



*Fall 2017*

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# Mission Statement

**The Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies promotes quality Social Studies Education from kindergarten to higher learning by:**

*Advocating the Social Studies at all levels of education in Pennsylvania.*

*Promoting the analysis, dissemination and valuation of Social Studies materials.*

*Examining and recommending certification requirements for teachers.*

*Assisting educators in organizing local Social Studies councils for professional development.*

*Cooperating with schools, districts, intermediate units and other interested parties on Social Studies projects.*

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# *Real-World Applications of Classroom Learning*

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*Project-based learning ideas that  
have your students collaborate with peers  
around the world and apply their learning  
to make a difference*

**By: Suzie Boss**

Instead of promising students that today’s lessons will be important in their lives someday, why not help them apply what they’re learning to tackle real issues now?

Without meaningful opportunities to put problem-solving skills to work, Godwaldt cautions, students may gradually lose hope that they can make a difference. “Maybe in first grade they

*“Education without action is like food without exercise,” says veteran educator Terry Godwaldt, founder of the Centre for Global Education in Edmonton, Alberta.*

hear about the plight of polar bears. That opens a wound. Later it’s climate change, and the wound gets bigger. Eventually,” he warns, “young people learn to change the channel [mentally] when they hear about issues they don’t think they can affect.”

To prevent that slide into apathy, Godwaldt teams up with partners to design global collaborative projects that emphasize action along with inquiry. During the coming school year, he aims to engage 100,000 students in a project called #Decarbonize, focusing on youth response to climate change. The project offers multiple ways for students to engage, including a virtual art gallery to illustrate how climate change is affecting Earth’s indigenous populations. Students are getting ready to take action during the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany.

### **3 More Projects That Inspire Action**

Since meeting Godwaldt during Global Education Day at the 2017 International Society for Technology in Education conference, I’ve been keeping an eye out for more project ideas to help students take part in real-world learning. Here are three suggestions for the coming school year.

1. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development established by the U.N. focus on issues ranging from clean water and sanitation to peace and justice. For educators, the SDGs offer a framework for designing authentic project-based learning experiences that connect students with today’s most pressing issues.

A growing movement to teach the SDGs across the curriculum is generating new resources for teachers, including Twitter chats (#TeachSDGs) and online courses from Participate, and Microsoft Skype offers a matching platform to connect educators on collaborative projects about the SDGs. What might teaching the SDGs look like? New York teacher Amy Rosenstein had her second graders apply communication skills to create digital posters to educate others about the SDGs, then used Skype to talk about them with children from around the world.

For high school teacher Jason Welker, the SDGs offered a way to teach environmental economics via project-based learning.

His students at Zurich International School applied economic theories to address the goals they wanted to affect, leading up to action projects of their own design.

2. The Monuments Project: Giving students as young as middle school opportunities to do the real work of historians—and provide meaningful public service in the process—is the idea behind the Monuments Project. Participating students collaborate across time zones and even oceans to research and tell the stories of World War I veterans buried in American cemeteries abroad.

Teacher Tom Neville of the American School of Paris launched the project over the 2016–17 school year to have his students discover the untold stories of WWI veterans buried in Suresnes American Cemetery outside Paris. Realizing that they needed access to primary source materials in the U.S., Neville and his students teamed up with social studies teacher Anthony Rovente and his students at Lopez Island Middle School in Washington State.

The project has continued to grow with more schools and independent researchers joining from New York, West Virginia, and elsewhere. To encourage broader participation, Neville has shared an online briefcase loaded with digital tools, databases for research, and more.

3. The Future of Food: In July, I took part in a Global Leadership Summit organized by EF Education First on the Future of Food. Some 2,000 high school students and teachers gathered in Milan, Italy, to think creatively and collaboratively about how to improve access to fresh, healthy, affordable food for our ever-growing species. While students dove into a design thinking challenge about actions they might take, I brainstormed with teachers about academically rigorous project ideas that focus on food—growing it, cooking it, sharing it, writing about it, and marketing it in a way that’s equitable and sustainable.

### **Here are a few of the driving questions and content connections that emerged:**

- How can we make better food choices to reduce our impact on the environment? (Content connections: math, geography, science, health)
- How can our stories change our eating habits and empower healthier communities? (Content connections: language arts, health, social studies)
- How can we prevent language barriers from preventing access to information on health and well-being? (Content connections: world languages, English, health)

# How Do Teachers Talk about Hate Speech?

## Heard on: All Things Considered, NPR

*One Charlottesville, Va., elementary school teacher grapples with how to have this conversation with her students the week after the violence erupted in her city just as a new school year is about to begin.*

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### TRANSCRIPT

AUDIE CORNISH, HOST: Charlottesville city schools will be back in session next week, and work is underway to map out how last weekend's events around the Unite the Right rally will be dealt with in the classroom. How will teachers help students process the swastikas, Nazi salutes, violence and words of hate that were on open display? Rachel Caldwell has been thinking about that question. She's a fourth-grade teacher at Burnley-Moran Elementary School in Charlottesville. She joins me now. Welcome to the program.

RACHEL CALDWELL: Thank you, Audie. Thanks for having me.

CORNISH: So I understand that you guys had a staff meeting after last weekend's events. What was that like? What was the feel?

CALDWELL: First, we debriefed just as adults with each other, as co-workers, friends. And then we moved into thinking about, what are we going to do next week?

CORNISH: So there was a sense you had to do something. How come?

CALDWELL: Absolutely. I think teachers would have felt very disappointed if we hadn't spent the time, like, really grappling with this huge thing. It feels insincere to just get back to the old grindstone of making lesson plans when you have this huge life-changing event happen for us as adults and especially for our children. And many of them - you know, we know in America that over 50 percent of students are students of color. And that is true for our school as well.

CORNISH: We mentioned that you teach the fourth grade. So they're about - what? - 9 years old.

CALDWELL: They are 9 turning 10.

CORNISH: So they are old enough to be aware of what's happening, but they're still very young. So when you think about the strategy of how to talk about this for the new school year, what are your goals?

CALDWELL: I think we do a disservice to our students and our community at large when we underestimate what students are ready and able to talk about. That's why we are there as educators, to help them grapple with these topics, how to notice injustice, address it and engage with it productively. So I've really been thinking about the books that I'll be reading with my class, the topics.

CORNISH: So give an example. I mean, what kind of book or what kind of resource might you be talking about?

CALDWELL: First of all, I think we can address specific questions that students have. Last year, I was teaching second grade. And this was before any of these rallies occurred in Charlottesville. I had a student come up to me first thing in the morning off the bus and say, are there white people in Charlottesville that want to kill black people? That was her quote.

