





**TO:** P-12 Education Committee  
**FROM:** Ken Wagner   
**SUBJECT:** Roadmap for Social Studies  
**DATE:** September 8, 2014  
**AUTHORIZATION(S):**   
**SUMMARY**

**Issue for Discussion**

Department staff will present a roadmap for a comprehensive approach to Social Studies following the Board’s approval of the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework at its April 2014 meeting. This roadmap includes plans for the release of instructional resources, proposed adjustments to high school course requirements, and a timeline for updates to Social Studies Regents Exams.

**Reason(s) for Consideration**

Review of Policy

**Proposed Handling**

The question will come before a meeting of the P-12 Education Committee for discussion at its September 2014 meeting.

**Procedural History and Background Information**

In July 2010, the Board of Regents adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. Since that time, the Department has articulated the shifts in instructional practice that are required to implement these rigorous standards successfully. These shifts help ensure that students who graduate from high school have received instruction that develops the knowledge and skills required to be successful in college and careers the 21st century.

At the May 2011 joint discussion of the Board’s P-12 Education Committee and

College and Career Readiness Working Group, Department staff was directed to create a Social Studies Content Advisory Panel, consisting of a wide range of experts from the field. One of the charges of this panel was to advise on the suggested revision of the *New York State Social Studies Resource Guide with Core Curriculum* to ensure alignment to *New York State Common Core Learning Standards*.

The Content Advisory Panel has met since fall 2011 and advised the Department on draft versions of the New York State Common Core K-12 Social Studies Framework. Although the Framework is aligned to the *New York State Common Core Learning Standards*, it maintains the standards statements from the existing *New York State Learning Standards for Social Studies* (1996) and the order of courses and many of the key topics from the *Social Studies Resource Guide with Core Curriculum* (1998). The Framework includes Key Ideas, Conceptual Understandings, and Content Specifications for each grade level. In addition, the Framework incorporates the “Inquiry Arc” and other guidance from the National Council for the Social Studies document entitled *College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards*.

Following the September 2012 Board of Regents meeting, the Content Advisory Panel was asked to advise the Department on the possibility of splitting Global History and Geography into two distinct units of study that could be required for graduation purposes.

At its October 19, 2012 meeting, the Content Advisory Panel recommended, consistent with the Board’s discussion in September, that the Global History and Geography course of study be divided into two separate and distinct units of study to be required for graduation. As directed by the Board at its November 2012 meeting, a survey of stakeholders was conducted in December 2012 regarding options for dividing the course of study into two units of study. Overall, survey respondents supported a chronological approach to this course of study, as opposed to a thematic approach.

As a result of the Framework review and revision process described above, Global History and Geography I (Grade 9) begins with the Paleolithic Era and continues to a period of Global Interactions from approximately 1400 to 1750. Global History and Geography II (Grade 10) begins with a snapshot of the world at 1750, incorporates the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, and continues to the present. This two-unit sequence provides students with a comprehensive and rigorous course of study in Global History and Geography, consistent with the Common Core Learning Standards.

At the April 2014 meeting, the New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework was approved by the Board of Regents. The Framework provides districts and teachers with information needed to develop local curriculum in grades K-12 social studies. It incorporates the five learning standards for social studies: (1) History of the United States and New York, (2) World History, (3) Geography, (4) Economics, and (5) Civics, Citizenship, and Government. The framework includes two distinct courses for Grades 9 and 10—Global History and Geography I and Global History and Geography II.

## **Implementation and Professional Development**

A field guide to help teachers and administrators develop local curriculum in alignment with the Framework is near completion. The first part of the field guide explains the structure of the Framework and the instructional shifts supporting implementation of the Framework. Suggested resources for developing instructional practices in the social studies are included. The field guide includes a sample unit that suggests one way for the Framework to be implemented. This unit will be reviewed and revised over the course of the year as part of the New York State Social Studies Resource Toolkit Project described below.

The New York State Social Studies Resource Toolkit Project is a collaborative partnership with SUNY Binghamton, New York State teachers, and national experts in the social studies. Units and instructional resources will be developed and piloted by New York State teachers in classrooms across the State over the next year to identify best practices in the social studies. The Toolkit, like the Framework, will be aligned to the C3 Framework, and can serve as an exemplar and resource for other states.

The Toolkit Project will provide professional development support in partnership with the Staff and Curriculum Development Network, the New York State Council for the Social Studies Conference, and the Network Team Institute. Additional professional development will be provided by the Department to various districts, BOCES regions, and organizations including local social studies councils.

## **Assessment Development and Implementation**

The Office of State Assessment has begun gathering feedback to guide revisions consistent with the Framework to the Regents Examinations in Global History and Geography and in United States History and Government. Members of the Content Advisory Panel have been invited to share ideas, along with supervisors of social studies from various school districts and teachers throughout the State.

The test development process will commence with the training of item writers in the spring of 2015, the piloting of new items in spring 2016, field testing in 2017, and the first administration of the Regents Examination in Global History and Geography in June 2018 and the Regents Examination in United States History and Government in June 2019.

This proposed timeline would allow for teacher opportunities to become familiar with the types of items that will be used on these assessments. In addition, students in grades K-8 will soon begin to receive instruction aligned to the Framework, particularly in the areas of social studies practices and skills.

## **Recommended Change to Course Requirements and Regents Exam Design**

As described above, the Framework separates Global History and Geography content into two units of study. Global History and Geography I (Grade 9) begins with the Paleolithic Era and continues to a period of Global Interactions from approximately

1400 to 1750. Global History and Geography II (Grade 10) begins with a snapshot of the world at 1750, incorporates the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, and continues to the present.

The current Global History and Geography Regents Exam is required for graduation and measures student knowledge and skills across two years of Global History and Geography content. However, there is no requirement that a student actually take a Global History and Geography course. Rather, students are required for graduation purposes to complete four units of study in the Social Studies, including one unit of study in United States History, one-half unit in Economics or its equivalent, and one-half unit in Participation in Government or its equivalent.

Department staff recommend that course requirements be modified to include two required units of study in Global History and Geography or equivalent, and, in turn, the Regents Exam that measures student knowledge and skills for graduation measure student knowledge and skills only in the Global History and Geography II (Grade 10) course. This approach would maintain the current implicit requirement that students pursue two years of study of Global History and Geography, but would refocus the Regents Exam, which is required for graduation, to a more limited scope and depth of content.

If the Board wishes to proceed with this recommendation, staff will develop amendments to the Commissioner's Regulations to reflect these changes.

In addition, Department staff will advise the field to commence instruction aligned to the Framework in grades Kindergarten to Grade 8. Instruction based on the Framework for Grades 9-12 will be phased in beginning with Grade 9 in the 2016-17 school year. The new Regents Examination in Global History and Geography II will be administered in June 2018, and the new Regents Examination in United States History and Government will be administered in June 2019.