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PCSS News and Views

Volume LVIII No. 2 Spring 2014

To keep you informed

To keep you in touch

To keep you involved

Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies

Tech-savvy Pa. social studies teacher listed among "20 to Watch"

The National School Boards Association's Technology Leadership Network has named Bradley Wilson, a Pennsylvania social studies teacher, to its "20 to Watch" list for his innovative use of technology. At Fort Couch Middle School, Wilson integrates iPads into lessons and trains fellow teachers to use iPads and Google Apps. He also has integrated digital animation into classroom presentations and created digital lessons for students who miss school because of illness. Pittsburgh Tribune-Review (3/12)

Fewer books checked out of Pa. district's libraries following budget cuts

Severe budget cuts has left the Allentown, Pa., school district with one librarian serving 15 elementary schools and two serving four middle schools. The librarians often are teaching library-skills classes, closing the library to students. At one middle school, circulation dropped 77% during the first four months of operations without a librarian, from the same months of the previous year. The Morning Call (Allentown, Pa.) (3/15)

Studying America's Crisis in Civic Education

Robyn Verbois, a social studies teacher from Baton Rouge, used her time in the Ashbrook Center's MA Degree program to explore America's crisis in civic education. Americans have lost a sense of community, Verbois concludes, "because we have failed to pass along the uniqueness of our origins." **Learn More**

Call for manuscripts for Social Studies and the Young Learner

If you are an enthusiastic elementary teacher or teacher educator with great ideas that you have implemented in the classroom, we invite you to share your work in Social Studies and the Young Learner. Read on for themes of upcoming issues, and view guidelines and deadlines.

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President's Message

David Trevaskis

One of the many hats I wear as an attorney/educator is that I sit on the statewide high school mock trial executive committee for the Pennsylvania Bar Association. Every year, I have the pleasure of working with impressive young people from across the Commonwealth, and their equally impressive teachers and mentors, as part of this performance based civic education program. This year Altoona Area High School defeated Roman Catholic High School in the PBA Young Lawyer Division sponsored Pennsylvania High School Mock Trial Competition, the culmination of nearly five months of statewide competition that stated with 327 teams beginning work last November on a problem that involved a student athlete and performance enhancing drugs The Altoona team moves on to the national competition over Mother's Day weekend in Madison, Wisconsin.

Ten other schools (Pine Richland from Allegheny County, Beaver Area, Central from Blair County, State College Area, Hazleton Area, Cumberland Valley, B. Reed Henderson from Chester County, Delaware County's Strath Haven, The Haverford School from Montgomery County and Abington Heights from Lackawanna County) joined Altoona Area and Roman Catholic at the state finals during the last weekend of March. Congratulations to teacher coaches James Lowe (social studies) and Jennifer Lowe (English) and lawyer coach David Andrews. Special kudos to team members Jacob Foose, Blanca Gates, Juan Gil, Chelsea Keller, Rachel McIntosh, Michael Scott, Haley Smith and Haley Walker! The Altoona team has been invited to present a session on mock trial at next October's PCSS Annual Conference in Johnstown. Learn more about mock trial at http://www.pabar.org/public/yld/meetings/yldstatewidemock.asp

A series of spring mini-sessions at Arcadia, Millersville and Pitt-Johnstown are now history and it is time to look to the future and start planning for next fall's conference season. ***C3 and the Civic Mission of Schools*** is the theme for the 61st annual Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies Statewide Conference this October 16-18 at the Frank J. Pasquerilla Conference Center in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. It is also the theme for November's National Council for the Social Studies Conference in Boston, Massachusetts.

