

# The POINT!

E-Letter for Western Pennsylvania Social Studies Educators  
Vol. 13 No. 7

July 2020



## Celebrating July 4!

In the course of human  
events...

We hold these Truths to be  
self-evident, that all Men are  
created equal, ...

## Black Lives Matter!

## 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, like all places where people congregate, is not open to the public at this time. Please visit on line: [soldiersandsailorshall.org](http://soldiersandsailorshall.org)



### HIGH SCHOOL WEEKLY BOOK CLUB: *CITIZEN: AN AMERICAN LYRIC* BY CLAUDIA RANKINE

BEGINS WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2020  
4PM EASTERN TIME

**Zoom** | What does it mean to be a citizen? This summer book club for high school students will read *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine. Together, we will think about how each of us is a citizen in many different ways. [Click here for more information](#)

#### RSVP HERE

RSVP to receive link to the online event  
Open to Students in Grades 9-12

### SUMMER ART CHALLENGE WITH SHIREL HOROVITZ AND TALI KAYAM BEGINS WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2020 10:30AM or 12PM EASTERN TIME (by grade level)

**Zoom** | Join us for a 4 session program to find out the creative possibilities hiding inside our own homes. Using a variety of mediums including sculpting, photography, installation and performance we'll create portraits, tell our stories and connect with the larger context of international and Israeli art. [Click here for more information](#)

#### RSVP HERE

RSVP to receive link to the online event  
Supplies needed: computer/iPad with video capabilities and a phone



*History is a vast early warning system. -  
Norman Cousins, editor and author (24 Jun 1915-1990)*

# The Point

For  
Western Pennsylvania  
Social Studies Educators  
EDITORS  
Leo R. West  
John Larner

*The Point* is the  
e-newsletter  
of the former WPCSS  
issued monthly via e-mail.  
WPCSS was a non-profit 501c  
organization dedicated to promoting  
the teaching and learning of social  
studies in Western Pennsylvania

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## Pre-k teacher posts reading list on race, goes viral

Brittany Smith, a pre-kindergarten teacher in New Jersey, tweeted a list of children's books that explore race and racism, and her thread has attracted more than 410,000 likes and 210,000 retweets. Smith says she had no idea the list -- which includes books about Harriet Tubman, Malcolm X and Fannie Lou Hamer -- would go viral and hopes fellow educators, families and elected leaders will see "the importance of representation and promoting diversity in school." **Full Story:** [TIME online \(6/5\)](#)

## Teachers engage students in discussions on race

Teachers nationwide are finding ways to engage students in conversations about race and the killing of George Floyd. Eden Buba, a teacher in Alexandria, Va., held a Zoom discussion with her class and Nubia Gerima-Rogers, a teacher in Washington, D.C., took her students to a daytime demonstration near the White House. **Full Story:** [The Washington Post \(tiered subscription model\) \(6/8\)](#)

## How racial inequity harms outcomes for students

Inequity in schools affects more than academic success, as it also touches social justice issues such as incarceration rates, this article states. For example, black students have higher arrest rates in schools, higher rates of suspension and often attend schools that receive less funding than districts that enroll higher numbers of white students, research finds. **Full Story:** [National Public Radio \(6/11\)](#)

## New Zealand teacher's anti-racism video goes viral

A video of a teacher in New Zealand talking to her Year 2 students about the differences and similarities of humans is going viral. Samantha Richards, who says the lesson was inspired by the killing of George Floyd in the US, posted the video on her Instagram account where it has had more than 80,000 views. **Full Story:** [The New Zealand Herald \(6/10\)](#)

## Black Lives Matter offers free, educator-designed lessons on race

*District Administration magazine online (6/3)*

*Teachers, even in schools that have closed for the year, are reaching out to students to discuss the protests over George Floyd's death and issues of racism and social justice. (Alex Radelich/Unsplash)*

Black Lives Matter at School offers [free K-12 curriculum](#) for teachers covering racism, social justice and diversity as protests over George Floyd's death continue across the country.

The lessons, created by educators, are designed for students of all ages, from early childhood to high school, and also include resources in multiple languages.

## **158 Resources for Understanding Systemic Racism in America**

These articles, videos, podcasts and websites from the Smithsonian chronicle the history of anti-black violence and inequality in the United States

Smithsonian  
MAGAZINE

### **Mich. students participate in, help lead protests**

Students in Michigan are taking part in protests and marches that have been sparked by the killing of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis. Among the students was 17-year-old Taylor Martin, who helped organize a protest where she spoke out against racism and called for reform in law enforcement. **Full Story:** [Chalkbeat/Detroit \(6/6\)](#)



### **Survey: Students' response to police differs by race**

Just 40% of black students in New Orleans report they feel safe around police officers, compared with 69% of white students, according to a survey conducted by researchers at Tulane University. The data was slightly better when students were asked about school security officers, with 77% of white students reporting they feel safe around the guards, compared with 54% of black students. **Full Story:** [Chalkbeat \(6/8\)](#)



### **Commentary: How scientists can fight racism**

Scientists should act against racism by recognizing the additional challenges faced by black students, creating a supportive environment, helping find students financial resources and educating themselves in ways to be more inclusive, writes astrophysicist and author Ethan Siegel. "These four steps, as limited as they are, can play a major role in transforming science and academia into a safer, more inclusive environment," he says. **Full Story:** [Forbes \(6/2\)](#)



### **Resources for Teaching About Slavery**

The Civics Renewal Network provides a [collection of resources](#) to support teaching about the history of slavery and discrimination in our nation. 58 separate items from Lesson Plans to How the Constitutional convention dealt with slavery through southern defense of slavery and anti-slavery movements in pre civil war times.



