

THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, non-profit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

Valerie A. Woodruff (Delaware), President

Elizabeth Burmaster (Wisconsin), President-Elect

David P. Driscoll (Massachusetts), Past President

© 2006 by the Council of Chief State School Officers



Global Education Policy Statement

Our children must be well prepared for what they will encounter in the world and for what kind of global society they will inhabit and create.



November 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1985 the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) issued a policy statement on international dimensions in education. Many, if not most, of the priorities identified in that statement continue to have relevance today. However, over the course of two decades the context and traditional drivers of change have been significantly altered. More than ever before, students from around the globe are learning to adapt to change and to capitalize on expanding opportunities to become multilingual and learn to use mathematics, science, and technological skills in ways that meet or exceed the levels of current American students. We must take a constructive, positive, and innovative approach to prepare our children in a similar fashion, increasing the rigor of our academic standards, and thereby ensuring that all students are prepared to succeed in the global society.

This updated statement identifies five major challenges we face in the 21st century both individually in our state education agencies and collectively as a national organization of education leaders. Highlighted below are some strategies recommended to address these challenges.

Challenge 1:

Our graduates are not well equipped with the skills necessary for success in today's global society.

Recommendations ask policymakers and others to work together to identify the necessary skills needed for success in the

world's rapidly expanding knowledge economy and incorporate those skills into the curriculum.

Challenge 2:

Our current standards and curricula do not adequately emphasize the necessity of mastering world languages, geography, and culture.

Strategies addressing this challenge advise reviewing state standards to incorporate world orientation into curricula. In particular, content standards and assessments should be revised to make world languages an essential part of the curriculum for grades 3–12. Increased instruction in languages, geography, and culture will have implications for certification, training, and professional development.

Challenge 3:

Our schools are not currently designed and equipped to meet the reality of the demographic, economic, technological, and political trends of our rapidly changing world.

This set of recommendations places secondary school reform front and center and suggests, among other things, expanding graduation requirements in mathematics, science, foreign language, and technological skills.

Challenge 4:

Our teachers are not sufficiently supported and trained in 21st century skills and global content.

These strategies emphasize the importance of teacher training in world languages, including requiring pre-service teachers to be not only fluent but trained in the teaching of a world language.

Challenge 5:

Our education system does not readily explore best practices from our global education counterparts nor fully utilize learnings outside of the education community.

The U.S. must benchmark itself against the international community and incorporate 21st century skills into its curriculum. Additional strategies include expanding exchange efforts at all levels and engaging businesses and associations to find innovative solutions to increase student achievement.

Through this policy statement, the Council articulates the belief that students will be best poised to achieve their full potential and contribute most to society when they have complete access to a system of education that recognizes and incorporates best practices from around the globe, teaches skills and knowledge necessary for success in the 21st century, and utilizes high-quality and rigorous curricula, including instruction in world languages and cultures. To prepare students to participate in this new environment requires

the ability to translate into classroom practice real-life 21st century problem solving and critical thinking skills, communication and information sharing, and interpersonal and self-directed learning.

This policy statement was made possible by the contributions and work of the CCSSO International Education Committee.

International Education Committee Members

Peter McWalters, Rhode Island (chair)

Jack O'Connell, California

Valerie Woodruff, Delaware

Kathy Cox, Georgia

Randy Dunn, Illinois

Suellen Reed, Indiana

Cecil J. Picard, Louisiana

Rick Mills, New York

June Atkinson, North Carolina

Susan Castillo, Oregon

Richard Cate, Vermont

CCSSO Staff

Scott Montgomery (committee liaison)

Lois Adams-Rodgers

Melissa Zack Johnston

Najean Lee

CCSSO GLOBAL EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT

Introduction

Our children must be well prepared for what they will encounter in the world and for what kind of global society they will inhabit and create.