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards guides educators on the concepts, skills and disciplinary tools necessary to prepare students for college, career, and civic life. In doing so, the C3 Framework offers guidance and support for rigorous student learning. That guidance and support takes form in an inquiry arc—a set of interlocking and mutually reinforcing ideas that feature the four Dimensions of informed inquiry in social studies: (1) developing questions and planning inquiries; (2) applying disciplinary concepts and tools; (3) evaluating sources and using evidence; and (4) communicating conclusions and taking informed action. The Civic Mission of Schools, to educate our next generation in the values of our representative democracy, is informed by C3. C3 promotes the six proven practices that constitute well-rounded civic learning as described in *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*:

- Classroom instruction in civics, government, history, economics, and geography
- Discussion of current events and controversial issues
- Service learning linked to the curriculum and classroom
- Extracurricular activities in schools and communities
- Student participation in school governance
- Simulations of democratic processes

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PCSS Mission

PCSS promotes quality Social Studies education from kindergarten to higher learning by:

1. Advocating the Social Studies at all levels of education in Pennsylvania.
2. Promoting the analysis, dissemination and evaluation of Social Studies materials.
3. Examining and recommending certification requirements for teachers.
4. Assisting educators in organizing local Social Studies councils for professional development.
5. Cooperating with schools, districts, intermediate units and other interested parties on Social Studies projects.

Many Teachers Will Forfeit Pension Wealth, Analysis Concludes

A new paper estimates that the structure of defined-benefit pension systems could cost today's young, mobile teachers to forfeit significant retirement wealth. (Teacher Beat)

Researcher calls for teaching the history of science

Mixing the history of science with facts and equations can engage students in lessons, writes Andrew Holding, a medical researcher. In this blog post, Holding writes that the stories and characters in science can be as fascinating as the science itself, making it more interesting to students. "Neglecting the rich history of science when teaching it is a missed opportunity to connect the subject to the world around us," he writes. The Guardian (London)/Teacher Network blog (3/25)

Pa. high-school student teaches peers about wars

Areon Metz, a junior at Shaler Area High School in Pennsylvania, has for three years helped teach military history to peers in social studies teacher Jim McDermott's American history class. Metz, whose father and grandfather served in the military, began his interest in elementary school. and accumulated a vast knowledge by studying biographies and historical documents and collecting memorabilia. Metz aspires to join the military or become a history teacher -- or both. Pittsburgh Tribune-Review/Pine Creek Journal (3/19)

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The Uncommon Common Core??

Retired Georgia Veterans To Rally In Support Of Common Core.

The AP (3/5) reports that a group of retired service members with Mission Readiness are planning a rally at the Georgia state Capitol on Tuesday in support of the Common Core, saying that the standards will "ensure that students are better prepared for college, careers or the military." . . .

Arizona Senate Approves Bill "Banning" Common Core.

The Arizona Daily Star (3/5) reports that the Arizona state Senate has approved legislation "to scrap the Common Core standards," . . .

New York Commissioner Criticizes Common Core Bill.

The Lower Hudson Valley (NY) Journal News (3/4) reports that New York Commissioner John King says that a bill in the state Assembly to "make changes to New York's Common Core implementation...would violate state and federal law."

Common Core Divides State-Level Republicans.

The National Journal (3/5, Subscription Publication) reports on the fight within the GOP over the Common Core Standards, noting that "lifelong Republican" Alabama Board of Education member Mary Scott Hunter is being aggressively targeted by the tea party because of her support for the Common Core Standards. . . .

Tennessee Business Leader Hails Common Core.

In an op-ed in the Tennessean (3/4), Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce International Business Council Chairman Rick Olszewski writes that Tennessee's implementation of the Common Core Standards "helps to bolster Tennessee's reputation as a great place to live and do business."

More States Field-Testing Common Core Assessments.

Education Week (3/5, McNeil) reports that the number of states field-testing Common Core assessments "continues to grow," noting that the trend coincides with ED giving "states more assessment flexibility under the No Child Left Behind Act."

Indiana Common Core Replacement Draws Negative Reaction.

Education Week (3/5, Ujifusa) reports on the "barrage of skeptical and disappointed reactions" that met the release of Indiana's replacement standards for the Common Core, noting that witnesses at a legislative hearing last week about the standards "were dismayed that the draft Indiana academic standards seemed very similar to, or no different from, the common core."

Wisconsin Senate Education Committee To Debate Anti-Common Core Bill.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (3/5) reports that the Wisconsin state Senate Education Committee is scheduled to hold a hearing Thursday on a bill to "create a state academic standards board with the power to derail the implementation of" the Common Core Standards,

Scalia Worries Over Civics Education, Religion In Chicago Speech.

