

**HISTORY EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES:
A SURVEY OF TEACHER CERTIFICATION AND
STATE-BASED STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS
FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**

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INTRODUCTION

What is the condition of K-12 history education today? Answering this question requires an understanding of how the various states prepare and evaluate their teachers and students. This site offers a snapshot of state policies taken in fall of 2002, focused on five key areas: teacher certification; content standards for teachers; content standards for students; high school graduation and exit exam requirements; and assessments. The Organization of American Historians and the American Historical Association present this survey to those who seek to measure and improve how history is taught in America's elementary, middle, and high schools.

Our particular concern is with the alignment of these five areas. How do the guidelines for training history teachers line up with the history curriculum and the expected outcomes for students? How do assessments of historical knowledge for teachers compare to the assessments for their students? The results cannot be easily quantified, given the varying definitions of history and its relation to the social studies. However, we can note a few issues that bring the issue of alignment to the fore.

For instance, no state now requires its teachers to have majored in history in college to be certified at the secondary or middle school level. Only nine states expect their high school teachers to have even minored in history, and only two states require this of their middle school teachers. At the time of the report, thirteen states had no history, social science, or social studies content standards for teachers. As other recent reports have shown, the quality, range, and depth of student content standards in history vary widely from state to state. Only twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia require students to take U.S. history in high school. A mere eleven states plus the District demand that students take world history in high school.

Even a cursory review of the survey results suggests that recent reform efforts have tended to address one aspect or another, but rarely look at the pieces as a whole. We hope the following survey will provide a better means of envisioning how the various components of K-12 history education fit together.

This study was prepared by Sarah Drake Brown, a doctoral student at Indiana University, and Dr. John J. Patrick, director of the Social Studies Development Center of Indiana University, from spring 2002 through summer 2003. Ms. Brown presented progress reports and sought feedback from teachers, curriculum specialists, historians, and other state education officials at the 2002 National Council for Social Studies Annual Meeting in Phoenix, the 2003 American Historical Association Annual Meeting in Chicago, and the 2003 Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting in Memphis. Funding for the study came from the National History Education Network, a joint project that OAH, AHA, and other organizations supported during the 1990s.

