

Summary of Amicus Brief filed by National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

Social studies experts lay out the components of a quality civics education to prepare students for democratic citizenship.

Education generally, and civics education in particular, is fundamental to American democracy. A quality civics education equips students with the knowledge, skills, experiences and values needed for active and engaged democratic citizenship. The essential role that quality civics education plays in developing an engaged democratic citizenry is supported by empirical research documented here. Unfortunately, national assessment data demonstrate US students have not received adequate civics education, and events following the 2020 US elections demonstrate the potential dangers of this neglect. In collaboration with experts in the field of social studies, NCSS has developed standards for social studies education and a framework that can guide states in developing quality civics education in particular. Described in greater detail in this brief, this guidance sets forth fundamental democratic concepts and skills students should understand and develop in connection with civics education. A civics education that fails to impart these fundamental concepts and skills cannot prepare students for democratic citizenship.