The Chicago Tribune (2/16, Perez) reports that Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia lamented US civics education and an absence of religious ideals in education at a speech Friday in Chicago. He said that "it is contrary to our founding principles to insist that government be hostile to religion. Or even to insist, as my court, alas, has done, that government cannot favor religion over nonreligion." Scalia also worried over a "decline of the republican spirit" and that the US could "become just another, I don't know, another undemocratic, politician-run state. Which our framers would never have supported. That's why I think education in democracy, education in republicanism, is so important."

How to teach students to assess the credibility of digital news

Teaching students to think critically about information and sources found on the Internet is becoming an increasingly important 21st-century skill, writes Peter Adams, senior vice president of educational programs for The News Literacy Project. In this blog post, Adams offers three exercises educators can use to help students develop this skill, such as having them analyze the news and checking facts. "News literacy education has the potential to engage students and ignite their critical thinking," he writes. Edutopia.org/Peter Adams's blog (1/31

Oklahoma House Passes "Merry Christmas" Bill.

The Huffington Post (3/5, Ashtari) reports that the Oklahoma state House passed, 73-10, HB 2317, or the "Merry Christmas" bill, which allows "public school students, teachers and district staff to greet each other with 'traditional phrases' such as 'Merry Christmas' and 'Happy Hanukkah.'" It would also allow "schools to display religious scenes or symbols, such as a nativity scene or menorah, providing they include 'more than one religion or one religion and at least one secular scene or symbol.'"

How to use video to flip professional development

Jennifer Carey, director of academic technology at a Florida school, was inspired this year to adapt the flipped instructional model to tech-related professional development for educators. In this blog post, she writes that videos are the most efficient tool for flipping PD and shares some of the tools she uses to create videos. She writes that she posts instructional videos that teachers can view before or after PD sessions. Powerful Learning Practice/Voices blog (3/3)

Teaching students about stocks

Started by Dr. Charles Andrew St. John Fritz, Tutor/Founder at Master Scholar
This will be of interest students.

App offers commission-free access to the stock market smartbrief.com
A new app called RobinHood is looking to make investing more affordable by offering a commission-free method for buying and selling stocks. The company, which has brought in more than $3 million in investment from sources such as Google Ventures and...

Content, Context, and Global Education: New World History Resources for High School Teachers http://cperrier.e-dublogs.org/

Started by Craig Perrier

Teachers may be even better able to help students develop a global perspective, if the many aspects of world history and the "US in the... **more »**

By LuAnne Feik

15 Months in Virtual Charter Hell: A Teacher's Tale (Living in Dialogue Blog)

K12 Inc., the virtual-education company, was founded in 1999 by the one-time "junk bond king" Michael Milken and the hedge fund banker Ronald Packard. The company's original board chairman was William J. Bennett, who had been the U.S. Secretary of Education under President Ronald Reagan. (Bennett resigned from his position with K12 Inc. in 2005 after sparking controversy by stating that the U.S. crime rate would go down if more African-American babies were aborted.)

As a private company founded by financiers, K12 Inc. is highly profit-driven. Though its stock price has apparently **taken a hit recently**, there is little doubt that K12 Inc. has been quite successful in bringing in revenue--even as regular public schools have faced dire financial straits. According to the Center for Media and Democracy's PR Watch, **Packard, who is the current CEO, earned $19 million** in compensation from 2009-2013. **In 2013 alone, as Chicago closed 50 of its public schools and Philadelphia closed 23** more, K12 Inc. **brought in a whopping $730.8 million in taxpayer dollars** from its managed public schools, and its top executives saw their **compensation skyrocket by 96 percent.** . . .

Pennsylvania State Senate To Vote On Charter Law Overhaul.

The Beaver County (PA) Times (1/7) reports that the Pennsylvania state Senate is scheduled to vote in the coming months on "the latest proposal to overhaul Pennsylvania's 16-year-old charter school law." The article describes rising tensions between the state's charters and its traditional public schools over decreased state education funding and increasing charter demands on what is left. Moreover, "high-profile corruption scandals" have increased the push for reforms.