And as an educator, we can say like, oh, we don't talk about race or not right now or I'll get back to you. But I think as the trusted adult in her life, it was really up to me to address that right then and there. If I silence her, I'm showing her that I don't care about her personal safety or these huge questions that she has or that I'm too afraid to face it, which I think instills more fear in our young people.

CORNISH: What's your response to the parent who disagrees maybe with your idea of a social justice conversation, who look at it as liberal indoctrination?

CALDWELL: I think that response can be

very different now after these weekend's events. I think it's very clear that there are not many sides to this issue, that we can talk about this in the classroom and I'm not pushing a specific political agenda because it's not a political agenda to kill people.

CORNISH: Right. But it is still a sensitive topic, right?

CALDWELL: Absolutely.

CORNISH: These conversations, they're still fundamentally political conversations, many of which are unsettled in this country. I mean, how do you think about, I guess, things that you might actually still avoid or things that you're worried about handling correctly?

CALDWELL: I think that gets at the question of what do I bring into the classroom as a white person about my own biases and expectations in the classroom? And I'm not an expert on talking about race. I'm not an expert on having these conversations. I'm just trying. And I think - just to give you an example, I've thought about in the past that we only teach Martin Luther King. We don't talk about Malcolm X because that is a choice that our curriculum developers have made.

And am I doing a disservice to my students when I present only one way of addressing injustice without giving them the full picture? But at the same time, when I've been teaching this curriculum it's been in second grade, so those are 7-year-olds. So how am I addressing these topics fairly and equitably, but also thinking about their need for safety and feeling like their teacher hears them and protects them and wants to hear their voice?

CORNISH: That's Rachel Caldwell. She teaches the fourth grade in Charlottesville, Va. Rachel Caldwell, thanks so much.

CALDWELL: Thank you.

# Four N.H. teachers on how they plan to talk about Charlottesville

By: Rick Ganley and Michael Brindley

The events that occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia earlier this month sparked a national dialogue about racial tensions in America. It's a conversation that's continuing in classrooms across the state, as another school year gets underway.

We asked four New Hampshire teachers how they're planning to incorporate discussions about the violence that occurred in Charlottesville into their classrooms. We asked them to record themselves and send in their thoughts; here's what we heard:

**James Gaj,**  
**Nashua High School South**

"I currently teach a current events class and that covers anything, current events, anything that's going to pop up in the news, and Charlottesville is definitely something that fits the mold. What we're going to do is we're going to have to talk about that the first day of school because it is in fact so relevant to today, especially when we're talking about things like extremism and hate groups, domestic terrorism, people like Timothy McVeigh and Randy Weaver.

"One thing that we do study is the psychology of what makes people act the way that they do. We know that these people that showed up for this rally were neo-Nazis and the KKK and people like David Duke. And we want to know what makes them tick, what made them get there, how come they act the way that they do. And also it's really important for the kids to understand this kind of thing because the world that they live in doesn't contain people like this right now. They are in for a rude awakening when they graduate and go out into the world that they're going to meet a bunch of different people. And that's one of the things that I really try and explain and open their eyes to."

**Kim Carrozza,**  
**Nashua High School South**

"I'm going to be talking about Charlottesville in my fall classes this semester because I want to show the continuum of race relations in America, beginning with reconstruction, coming through Jim Crow and the great migration in the 20s through the 40s, the civil rights events of the 50s and 60s, right up to the present day in Charlottesville. I want students to be able to trace the chain of events. What happened? How did we get from reconstruction 150 years ago to Charlottesville? Why haven't things changed? So I'm preparing by finding primary sources, both writ-

ten and visual, so that students can trace the history of race relations so that they can look at it from a political, economic, and social viewpoint so that they can compare pictures of past race incidents like lynchings to Charlottesville and protests that we see going on today.

"Can they solve the problem? Will moving the monuments really solve the problem? This hits into my core subject US history because it shows students the connectedness and relativity of history in their daily lives. I often hear from students 'Why do I have to learn about history? It's not important. It doesn't impact me.' Charlottesville is why we have to learn about it. If they don't understand how events started in the past, they won't understand why these events are happening today. You can't solve a problem if you don't understand its complexity: its political complexity, its violence complexity, its social complexity, and its economic complexity. That's what I'm hoping to impart to my students and the hope that they'll walk away with a better understanding of why these things are happening and what they can do to help solve the problem."

**Sara Bennett,**  
**Lebanon High School**

"I am an English and social studies teacher at Lebanon High School. This year, I co-teach a class called humanities with Andrew Gamble and our plan is to discuss Charlottesville as either an introduction to looking at humanity through the lens of the United States government and how it operates or to discuss it during our free speech unit, talking about the First Amendment.

As far as preparing goes we have been reading articles, looking at photographs, thinking about strategies that will get our students to empathize and sympathize with those who have different viewpoints than they do. I think especially being up in New Hampshire, where it's not as diverse as the South and our student body is primarily white, to look at Charlottesville in a new lens will be really helpful for students to understand different perspectives.

"I think it's important for students have a dialogue about what is happening in Charlottesville, what has happened, what's happening across the south with the Confederate statues because they're entering into the world in a year. They're not going to have school. They need to have informed opinions and knowledge about political events. I think they think that politics a lot of times is something

that's separate from them and it's not personal and it's sort of these guys making rules that they don't totally understand. Events like this kind of bring it to them and allow them to have their own opinions and think about who do I want to vote for, how does this stuff affect me, why does it matter."

**Lisa Petersen,**  
**Granite State Arts Academy in Salem**

"We are a public performing arts charter school. This coming year I will be teaching 9th, 11th, and 12th grade English. Last year I taught 11th grade humanities which was U.S. history and English. I will have those same students as 12th graders this year and going into the school year, I know at this point that I will be discussing and opening up the dialogue of the events that occurred in Charlottesville with them. I have been making sure I keep myself informed so I am able to answer any questions they may have and to ensure we can have an open and respectful dialogue about the events. I also subscribe to Teaching Tolerance, both online and in print, and frequently look to them for appropriate ways to approach such discussions in the classroom.

"The Common Core asks us to make our students into critical thinkers, and when an event like this happens it can't be ignored. We live in an information age when students are seeing both full accounts but also sound bites and it's important to discuss how that can influence our society too. What is the difference between a sound bite and the actual article that comes from? When I get the question like 'why are they so angry' and 'what do they think is being taken from them,' I ask students what do they think. Honestly, the answer is usually nothing is being taken from them and anger gets them nowhere. There is no place for that kind of hate. We must keep the dialogue open to young people.

