

The POINT!



E-Letter for Western Pennsylvania Social Studies Educators
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History Happened and is Happening Here!

The Vegas brag about “what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas!” is simply not true, and it really has not been true for any locality. Because textbooks try to cater to a large audience, local history is often by-passed, leading to ignorance of the importance of their own area in the past and present.

Textbooks have always been prejudiced. The New England Puritans brought in the first printing press to spread the gospel. Idleness was sinful so the printers began to turn out text books. Since the first text books were printed by the Puritans, they Christened the Pilgrims as our original settlers and told the story of the first Thanksgiving, held in Plymouth with neighboring Native Americans as honored guests.

New England was the center of most publishing companies until the mid-twentieth century. As book companies united and became part of huge corporate bodies, they looked to marketing for guidance and large population states soon dictated the content of most history texts. As we begin the Third decade of the 21st century, a question arises about how much of the past is included in the study of history. 180 days minus delayed starting times, fire and shooter drills, and of course test preps, it has always been difficult just to get to the 20th century in American History, not to mention world history and cultures. Somewhere there must be room for local history, and geography and include the 20th century.

The Pittsburgh region has been the center of action over most of the life of the United States. Early settlement and expiration led to clashes with the French and Indians, the early republic and the Whiskey Rebellion. Here also saw the rise of transportation and industry. Sand deposits led to glass works and coal fields to the iron and steel industry. Boat yards lined the rivers. Railroads connected the country through Pittsburgh and supplied the goods and services needed everywhere. Immigrants filled the demand for labor and swelled the population. Every student has roots in Western Pennsylvania and should have the opportunity to gather information about their home town.

Silence is so accurate. Mark Rothko,

Soldiers & Sailors Hall!

Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum houses a vast collection of primary and secondary documents and military artifacts. It is their mission to promote the use of these educational items and create an understanding for all groups who visit the museum. They provide a rich learning experience for all people by exploring the deeds and sacrifices of ordinary citizens during extraordinary circumstances.

S&S is pleased to announce that we have once again received funding to support our **Bus Scholarship Program**.

Don't forget contact S&S about VIP Tours and Footlocker program.

For more information visit our web site:

<https://soldiersandsailorshall.org>

Journey with Howard Chandler,

The mobile app for iOS devices, will be available to access on the iOS App Store next week!

Hear Holocaust survivor Howard Chandler's powerful story in his own words. Interact with him in a conversation-like interface. Users can pick which questions to ask Howard, on subjects ranging from his childhood, his time in the camps or his life after the Holocaust. The app acts as a companion piece for Classrooms Without Borders' Poland Personally study seminar, as well as a rich primary source resource in the classroom.

Contact Melissa Haviv melissa@classroomswithoutborders.org for more information.

Unwrap a Box

Explore *Time Capsule 21* and our *Community Time Capsules*

The *Time Capsules* are Andy Warhol's largest collecting project, in which he saved and an enormous record of his own daily life including source material for his work. Now you can view Warhol's *Time Capsule 21* and our *Community Time Capsules online*.

Explore over 50 objects from *Time Capsule 21*, including photobooth photos, business records, personal notes and cards, record albums, newspaper headlines, and source material for Warhol's artworks.



CHOICES PA Workshop
The Civil War and the Meaning of Liberty
The National Civil War Museum

There is more power in telling little than in telling all.

Mark Rothko, painter

The Point

For

Western Pennsylvania
Social Studies Educators

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The Point is the
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WPCSS was a non-profit 501c
organization dedicated to promoting
the teaching and learning of social
studies in Western Pennsylvania

Leo West

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Pa. district deploys autonomous robot in elementary school

Students at Montour Elementary School in Pennsylvania are seeing first-hand how artificially intelligent autonomous robots work through the school district's Artificial Intelligence K-12 program. The robot performs delivery tasks and is the first of its kind to be deployed at a school. District Administration magazine (12/2019)

How education has changed since 2010

The past 10 years brought several shifts in education, such as increased pressure on teachers, a spike in school violence and enhanced accountability. The decade also saw nearly all states raise their academic standards and several headline-grabbing teachers' strikes. Education Week (tiered subscription model) (12/11)

How US Census count could affect schools

The results of the 2020 US Census could have implications for schools, particularly if there is an expected undercounting of Latino families. If the anticipated undercount occurs, close to 40 states could lose funding for programs that serve families and children, according to a report from Child Trends.

