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Lester W. Young, Jr.
Chancellor, New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Board of Regents, Room 110 EB
Albany, New York 12234
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Dear Chancellor Young,

As the statewide professional organization of New York's Social Studies educators, we urge you to reconsider two potential modifications to the ESSA State Accountability System for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years.

The proposed changes to the ESSA plan are described as "pauses" in the inclusion of the Social Studies Regents exam scores. Excluding Social Studies in both the High School Weighted Average Achievement score and the High School Core Subject Performance for the 2023-2025 school years places Social Studies in New York at a dangerous precipice. This "pause" sends a message to all New Yorkers that Social Studies education is not a priority. Recent political, economic and societal events provide ample evidence that our students need Social Studies at this critical moment in our nation's history.

NYSED will have actionable results to evaluate the progress of students and schools in Social Studies in the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. The Global History & Geography Regents exam was administered in 2022 and will be administered again in June 2023 and in the 2023-2024 school year. On June 1st, students will take the new, long-delayed, U.S. History & Government Regents exam. That exam will also be administered in the 2023-2024 school year. Why would we choose *not* to hold our students and schools accountable for an objective measure of the knowledge and skills of the subject area that is so critical to a functioning democracy?

As the New York Court of Appeals ruled in 2003, the New York State Constitution guarantees all students a meaningful opportunity to receive an education to prepare them to function productively as civic participants. A high quality civic education empowers all students to make informed decisions for the public good as members of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world – values that the Board of Regents claims to espouse. To make these informed decisions, students need to demonstrate that they have a fundamental and functional knowledge of government, law, history, geography, culture, economics, and current events. Students and schools show that knowledge through their performance on the Social Studies Regents exams. The Board of Regents made a significant financial investment to redesign both the Global and U.S. Regents. Both exams encourage broad and deep thinking, the skills of supporting claims with fact-based

The New York State Council for the Social Studies is committed to ensuring that all students graduate from high school and college ready for lifelong learning, engaging careers, and active civic life. We represent Social Studies teachers, supervisors, curriculum developers, researchers, scholars, and administrators at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary (college and university) levels, educators in cultural institutions, publishers, and content creators.



evidence, and an appropriate knowledge base in history, geography and government. Both exams reflect the 2014 Social Studies Curriculum Framework and have sparked changes in instruction across the state. Why would we choose to disregard the results of these exams? Regents results enable schools to set goals for a high-quality education for our diverse student population. Social Studies results need to be included in the accountability system because we know that what is tested is taught. New York's inclusion of Social Studies in the original ESSA Plan established New York as a national leader in endorsing the value of Social Studies in a student's education. We are concerned that "pausing" the inclusion of results demonstrates a devaluation of Social Studies that could lead to the elimination of the Social Studies Regents exams and minimization of the critical importance of this core subject.

Please demonstrate your commitment to a comprehensive Social Studies program in New York by including Social Studies in the Two-Year Rebuild Model for the ESSA State Accountability Plan.

Lisa Kissinger
President

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