"Here's something I honestly grapple with all the time: I'm constantly asking myself: am I the right person to teach this? Am I the right person to have this discussion? And I don't know. Perhaps I'm not. But I do know that I'm willing to and I'm constantly striving to stay informed to get my students to ask thought provoking questions. I'm going into my 20th year of teaching and in my tenure I have tried to always ensure that my classroom is a safe space. I have no tolerance for words of hate in my classroom environment."

# Students Create Film to Inspire Civic Engagement

By: Eileen Buckley

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Some Buffalo high school students immersed themselves in a special film making project over the summer. They participated in the Buffalo Youth Media Institute. WBFO's senior reporter Eileen Buckley says they premiered their short film *The Civic Heart* at the Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology.

"Civic – to me civic is citizen." *The Civic Heart* is a powerful, short film opening with video of a diverse group of citizens. It moves through parts of the city and jumps to some quick clips of students.

The film also gives you the definition of civic – "relating to a city or town." You will then hear from nearly a dozen area leaders. Some voices you will recognize.

"I think all too often too many people sit back waiting for other people to do things," stated Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown in the film.

Mayor Brown, New York State Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes and Buffalo Common Council President Darrius Pridgen all appear in the student film.

"You know it's important for people to be engaged. Government – the main purpose of Government is about order," said Pridgen in the film.

You will also hear from former Common Council President James Pitts. Sarah Wooten from the Partnership for the Public Good and Samantha Nephew with Citizen Action of New York.

"To participate in your community and have a voice," said Nephew in the film.

Each answering questions about the need for citizens be involved in their communi-

ty and what inspires these activists and political leaders to be civically engaged in their community.

"These things were taught in school," declared Pitts in the film.

Student Savannah Worth participated in the program. She's heading into her second year Oracle Charter School.

We asked Worth what she learned from the film project.

"The quote that I got was from Samantha Nephew – she was like you might not be into politics, but politics are totally into you and I totally learned from that," replied Worth.

"Will this make you more engaged in the civic end of it?" asked Buckley. "I believe so," responded Worth.

Over the last six weeks students shot all the material and spent hours editing. They were guided by the Squeaky Wheel's Kevin Kline.

Student Breanna Roberts is heading into her second year at the Health Science Charter School. She conducted all the interviews and worked to turn it into a conversation.

"I walk away with how to communicate better – so basically how to talk to people better," Roberts said.

When Roberts was asked what stood out to her the most from the film regarding the lesson in civic engagement she responded "just basically let's do it – let's get involved – that's basically what they are all saying."

This film was funded by AT&T and sup-

ported by Squeaky Wheel and BCAT. AT&T's partnership with BCAT and Squeaky Wheel on this initiative is a creative way to expose local students to the skills and technology necessary to create film and multimedia projects.

Kevin Hanna, area Manager of External Affairs at AT&T, noted the company has committed \$400 million in philanthropic projects for education programs.

BCAT Board Chairman John Koelmel says the project is another home-run for students at BCAT.

"As a result more than two dozen of our youth have had the opportunity over the summer months to dive head first into not only the skills and training needed in film and video production, but to also learn invaluable lessons on civic engagement and public service," remarked Koelmel.

Students tell WBFO they hope the community will use the film as a teaching tool to inspire civil engagement.

"Go out and help when you can – if you can. Whenever you have the time, just help out a little. Take out the trash for someone else," responded Zaire Maysaun Goodman, a City Honors student, who also worked on the project.

"I learned that there is a lot people in this community who actually care to represent other people and to help people. I learned that we need to build a stronger community for everybody, so that we can succeed further in life," replied Jordan Jackson, a St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute student.

# Washington Middle School To Introduce Teen Court

By: Samantha Hernandez

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GREEN BAY - Washington Middle School is looking to make its students part of a solution to student discipline problems with the introduction of a teen court this school year.

A teen court, also known as a peer court, can take different forms. It generally includes an element where student offenders, who agree to take part, go before their trained peers to receive their punishment. Often the sentence calls for the student to make amends in some way.

The teen court was proposed by Brown County Assistant District Attorney Cynthia Vopal and Elisabeth Stockbridge, assistant state public defender with the Green Bay Trial Office. They came to the school after Green Bay School District Superintendent Michelle Langenfeld asked the public to help find solutions for ongoing issues with disruptive and at times dangerous student behavior throughout the district.

The impetus for Langenfeld's call to action came in June in the form of Kerstin Westcott's resignation from her position at Washington Middle School and her claim that the middle school was not a safe place.

In the days leading up to the new school year, Vopal and Stockbridge are working with district administrators to figure out what form the teen court will take. Different types of teen courts enlist different numbers of students and varying levels of adult involvement.

Stockbridge's children attended Washington Middle School.

"My kids had a good experience at Washington, and that's part of the reason I do care about the school," Stockbridge said. "My kids still go to Green Bay public schools. I really want to make sure that I'm involved in the school community — not just parental involvement but community involvement is so

important."

## STUDENT GROWTH

The teen court will be at no cost to Washington Middle School and Vopal and Stockbridge are donating their services, said Vicki Bayer, director of special education and pupil services for the school district.

Over the years, peer courts have been shown to be positive in a number of ways.

*"It's bigger than just the discipline piece, it's allowing our students to learn about decision making and learn about career opportunities," Bayer said.*

There is also room for student growth.

"The leadership skills, the listening skills, the ability to think on their feet and to work as role models in the building because they themselves are being empowered to be a role model and have a positive influence on their peers is all a part of it," said Nancy Anne Miller, Vilas County University Wisconsin-Extension youth agent and founding president of the Wisconsin Teen Court Association.

Miller has seen teens who went through the program as a defendant come back to take on a role in the court.

"Historically, and on the national level, recidivism rates are lower through the program. It's not for everyone. It's not 100 percent all the time, but it is a successful program," Miller said.

*One of the reasons for the success is the student must have admitted fault before going to court.*

"They have already admitted their guilt and they are there to make up for their mistakes,"

Miller said.

Bayer said the Washington teen court will not be part of the Teen Court Association.

Any incidents rising to the level of possible suspension or expulsion will continue to be handled by the administration, Bayer said.

There is also a restorative justice piece to the courts.

"The restorative justice part increases our options of possible interventions," Bayer said.

She gave the example of a student writing on a wall. Using the restorative justice path, the student would work with the building engineer to improve the environment around campus.

This is not the first time the Green Bay School District or the county has had a teen court.

Southwest High School had a teen court 20 or 30 years ago, Bayer said.

According to Miller, Brown County also had a teen court until the early 2000s.

