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**STANDARDSWORK EXAMINES STATE SOCIAL STUDIES TESTING**  
*Are students learning social studies in schools? Without state testing, who knows?*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Are students in the U.S. learning anything about how society functions, from the political process to the economy to their civic responsibilities? For the most part, it is an unanswerable question. An analysis released today found the majority of states do no testing in social studies.

“These results are an important first step for us in shining a light on the short shrift most states give to social studies,” said Barbara Davidson, president of StandardsWork. The analysis of the prevalence and nature of state social studies testing is part of a larger effort by StandardsWork to scrutinize schools’ overall neglect of social studies and offer practical solutions for reversing a recent trend toward reduced social studies instruction.

Using publicly available data from state departments of education, StandardsWork cataloged state social studies testing in grades three through 12. In general, the inquiry found that a majority of states (53%) have no social studies tests. For the most part, states that test do so with general social studies assessments and not content (discipline) specific exams or end-of-course tests. Only 16% of states have tests specifically targeting history. Less than a third test social studies at any point in a child’s elementary career.

Virginia and Georgia stand out as states that test all grades from three through 12 (including having high school end-of-course exams). Coincidentally, these two states, together with Indiana and the District of Columbia, also received high marks earlier this year from the American Federation of Teachers for the overall quality, specificity, and rigor of their state content standards.

“In many ways, these results raise more questions than they answer,” Davidson said. “We’d like to find out what’s on the tests, which states have the better ones, and what impact such testing might be having on overall student achievement gains in the states that have them.”

StandardsWork, Inc. is a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit education consultancy that works hand-in-hand with school districts, state agencies and civic groups around the country to improve student achievement. The organization, now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year, is considered one of the leaders in the standards-based school reform movement. Charts showing the results of their investigation can be found on StandardsWork’s website ([www.standardswork.org](http://www.standardswork.org)).

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*Working for a better standard of education.*

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