The Council of Chief State School Officers believes that our nation's schools must ensure high standards of performance for every one of our children and prepare each child to succeed as a productive member of society. The Council believes that students will be best poised to achieve their full potential and contribute most to society when they have complete access to a system of education that recognizes and incorporates best practices from around the globe, teaches skills and knowledge necessary for success in the 21st century, and utilizes high-quality and rigorous curricula, including instruction in world languages and cultures.

"Parents, policymakers, business leaders, and students themselves are recognizing that too many of our people do not receive the rigorous, world-class high school education that they need to succeed in the 21st century."ⁱ We live in a multicultural, multilingual nation in which the public education system has sought to provide opportunities for newcomers to our country. As our world becomes less a collection of separate countries and increasingly a global, integrated

community, it is imperative that students today understand their counterparts, both in the Americas and around the globe. In order to thrive in life and work, students must gain an awareness of and openness toward other cultures. Thus the Council's deliberate shift from viewing our work as "international" to "global" positions the organization as we want to position our children—prepared to work together in a civilized way with people of other nations as part of an interconnected global community.

In order to thrive in life and work, students must gain an awareness of and openness toward other cultures.

To prepare students to contribute in this new environment requires the ability to translate into classroom practice real-life 21st century problem solving and critical thinking skills, communication and information sharing, and interpersonal and self-directed learning. To flourish and contribute requires not only improvement in traditional mathematics and science courses, but also a significant study and appreciation of world cultures, religions, and languages. The integration into this way of thinking can be aided by more educators and policymakers participating in a continuous study of best practices, policies, and programs from other countries and by finding more ways to incorporate them into our systems. By encouraging our educators and students to participate in an exchange of ideas and practices within and beyond our borders, we collaborate with our

worldwide neighbors to promote positive relationships and responsible global stewardship for all.

Critical Challenges and Recommendations

CCSSO and its members believe that in order to address the challenges of the 21st century our education system must reflect knowledge and understanding of global perspectives and dimensions as well as the multifaceted perspectives within our own country; therefore, we believe certain core areas must be addressed in order for American students to thrive in and contribute to the global society. Our students must learn about many cultures as an integrated part of their study of literature, history, social studies, natural sciences, the arts, and other courses throughout the curriculum. Only by learning about other cultures, faiths, and ways of living will they be able to better their understanding of the various perspectives that frame our world and the people who inhabit it.

Global studies must create a thoughtful awareness of cultures; and they must be imbued throughout the curriculum

More than ever before, students from around the globe are learning to adapt to change and to capitalize on expanding opportunities to become multilingual and learn to use mathematics, science, and technological skills in ways that meet or exceed the levels of current American students. We

must take a constructive, positive, and innovative approach to preparing our children in a similar fashion, increasing the rigor of our academic standards, and thereby ensuring that all students are prepared to succeed in a global society.

Challenge 1: Our graduates are not well equipped with the skills necessary for success in today's global society.

The skills of our high school graduates, whether they are attending a university or entering the workplace, must allow them to succeed, prosper, and contribute to society.

- state policymakers must work with their local and state universities and business communities to reach consensus on those skills necessary to the 21st century global economy
- the agreed-upon 21st century global skills might include world history, international politics, economics, geography, and cultural studies; these global studies must create among our students a thoughtful awareness of cultures throughout the world, and they must be embedded throughout the curriculum so that all courses have a global perspective
- additional vital 21st century skills might include information technology and computer literacy; critical thinking and problem solving; interpersonal as well as self-directed learning; and communication and information sharing

Challenge 2: Our current standards and curricula do not adequately emphasize the necessity of mastering world languages, geography, and culture.

As global society evolves, the need to have both the language skills and better cultural understanding of the peoples and places of the world will be critical for American students. It is imperative that the United States strengthen and increase the world language skills of its students; therefore, we are committed to ensuring that every student graduating from an American high school will be multi-lingual. This effort will require

- state initiatives, including revisions to state content standards and assessments that make world languages an essential part of the curriculum for grades 3–12
- reviewing state standards to incorporate world orientation into curricula
- making standards a key part of a larger system that aims for program excellence—a system that includes high-quality professional development, training, technical assistance, and evaluation
- ensuring standards are comprehensive and broad enough to be relevant to the widest range of programs and approaches
- increased language programs in the early and middle grades
- increased opportunities for middle and especially high school students to learn languages including those critical to global, economic, and societal interaction

Challenge 3: Our schools are not currently designed and equipped to meet the reality of the demographic, economic, technological, and political trends of our rapidly changing world.