## REPRESENTED

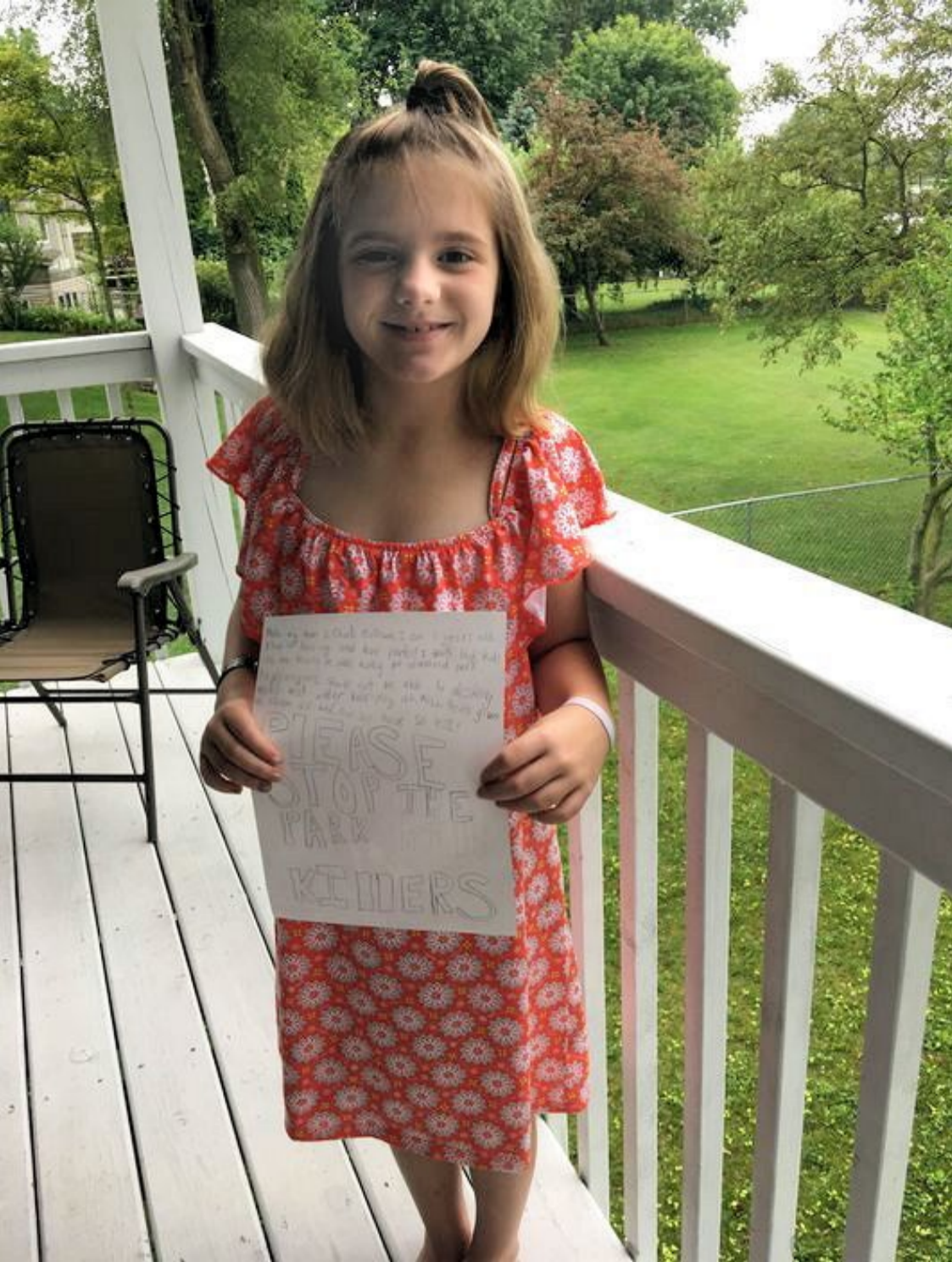
The goal is to have a mix of Washington Middle School students participating in the court, Bayer said.

A teen court should reflect the student body and be inclusive, Miller said.

The court should not be only made up of honor students, she said. If a student is a good communicator they might be a good fit to take part in the court.

Students will be chosen after the start of school year, Bayer said.





## *Say What?*

### *9-Year-Old Muzzled at City Council Meeting*

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*Charli Collison's comments were read by her mother, Kelly Collison, at the Lansing City Council meeting July 10, 2017, after Charli was denied the chance to talk.  
Photos courtesy of Kelly Collinson*

**By: Judy Putnam**

LANSING, Mich. — The Lansing City Council dished up the wrong kind of civics lesson to a fourth-grader this week.

Charli Collison, 9, tagged along with her mother, Kelly Collison, to a Monday council meeting to protest the construction of a new golf course entrance through Ormond Park. A judge halted the construc-

*“I thought that it sent a message to young people that their voice doesn’t matter,” Collison said. Plus, she points out, who knows a park better than kids who play there?”*

tion after a lawsuit was filed.

When Council President Patricia Spitzley asked if anyone else wanted to speak at the end of the public comment portion of the meeting, five hands went up. Spitzley allowed the four adults to talk but said “No” to Charli.

“I have strong feelings about the role of children and what their role should be. I don’t believe that 9-year-old children should be giving public comment. I just don’t,” Spitzley said in a phone interview Wednesday.

At the meeting on Monday, Charli started to cry after being told she couldn’t share her views on the park with council members.

“I cried because I was sad I couldn’t talk about the reasons I had for Ormond Park to be saved,” Charli said in a phone interview.

She said her father used to live near Ormond Park and she played there frequently. A small rock-climbing wall that’s been knocked down for construction was a highlight.

“I wanted to tell them that kids should have a chance to come to Ormond Park and climb on the rock wall and play on the structures,” she said.

Kelly Collison, who lives in Lansing, said

she brought her daughter with her to the meeting to speak against the park changes. She said it was Charli’s idea to address the council. Collison said she was shaken when her daughter was denied that chance.

“I thought that it sent a message to young people that their voice doesn’t matter,” Collison said. Plus, she points out, who

knows a park better than kids who play there?

Collison used a portion of her own time at the microphone to read Charli’s handwritten remarks. She said two council members, Kathie Dunbar and Carol Wood, have apologized to Charli.

Spitzley said the child called Mayor Virg

Bernero a “park killer” in remarks read for Charli by her mother.

“The child’s comment referred to the mayor as a park killer. That just validated it wasn’t a meaningful, thoughtful comment. It was more done for effect,” she said.

Collison said the remarks say: “Stop the park killers.” But Bernero did get a reference: “Angry mayors should not be able to destroy parks that other kids play at.”

