

# The POINT!

E-Letter for Western Pennsylvania Social Studies Educators  
Vol. 13 No. 9  
September 2020



## REPEAT!! PCSS VIRTUAL FALL CONFERENCE THURSDAY EVENINGS - OCTOBER 1 - OCTOBER 22

The Pennsylvania Council of the Social Studies as well as announcing that the annual conference in October will be a multi-day virtual affair through Zoom. The PCSS conference committee, including President Rachel Finley-Bowman, President-Elect and Conference Chair Jason Raia, Exhibits Chair Kevin Wagner, Executive Secretary David Trevaskis and Recording Secretary Gabriele Miller-Wagner, has established the draft framework for what the annual conference will look like in 2020 while also engaging with potential presenters for the virtual conference. Thanks to all those who joined Zoom calls, gave feedback, and helped to make this pivot possible.

Check out the conference updates on the webpage at <https://pcssonline.org/> As per Board discussions this spring, we will not charge participants or presenters but instead ask for donations for the conference. We will charge exhibitors a reduced rate of \$100 for the virtual exhibit hall on the last day and we will seek sponsors for the entire event. Between the kickoff panel on Thursday, October 1, 2020 and the closing day (exhibits, keynote, awards ceremony and Board meeting) on Saturday, October 24, 2020, we will have 15 sessions spread over the three Thursday evenings bracketed by our kickoff and close (October 8, 15 and 22). We will be using Zoom with breakout rooms for three sessions each of the Thursdays from 7 to 8 p.m. and then two more sessions each night from 8:15 to 9:15 p.m.

Among the potential presenters who have expressed interest are:

1. *Army Heritage Education Center (Teacher Toolbox) – Karl Warner*
2. *Committee of Seventy—Draw the Lines*
3. *Duke University's Islamic Studies Center*
4. *Echoes & Reflections*
5. *Edgar Cahn Collaborative – Youth Court and Social Justice Presentation*
6. *Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) – Bonnie Snyder*
7. *Fort Ticonderoga (Teacher Education Program) – Rich Strum*
8. *Jessie Haight – Clarion University of Pennsylvania—People Count: Understanding Demography in the Year of the Census*
9. *Kevin Wagner – Carlisle School District – using historical obituaries*
10. *Mark Previte—University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown – Future of Social Studies*
11. *Mount Vernon Education Group*
12. *National History Day – Jeff Hawks, PA State Coordinator*
13. *PCSS Board Members – Interviewing for a Social Studies Position*

*(Continued on page 8)*



## 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)

## Resources from Classrooms without Borders

In this [lesson](#) from [Constituting America](#), students learn about each presidential election and the terms served. They will understand how events in history shaped campaigns, why elections were won and lost, what accomplishments and disappointments each president experienced. Each election and presidential term made its own mark on history. [Explore Resource](#)

## CLASSROOMS WITHOUT BORDERS

### Monthly tours with guide and scholar, Rabbi Jonty Blackman

Monday, September 14, 2020 7 PM Eastern Time

Zoom | [Click here for more information](#)

This month's topic is: “Unetaneh Tokenf” – “Who by Fire”? – The power of one song to change a country. This session is very timely for Rosh Hashana [RSVP HERE](#)

### Film and Discussion with Film Director

"Eva: A-7063" with Dr. Michael Berenbaum and Film

Director Ted Green

Thursday, September 24, 2020 3 PM Eastern Time

Zoom | [Click here for more information](#)

RSVP to receive a link to the film prior to the discussion.

