

# The POINT!



E-Letter of the Western Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies  
Vol. 11 No. 12  
December 2018

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## Farewell

WPCSS was formed shortly after the founding of the National Council for the Social Studies in 1920 was an early advocate for the teaching of history and social studies. Over the years, membership dipped when veteran teachers retired but always recovered as new faces took their place. The council became a 501c Non-Profit in the late 20th century and membership soared. As the century turned, Albert Goldsmith, a long time member passed away and left a sum of money for use of the council in the furtherance of its mission. About the same time, the testing craze began that de-emphasized the place of social studies in the classroom. In addition, a large number of members became retirees and turned to other interests. Membership has slumped over the last few years and it is no longer feasible to operate a 501c organization. WPCSS can continue to operate as a voluntary organization but it can no longer be recognized by the IRS. Current officers will retire and all funds will be given to the Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies with the stipulation that the Albert Goldsmith Memorial Awards each year be continued to be presented for the outstanding exhibits that focus on LOCAL or FAMILY history in junior and senior competition in the Western Pennsylvania History Fair at the Heinz History Center. This will be effective as of December 31, 2018

As one of the oldest social studies councils in the country, it is difficult to close the books and disappear. As of December 31, 2018, Western Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies will cease being a 501c non profit organization. An informal group can still exist and to serve this group who support the teaching and learning of social studies, the POINT will continue to be published on its regular schedule. If there is a movement to re-establish a formal organization, it will depend upon the initiative of those who desire to organize. It would no longer be a 501c non-profit organization. This means that donations to the organization would no longer be tax deductible for those who donate. Originally, WPCSS sought this classification from the IRS to be eligible for a mailing permit. With advent of the internet, this is no longer needed.

You will note there is no membership page included in this issue. If anyone wishes to receive the POINT and is not on the current list, they may apply to Leo West at [wlrw@yahoo.com](mailto:wlrw@yahoo.com). The same address can be used for contribution of articles or announcements to the POINT. Deadline for all articles is the 25th of the month.



**IN PROMOTING OUR MISSION TO FOCUS ON LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORY, WPCSS ANNUALLY PRESENTS TWO \$100 SAVINGS BONDS FOR THE BEST LOCAL OR FAMILY HISTORY EXHIBIT IN BOTH JUNIOR AND SENIOR ENTRIES OF THE LOCAL NATIONAL HISTORY DAY COMPETITION AT THE HEINZ HISTORY CENTER**

## Soldiers & Sailors Hall!

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

The Education Dept. 412.621.4253 Tim Neff x 219  
<http://www.soldiersandsailorshall.org/education.html>



## SEWICKLEY VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Sewickley Valley is beautiful in situation and rich in history. Because the Valley is in a major corridor that led westward, the area was witness to momentous events in the last half of the 18th century: the French and Indian War, Pontiac's Rebellion and the American Revolution. :

200 Broad Street Sewickely, PA 15143 412-741-5315 <http://www.sewickleyhistory.org/>



## MCKEESPORT HERITAGE CENTER

We operate our museum and research facility to preserve and present the history of McKeesport and its surrounding communities for public education and enjoyment.

1832 Arboretum Drive McKeesport, PA 15132  
 412-678-1832 <http://www.mckeesportheritage.org/>



## ELIZABETH TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A visit to the Elizabeth Township Historical Society is certainly worthwhile. You will find museum rooms filled with numerous items from the bygone era of interest to all ages. The "Golda Abraham Memorial Library Room" houses historical books and records of the surrounding towns and counties to assist in family research.

5811 Smithfield Street 412.754.2030  
<http://www.betweenworivers.org/>



## Heinz History Center

[news@heinzhistorycenter.org](mailto:news@heinzhistorycenter.org)  
 (412) 454-6000

The History Center has a variety of programs in December that are relevant to social studies education. Dec. 6 hear the code breaker who deciphered the Nazi Enigma code of WWII; Dec. 7 the flag folding ceremony; Dec. 8-16, 11 a.m. to 2



*Take the job that you would take if you were independently wealthy.*  
*Warren Buffett, investor*



**Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell will host his first town hall for teachers**

**[PLEASE JOIN US FOR A LIVE VIEWING & TEACHER WORKSHOP](#)**

**Wednesday, February 6, 2019  
5–8 pm.**

**ALLEGHENY INTERMEDIARY UNIT  
475 E Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120**

*Free Teacher and Student Workshop:*

Educators and students will participate in hands-on activities, receive free Federal Reserve education resources, network over dinner, and ~~type to enter text~~ **type to enter text** Powell as he answers questions from audiences across the country.