When another speaker raised a question about allowing Charli to speak, Spitzley said she asked City Attorney Jim Smiertka about the state Open Meetings Act.

She said he told her the law was silent on whether a child is covered under the law.

Herschel Fink, an attorney who represents the Lansing State Journal, said the law is clear: A person is allowed to address a public body. A 9-year-old is a person.

“Being silent on age means there is no requirement of age. That’s a totally preposterous claim,” he said.

The council does, as allowed by law, set limits on time and prohibits disruptive speech or behavior. But there’s nothing in the rules about age.

Smiertka, in an email, said he was researching it after the meeting and reached the conclusion that the term person “is broadly used in the statute in such a way that age does not appear to be a limiting condition.”

Fink was far more direct: “The simple answer is ‘Yeah, it’s a violation of the Open

*“We need to be careful when we are encouraging our young people, more now than probably ever, to get people civically engaged.”*

Meetings Act, plain and simple.”

Council member Adam Hussain teaches eighth-grade social studies. He gives Spitzley high marks for running the meetings in an orderly way but said she may have to rethink her decision about Charli’s right to speak.

“We need to be careful when we are encouraging our young people, more now than probably ever, to get people civically engaged,” he said.

“We have to be careful with the message that we’re sending.”



# *Teaching for Civic Engagement: Criteria for Effective Civic Engagement*

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*Identifying and analyzing what makes for effective civic action is pretty murky business.*

*One reason it's so challenging to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular movement, group, or action step is because definitions of effectiveness vary so much.*

**By: Matthew Colley**

There are a number of ways to define an effective action or group. You might choose to focus on the outcome, such as how many people were impacted, the extent to which a demand was met, or the amount of concrete change that's accomplished. Others might choose to focus more on the process of making change, such as the degree of solidarity and community formed by a group, the style of leadership or core values that are developed, or the extent of internal change or consciousness raising that's created. The reality is that none of these criteria are wrong — it just depends on your perspective.

For these reasons, instead of giving my students the criteria I think they should use to evaluate past efforts for social change, and then use to plan their own action steps, I allow them to develop and hash out for themselves what they think makes for an effective social justice movement.

To begin the process of getting students thinking about what makes for an effective social justice movement, we analyze a current case study that most students are familiar with: Black Lives Matter.

#### **Contextualization:**

##### **Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement**

I begin by providing context through a brief presentation about the founding of the Black Lives Matter movement, which came in the aftermath of the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the killing of Trayvon Martin. I also outline some broader statistics about police brutality along with the goals and vision of the Black Lives Matter movement. Then, I assign two readings to students. Both articles look back on the first year of the movement. One article appraises the movement positively, while the other article is more critical of Black Lives Matter activists. I ask students to annotate each article for evidence showing that Black Lives Matter is a successful movement or evidence showing that they're not yet successful.

After reading the articles, students engage in a structured academic controversy, which I discussed in an earlier blog post. After reading, thinking, and discussing the Black Lives Matter movement from multiple perspectives, I ask students to come to their own conclusion — Is Black Lives Matter an effective movement?

#### **Focus on Criteria**

After students write a brief paragraph, synthesizing their own thinking and what they discussed in their small groups, I push their

thinking in the direction of criteria, which is one of our vocabulary words for the week. I ask them to take a step back from their answer about effectiveness and consider the underlying criteria they're using to evaluate the Black Lives Matter movement. It's helpful to model an example with the class, but their criteria is usually found in their topic sentence.

For example, if a student writes, "The Black Lives Matter movement is successful because they've gained a lot of attention and helped people feel a sense of racial pride," then the criteria they're focusing on are gaining attention and development of racial or self pride. Likewise, a student might argue that "The Black Lives Matter movement isn't successful yet because they've not built relationships with other civil rights organizations," in which case this student is prioritizing the criterion of solidarity or coalition building.

After students have reflected on the criteria they think is most significant, I ask them to choose one criterion to describe in more detail. I want them to begin thinking in specifics.

For example, if you're going to argue that a successful social justice movement is effective if it reaches "a lot of people," what does this look like? How many people are "a lot"? What does it mean to "reach" someone? Does it mean there are national news stories about a group? Does it mean a certain number of people show up to events or regular meetings?

Clearly, there are no right or wrong answers here. The key is for students to begin defining their criteria in more specific detail. This thinking will not only help them evaluate historical case studies more carefully, but it will also prepare them to plan their own effective action steps at the end of the semester.

#### **Case Studies: Social Justice Movements**

After using an analysis of Black Lives Matter to begin thinking about criteria for effectiveness, we look at three historical case studies of social justice movements from the 1960s and 1970s. The purpose of these case studies is for students to understand the goals, tactics, and accomplishments of historical social justice movements in order to practice applying their criteria for success and to begin thinking about how they can continue the work of the past with their own action projects.

For each case, I use a combination of primary and secondary sources, including visuals and documentary film clips, to cover the goals, tactics, and legacy of each group. I generally

spend a week on each historical movement. There are so many different groups to cover, but since my class is focused on California Studies, with a particular emphasis on the Bay Area, I cover the Black Panther Party, the Third World Liberation Front, and the United Farm Workers. These groups also help us cover a variety of tactics, from art to legislative change to direct action. The accomplishments and legacies of these groups are also quite subjective, so they make for interesting class discussions. Additionally, covering these groups helps me represent the racial and ethnic diversity of my class in my curriculum.

I close the case studies by asking students to return to their criteria for effectiveness and make an argument about which social justice movement was the most successful and why. This assessment is generally in the form of an essay, but of course there are a variety of different ways to get at this question.

#### **Why Think About Criteria?**

My goal in pushing students to think about criteria is that if they can identify what makes a social justice movement effective, they'll be more likely to consider that criteria in their own work. For example, if students argue the most effective criterion is getting your demand met, this will help them focus and narrow down their demand. Alternatively, if students say that the most important criterion is outreach to a large group of people, this would shift their tactic and action.

Most importantly, the case studies put them in the historical driver's seat and ask them to evaluate what has come before, so that they're prepared to move forward. Ultimately, there is no one answer for what makes a movement or action step effective. I don't want to dictate to students my definition of effectiveness — I'd rather have them develop their own standards for their work.

These case studies and reflections of what makes for an effective social justice movement are the final step in my history curriculum before students design and implement their own action steps. I'll detail that process and my reflections on this year's projects in my final post for this series.

How do you use criteria in your classroom? How have you worked with students to evaluate effective civic engagement?



