

# The Iowa Council for the Social Studies Journal

## EDITOR

Lynn E. Nielsen  
Malcolm Price Laboratory School  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, Iowa

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

BEYOND THE NEW STANDARDS IN SOCIAL STUDIES Cordell M. Svengalis .....	1
USING THE TEN NCSS THEMATIC STRANDS/STANDARDS IN THE K-12 SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM Craig M. Bancroft .....	9
THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CIVICS & GOVERNMENT John Wheeler .....	13
GEOGRAPHY, A LIFE LONG JOURNEY Louise Voss Thurn.....	19
TRENDS IN GLOBAL EDUCATION James Hantula .....	25
THE NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS Clair Keller.....	31

## FORWARD

The impact of the national standards movement on social studies education provides the focus of this issue of the Iowa Council for the Social Studies Journal. From its beginnings early in this century, the field of social studies has struggled to maintain its identity. Challenge to the social studies has originated from at least two sources. First, conflicts between the ranks of the various members of the social studies community have tested the future of social education. Social studies assumes its identity and definition from a sometimes shaky alliance of the many social science disciplines. That fault lines should occasionally develop between these loosely connected fields should come as no surprise. At times in the past when social studies educators have found it necessary to close ranks in the face of a battle, it was not always clear which groups would show up for duty. Often historians charged off in one direction, geographers and sociologists in another leaving economists and political scientists to fight for themselves while anthropologists and psychologists analyzed the results. At other times the battle lines were drawn within the ranks rather than outside.

Second, challenges to the social studies have come from forces exterior to the ranks of social studies educators. For example, the current reform movement under the general umbrella of the National Education Goals, somewhat diminishes the social studies by giving little notice to the field as a whole and instead focuses on history, geography and civics. Despite these limitations, the establishment of the national goals has inspired the development of standards for a broad range of social studies areas ranging from history to global education. These initiatives hold great promise for the future as general social studies standards have been developed and as well as standards for most of the individual disciplines.

In this issue of the Iowa Council of the Social Studies Journal, Cordell Svengalis addresses the general issues which face social studies educators as they take on the daunting task of implementing the many standards which have social studies connections. Craig Bancroft follows this theme by examining more closely Expectations of Excellence developed by the National Council for the Social Studies. Next, John Wheeler overviews the National Standards for Civics and Government and their importance to the development of citizenship appreciations and skills. Louise Voss Thurn addresses geography standards with her creative overview of Geography for Life, National Geography Standards. Jim Hantula follows by addressing work to date in the area of standards for global education. Last but not least, Clair Keller addresses possibly the most contentious issues related to Goals 2000, namely the history standards as explicated in Standards in United States and World History.

With this guidance from the grassroots, we can move forward with confidence that social studies education will remain vigorous into the next century and beyond.