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NEWS FROM THE NEW HAMPSHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 2022

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### **New Guidelines Provide a Road Map for Social Studies Education in the Granite State**

CONCORD—The New Hampshire Historical Society and the New Hampshire Council for the Social Studies released today a document addressed to school administrators, school boards, and parents that will provide a road map for renewing social studies education in the state.

Many people believe well-balanced social studies programs offer the best chance to temper the polarization of American society. In addition, there is increasing evidence that social studies—with its emphasis on contextual knowledge—provides a critical foundation to support all learning across a wide spectrum of subject areas. Among the many benefits of social studies is its ability to finally move the needle on America’s stagnant test scores in English language arts, particularly reading comprehension.

Yet social studies education has been marginalized in New Hampshire, as it has throughout the United States, for decades. Crowded out of the K–12 curriculum by high-stakes testing in English language arts and math, social studies has consequently been neglected across every metric, including instructional time, resources, teacher preparation, and state support.

The “Guidelines for Social Studies Education in New Hampshire Schools” offer eight key principles schools can implement to deliver high-quality instruction in history, civics, geography, and economics. The required curricular changes are structural rather than political—addressing the way New Hampshire parents and schools prioritize the subjects taught and how educational resources are allocated. The eight key principles are summarized in the document’s Executive Summary.

The New Hampshire Historical Society and the New Hampshire Council for the Social Studies, along with leaders in social studies education, have been working collaboratively over the past year to produce the Guidelines in the hope they will provide school districts with much-needed support.

Originally, the groups came together to produce new academic standards (called frameworks in this state). The state's current social studies frameworks have not been updated since 2006, and school administrators in many New Hampshire districts have been waiting for new frameworks before reassessing their social studies programs. These frameworks historically have been developed by the New Hampshire Department of Education, but with an update several years overdue, the two nonprofits stepped in.

As work got underway on new frameworks, the group realized that more significant structural reforms to social studies education were needed before revised frameworks could be implemented successfully. Such reforms include changes like starting social studies education in the younger grades for New Hampshire students and providing more training and support for the state's social studies teachers.

"These Guidelines are a first step to bringing social studies education into the 21st century in New Hampshire," says Elizabeth Dubrulle, director of education at the New Hampshire Historical Society and the lead author of the document. "If we expect school districts to provide our children with a high-quality education—one that will make them competitive with students in other states—then we must provide our educators with guidance. New Hampshire, which routinely ranks among the top states in the country in regards to education, should be leading the effort in social studies reform, and these Guidelines will help our schools do that."

In addition to the New Hampshire Historical Society and the New Hampshire Council for the Social Studies, the Guidelines are also approved by the League of Women Voters, the New Hampshire Bar Foundation, and New Hampshire Civics.

Founded in 1823, the New Hampshire Historical Society is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to saving, preserving, and sharing New Hampshire history. Nowhere will you find a more extensive collection of objects and archives related to New Hampshire's history. The Society shares these vast collections through its research library, museum, website, publications, exhibitions, and youth and adult educational programs. The Society is not a state-funded agency. All of its programs and services are made possible by membership dues and contributions. For more information about the Society and the benefits of membership, visit [nhhistory.org](http://nhhistory.org) or call 603-228-6688.