## *After Charlottesville, Some Rally to Take Confederate Name Off Schools*

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*Ryan Sawyers, chairman of the Prince William County School Board, has started raising funds to change the name of Stonewall Jackson High in Manassas, Va., named for the Confederate general.*

*Photo: Gabriella Demczuk, for the Washington Post.*

**By: Moriah Balingit and Emma Brown**

*The Washington Post*

Outrage over the violence and hate on display during a rally of white supremacists and white nationalists last weekend in Charlottesville has reenergized efforts nationwide to strip Confederate symbols out of American public life — including from the names of public schools.

School officials and community members across the country have invoked the Charlottesville events — which left three people dead — to call for renaming schools in Dallas and Oklahoma City. The movement is resonating especially in Virginia, the scene of much of the Civil War.

Some in Arlington County are calling for officials to rename Washington-Lee High School, whose campus sits not far from the home of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. And a school board member in Prince William County has begun raising funds to strip the name of Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson from two schools.

A graduate of Lee-Davis High, which calls itself the “Home of the Confederates,” has begun a petition to rebrand his alma mater. That school, near Richmond, is named for Lee and Jefferson Davis, who was president of the Confederacy.

“Our school should not use the same names and symbols as violent extremist groups,” Ryan Leach, who is a 2010 graduate of Lee-Davis, wrote on Facebook.

The campaigns come as cities weigh the removal of statues and monuments honoring Confederate figures — a move President Trump has denounced as “the history and culture of our great country being ripped apart.”

Data on school names from the National Center for Education Statistics show that at least 138 public schools nationwide in 2015-16 were named after Confederate leaders or for counties that bear the name of those leaders, including Lee, Jackson and Davis. They are largely concentrated in the South.

But the figure is probably an undercount of the Confederate imprint on school names, because it does not include less-prominent Rebel figures.

Schools named after Confederate leaders underwent soul-searching two years ago, after white supremacist Dylann Roof massacred nine black parishioners in a Charleston, S.C., church. San Diego’s Robert E. Lee Elementary, for example, was named Pacific View Leadership Elementary. Dallas Independent School District in Texas

— home to several schools bearing Confederate names — is among those reevaluating those names in light of the Charlottesville events.

Dallas school board member Miguel Solis, who wants to change those names, said he was shocked at how youthful many of the white nationalists in Charlottesville seemed. Roof was in his early 20s at the time of his attack.

“It is not okay for new generations to continue to cling to a dark moment and time in American history .??. and to have symbols that they can continue to rally around to help preserve a dark ideology,” Solis said. “We need to do something about it.”

Dan Micciche, president of the Dallas school board, wrote on Facebook that he supported Solis’s proposal.

“Over the weekend, we witnessed in Charlottesville a terrible tragedy caused by white supremacists,” he wrote. “There is no place for the violence and hatred we saw on display this weekend.”

Last year, the Dallas board approved the renaming of John B. Hood Middle School — named after a Confederate general — to Piedmont G.L.O.B.A.L. Academy in response to concerns from the community.

Officials in Oklahoma City are considering renaming four schools that bear Confederate names. Superintendent Aurora Lora said renaming a school can cost up to \$75,000 — a significant burden at a time when the state’s schools are already struggling with cut-to-the-bone budgets. But in a statement posted on the district’s website, she said it is clear that “the historical names of some of our facilities are not names that reflect our values in 2017.”

Virginia, home to the capital of the Confederacy, has at least 19 schools named for Confederate generals. That will soon change. Last month, the Fairfax County school board last month voted to change the name of J.E.B. Stuart High, which was originally named for a Confederate cavalry officer. The county also has a high school named for Lee, but the board has not moved to rename it.

Those who back changing names argue that they were originally chosen in decades past to send a message to black students that they were not welcome. Many of the schools opened prior to court-ordered racial integration and served only white students.

In Arlington, a school board meeting Thursday night opened with a moment of silence

for those who were killed and injured in Charlottesville. Barbara Kanninen, the board’s chair, said that the events raised important questions about how to name schools.

“It’s time to talk about the names of our schools, and what they mean, and why they matter. It is time to talk about the values these names reflect and the messages we are sending to our children,” Kanninen said.

Community members pleaded with the board to change the name of Washington-Lee High.

Marc Beallor, a retired union organizer and member of the activist group Indivisible Arlington, told the board it was improper to honor Lee alongside President George Washington.

“It emits the hypocritical and shameful message of moral equivalency between those who fought for freedom and those who fought for slavery,” said Beallor.

He added: “Let us act now in the memory of Heather Heyer, who gave her life in this cause,” referring to the woman who was fatally struck by a car Saturday in Charlottesville.

In Prince William, a school board member has called for stripping the name of Stonewall Jackson from two schools near Manassas, scene of the 1861 battle where the Confederate general, born Thomas Jonathan Jackson, earned his moniker. School board member Ryan Sawyers is raising funds from private donors to pay for the name change.

Sawyers said he was moved to start the campaign by last weekend’s events and wants to send a message that Virginia has evolved.

“This is certainly a nonviolent way to say that Virginia is moving on from its segregationist and racist past,” Sawyers said.

But there are plenty of people in the county who want the name to stay.

Corey Stewart, chairman of the Prince William Board of County Supervisors, said the school was named for Stonewall Jackson “because .??. he was a good and honorable and noble man.” Stewart has threatened to reduce the school system’s funding if the proposal by Sawyers is approved.

“This is just political correctness run amok,” Stewart said.



## *Civil War Lessons Often Depend on Where the Classroom is*

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*AUSTIN, Texas (AP) —  
The Civil War lessons taught to American students  
often depend on where the classroom is, with schools  
presenting accounts of the conflict that vary  
from state to state and even district to district.*

**By: Will Weissert**

Some schools emphasize states' rights in addition to slavery and stress how economic and cultural differences stoked tensions between North and South. Others highlight the battlefield acumen of Confederate commanders alongside their Union counterparts. At least one suggests that abolition represented the first time the nation lived up to its founding ideals.

The differences don't always break down neatly along geographic lines.

"You don't know, as you speak to folks around the country, what kind of assumptions they have about things like the Civil War," said Dustin Kidd, a sociology professor at Temple University in Philadelphia.

Lessons on the war and its causes usually begin in the fifth through eighth grades. That means attitudes toward the war may be influenced by what people learned at an age when many were choosing a favorite color or imagining what they wanted to be when they grew up.

The effect may not be obvious until a related issue is thrust into the spotlight like this month's violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, and the resulting backlash against Confederate symbols.

Growing up in Charlottesville, Kidd said, he was taught that "folks from the North" had put forward the "misconception" that slavery was the cause of the war. The real origin, he was told, could be traced to groups of colonists from England who despised each other long before the rebellion began in 1861. Not until graduate school did he begin to question that premise.