Improve Democracy, Not Tests

(Bridging Differences)

It's not and never will be a perfect world. You've hit upon one example. Is profiteering off school materials not legit? Should teachers get paid less than the market rate because they are teaching in public schools?

Dilemmas abound and exactly where to draw the line will always be tricky. But even if we're not sure we know very well that it's a subject of universal concern. The obligation to pay close attention to conflicts of interest has similar concerns at stake. Even if it's devilishly hard to know when self-interest must give way to public interest it is no reason for ignoring the dilemma.

I was always amused at the quality of masking tape that the board sent to our school. The only nonstick masking tape I ever used. I decided it came from the "seconds" supply. It's easier to get away with shoddy goods when the users are two or more steps removed from the producer. . . .

WWW.SOCIALSTUDIESDIFFERENTIATEDINSTRUCTION.-COM

Kasha Mastrodomenico

I just finished my second article on my blog in a series about how to use the common core standards in the middle school social studies classroom. I'm going through each one of the RH.6-8 standards. Here are links to the two articles:

1. http://socialstudiesdifferentiatedinstruction.com/how-can-teachers-teach-students-to-cite-specific-textual-evidence/

2. http://socialstudiesdifferentiatedinstruction.com/can-the-common-core-standards-help-teachers-enrich-their-lesson-plans/

Former federal official encourages Pa. students' civic involvement

Jim Nussle, the former director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, recently visited Cumberland Valley High School in Pennsylvania to chat with students about government. Nussle, who served as the budget director in former President George W. Bush's cabinet and in Congress from 1991 to 2007, also encouraged students to get involved in an upcoming election campaign with a local branch of a political party. District Social Studies Supervisor Sabrina Lindsay said the visit helped students see possibilities for their own futures. The Sentinel (Carlisle, Pa.)

The five paragraph essay is a standard among English and Social Studies departments across the...

Maria Mahaffey

CEO at Hawk & Dove Strategies

For the complete article, click on the link below. http://www.hawkanddovestrategies.com/five-paragraph-essay-fantastic-or-formulaic/ Comments on the blog site are welcome and encouraged.

http://www.hawkanddovestrategies.com/five-paragraph-essay-fantastic-or-formulaic/

Introduction & Thesis

1st Argument & Evidence

2nd Argument & Evidence 3rd Argument & Evidence

Review Thesis

Generalize

The New 'It' Language

(Global Learning)

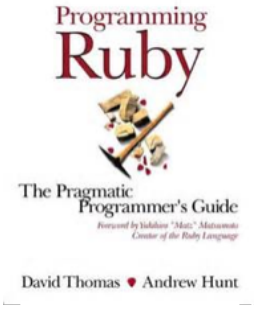
The global innovation age demands that we know languages other than English. Students today are learning Spanish, French, Chinese, HTML, Ruby, and many other languages.

Wait. What? Ruby?

Steve Jobs once said, "I think everybody in this country should learn ... a computer language, because it teaches you *how* to think."

Coding isn't a replacement for math or language arts or language learning. Coding is something that can augment those skills in very interesting ways.

Case in point: play Cargo-Bot. It's a free game anyone can download. . .



When you're through changing, you're through." -- Bruce Fairchild Barton, American advertising executive and writer

Social Studies for the Next Generation: Purposes, Practices, and Implications of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

! New from NCSS Publications, this book breaks new ground with its inquiry based framework for enhancing social studies state standards and linking social s education to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and L in History/Social Studies. The book includes the entire C3 document, along with b chapters not available in the pdf version that discuss the origins and purposes of t Framework, the central concept of the Inquiry Arc, the connections between C3 a common core standards, the links between C3 and the national social studies sta and appropriate assessments for C3. Learn more.!

The links between the C3 Framework and the NCSS National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

! Like the NCSS national standards, which outline content and concepts for ers and curriculum developers, the C3 Framework delineates pedagogical approa and guides states in upgrading their social studies standards. In the November/De 2013 Social Education, Michelle Herczog explains how these two essential docum complement each other. Read the article!

