

The Marginalization of Social Studies

Research consistently demonstrates that social studies receives the least amount of instructional time in the elementary grades when compared to the amount of time afforded to other core content areas.

College, Career, and Civic Life

Students are denied opportunities to succeed in college, career, and civic life when social studies is marginalized.



Students in low-income communities have less access to social studies instruction in elementary school.



An increase in time devoted to social studies in elementary schools resulted in higher scores on the Nation's Report Card for 4th grade U.S. History.

Civic Engagement

Preparation for civic life was the primary purpose for establishing public schools in the United States. Students who receive effective social studies instruction are:



More likely to vote and discuss politics at home.



Four times more likely to volunteer and work on community issues.



More confident in their ability to speak publicly and communicate with their elected representatives.

44%



of districts surveyed have reduced time for social studies since the enactment of No Child Left Behind.



23%

of American 8th graders are proficient in civics, according to the most recent NAEP assessment.

Reading

Content knowledge makes weak readers better readers.

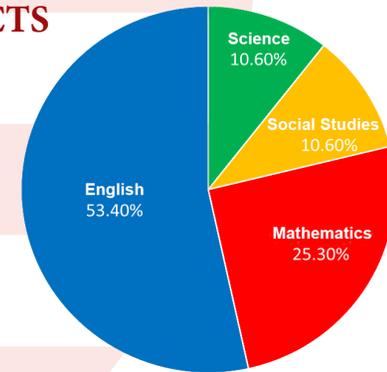


Reading assessments require background knowledge from social studies disciplines like civics, economics, geography, and history.¹

Poor readers with strong background knowledge display better reading comprehension than strong readers with low background knowledge.²

2nd graders who had 60 lessons of literacy-rich social studies instruction scored 23% higher on reading assessments.³

TIME SPENT ON CORE ELEMENTARY SUBJECTS



U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)

What to do?



Dedicate at least 45 minutes of daily instructional time to social studies in grades K-5.



Assess social studies skills and content.



Support social studies professional learning.



Use high-quality social studies curriculum and materials.

¹ Center for Early Reading, Amplify. *Learning to read: A primer, part two*. Retrieved from https://go.info.amplify.com/hubfs/Primer%20II/Primer2_2018_Final.pdf.

² Recht, D. R., & Leslie, L. (1988). Effect of prior knowledge on good and poor readers' memory of text. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80(1), 16–20.

³ Halvorsen, A. L., Duke, N. K., Brugar, K. A., Block, M. K., Strachan, S. S., Berka, M. B., & Brown, J. M. (2012). Narrowing the achievement gap in second-grade social studies and content area literacy: The promise of a project-based approach. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 40, 198–229

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Weekly Hours of Core Subject Instruction

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