

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE

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Defining Social Studies

National Council of the Social Studies



- The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

Civic Mission of the Schools: Identifying Best Practices

Best Practices

- 1. Provide instruction in content
- 2. Incorporate discussion of current events
- 3. Community service applicable to classroom instruction
- 4. Extracurricular activities that involve students in community
- 5. Student participation in school governance
- 6. Simulations of the democratic process.

Recognized Exemplary Programs

- We the People
- National History Day
- Kids Voting
- Project Citizen

Growing Students into Engaged Citizens

Programs that Work – Simulating the Democratic Process and Traditions

- **History Day – www.nhd.org**

Students choose historical topics related to a theme and conduct extensive primary and secondary research through libraries, archives, museums, oral history interviews and historic sites. After analyzing and interpreting their sources and drawing conclusions about their topics' significance in history, students present their work in original papers, websites, exhibits, performances and documentaries.

- **We the People – www.civiced.org**

The **We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution Program** promotes civic competence and responsibility among the nation's upper elementary and secondary students. The *We the People* [textbook](#), its interactive strategies, and the simulated congressional hearing make teaching and learning exciting for both students and teachers.

- **Project Citizen – www.civiced.org**

- Students create a “portfolio.” The portfolios represent work done by middle grade students and youth organization participants to analyze local issues within their school, community, or state and present public policy solutions to address their selected problem.

- **Kids Voting - <https://www.kidsvotingusa.org>**

- Kids Voting USA is a nonpartisan, grassroots-driven voter education program committed to creating lifelong voting habits in children, increasing family communication about citizenship, and encouraging greater adult voter turnout.

Exemplary Programs – How They Work

Celebrate our Discipline

- Teaches to the Standards
- Promotes Student-Centered learning
- Differentiates Instruction
- Connect to the Community
 - Promotes Trust
 - Develops a Dialog
- Creates an Authentic Audience
 - Transition to Adulthood
 - Opens Opportunities

Exemplary Programs: Teachers working with Students



- Use literacy skills assist students acquiring knowledge, skills, and dispositions that build an engaged citizenry
- Emphasize knowledge that is needed be an effective citizen
- Integrate promising practices that simulate the democratic experience into the classroom