!

Chicago Teacher Explains the Infamous Viral PD Video

(Living in Dialogue)

By Anthony Cody on March 11, 2014 11:34 PM!

! About two weeks ago I saw a video of a Chicago "professional developme session posted on Facebook. Shortly thereafter, it appeared here in Valerie Strauss' Answer Sheet blog, and has been viewed more than 126,000 times since then. To for the Þrst time, I share the Þrsthand account of the teacher who recorded this s Due to the tense environment in Chicago, she has asked to remain anonymous, b connected to me. .!

Unlearning Learned Helplessness

(Coach G's Teaching Tips)

By David Ginsburg on March 8, 2014 3:29 PM!

! "I need help," several students said in their geometry class at Esperanza Acad emy in Philadelphia.!

! "I don't think so," teacher John Roman replied.!

Roman had just given students a handout with several unmarked triangles on it, a asked them to determine which of the triangles were congruent. He also gave the paper (tracing paper), Ė

!

Pa. elementary students blend history, art for China project

! Fort Cherry Elementary Center students in Pennsylvania guided their peers through ancient China with their class project the "China Experience." The project blends history, art and technology as the students created a cardboard Great Wa na, paper dragons and sculpted terra-cotta warriors, and some of the students us to create a trivia game. "It's a lot of 21st-century learning. It was a lot of organizati higher-level thinking, working as a team and a lot of problem solving," teacher Ke Welsh said. Observer-Reporter (Washington, Pa.) (2/17)

How to help students learn about the undocumented past

Edutopia.org/Linda S. Levstik's blog (2/13)

When I was an elementary and middle level history teacher, my students investigated worldwide human patterns and variety. They examined how shadows of the past stretch across the present, influencing ideas about what it means to be human and to live humanely in a community. In the process, I noticed that early adolescents started with some surprising misconceptions about human intelligence, innovation and agency, especially in the most distant reaches of the human past. These misconceptions present challenges for preservice teachers in my middle level methods course, especially when they teach the **deep past** -- the period for which we lack written documentation.

The first challenge in teaching any aspect of the deep past is the most obvious. Because objects, rather than traditional written documentation, provide the primary evidence of ancient people's ingenuity and agency, teachers need to help students "read" objects. A second challenge relates to early adolescents' tendency to assume a lack of intelligence on the part of distant ancestors . . . (More)

Delayed School Start Times May Benefit Teens.

In a front page article, the New York Times (3/14, Hoffman) reports that across the US, numerous school districts have moved high-school starting times to later in the day to accommodate the fact that adolescents "are developmentally driven to be late to bed, late to rise."

• Obama Backs Standards But Won't Say "Common Core."

The Huffington Post (3/14, Klein) reports that though President Obama often touts "the new education standards adopted by a majority of states during his presidency," he seems to have never used the term "Common Core" in an education policy speech. Instead, he addresses the standards "in vague terms, dancing around the label that the public has come to know." The article chronicles the politicization of the term and links to a "a video list of speeches in which Obama has referenced the Common Core but opted not to call them by their name."

The Business of Lesson Plans

(Education Futures)

Creating and writing lesson plans are activities common to basic teacher education courses. Before entering a classroom, young educators are taught how to meticulously plan their time for the benefit of their students.

Through online collaboration though, many teachers now take a different approach to lesson planning than even a decade ago, and it has stirred up some controversy from both sides of the aisle.

You've got to do your own growing, no matter how tall your grandfather was. -Irish Proverb

Hello from the PA Alliance for Geographic Education.

We are in the process of migrating all of our PA Alliance members from our old list serve to our new email program associated with our new website (http://pageoalliance.org) As always, membership in the PA Alliance is **free**, but it does require you to "Become a Member" on our website. The process takes less than 5 minutes. If you could click on the following link, it will take you right to the page to register your email and stay in contact with the PA Alliance.

http://pageoalliance.org/members/how-to-become-a-member/

If, for some reason, this is not convenient or does not work for you, we are very happy to register you. If you simply reply to this email, we will create your PA Alliance membership for you and send you an email confirmation with the details.