### **Professor: History is also about what isn't taught**

Textbooks have ignored or glossed over the oppression and contributions of nonwhite populations of the US and sidestepped topics such as Juneteenth and the Tulsa Massacre in Oklahoma, says social studies professor LaGarrett King. In this article, King and others note that what is left out of history lessons can be meaningful to understanding history and gives context to the civil rights movement and Black Lives Matter. **Full Story:** [NBC News \(6/18\)](#)



*No matter where you're from, your dreams are valid.*  
*Lupita Nyong'o, actress, writer*

## **16 states have schools named for Confederate figures**

There are at least 174 schools in 16 states that are named after Confederate figures -- 53 named for Robert E. Lee, according to an analysis of federal data. Past efforts to remove Confederate names, statues and flags from public spaces have had mixed results, but the recent killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis has brought increased attention to the issue. **Full Story:** [Education Week \(tiered subscription model\) \(6/18\)](#)

## **Student's Motown documentary to screen at Smithsonian**

Middle-schooler Laura Theilman of Whitehall, Mich., researched, wrote and produced a documentary about the history of Motown that will be shown at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Last year her film for National History Day was about the tensions between Pakistan and India. **Full Story:** [WOOD-TV \(Grand Rapids, Mich.\) \(6/17\)](#)

## **Students tap social media to root out racism**

High-school students and alumni are using social media to hold their classmates and others accountable for racist behavior. On dozens of Instagram accounts that have been created in recent weeks, students are asked to anonymously share images or videos that expose racist behavior. **Full Story:** [The New York Times \(tiered subscription model\) \(6/16\)](#)

## **Civil rights groups take aim at Facebook**

The Anti-Defamation League, Color of Change, Common Sense Media, Free Press, the NAACP and Sleeping Giants are launching a social media campaign to urge large Facebook advertisers to boycott the platform unless it makes formal moves to curtail the proliferation of hate speech on its platform. The group is also requesting the platform take steps such as removing ads labeled as misinformation or hateful and inform advertisers when their media buys appear near harmful content and grant refunds. **Full Story:** [The Wall Street Journal \(tiered subscription model\) \(6/17\)](#), [Adweek \(tiered subscription model\)](#)

## **7th-grade teacher connects protests, local history**

Using the news to teach local history is nothing new to Joe Menting, a Wisconsin social studies teacher. With schools closed because of the pandemic, Menting says he needed to connect local history to something that students were genuinely interested in -- the protests that have followed the killing of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis -- with one student putting together a passion project about police brutality. **Full Story:** [Wisconsin Public Radio \(6/16\)](#)

## **NYC middle school adds Juneteenth to curriculum**

A middle school in New York City is commemorating Juneteenth for a fifth year, but in a remote environment while closed because of the coronavirus, writes principal George Patterson. In this article, Patterson writes that past events have called on students to design, decorate and market a pair of sneakers with elements of black history though this year's project is missing the shoes. **Full Story:** [Chalkbeat/New York \(6/18\)](#)



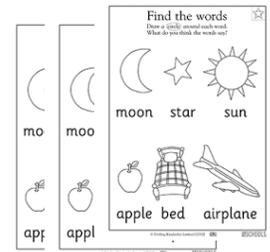
## Closures change teachers' views on grading, homework

Internet prices and data limits have presented challenges to remote learning for some students of Carlene Baurichter, who teaches high-school social studies in rural Wisconsin. In this article, Baurichter and four other US educators share how and why their approaches to grading and homework have shifted, with Baurichter saying she plans to focus on in-class work when schools reopen. **Full Story:** [Vox \(6/12\)](#)



## Most districts did not require live, virtual lessons

Only 1 in 3 school districts required teachers to deliver instruction during the prolonged school closures because of the coronavirus, according to an analysis of 477 districts by the Center on Reinventing Public Education. Researchers with CRPE suggest this could lead to learning loss and they encourage districts to offer more support for teachers as the new school year may move forward with some level of remote instruction. **Full Story:** [The 74 \(6/16\)](#)



## 5 lessons learned from remote instruction

The rapid transition to remote instruction has offered some lessons that could be useful as educators consider possible instructional models for the fall. Among them are additional support for parent-assisted learning, programs targeted to keep teens on track and online systems to assess, remediate and individualize learning. **Full Story:** [National Public Radio \(6/17\)](#)



## Is the US focus on testing coming to an end?

A two-decade push for testing to hold students accountable appears to be lessening as school districts seek testing waivers from the US Department of Education and more colleges and universities adopt test-optional admissions. Governors in Ohio and Georgia, for example, have supported prolonged periods without standardized testing following the coronavirus pandemic. **Full Story:** [The Washington Post \(tiered subscription model\) \(6/21\)](#)



## Preparing Our School Districts for Fall 2020

Planning to ensure the safety of our school communities in September must happen now. A superintendent provides a list of essential questions that lawmakers and school leaders must address.



## Expert Tips: Prepare Students to Learn Again

COVID-19 caused more than learning loss. It impacted students socially and emotionally, too. Ensure students are in the best position to close skill gaps when instruction resumes. Support their social-emotional and behavioral (SEB) needs from the district to the classroom. [Read the eBook.](#)



*Youth may outrun the old, but not outwit.*  
Geoffrey Chaucer, writer, poet

