, to support inquiry in your classroom.

Register: [http://www.collaborative.org/events-and-courses/so-many-sources-so-little-time](http://www.collaborative.org/events-and-courses/so-many-sources-so-little-time)

Rich Cairn, Program Director, Emerging America
Library of Congress: Teaching with Primary Sources at CES 97 Hawley Street, Northampton, MA 01060
[http://emergingamerica.org](http://emergingamerica.org) (413) 588-5936 (413) 586-2878 fax
Emerging America [Workshop Registration](http://emergingamerica.org)
2015 Forge of Innovation - NEH Landmarks - [http://EmergingAmerica.org/NEH](http://EmergingAmerica.org/NEH)
Twitter: @EmergingAmerica

Connecticut Explored

Connecticut Explored, the 13-year-old magazine of Connecticut history, is one among a number of educational and historical organizations working to provide toolkits for teachers that use Connecticut history to teach U.S. history and other social studies content. Their first toolkit, for 8th graders and written by Tony Roy of Connecticut River Academy, adapts an essay from their 2014 book, African American Connecticut Explored (Wesleyan University Press) for 8th grade readers and provides compelling and supporting questions, performance tasks, and sources. The stories of Connecticut’s Ebenezer Bassett, the first African American to be appointed a diplomat (by President Grant to Haiti) and Rebecca Primus, who taught school in the south during Reconstruction, are compelling narratives that will bring the post Civil War period alive for your students. Students will explore the compelling question: Is the history of race relations in America a story of progress? Access to the toolkit is available at [ctexplored.org/teach](http://ctexplored.org/teach). Connecticut Explored plans to provide more toolkits from both African American Connecticut Explored and the pages of Connecticut Explored. Teachers interested in assisting them are welcome to email Elizabeth Normen at [publisher@ctexplored.org](mailto:publisher@ctexplored.org). In addition, teachers may subscribe to Connecticut Explored at a discount: $15 for one year (4 issues) and $28 for two years at [ctexplored.org](http://ctexplored.org). Visit their table at the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies conference on October 27.

Elizabeth J. Normen, Publisher
Connecticut Explored
[www.ctexplored.org](http://www.ctexplored.org) (860) 233-5421

African American Connecticut Explored now available!

Rand McNally Intro to Geography

Rand McNally has teamed up with Montessorium to present [Intro to Geography - World Edition](http://www.collaborative.org/), a Montessori inspired educational app for iPad® and iPhone® [Intro to Geography - World Edition](http://www.collaborative.org/) combines 150 years of map-making expertise with the 100-year-old educational method of Montessori.

The result? A geography app that puts the world at your child’s fingertips. This new app brings the engaging Montessori puzzle map work to the iPhone and iPad. Journey through every continent, watch your progression along a road map, and discover what makes our planet unique:

- Drag and drop each country
- Draw lines and match each country to its name.
- Discover each country’s identity by coloring in their flag.
- Collect stamps along the way to add to your passport

![Professional Opportunities](http://www.collaborative.org/)
Join us this fall for our annual conference!

“Digital History: The Future of Exploring the Past”

Friday October 2, 2015, 8:15am to 5:00pm
Rhode Island Historical Society, Aldrich House, 110 Benevolent Street, Providence, RI

Dig into innovative methods, tools, and sources:
How are Big Data, the Cloud, and Google Earth changing the way we interpret the past? Is the “digital turn” producing a more vibrant, more accessible form of history?
Does it allow us – and our students – to ask new questions? To work in new ways? What does it take to integrate digital methods and tools into the history classroom?

Examine the possibilities with experts in the field
including keynote speaker Kathryn Tomasek (Wheaton College) and other pioneers in the scholarly and pedagogical aspects of data visualization, GIS, web mapping, cloud-based collaboration, social media, and digitization from schools and universities across New England.

Visit our fall conference page to register:
http://nehta.org/conferences-events/fall/
Global Challenges and Innovations Workshop Series

Using the CT Social Studies Frameworks to Investigate Global Health

Global Health remains a top priority in the international community and intersects with prominent social issues like poverty, development, and globalization.

Participants will receive the materials and tools they need to foster an inquiry-based classroom. Participants will explore innovative solutions and ways to take informed action to address global health issues. This workshop will feature:

- Stephen Armstrong, State Social Studies Consultant
- Christopher Todd, Teacher Leader-in-Residence at the CT State Department of Education
- David Bosso, Ed. D., 2012 CT Teacher of the Year
- Laura Krenicki, Teacher Consultant at the CT Geographic Alliance
- Cher-Wen DeWitt, Global Health Corps Fellow
- Integration of resources and evidence

Global Health Workshop
Thursday, October 8, 2015
8:30am-3:30pm

Location
Harry Jack Gray Center
University of Hartford
200 Bloomfield Avenue
West Hartford, CT 06117

For more information contact Eve Pech:
epech@ctwac.org

Workshop Registration
Eventbrite (online):
$30 per workshop

At-the-Door:
$35 per workshop

Sponsored by:

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Professional Opportunities
Membership in CCSS entitles you to:

- Reduced Registration for the CCSS Fall Conference
- Reduced Registration for the Northeast Regional Conference for the Social Studies (NERC)
- Convenient access to the Yankee Post, the CCSS online newsletter
- Opportunity to apply for “mini-grants” of up to $500 for innovative curriculum in social studies and other special projects
- Opportunity to meet colleagues and develop a network of professional friends and associates
- Ability to keep up-to-date with developments in the social studies.

If you have always wanted to become a member of NCSS, now is the time to act. New membership subscriptions to NCSS will also give you membership benefits from Connecticut Council for the Social Studies for one year—a $20 savings. This offer applies to only new NCSS Regular or new Comprehensive members only who send in their form to CCSS. Joint member benefits include:

- All CCSS benefits
- Regular and Comprehensive membership in NCSS includes a subscription to Social Education or Social Studies and the Young Learner
- NCSS Comprehensive membership also includes all bulletins published during the membership year.

Please complete membership form. Make checks payable to CCSS and mail this form to CCSS, P.O. Box 5031, Milford, CT 06460.

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Home Address___________________________City_________________State_______Zip______
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Home Phone_____________________Cell Phone________________Work Phone_____________
Position________________________________Level of Instruction__________________________
Areas of Special Interest__________________________________________________________

CCSS Membership (July 1- June 30) NEW NCSS Membership
_____Regular $20 _____Regular* $69
_____Student $10 _____Comprehensive* $83
_____Retiree $10

*Choose one:
_____Social Education
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