[RSVP HERE](#)



*The American who first discovered Columbus made a bad discovery. -Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, scientist and philosopher (1 Jul 1742-1799)*

# The Point

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

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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## Teachers reimagine classroom routines during pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic will upend many typical classroom routines. This article offers several strategies to help transition in-person routines to an online setting, such as eighth-grade teacher Alice Chen's plan to ask her students to create videos introducing themselves as an alternative to in-person introductions at the start of the school year. **Full Story:** Education Week (tiered subscription model) (8/5)

## Students flouting mask rules must learn from home in NYC

New York City Schools will send home any student who refuses to wear a mask during in-person learning, Chancellor Richard Carranza says. High-school math teacher Bobson Wong compares it with the hard-to-enforce ban on cellphones during class and says clear guidance from the district and enforcement flexibility in each school are imperative. **Full Story:** Chalkbeat/New York (8/4)

## How will school openings affect the pandemic?

Analyses of different studies released in recent weeks look at the possibility of students further spreading the coronavirus if schools return to in-person instruction. A study of 20 countries' reopenings found that outbreaks were lessened at schools that mandated face masks, physical distancing and "pandemic pods" -- yet the determining factor often was the rate of community infection. **Full Story:** Education Week (tiered subscription model) (7/31)

## What All-Girls Schools Can Teach Coeducational Schools

Using the same techniques to teach every student ignores the gendered ways in which we experience the world. All-girls schools have instructional, curricular, and programmatic best practices that coeducational schools can adopt to benefit learning.

## Retired Mich. teacher puts a twist on state's history

Writing novels for students was a way for retired teacher Lynne Smyles to help young readers connect with Michigan's history. Author of the "Michigan History Nightmares" series of books, Smyles has included area Native American tribes and the story of Michigan's statehood into her books. **Full Story:** C&G Newspapers (Warren, Mich.) (7/27)

### Constitution Center

As students, teachers, and parents prepare for remote learning in the fall, the National Constitution Center is thrilled to offer free, live classes on the Constitution and nonpartisan online education materials that can support middle school, high school, and college students across America.

Regardless of where your teaching happens this year, the Center has the resources and support you need to create meaningful and engaging lessons for your students. Choose what mix of programs and resources work for you and your students.

You can access all sessions on Zoom using a home computer, tablet, or phone



### Virtual learning varies based on district's wealth

The type of instruction students received during remote learning varied between low-income and higher-income schools, according to early results of a national survey by the American Institutes for Research. Data shows that students in lower-income schools spent more time reviewing content taught earlier in the year, while those in higher-income schools were more likely to cover new material. **Full Story:** [The Hechinger Report \(7/27\)](#), [Chalkbeat \(7/23\)](#)



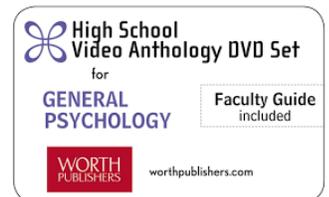
### How to address the threat of online cheating

Rather than punishing students for online cheating, teachers should consider using such incidents as a teachable moment, says Tricia Bertram Gallant, academic integrity director at the University of California at San Diego. "[B]y actually creating environments where students can learn from the integrity violations, I think we'll do more for our society than trying to lock down our schools so that students don't have the opportunity to cheat," Bertram Gallant says. **Full Story:** [EdSurge \(7/27\)](#)



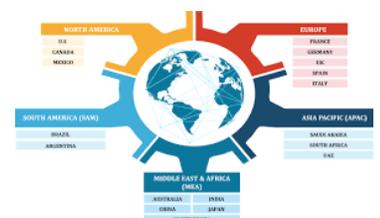
### HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

The APA TOPSS Committee is pleased to share that the [TOPSS High School Psychology Course Template in Canvas](#) has been updated and re-released. This teaching resource was developed for teachers by teachers, and includes many content specific, peer-reviewed resources, videos and formative assessments organized by the [National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula](#). The entire course template is shareable and customizable and can be used in on-line or in-person psychology classes. Teachers should note the template provides vetted resources for them to use as they develop the assignments for their students and should be modified before it is shared with students.



