



THE LONG ISLAND COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES

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SS Regents Should Remain as Graduation Requirement

The Long Island Council for the Social Studies, a committed group of over 1,100 social studies teachers and administrators, is unequivocally opposed to any action by the New York State Board of Regents to eliminate or make optional either the New York State Regents exam in Global History and Geography or the Regents exam in United States History and Government.

The following reasons support our position:

- The New York State Regents exams ensure that students graduate from high school with a basic knowledge of the history of our country and the values that guided its founding as well as the critical thinking skills necessary for students to fully participate in and fulfill their civic responsibilities.
- The New York State Regents exams ensure that students meet at least minimum standard of achievement in all academic courses. The New York State Regents exams in both Global History and Geography and United States History and Government ensure that a state approved and vetted curriculum is taught to all students. What is tested assures what is taught.
- The New York State Regents exams in Global History and Geography and United States History and Government require students to both read and write at a high level, synthesizing content and skills to create a well-reasoned argument. Both tests challenge students to take into account historical circumstances, point of view, and intended audience to look at history with a critical eye and through multiple lenses. Both tests ensure those students who pass the exams are college and career ready.
- In our increasingly interconnected world the New York State Regents exam in Global History and Geography ensures that our students have a knowledge and understanding of other beliefs, civilizations, and societies in the world. The study of world history culminating in a New York State Regents is a strong indication that our graduates can move on to the next steps in their lives with knowledge of other peoples and the geography of our planet.
- The history of the United States should never be marginalized for any reason, especially for political or educational expediency. The heart of our nation is our common history. For all those who live in the United States and for those wishing to become citizens of the United States, an understanding of our heritage and our founding documents should be an absolute requirement for graduation from high school. Additionally, a knowledge of the values, ideals, institutions, and functioning of the US political system is so important for civically responsible adults to make informed and reasoned decisions as they engage in the political process.

The New York State Regents has always been the gold standard for education in the United States for over 150 years. While the United States is in desperate need of a highly educated workforce and informed citizens who are critical thinkers, the prospect of eliminating the Regents exams in both global history and United States history is, in our opinion, a dangerous step backward. Social Studies exams, in particular, are essential for the survival of a vibrant, democratic society. The New York State Regents exams are critical to maintain the high standards of excellence in education that has made New York schools, teachers and education the best in the country. We, the Long Island Council of the Social Studies, strongly believe that both New York State Regents exams in Global History and Geography and United States History and Government must continue to be required for high school graduation.