We must make our schools rich learning environments that allow for the acquisition of 21st century and global-knowledge

skills. We must also make a steadfast commitment to expand our discussion of high school redesign to include middle schools. True secondary school reform is needed so that the process of global learning is extended from the formative pre-teen years through high school graduation to university and graduate programs and the workplace. This redesign must include at a minimum

- redefined graduation requirements to include a thorough understanding of global studies
- targeted programs to increase mathematics and science exploration in the middle grades and expanded graduation requirements at high school in mathematics, science, foreign language, and technological skills

We are committed to ensuring that every student graduating from an American high school will be multi-lingual.

Challenge 4: Our teachers are not sufficiently supported and trained in 21st century and global content.

Without a doubt the vital piece in the achievement puzzle is the teacher. Unless our teachers develop their own 21st century global knowledge, our students will not be able to achieve at the highest possible level. If we are to ensure teachers are adequately trained for today's needs, then we must

- advocate for federal and local funding to increase world language development for in-service teachers
- require all pre-service teachers to be fluent in a world language and

have training in the teaching of world languages

- revise teacher certification so that college-level coursework in a world language or the ability to prove fluency through other means is required
- provide alternative teacher certification routes for native speakers of emerging or critical languages to become fully licensed
- provide professional development to pre- and in-service teachers in the use of new and emerging technologies and their integration into the existing curriculum
- expand partnerships with our international neighbors for teacher exchanges to deepen understanding and improve content offerings jointly in our schools

Challenge 5: Our education system does not readily explore best practices from our global education counterparts or fully utilize learnings outside of the education community.

In the last several years, it has been made clear that American students fall well below their counterparts from other countries. Parents and policymakers expect and believe that American students are receiving a world-class education, yet international assessments such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicate that many other countries have gone far beyond the United States in regard to global education. They have benchmarked themselves against the international community and determined that incorporating 21st century skills— inquiry-based learning methods;

mathematics, science, and technology skills; and world studies—into the curriculum produces globally-oriented students who are prepared for leadership and are ready to participate in the interconnected world. CCSSO members believe that we must do the same. To that end, we must

- expand exchange efforts from school visits and formal speeches to exploring foreign systems; from policy creation to real-life, on-the-ground application; and we must be willing to replicate or adapt such methods if proven successful
- learn from international best practices (policies and programs), and determine how to incorporate those practices into our existing policies and programs at the state and local levels
- be willing to look outside the “education box” and engage global businesses, associations, and other concerned entities to find solutions that increase student achievement at all levels
- remove roadblocks that stand in the way of successful implementation of identified promising practices

Incorporating 21st century skills produces globally-oriented students who are ready to participate in the interconnected world.

Conclusion

Our rapidly expanding global society has altered the traditional drivers of change. Changing global demographics, technical innovations produced by non-Western countries, and economic globalization have accelerated the rate

of change. We must ensure that we provide our children with the tools that they will need to navigate the changing global landscape. The challenges and the ways to address them as outlined in this policy statement are only a starting point—they are by no means the end. As the world’s knowledge expands and the means to transmit and share that knowledge grow at an exponential rate, we must find ways to tap into that knowledge so that our children are not only prepared to function in the global society but are also prepared to lead the new society. We must be able

to master the ideals of a real-time, 21st century global education for all children. They are our future; we owe it to them to build the best platform possible for their success.

ⁱ Susan Sclafani, “Results that Matter: 21st Century Skills and High School Reform,” *Partnership for 21st Century Skills*, March 2006.