*Who should attend:*

This event is open to high school teachers, collegiate instructors/faculty along with up to ten of their students. Social studies educators,

Econ instructors and school-based economic clubs are encouraged to attend.

**Registration is required by December 31.**

**To register or submit your question for Chairman Powell, [click here](#)**

*\*Please note there is limited seating. Registrations will be accepted on a first-come basis.*

*Continuing education credit hours certificates or ACT 48 credits will be provided.*

*Note: For those who cannot attend in person, the conversation will be webcast live from 7–8 pm EST*

*Patriotism is when love of your own people comes first; nationalism, when hate for people other than your own comes first.*

*-Charles de Gaulle, French president (22 Nov 1890-1970)*

*The Point*

Western Pennsylvania Council for the

Social Studies

Richard Williams

President

Leo R. West

Secretary / Treasurer

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WPCSS is a non-profit 501c organization

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Social Studies

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## Advisory Board

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**Interview With Justice Sotomayor: A Passion for Education and Civics**

With two new books for young people and her work with the iCivics organization, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor devotes time off the bench to topics close to her heart. [Read more.](#)

**Top justices press for more civics education**

Supreme Court Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Neil Gorsuch have partnered across the political aisle to advocate for more civics education in K-12 curricula. They say that the elimination of civics has helped to fuel the lack of civility in the political discourse. [The Daily Caller](#) (11/4)

**Survey shows lack of civics knowledge in US**

A survey by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation has found that only 13% of Americans knew that the US Constitution was ratified in 1788 and fewer than half knew the US Supreme Court has nine justices. A report earlier this year showed that only nine states and the District of Columbia require civics courses in high school.

[Education Week \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (10/3), [The Atlantic online](#)

**Civics and Government for Kids: Lessons, Activities and Guides**

Civics is the study of citizenship and how a system of government works. Studying civics in the United States includes learning about the different branches of the government and how they work together. Understanding civics prepares you to be a part of adult society, following laws and voting for people to represent you in government positions. As you learn about civics, you will also study United States history, which helps you understand how the country came to be what it is today. [Criminal defense attorney](#) Diana Aizman explains important elements of our history and related constitutional amendments.(10/5)

**Mo. law requires students to pass civics test**

A new Missouri law mandates that students attending public colleges and universities must pass a civics exam to graduate. The exam, to go into effect for freshmen entering fall 2019, will test students on their knowledge of the Bill of Rights, the US Constitution and other subjects related to the government. [KSMU-FM \(Springfield, Mo.\)](#) (9/5)

**Free apps teach civics with Library of Congress**

Teachers are being offered **free access** to two mobile apps -- **DBQuest** and **Case Maker** -- that provide resources for lessons about government and civics, thanks to a collaboration with and a grant from the Library of Congress. DBQuest offers primary-source documents and evidence-based learning resources, while Case Maker allows teachers to personalize inquiry-based learning challenges to suit students' needs. [School Library Journal](#) (9/17)



## Are Parents OK With Talking About Race in the Classroom? Teachers Are Unsure



How are teachers deciding whether or not to discuss race in the classroom? New research suggests that their perception of parents' opinions may play a role. The **study**, coming out of the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Urban Education, surveyed about 500 current and preservice teachers about discussing race and racial violence in the classroom. About 80 percent of the respondents were white, mirroring the national teaching population.

Of the teachers surveyed, 85 percent said race and racial discrimination were important topics to cover with their students. But only 30 percent said they felt their students' families would support a decision to take those topics up in the classroom.

## The Nation's First Charter School Strike Could Be Imminent



Teachers at a charter network in Chicago have voted to take the first step toward the country's first charter-school strike.