Confederate sympathizers have long promoted the "Lost Cause" theory that the Southern side was heroic against impossible odds, and that slavery was not the driving force behind the war. Edward Countryman, a history professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, said he learned that idea growing up in New York state in the 1950s.

"I recall my father coming home when I was about 8 or 9 with two Civil War caps, one's gray and one's blue. And I wanted the gray one," Countryman said. "The belief, strongly, that the Civil War had been about anything but slavery was very, very powerful."

A 2011 Pew Research Center poll found that 48 percent of Americans said the Civil War was mainly about states' rights, compared with 38 percent who said its main cause was slavery. Nine percent said both factors were equal.

The divide in opinions broke down more by race than geography. Forty-eight percent of whites chose states' rights over slavery, while 39 percent of blacks did. But 49 percent of self-described Southern whites chose states' rights compared with 48 percent of whites who did not consider themselves Southern.

The president of the Texas NAACP said finding "kinder" ways to describe the war's origins masks racism.

"States' rights is about the whole idea of permitting slavery and allowing the South to do what they do, or, after slavery, to allow the South to engage in Jim Crow," Gary Bledsoe said. "You can't sanitize history and have history report that master and slave were out there singing 'Kumbaya' in the fields."

Texas has 178 confederate monuments. Only Virginia has more, with 223, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, a civil rights advocacy group.

Democratic state Rep. Eric Johnson, meanwhile,

## *The president of the Texas NAACP said finding "kinder" ways to describe the war's origins masks racism.*

is demanding the removal of a nearly 60-year-old plaque rejecting slavery as the Civil War's "underlying cause." Republican House Speaker Joe Straus has called for checking the accuracy of that plaque and nearly a dozen other Confederate symbols located around the state Capitol alone.

When curriculum standards were approved in 2010 by Texas' Republican-controlled Board of Education, debate focused on slavery being a Civil War "after issue."

The state's fifth- and seventh-graders taking Texas history courses, and eighth-graders taking U.S. history, are now asked to identify the causes of the war, "including sectionalism, states' rights and slavery."

Eighth-graders also compare ideas from Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address with those from Confederate President Jefferson Davis' inaugural address, which did not mention slavery and instead endorsed small-government values still popular with many conservatives today.

The eighth-grade curriculum also lists Confederate Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson alongside

Frederick Douglass, a 19th century abolitionist, as examples of "the importance of effective leadership in a constitutional republic."

Home to about 5.3 million public school students, Texas has a textbook market so large that volumes published for its classrooms can be sold in other states, though that influence has waned recently. Publishers can now more easily tailor electronic materials to the needs of individual markets.

Still, in 2015, a publisher promised to make editorial changes after a mother in Houston complained that her son's ninth-grade geography textbook referred to African slaves as "workers" and immigrants."

Virginia's standards of learning for U.S. history to 1865 include "describing the cultural, economic and constitutional issues that divided the nation" and "explaining how the issues of states' rights and slavery increased sectional tensions." Alabama fifth-graders "identify causes of the Civil War from the Northern and Southern viewpoints."

Contrast that with Delaware, where school districts set their own curriculum but a syllabus for the eighth grade suggesting what might be covered during instruction says that abolition meant that the American people could for the first time "seriously claim to be living up to their commitment to the principle of liberty rooted in the American state papers.

In Michigan, curriculum also is decided locally, though the state's social studies standards for the Civil War and Reconstruction in eighth grade include the instructions: "Explain the reasons (political, economic, and social) why Southern states seceded and explain the differences in the timing of secession in the Upper and Lower South."

Massachusetts' framework for a U.S. history course asks students to "describe the rapid growth of slavery in the South after 1800 and analyze slave life and resistance on plantations and farms across the South."

Chester Finn, president emeritus of the conservative Thomas B. Fordham Institute, an educational nonprofit, called teaching history and social studies "a real jigsaw puzzle" since many states leave standards up to school districts.

Still, "If the state curriculum calls it the 'War of Northern Aggression' and says states' rights were dominated by the Yankee army crushing the good people of the South, and slighting the whole slavery issue," Finn said, "you can influence what a million kids take away."



# *Teacher Voice: What was troubling enough as 20th century history is happening in the present time*

**By: Deborah Menkart**

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*It is essential that we have discussions about Charlottesville in the classroom.*

"What should I say about Charlottesville?"

It's the burning question on every teacher's mind as the new school year gets underway.

On Twitter, users add lessons and resources to the #CharlottesvilleSyllabus and #CharlottesvilleCurriculum pages; everything from identity charts to readings on the history of white supremacy to conflict resolution activities.

It's all good stuff.

What is needed is not just day-after or week-after lessons, but a chance to reexamine what children learn about history – and themselves – all year long. This work needs to begin in elementary school, where students' ideas about their place in the world are shaped.

"Young children's minds are like sponges, soaking up the most obscure, profound (and sometimes erroneous!) things imaginable," Rethinking Schools editors wrote in the introduction to Rethinking Elementary Education.

The Rethinking Schools editors add that for teachers, the challenge is to help young students to acquire the "critical dispositions and questioning" skills that "set the stage to encourage children to act on what they've learned — to have 'civic courage,' to act as if we live in a democracy." The editors stress that they do not want to teach students what to think or "how their teachers think their parents should vote." Rather, they aspire to "create a learning community that models and thinks hard about values of justice and empathy."

Charlottesville has been a national wake-up call (sadly one of many) as to how important it is to create classrooms that model the justice and empathy values.

Here are some ways to do that in elementary school classrooms.

First and foremost, it is vital that young people have a place to

process disturbing news and to be reassured that their lives matter and that they are safe. The images of Nazis and other white supremacists marching with guns and impunity are unnerving for most of us, but can be particularly traumatizing for students of color, Native Americans, Muslims and Jewish students.

What was troubling enough as 20th century history is happening in present time. It is essential that we have discussions (and not just once) about these current events in the classroom, reassuring students that their lives and concerns are front and center. It is also a time for teachers and students to examine the school curriculum and library. Are children of color represented in all aspects of life in the U.S., or only during stories about slavery and Jim Crow? Are Native Americans portrayed in the present tense, or

only pre-1900 as is the case with 87 percent of U.S. history standards? Are Muslims represented as foreigners or as part of U.S. dating back to the pre-colonial era? Students can help answer these questions. For example, third graders in San Marcos, California assessed their own school library and took steps to ensure it was more representative.

representative.

