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Dear Commissioner Rosa,

The recent decision by the United States Department of Education not to grant waivers for federally required final exams has led the New York State Education Department to propose modifications to Regents exams this June. NYSED spokesperson Emily DeSantis, (memo dated 2-23-21) raised the possibility that Regents might cancel exams not required by federal law, which include those in the subjects of U.S. and Global History.

The Long Island Council for the Social Studies would view the cancellation of these two exams as educational malpractice. All Regents exams should be treated equally without any subject area deemed less important or critical to a student's education. The Council is stating that if any Regents is given, Social Studies must be included as it is equally or more important as any other subject to the recovery of our country.

At a time of a global health crisis and the greatest civic crisis since the 1850's, the skills associated with critical thinking, including determining the validity of information, identifying bias and point of view, are more important than ever to a democratic society seeking to ensure the growth of an informed citizenry. These two Regents exams have been designed by NYSED to assess student attainment of these skills and should not be canceled.

We are not weighing into the debate of whether or not Regents Exams should be administered in a pandemic.

Respectfully,

The Executive Board, LICSS

Cc: Board of Regents