**The Future of Social Studies in Pennsylvania**

The original purpose of public schools in the United States was to create American citizens. This is not something that just happens when a child becomes 18 years old. Citizens enjoy rights, but there are responsibilities that accompany them. Students should be able to recognize problems in our society and have the ability to work on solutions to them. As educators, it our responsibility to provide students with the skill set needed to be civic minded citizens. This must be achieved through an inquiry model of learning that promotes higher order thinking. Students are not only given content, but also the opportunity to ask questions and seek answers. This provides them with the practice and necessary tools needed to explain, analyze, and argue about societal issues in our world. With the technological advances that occur each day, the interconnectedness of each nation gets stronger. The decisions and actions made by one nation have direct consequences for the rest of the world, politically, economically, and geographically. The increase in natural disasters worldwide has also resulted in examples of interdependence of nations. So as the world becomes a smaller place, the role of social studies takes on greater importance. In Pennsylvania, as in the rest of the United States, educators must give students the skills they need to make informed and intelligent decisions. This will lead to the American citizens our founding fathers envisioned.