

2019-2020 State of the Social Studies Annual Survey Findings

The Ohio Council for the Social Studies (OCSS) serves as the premier voice for social studies professionals in the state of Ohio. We advocate for the vital role of social studies and assist educators in the delivery of effective and innovative curriculum and instruction. This survey is conducted annually and invites social studies teachers around the state of Ohio to provide feedback to the organization regarding social studies in Ohio, and how the organization can best support its members.

This year, we created a more robust survey instrument that gave us a better perspective on the state of social studies in Ohio. In addition to OCSS membership questions, we integrated additional survey questions regarding the methods of instruction K-12 teachers use, use of inquiry, and what respondents' thoughts were on social studies instruction in Ohio. If anyone is interested in assisting with future survey creation, validation, or distribution, please contact Dr. Sarah Kaka, the OCSS Higher Education Representative, at sjkaka@owu.edu.

- For those reached by our 2019-2020 annual survey, 139 responses were recorded.
- Of those who responded, 55.8% have been teaching for more than 11 years. 44.2% ranged from pre-service to 10 years of teaching.
- 31.8% are in an urban district, 38% are in a suburban district, and 30.2% are in a rural district.
- 91.7% are white; 3.8% are black; 2.8% are Asian or Pacific Islander; 1.5% are multiracial; and 1% are Hispanic.
- 15.9% teach elementary school; 31% teach middle school; 49.1% teach high school; and 4% teach higher education.
- 70.4% have a master's degree
- 48.5% coach or sponsor something; 51.5% do not
- 57.2% of those are currently members of OCSS, while 42.8% are not.
- They were asked to rank the reason for teaching social studies, from most important to least. The most important reason chosen is "to teach students an appreciation and awareness of their community, nation, and world." This was followed closely by "to prepare good citizens." The reason that is least important is "because it is required by state standards."
- When asked about specific teaching methods, and the frequency in which they engage students in them, whole class discussion is most often used daily, while cooperative learning, lecture, and primary source analysis are used weekly (1-2 times per week). Working with maps and globes and textbook-based reading are occasionally used (2-3 times per month).
- 79.9% of participants were not prepared in their teacher preparation program to use the C3 Framework and inquiry when planning social studies instruction. 20.1% were prepared.
- 79.1% indicated that they do use inquiry in their classroom, while 20.9% do not.
- When asked to describe what inquiry-based instruction looks like in their classroom, participants offered competing perspectives. The most common responses fell under the

categories of questioning (65%), source work (25%), and research (30%). They cited the use of projects as being part of inquiry-based instruction (12%), and student-centered tasks that involved problem-solving (12%).

- When asked about the challenges involved in utilizing inquiry-based instruction, the largest challenge cited was time. 91% reported they don't have enough time to plan to integrate inquiry-based instruction effectively, and they don't have enough instructional time to use inquiry in a meaningful way. A lack of materials and age/skill-level appropriate resources was also cited (8%), which connected closely with many teachers' beliefs that they were not well-trained to incorporate inquiry-based instruction effectively (39%).
- When asked how they would currently assess the vitality and strength of the teaching and learning of social studies in their school by assigning a letter grade, they responded: 20.4% an A, 45.3% a B, 27% a C, 6.6% a D, and 0.7% an F.
- When then asked to assess the vitality and strength of the teaching and learning of social studies in Ohio's K-12 classrooms, responses varied: 4.4% an A, 25.5% a B, 56.9% a C, 10.9% a D, and 2.2% an F. The decline in grades at the state level were mainly due to the perception that social studies is less important state-wide than the other core content areas since it is no longer tested at most grade levels, though they do feel it is valued in individual schools as evidenced by the previous bullet.
- When asked to indicate how they believed their school leaders perceive the value of each content area based upon investments in hiring, professional development, and instructional resources, math was most valued, followed closely by English Language Arts. 49.2% believed that social studies is valued, while 47.7% believe it is least valued.
- When asked about whether or not they had participated in social studies specific professional development activities in the previous year, 25.9% indicated they participated in three or more activities; 20.9% in two; 27.3% in one, and 25.9% of participants said they had not participated in any professional development in the previous year.
- OCSS has renewed its commitment to offering regional professional development workshops. The top three responses for which are most appealing are Using Debates, Simulations, and Student-Centered Instructional Methods such as Inquiry (62%), Primary Source Analysis and Information Literacy (56.9%), and Teaching Hard History and Controversial Issues (52.6%).