The National Council for the Social Studies or (NCSS) began Rho Kappa Social studies honor society in 2011. NCSS saw a need for a national student award program that recognized students for their achievements in required and elective social studies courses as well as community service. Students may be invited to become a member of Rho Kappa based on their achievement in the social studies areas.

Criteria for membership include:

- Completing 4 semesters of courses in the field of social studies at the time of induction and complete at least six semesters upon graduation. All semesters in social studies must have an un-weighted grade point average of an 90 and an overall GPA of 85 or higher
• They must provide evidence of community service and a letter of recommendation from a teacher or guidance counselor and complete an approved community service project or historical research and presented it to an e-board and adviser

• And lastly attending at least 10 meetings a semester