Education Week (tiered subscription model) (11/21)

Should students be required to learn cursive?

Wisconsin Public Radio (11/14)

While keyboarding may be more practical for elementary school students to learn in the digital age, a state lawmaker says the benefits of learning cursive handwriting can't be ignored.

Civics education targeted for investment

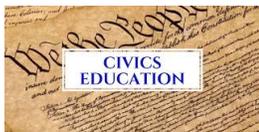
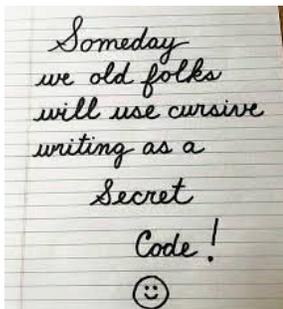
Investments in civic education are becoming a priority for major education philanthropies, according to Rajiv Vinnakota, president of the Woodrow Wilson national Fellowship Foundation. His report highlights lessons learned and potential trends in future investments, including a possible source of tension -- the lack of diversity in investors.

Education Week (tiered subscription model) (12/4)

Report: Native American education lacking in US

Native American history after 1900 is not part of the history curriculum in 87% of states, and 27 states include no mention at all, according to a report from the National Congress of American Indians. Many states indicate they are working to improve the quality of Native American history education, with one seventh-grade teacher in North Carolina saying she uses Native Knowledge 360 Degrees lesson plans developed by the Smithsonian.

U.S. News & World Report (11/29)



Is the focus on PISA scores short-sighted?

The recent release of international PISA scores has caused the usual questions about the direction of education in the US. However, Andreas Schelicher, director of education and skills at the OECD -- the organization behind PISA -- urged officials not to look to the results as evidence for a "quick solution, to say, 'Oh, that seems to be working. Let's just copy and paste it.' "

[EdSurge](#) (12/3)



Ky. students make meals fit for Neolithic menus

Social studies students at an Owensboro, Ky., middle school recently served up a tasty class project with the help of Nicholas Rose and his Tri-R-Tips BBQ food truck. The sixth-graders created menus based on the diets of the early people of Neolithic times, seventh-graders voted on their favorite menus, and Rose worked with students to prepare and serve the winning dishes.

[Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer \(Ky.\)](#) (12/4)



*** N.C. adds personal finance, subtracts US history ***

Next school year's high-school freshmen and those who follow them in North Carolina's schools will have to take an economics and personal finance course as a requirement for graduation. To make room for the finance class, the state is dropping one of two mandated US history classes, while also easing some requirement for current students as schools may be limited in what they can offer in the next few years.

 [The Herald-Sun \(Durham, N.C.\)](#) (free registration) (12/4)



“ALERT!”

*** Bill would require a financial literacy graduation credit ***

Pennsylvania Business Report

The bill (House Bill 49) also amends the school code to provide specifics when a student seeks a fostering independence waiver, extends the Higher Education . . .

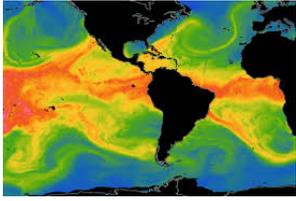


Principal gains traction with model of inquiry

The skills students need to succeed in the modern work world can rarely be measured through standardized testing, says Michael Oliver, principal at Zaharis Elementary in Phoenix. In this interview, Oliver outlines the model of inquiry that his school uses for instruction and offers an example of students applying it to solve a real-world problem. [Education Dive](#) (11/19)



Everything you add to the truth subtracts from the truth. -Alexander Solzhenitsyn, novelist, Nobel laureate (11 Dec 1918-2008)



Teachers use real-world examples to teach climate change

Some teachers in Missouri are incorporating climate change into lessons while using real-world examples. Teachers say students are more interested in learning about climate change, so teachers are choosing to cover the topic in high-school biology, chemistry and physics classes -- required classes -- though the topic is mandated by the state only in environmental or earth science classes, which are usually offered as electives.

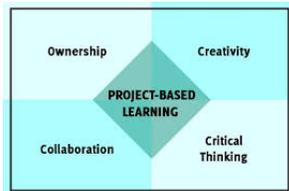
[KCUR-FM \(Kansas City, Mo.\)](#) (12/2)

Pa. school within a school encourages project-based learning

[The Morning Call \(Allentown, Pa.\)](#) (11/28)

East Penn's '[school within a school](#)' initiative finally has a name — the Jasper Learning Initiative.