If we don't hear from you either through a website registration or as a reply to this email by April 30th, 2014, we will assume that you are no longer interested in receiving information about professional development, teacher opportunities, classroom resources, etc… and we will go ahead and drop you from our membership list.

Thanks for your continued interest in the PA Alliance for Geographic Education. We appreciate you taking the time to migrate your membership so we don't lose contact with you!

Warm regards,

Janet Stuhrenberg Smith, Ph.D. • Professor • Coordinator for PA Alliance for Geographic Education • Department of Geography-Earth Science
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How to use newspaper editorials to teach persuasive writing

02/9/2014 | **New York Times (tiered subscription model), The**

Teaching students to write short, newspaper editorials can help them craft evidence-based persuasive essays and learn how such writing works in a real-world scenario, Michael Gonchar writes in this article. Noting that editorials often are collaborative efforts, Gonchar suggests students work in pairs or groups, such as posting ideas to class wikis or blogs, among other ideas.

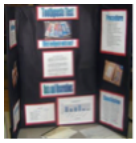
The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place." -- George Bernard Shaw, Irish writer

How tangible history lessons can connect past to present

Re-creating experiential lessons in the classroom to guide students' understanding of the connections between the past and present can be challenging, writes middle-school social studies teacher Aaron Brock. In this blog post, Brock explains how he adapted a lesson on raw cotton to help his students understand the material's significance in the U.S. Civil War. The cotton, he writes, also helped them understand the cotton gin, plantation life and other elements of the period. MiddleWeb/The Future of History blog (3/15)

Fewer books checked out of Pa. district's libraries following budget cuts

Severe budget cuts has left the Allentown, Pa., school district with one librarian serving 15 elementary schools and two serving four middle schools. The librarians often are teaching library-skills classes, closing the library to students. At one middle school, circulation dropped 77% during the first four months of operations without a librarian, from the same months of the previous year. The Morning Call (Allentown, Pa.) (3/15)



Is project-based learning compatible with standardized testing?

Some teachers are putting project-based learning aside as pressure builds to increase students' test scores, asserts English teacher Paul Barnwell. In this blog post, he writes about his concerns that testing will get in the way of efforts at deep inquiry afforded by projects. "I'm worried that until high-stakes testing is marginalized to become a smaller part of student and school accountability, kids will be further left behind with missed opportunities to develop creative, collaborative, and problem-solving skills through PBL," he writes. Center for Teaching Quality/Bluegrass Dispatches blog (3/15)

New Extremists In The Education Debate

By Jeff Bryant

"The new extremists in the education debate … represent a mindset unwilling to fight things out on a democratic paying field, no matter how unlevel. Instead, they aim to eliminate the playing field altogether … What extremists in the education debate are calling for now is to remove all trust and respect from ordinary people and deposit that faith into a competitive market system operated by people who more often than not don't even live in the same community the children and parents do.

Students Are Not Overburdened by Homework, Study Says

There's little evidence to support parents' complaints that schools are dumping an unreasonable amount of homework on students, a new report from the Brookings Institution concludes. (Time and Learning)

Is teacher neutrality on "controversial" topics hazardous?

"Among the challenges of teaching controversial topics -- issues that stir personal and powerful discussion -- are negotiating the teacher's relationship to the topic, and how much to disclose about your relationship to the issue," writes managing editor at ASCD Lara Varlas. In a recent Inservice post, Varlas discusses the balancing act educators have to perform when addressing controversial issues in the classroom. Read on.