Earlier this week, 503 of the Chicago Teachers Union's 536 members at Acero's 15 charter schools voted to authorize a strike. (Most unionized members **turned out to vote**.) They are fighting for pay raises, smaller class sizes, increased special education staffing, and extended parental leave.

## After a Student Brought a Gun to School, This Teacher Filed to Run for Office



A 32-year-old U.S. government teacher in Montana wants the state, which lets local boards decide if teachers can be armed, to explicitly ban weapons on campus. [Read more.](#)

## Are Teachers Underpaid? Around the World, People Say Yes

Americans think that U.S. teachers are underpaid by an average of \$7,500 a year, according to a new global survey.

**The Global Teacher Status Index**, conducted by the Varkey Foundation, a global charity that supports teachers, surveyed more than 1,000 people from each of 35 countries. To examine differences in perceptions between teachers and the general public, the researchers included an oversample of 200 teachers in 27 of the countries.

## Report: Low teacher salaries cause pay gap

Teachers are paid about \$350 -- or 23% -- less per week than other college graduates, according to a report from the Economic Policy Institute, although the gap shrinks to 11% when health care and retirement benefits are considered. The gap is much larger than it was in 1994, when teachers' salaries were similar to the salaries of their peers. [Chalkbeat \(9/5\)](#)



## Teacher Pay: How Pennsylvania Ranks

Patch.com

How does teacher pay in **Pennsylvania** compare to salaries across the country? ... to the most recent data available from the National **Education** Association. ... Among those who won office was a high school **social studies** teacher in ...

## **Keep them Dumb!**

Over the past few years, there seems to have been a concerted effort to downplay the importance of schools and education. Criticism of public education led to the development of "Charter Schools" which are supported by local taxation but not subject to local control. In some cases there may be no control. It seems that there is a concerted effort to keep the bulk of the population ill informed.

While public education evolved well after the framing of the Constitution, it is a right just as much as the right to vote.



## **Climate Change Is Happening. You Should Teach It, Science Teachers Group Says**

The major group representing science educators is making this point crystal clear: The scientific consensus for climate change due to human activity is overwhelming, and the topic must be taught in K-12 classrooms.



## **In Her Shoes: Field Notes from National Geographic Explorers**

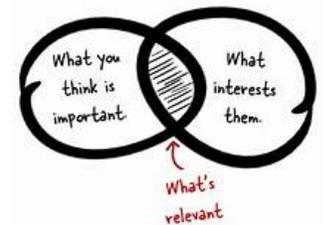
Hear from engaging women who are preserving history, sharing cultures from across the globe, and inspiring the next generation of change makers as a trio of National Geographic Explorers share their stories from the field in this NCSS Annual Conference Vital Issues Session. [Learn more and register.](#)



## **Report: Students benefit from choice, relevancy**

Teachers should strive to give students more choice and make lessons relevant to their lives, according to a report from the nonprofit Education Trust. The report offers strategies for integrating choice and relevancy in classrooms, but it also advises teachers not to offer "rewards," including stickers or candy, to motivate students because they "rarely influence deeper learning."

*T.H.E. Journal* (11/27)



## **Can role-playing games boost learning?**

Some educators are integrating "Dungeons & Dragons" into their lessons, saying the fantasy role-playing game can encourage students to read and do research as well as engage them in math. Kade Wells, a ninth-grade English teacher in Texas, launched after-school clubs focused on the game and integrated it into classroom management. [District Administration magazine online](#) (11/28)



## **Conservative Group Expands Push to Get Teachers to Leave Their Unions**

The Mackinac Center for Public Policy is partnering with think tanks and advocacy groups across the country in a campaign encouraging public employees to consider dropping their union memberships. [Read more.](#)

Look For The **Anti-Union** Union Label



## A Conversation with Steven Spielberg: Using Schindler's List in Classrooms

How can we apply the lessons of the film *Schindler's List* toward standing up to hatred in our own communities? How do you engage students in conversations around racism, antisemitism and other forms of hatred? Steven Spielberg personally shares how! Reserve your spot in this live webinar! ([Read More](#))



## Spotlight on New Tools for Effective Holocaust Education

Echoes & Reflections prepares educators to initiate important classroom discussions and respond to students toughest questions about the Holocaust. Our instructional resources inspire thoughtful conversations and critical thinking about the Holocaust as both a historical event and a part of the human story influencing today's social issues.