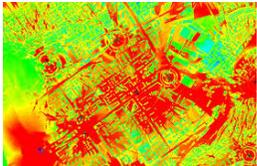
It's meant to evoke both the stone, which has different colors and patterns and is given beauty by its impurities, and the local community, which is home to some of the oldest jasper mines in North America.



Students' map project supports humanitarian efforts

Students worldwide are working to update digital maps, including students from George Washington University who are using the platform OpenStreetMap to create a digital map of a rural area of the Philippines. The project could have broader implications because the US Agency for International Development uses the data to plan infrastructure improvements, deliver aid and support communities during natural disasters.

[The Washington Post \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (12/1)



Analysis: Fewer students pursue teaching

There are about one-third fewer students enrolled in teacher-preparation programs now than in 2010, according to an analysis from the Center for American Progress. Some states, including Michigan, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania, reported declines of as much as 50%, a trend that officials warn could signal a worsening teacher shortage in the US.

[U.S. News & World Report](#) (12/3), [Education Week \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (12/3)



Students prepped for "productive citizenship"

High-school students in Wake County, N.C., are required to learn financial literacy and other subjects geared toward making them ready for "productive citizenship" after they graduate. Recent surveys have found that high-school juniors' knowledge of financial literacy is low, but local education officials say most students don't take the required course until their senior year, and the county is seeing more eligible students register to vote.

[The Herald-Sun \(Durham, N.C.\)](#) (free registration) (12/1)



A king can stand people's fighting, but he can't last long if people start thinking. -Will Rogers, humorist (4 Nov 1879-1935)

Social Emotional Learning Toolkit: Engaging Families

Discover easy to implement strategies and access ready-to-use resources for engaging families in your social emotional learning initiatives. Research has overwhelmingly demonstrated that parent engagement has a positive effect on students' achievement. In this toolkit, Move This World shares four essential strategies to help district and school leaders engage families: Teach, Communicate, Volunteer, and Support.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF FAMILIES

TEACHERS FAMILIES participation in equal plan on working committees



The Need for Research-Based Literacy Professional Development

Teachers, not programs, teach students how to read, yet many are not well prepared to teach all students to read, including those who struggle. Learn how LETRS® professional development fills the gaps and translates the extensive body of research about language and literacy development into effective classroom practice.



To make money, study maths or economics at a top university

Liberal-arts students will earn less, even if they go to Harvard
(Is this why there is such a divide in the country today?)

FOR AMERICAN university students aiming to maximise their earnings potential, there are two strategies worth considering. The first is to gain admission to a highly selective school, thereby signalling one's value to potential employers. The second is to pursue a lucrative field of study such as computer science or economics, rather than English or history. Students who can achieve both feats tend to earn the most; those who achieve neither, the least.

\$\$

OR

Do the Liberal Arts Matter?

A SERIES OF VIEWS



Program has teachers observing in real newsrooms

The News Literacy Project is bringing educators into newsrooms where they can meet with reporters and editors, observe the process of reporting the news, and understand the challenges of the profession. A group of teachers recently sat in on an editor's meeting at the San Francisco Chronicle as part of the project's professional-development event for educators. [EdSurge \(11/18\)](#)



Middle-schoolers find grave during class project

Middle-school students Rafel Alshakergi, Maya Elkhatib and Kameron Swanson discovered an unmarked mass grave for African Americans while researching a class history project. With teacher Debbie Holecko, the students worked with the mayor and a company to write and place a marker at the site those buried there.



 [WEWS-TV \(Cleveland\) \(11/19\)](#)



Is it important to teach about the 1st Amendment?