I never think of the future. It comes soon enough." -- Albert Einstein,

FROM THE PRESIDENT - Continued from page 2

The PCSS and NCSS Conferences will allow educators to become both teacher and practitioner for taking informed action. Conference sessions will provide examples of:

- Developing students' ability to apply social studies knowledge, concepts, and skills to issues in real world settings
- Enhancing YOUR ability to advocate for social studies at the national, state, and local level

Sessions will showcase techniques to:

- Teach social studies as a content-rich discipline that strengthens reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills
- Teach social studies disciplinary literacy (e.g., thinking/reading like a historian, geographer, economist, engaged citizen)

See how social studies content and concepts can intentionally strengthen the 4Cs of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills:

- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Collaborating
- Communicating

All of this encourages classroom instruction in civics, government, history, economics, and geography:

- Discussion of current events and controversial issues
- Service learning linked to the curriculum and classroom
- Extracurricular activities in schools and communities
- Student participation in school governance
- Simulations of democratic processes

The Altoona students' mock trial session will underscore the theme of the fall conference. There are a lot of C3 lessons that are taught through participating in mock trial. Students learn about fundamental constitutional rights as the right to a jury trial and the right against self-incrimination. They learn about the court system and the trial process. Students learn basic rules of evidence and how to think on their feet. They learn to work together, to compete hard and yet also to behave in a civil manner to their opponents.

Bill Higgins, the District Attorney for Bedford County, recently talked about his mock trial experience. "It was through mock trial that I was given my first public speaking experience. It was through mock trial that I learned how to conduct a thorough cross examination. It was through Mock Trial that I first learned proper courtroom decorum. It was through mock trial that I learned the benefits of preparation and hard work. It was through mock trial that I learned the joy of victory and the agony of defeat. And it was through mock trial that I began to learn the leadership skills that have shaped my career. Mock trial also allowed me to network with professionals for the first time. In just the few years I spent on the Cardinal Dougherty High School (Philadelphia) Mock Trial team, I met countless people who have had a great influence on my career."

I have known District Attorney Higgins since he was a young mock trial student. He is kind enough to call me one of his mentors as he shares a story that both of us can laugh about today: " Trevaskis was a lawyer working for Temple-LEAP in Philadelphia when I first met him and he recruited me my senior year to be on a citywide all-star mock trial team that did a special presentation for the Jewish Law Society, Tau Epsilon Rho. Trevaskis then booked us for a Saturday presentation at the statewide Students Against Drunk Driving Conference in Boalsburg,

Continued on Page 16

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a four hour drive from Philadelphia requiring us to leave at 7 a.m. I was the only "all-star" to show up that early in the morning on a weekend but we scrambled together a judge and a witness from neighborhood kids and I pulled in a then freshman member of the CDHS team, Brendan Boyle, and off we went to Boalsburg where I won my first conviction—albeit mock—in a drunk driving case. Maybe it helps that I was dating the Judge! I did not end up marrying the judge, but my beautiful wife Amy and my three lovely children know how much mock trial means to me and they travel with me to participate in mock trial events. Trevaskis continues to be a positive influence on my career and life and Boyle remains a friend across party lines."

Boyle, like many mock trial students, has gone on to a very successful career, serving the 170thlegislative district as State Representative since 2008. He is now running for Congress to represent Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District. There is a long history of mock trial participants going on to careers in law, as Higgins has, or other forms of service, as Representative Boyle has done. Tobey Oxholm, a longtime Philadelphia champion of justice now working at Rowan University, said it best when Drexel decided to become the leadership sponsor for the 2010 National High School Mock Trial Competition that was held in Philadelphia: "The skills that colleges, graduate schools and employers are hoping to find in their students and their employees are exactly the skills that the mock trial competition develops."

Some of the strongest mock trial students have gone on to careers in other fields. One is a movie and theatre star, another is an innovator in computer technology. Every year, nearly three thousand students participate in the Pennsylvania high school mock trials. Countless thousands additional children do mock trials in their classrooms, from the wonderful elementary historical mock trials conducted by Mt. Lebanon's Matt Mikesell to the fairy tale mock trials First Judicial District Judge Annette Rizzo conducts each Law Day for Philadelphia area children.

A growing trend across the state has students conducting "real" trials as Youth Courts in schools and in the community. Youth Courts have been featured by PCSS in recent years and the fall conference will find a session by PCSS and University of Pittsburgh Emeritus Kay Atman and her team that is working to promote youth courts across western Pennsylvania.

Youth courts are student run alternatives to juvenile justice and school disciplinary systems.