### Virtual robotics class taps math, geography

Jose Gonzalez and Darleen Perez's virtual summer school class tasked students with maneuvering robots digitally via Zoom around a map of Latin America. The teachers incorporated several subjects into the lessons, such as asking students to plot coordinates and answer questions on current events, geography and art. **Full Story:** [District Administration magazine online \(7/24\)](#)



Q.A.S. Presents:

**FOUR LESSONS ON RACE FOR WHITE PEOPLE\***

\*PEOPLE OF ALL RACES AND ETHNICITIES ARE WELCOME

>>FREE ZOOM WEBINAR<<  
TUESDAYS @ 9:00 P.M. E.S.T. IN JULY  
REGISTER HERE: [HTTPS://BIT.LY/37KUYXN](https://bit.ly/37kuyxn)  
WWW.QUEERAPOCALYPSESOLUTIONS.COM  
QUEERAPOCALYPSESOLUTIONS@GMAIL.COM

**The 1619 Project**



**Coalition of educators create, share lessons about race**

The Anti-Racist Teaching and Learning Collective in Connecticut is working to dismantle racism by developing and sharing lessons across subjects. During a recent seminar, group member and social studies teacher Nataliya Braginsky shared about how she and her students created a virtual walking tour of New Haven that highlights Latinx and Black historical figures and sites in the community. **Full Story:** The Connecticut Mirror (7/27)

**Senate bill targets schools that use 1619 Project**

Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., has introduced legislation that would make schools that adopt the New York Times Magazine's 1619 Project into their curriculum ineligible for federal grants to support teaching the material. The project, which examines slavery as part of US history, has drawn criticism from some conservatives, while opponents of the bill have taken to social media to express their views. **Full Story:** The Washington Post (tiered subscription model) (7/27), The Hill (7/23), Forbes (7/23)

**John Lewis**

The New York Times published the final words and the message is both poetic and powerful! *TO ENTER TEXT*

Consider his message about the power of history: **Emmett Till was my George Floyd.** Consider his message about the power of history: **Emmett Till was my George Floyd.**

*When historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate at last and that peace finally triumphed over violence, aggression and war. So I say to you, walk with the wind, brothers and sisters, and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide.*

**Racial Slavery in the Americas:**

**CHOICES** offers a forthcoming unit Racial Slavery in the Americas: Resistance, Freedom, and Legacies that explores a broad history of racial slavery in the Americas. The videos featuring Kristin J. Maye will complement that unit.

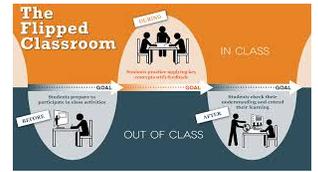
**Va. university installs memorial to slaves who built campus**

The University of Virginia has unveiled its Memorial to Enslaved Laborers, a large monument encircling grass that features a timeline of enslaved people in the US, with an emphasis on their presence at the university. Also featured in the memorial are the words of Isabella Gibbons, a slave who worked as a cook on the campus in the 1840s and later became a teacher. **Full Story:** The New York Times (tiered subscription model) (8/17)

*There's too much blank sky where a tree once stood. Jesmyn Ward, writer, professor*

### **Ideas on using the flipped-classroom model virtually**

When moving to remote teaching, middle-school learning and support coordinator Kait Gentry tapped into her experience with the flipped-classroom model, which she says particularly benefited students who are introverted or who have learning differences. In this blog post, she explains how she assigns a topic to read and digest before the camera is turned on and then utilizes small groups for discussion. **Full Story:** [Education Week Teacher \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (8/19)



### **Has "Lost Colony" of Roanoke been found?**

For centuries, historians have wondered what happened to the English colonists who reached Roanoke in the 16th century and subsequently disappeared. A team of archaeologists and other researchers have discovered evidence that the colonists assimilated with the native Croatoans and moved to



### **Students call for changes in book lists, history lessons**

High-school students across the country are signing petitions and addressing school boards and leaders to demand changes to how Black history is taught and increase diversity in reading lists with more books written by people of color. Social media has helped fuel the student activism, with protests spread across the US. **Full Story:** [The Washington Post \(tiered subscription model\)](#)