Most high-schoolers say they have been taught about the First Amendment, and a report says such instruction has significantly increased the number of students who support the rights and protections covered by the amendment. Emily Chamlee-Wright, president and CEO of the Institute for Humane Studies, writes in this article about the importance of "First Amendment Thinking" and the key role that teachers play in helping students become informed citizens. [Forbes](#) (11/20)

Districts integrate 1619 Project into lessons

Some school districts, including in New Jersey, Chicago and Washington, D.C., are teaching lessons based on The New York Times 1619 Project, which seeks to refocus instruction about slavery in the US. Students at a New Jersey high school recently hosted the journalist who led the project and held a showcase of skits, poems and performances based on the work. [Chalkbeat/Newark](#) (11/21)

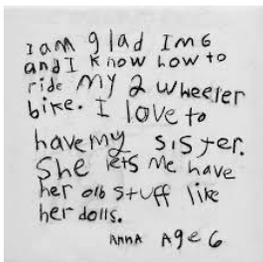


How teachers can recognize dysgraphia in students

[Edutopia](#) (11/21)

What Teachers Should Know About Dysgraphia

Dysgraphia is a neurological disorder that generally appears when children are first learning to write. Students with dysgraphia have an unexpected difficulty with spelling and writing skills. Here are the red flags to look for, and ways to support these students.



What's the best way to teach news literacy?

Most educators agree that students need to learn news literacy, but there's less consensus about how to teach it. Peter Adams, senior vice president for education at the News Literacy Project, discussed the need to instill skepticism but not cynicism in students and the importance of helping teachers better understand bias and the inner workings of newsrooms. [EdSurge/\(with audio\)](#) (9/24)



How to educate students about vaping risks

Much of e-cigarette marketing has targeted youths by emphasizing flavors appealing to teenagers, and data shows the efforts are working as the percentage of youth vaping ticks upward. This blog post includes tips to help educate students about the risks, such as avoiding lectures and showing them the deceptive techniques being used to hook them. [Edutopia](#) (9/20)



Ala. students engage in history with WWI wax museum

[The Messenger](#) (Troy, Ala.) (11/19)

The figures in the World War I Wax Museum at Pike Liberal Arts School came to life for an hour Tuesday morning. Visitors to the school were fortunate to be there to hear the stories the figures had to tell about their involvement in the "war to end all wars."



Truth never damages a cause that is just. -Mohandas K. Gandhi

Lesson Plan Competition Awards

In May 2019, Classrooms Without Borders published a call for educators to write lesson plans aimed to tackle issues of racism, hate, and antisemitism in classrooms; engage students in meaningful dialogue about the shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue; and help them act to prevent more violence.

Five months later and one year after the shooting, this call resulted in a repository of lesson plans ready for teachers to use, made available on CWB's online [Curriculum Support Center](#).

All winning proposals were presented at the Antisemitism, Hate and Social Responsibility conference in Pittsburgh, on November 10-11, 2019.

An independent evaluation committee composed of experts in education judged the proposed lesson plans and ranked the top three in each track: middle school and high school. The first-place lessons plans won a full scholarship for a Classrooms Without Borders travel seminar, worth up to \$6,000. Second place educators won a \$1,000 grant towards travel expenses or registration costs for a seminar with a focus on racism, antisemitism, the Holocaust or Israel. Third place educators won a \$200 book stipend.

In the high school track:

- In first place: [Kate Lukaszewicz](#) from Sewickley Academy
- In second place: [Molly Long](#) from Avonworth High School
- In third place: [Deborah Kruger](#), an instructor at Butler County Community College

In the middle school track:

- In first place: [Alyssa Betz](#) from Elizabeth Forward Middle School
- In second place: [Kathy Larsen Galecki](#) from Avonworth Middle School
- In third place: [Ezekiel Stroupe](#) from Ryan Gloyer Middle School, Seneca Valley

View these lesson plans and others on our Curriculum Support Center:

Choices New Curriculum Units

The Syrian Conflict

Slavery and the Making of the Modern World

A Forgotten History: The Slave Trade and Slavery in New England

(re-release of a currently retired unit)

Imperial America: U.S. Global Expansion (1890-1914)

The United States in Afghanistan

Updated Curriculum Units

Climate Change and Questions of Justice

The French Revolution

Immigration and the U.S. Policy Debate

The Middle East: Questions for U.S. Policy

The Russian Revolution

All new units and editions will be announced via email, social media, and on our website as soon as they are off the presses and ready to ship.

Teaching American History Webinar

As part of our American Minds webinar series, our panel of scholars will gather online with teachers from across the country to explore the ideas, character, and meaning of **Frederick Douglass**.

This webinar will begin at 11am, Saturday, January 11, 2020.

There is no cost to participate, and all who attend this 75-minute webinar live will receive a continuing education certificate for the time they spend with us.

REGISTER NOW