Students are trained by lawyers, law students, law and justice professionals and teachers to perform all court functions (judge, bailiff, jurors, etc.). Positive peer pressure helps offenders reflect on their behavior, recognize that actions have consequences, and accept responsibility.

Neuroscience informs us that the stress and trauma disadvantaged youth experience impairs their decision making and impulse control. Absent nurturing relationships with stable adults, some youth fail to acquire the executive function skills to cope with their environment. Teachers confirm such youth have problems following instructions and socializing. Without effective intervention they fall behind, becoming a danger to themselves and their community.

Youth court participation in under-resourced schools improves life outcomes for these youth. Youth court participation in well-resourced schools helps educate the next generation of social justice leaders.

Youth court participants report its transformative impact as they learn coping skills they otherwise fail to acquire, and will use the rest of their lives. Using restorative justice as a participatory tool, youth court students contribute to the well-being of their school and community. The most empowering courts limit the role of adults to trainer and mentor, trusting youth, and empowering them to control the entire process. Youth courts can operate after-school or be integrated within Social Studies classes. They can also operate as a pre-arrest juvenile justice diversion. 65% of the nation's 1,100 youth courts process juvenile justice offenses. 35% are school-based. The Philadelphia area has nearly a dozen school-based and no juvenile justice-based youth courts. Quality youth courts achieve recidivism rates lower than traditional justice programs. Quality youth courts achieve the following benefits:

Youth Court benefits for respondents

1) Offenders get to tell their story to their peers and view youth courts as more fair.
2) Offenders experience restorative justice, instead of being suspended they stay in school.

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3) Offenders respect peer justice more than adult discipline.
4) Offenders have lower recidivism rates (Urban Institute, 2002; Hamilton Fish, 2008).
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Youth Court benefits for student participants (many are former offenders)

1) Participants acquire legal knowledge and a positive attitude towards the legal system.
2) Participants contribute to their community through experiential and service learning.
3) Students learn academic skills: concentration, public speaking and communication skills.
4) Students acquire socialization skills by collaborating to form a restorative disposition.
5) Students become engaged and empowered and learn to become good citizens.
6) Youth court is a drop-out prevention program; members graduate from high school.

Youth Court benefits for schools and neighborhoods

1) School safety and climate can be improved if used with other restorative practices.
2) Disciplinary systems gain "youth as resources". as well as adult volunteers.
3) Costs of school discipline can be reduced.
4) A culture of justice is created.
5) Curriculum is enhanced by hands-on application of civic education.
6) Communication between juvenile and educational systems can be improved.

For more youth court backgrounder, please check out http://www.pabar.org/public/committees/childavo/basedyouthcourt.asp and look at http://stoneleighfoundation.org/fellows/volz for a summary of Gregg Volz's work in the field. The testimony that lead to the City Council of Philadelphia Resolution supporting youth courts is found at http://www.pabar.org/public/committees/childavo/CompilationOfYouthCourtTestimony.pdf The exhaustive ABA Youth court materials can be found at http://www.pabar.org/public/probono/ABA_YouthCourtGuide.pdf

The video found at http://stoneleighfoundation.org/content/how-run-youth-court gives a nice picture of youth courts but nothing can beat seeing one in person and I encourage you all to do so as we move forward on this effort to help young people.

C3 and we will see you in Johnstown!

David Trevaskis President

Professor Comments On Debate Over Common Core.

In an op-ed for the New York Times (3/23, Subscription Publication), Jennifer Finney Boylan, an author and professor at Colby College, writes about the "debate over the adoption of the Common Core State Standards in education" and how she believes that the argument is more about what we want from want from our children's education and how "getting an education" is defined. Boylan writes that she believes those who oppose common core standards "fear…loneliness" due to the "sadness that comes when we realize that our children have thoughts that we did not give them; needs and desires we do not understand; wisdom and insight that might surpass our own." Therefore, Boylan suggests that "maybe what we need is a common core for families," which will help them understand that "having a language in common doesn't mean we have to agree with one another."

Let's Stop the Glorification of Busy

Guy Kawasaki in **linkedin.com**

"The architecture of how we live our lives is badly in need of renovation and repair. What we really value is out of sync with...