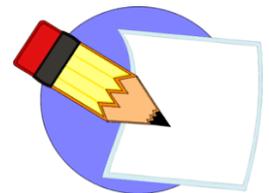
### **Teachers navigate lessons in civics, politics of 2020**

Lessons about current events and politics can be more challenging than usual for teachers as the country struggles with a pandemic and a presidential election. Middle-school history teachers Lauren Brown and Sarah Cooper share their perspectives and approaches, including one's plan to bring in more guest speakers, via the Pulitzer Center, to offer more diverse perspectives to students. **Full Story:** [MiddleWeb](#) (8/12)



### **Students need more writing time, report says**

Students are not spending enough time writing, according to The Learning Agency Lab, a nonprofit. The findings, based on data from the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress, found that about 25% of middle-and high-school students write for 30 minutes a day, and even fewer say they do argumentative writing weekly. **Full Story:** [T.H.E. Journal](#) (8/25)



### **What skills help students succeed online?**

There are seven key skills that middle-grades students need to succeed in remote instruction, asserts Jody Passanisi, director of middle school at Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School in Palo Alto, Calif. In this article, Passanisi offers strategies to bolster students' skills of self-regulation, time awareness and environment management. **Full Story:** [MiddleWeb](#) (8/16)



# 2020 Virtual Conference Proposal Form

## The 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies Conference



**October 1-24, 2020**

**Via Zoom**

**Conference Theme**

**“Expanding Citizen Voices”**

*In 2020, we commemorate the expansion of voting rights in our nation’s history – the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment (prohibiting disenfranchisement based on race, creed, or previous servitude), the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment (women’s suffrage), and the 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment (votes for 18 year olds). Each is more than a moment in history, but a chain of events to investigate and understand – protest movements, court cases, legislation, and more – that inform issues today. Preparing young citizens to learn how to exercise their voices in our democracy is a cornerstone of social studies education, whether that preparation takes place online during a pandemic or in a more traditional classroom setting.*

**The full schedule is linked at <https://pcssonline.org/>**

*Between the kickoff panel on Thursday, October 1, 2020 and the closing day (exhibits, keynote, awards ceremony and Board meeting) on Saturday, October 24, 2020, we will have 15 sessions spread over the three Thursday evenings bracketed by our kickoff and close (October 8, 15 and 22). We will be using Zoom with breakout rooms for three sessions each of the Thursdays from 7 to 8 p.m. and then two more sessions each night from 8:15 to 9:15 p.m.*

*(Continued on Page 8)*

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**r All attendees must register, including PCSS officers, board members, and conference presenters. There is no cost to attend or present (donations are welcome) but you must register. You can register and make a donation online or email or mail this form in with your check. Mailing address: PCSS, P.O. BOX 294, ABINGTON, PA 19001**

**Presenter Information**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Add Additional Names and information for co-presenters. Provide above information for all.**

***Proposal Abstract: Write a 100 word description of your session as you wish it to appear in the printed program. Describe both the content and the virtual format of the session.***

Primary Audience: \_\_\_ Early Childhood \_\_\_ Middle Level \_\_\_ Secondary \_\_\_ College/university

Other? Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**Outline the objectives, expanded content and presentation techniques for the session. Be specific in describing your proposal; particularly address usefulness and importance to the audience. Please connect to theme.**

**1. Pennsylvania Bar Association – Mock Trial Program  
Virtual PCSS Conference  
Continued from Page 1**

- 2. **Pennsylvania Alliance for Geographic Education (PAGE) – Nicole Eshelman**
- 3. **Rendell Center-Elementary Mock Trials**
- 4. **White House Historical Association (Education Department) – Whitney Hayne**
- 5. **9/11 Memorial & Museum**
- 6. **Social Studies School Service – Lori Swiger**
- 7.