We must assess our own knowledge and perspective as educators. We cannot teach what we do not know. Most of us were raised reading textbooks that provided a rose-colored, eurocentric narrative of U.S. history. That traditional narrative is reinforced every day. It takes an intentional and consistent effort, particularly for those of us who are white educators, to learn history outside the textbooks and consistently examine (and challenge) our own implicit biases. This is lifelong, daily work.

We must reframe the teaching of U.S. history. In elementary school, students develop a deep-seated understanding of who makes history and their role in it. Yes, the history will be studied in more depth when they are in high school and college. But as young children, they either learn that they are a part of history and have a role in shaping the future, or they learn that history is about "other people" in power. All too often they learn a mythical narrative of "freedom for all" in U.S. history with a few exceptions, instead of a more accurate understanding of a long history of oppression and resistance. Here are three of many examples that can shed a light on events today, for teachers to

deepen their own understanding and that of their students.

The era following the Civil War, Reconstruction, gets short shrift in high school and is rarely mentioned at all in elementary. Yet is it our strongest example of democracy and justice in all of U.S. history. Black representatives were elected to state and federal government, public schools were made available (for all children), and many (though tragically only

*These stories show that white supremacy takes many forms – not just flag-waving Nazis. A people’s history of the modern Civil Rights Movement also allows students to gain courage and ideas from the countless, creative stories of resistance.*

a fraction of) formerly enslaved families were reunited.

The end of Reconstruction also demonstrates the violent lengths white supremacists will take to regain power. There are a few books for upper elementary including *The Amazing Age of John Roy Lynch* and *Crow* that offer an age appropriate introduction to this era in history.

One of the most commonly taught stories of social change in U.S. history is about the modern Civil Rights Movement — yet it is often reduced to the master narrative of Rosa Parks sitting down on a bus and Martin Luther King Jr. saying “I have a dream.” Left out are the role of “ordinary” people, the long history of the movement, the role of women and young people, the violence that mirrors the actions of the white supremacists in Charlottesville and much more. Young people can interview grandparents, read stories about people who were their age in the Movement, critique textbooks and explore timelines such as the history of transportation protests that demonstrate that the struggle for civil and human rights began long before the 1950s. These stories show that white supremacy takes many forms – not just flag-waving Nazis. A people’s history of the modern Civil Rights Movement also allows students to gain courage and ideas from the countless, creative stories of resistance.

Key to critical literacy is exploring who tells history, what events are memorialized, and why those choices are made.

Howard Zinn explains, “Historians (and journalists) are forced to choose, out of an infinite number of facts, what to present, what to omit. And that decision inevitably reflects, whether consciously or not, the interests of the historian.”

In light of the current news about monuments, students can create a map of the memorialized people and actions in their school, town, or city. Exploring when and why the monuments were erected (or schools were named) would be a rich history lesson. There is a wonderful example from a class in Colorado, where students created artistic commemorative projects based on hidden history. Or students can engage in debate, like a class of first graders on the controversy over the Confederate flag. All of these activities convey the life lesson that history books or news media are not neutral.

ments were erected (or schools were named) would be a rich history lesson. There is a wonderful example from a class in Colorado, where students created artistic commemorative projects based on hidden history. Or students can engage in debate, like a class of first graders on the controversy over the Confederate flag. All of these activities convey the life lesson that history books or news media are not neutral.

James Baldwin’s 1963 essay “A Talk to Teachers” provides wise guidance for approaching students today: “I would teach him [and her] that he doesn’t have to be bound by the expedencies of any given administration, any given policy, any giv-

*Key to critical literacy is exploring who tells history, what events are memorialized, and why those choices are made.*

en morality; that he has the right and the necessity to examine everything.”

*Our best hope for the future lies with a generation of young people who value humanity, are grounded in an honest understanding of U.S. history, think critically, and have the skills and vision to shape a better future.*

*Let’s ensure that our children learn to read, write, and change the world.*

# Teachers Learn to Better Discuss Race in the Classroom

by Alex Modesitt, Tribune-Star

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Middle and high-school teachers from around the nation came together at Indiana State University Saturday for a workshop on how to best address topics that may elicit strong reactions in the classroom.

The CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center, and the non-profit education group Facing History and Ourselves, hosted a group of about 20 teachers in an effort to understand how to go from being a bystander to an upstander.

Mary Johnson, lead historian of Facing History and Ourselves, educated the attendees on the best practices to discuss race, civil, and human rights issues with their students through stories of individuals who chose to participate in a variety of ways during the civil rights movement.

Johnson used specific case studies from the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock in 1957 and the Freedom Rides in 1961 to help participants reflect on the values and actions taken during those events that helped strengthen those communities.

She said the goal of the workshop was to give teachers the tools to approach the topic in the classroom and not feel woefully unprepared for the potential responses of some students.

“I want help teachers find a way to bring it up in the classroom and not feel like they’re throwing it in the students’ faces,” Johnson said.

“I want them to be ready. If teachers think about the discussions before hand, they’ll be ready when Johnny raises his hand and says something offensive. And while they may not have all the answers, at least they’ll have thought about it before hand and how they’ll respond.”

Johnson, who began her teaching career as a Peace Corps volunteer in the bush of Northern Nigeria where she cre-

ated her own school, said an open dialogue about race and race relations is critical to better understanding each other and how differences between people are often much smaller or insignificant than originally thought.

“You have to have a dialogue,” Johnson said. “The most important thing is to talk to people from a different background and to understand where they’re coming from.

“Today we had a pretty white audience, and probably we need a more integrated audience because this is everybody’s problem.”

Nicholas Hosmer, a religion, morality and ethics teacher at Mount Notre Dame High School near Cincinnati, Ohio, said Saturday’s workshop opened his eyes to different perspectives in history and will allow him to return to his

classroom and more effectively discuss the topics of race and civil rights with his students.

“I walk out of here today with some really valuable resources to take back into my classes, because we’re about

educating the whole person, and not just about the history of what happened in 1957 and who was there and the events,” Hosmer said.

“What I see know is a chance to let my students put themselves in the story and ask themselves what they would have done, or what they’d do today when a person is being threatened or belittled because of who they are.”

Hosmer said he walks out of Saturday’s workshop better understanding that as an educator it’s important to impress upon his students that a person’s race, ethnicity, legal status or relationships they have with others ultimately doesn’t define who they are.

“Today makes me more sensitive to those things, and hopefully it’ll allow me to make my students sensitive to that as well,” Hosmer said.

*“You have to have a dialogue... the most important thing is to talk to people from a different background and to understand where they’re coming from.”*

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PCSS Luncheon and Speaker  
PCSS Presidential Reception and Dinner

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