## Teenager's diary shows unfolding terror during WWII

A diary written in Poland during World War II describes the details of a Jewish girl's life, between ages 15 and 18, as the war unfolded. Renia Spiegel's 700-page diary -- with English translated excerpts published in a magazine -- offers a contrast to the writing of Anne Frank and recounts the war and her final days hiding in an attic. [Smithsonian online](#) (10/24),



## Taube Foundation pledges \$2M to Holocaust education at WWII Museum

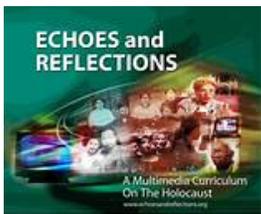
The National World War II Museum has received \$2 million from the Taube Foundation to expand its programming surrounding the Holocaust. "The gift from Taube Philanthropies makes it possible for the Museum to expand its teachings about the atrocities of the Holocaust and why we should all stand together against genocide," says WWII Museum President and CEO Stephen Watson. [The Associated Press](#) (10/21)



## Professional Learning and Classroom Resources

Echoes & Reflections provides educators with access to a library of comprehensive Holocaust content that is classroom-ready and prepared with today's students in mind. Teaching about the Holocaust can be difficult, so we encourage you to turn to our professional learning opportunities and comprehensive resources for support.

- [Our Online Class Begins November 5th](#)
- [New Webinar: The Life and Legacy of Anne Frank](#)
- [Video Toolbox for Veterans Day: Liberators](#)



## CORRECTION:

Names of the victims of the shooting at Tree of Life Synagogue were misspelled in the last issue of the Point. The letter was printed as received and we apologize for the error. Joyce Fienberg, Richard Gottfried, Rose Mallinger, Jerry Rabinowitz, Cecil Rosenthal, David Rosenthal, Bernice Simon, Sylvan Simon, Daniel Stein, Melvin Wax, and Irving Younger.

## [Are Companies Overselling Personalized Learning?](#)

As "personalized learning" has taken off, education and tech companies have applied the term broadly and imprecisely, contributing to confusion in the K-12 marketplace. [Read more.](#)

- [Read the Full Report: Personalized Learning: 4 Big Questions Shaping the Movement](#)



## [Personalized learning leads to gains in Va.](#)

A Virginia school district is in its fourth year of piloting a personalized learning program at three schools. Superintendent Doug Schuch says the approach, which has led to improved test scores in English and math, gives students more "choice and voice" in their learning.

[The News & Advance \(Lynchburg, Va.\)](#) (11/24)

## [Digital tools help district personalize learning](#)

A rural Tennessee school district has adopted several education-technology tools to implement a personalized approach to learning, writes Lance Key, the district's instructional technology specialist. In this commentary, he shares some of the edtech resources they use, including the learning management system Canvas.

[eSchool News](#) (11/26)



## [Historians weigh in on what should be taught in class](#)

The Washington Post (tiered subscription model) (11/22)

What are the most important things young people should be learning in school today?

As we are living in some rather extraordinary times, I thought it would be interesting to hear from historians on what teachers should be focusing on right now. Here's some of the responses, and I will be adding to the list in the coming days.

## [Ill. students map cemetery graves using technology](#)

A class of high-school geography students in Illinois studied historical documents before mapping their 13th cemetery within their school district. The students, who have mapped more than 15,000 graves and won praise from the governor for their efforts, are using GPS technology and will create an interactive, digital map of the cemetery. [Pontiac Daily Leader \(Ill.\)](#) (11/24)



## [After a Student Suicide: How Schools Should Respond \(Video\)](#)

When there's a student death by suicide, many schools aren't sure how to respond. Mental health experts say taking the right steps is critical, and can help prevent additional suicides. [Read more.](#)

## [Education, Unsettled: The Struggle to Keep Migrant Students in School](#)

Alex Granados, *Education Week's* first Gregory M. Chronister Journalism Fellow, follows along with educators doing the difficult work of linking the children of migrant farmworkers with needed educational services as they move from state to state. [Read more.](#)

