

The POINT!



E-Letter for Western Pennsylvania Social Studies Educators

Vol. 12 No. 12

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What's Going On?

A Guide to teaching about impeachment!

Not only do we study history in social studies we also live through it. . . .we started the year by trying to get an understanding of how the U.S. government works, talking about . . . things like the three branches of government, separation of powers, and checks and balances. It is a lot to take in and can seem removed and abstract. . . .until current events brings those checks and balances to the top of every newspaper, . . . of every news broadcast, and every other twitter post I took time at the beginning of each class . . . the past couple of days to talk about what is going on regarding the announcement by Speaker . . . Pelosi of opening an impeachment inquiry. . . .

We focused mainly on process, not so much on substance. Here are some highlights.

* Inquiry does not equal impeachment. The announcement amounted to more of a formal declaration of an investigation by the House of Representatives with the stated purpose of determining whether charges should be brought against President Trump.

* The Constitution defines what is impeachable: "The President, Vice President and all civil Officers (which has been interpreted to include Federal Judges) of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors."

* Impeachment is a two step process. Step 1 takes place in the House of Representatives. . . . the stage that would end in charges being brought and voted on by members of the House. It takes a simple majority to impeach at this stage. There are 435 Representatives, meaning that it would take 218 to pass "Articles of Impeachment". There are currently 235 Democrats, 199 Republicans and 1 Independent in the House.

* Step 2 takes place in the Senate. Think of this as the trial, with all 100 Senators being the Jury. If it is the President who has been impeached by the House, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court presides over the trial. Their role is mainly to run the trial. They do not have a vote. It takes 2/3 of the Senate to convict. That would be 67 Senators. There are currently 53 Republicans, 45 Democrats and 2 Independents (who caucus with the Democrats).

* According to the Constitution, if someone is convicted in the Senate the remedy "shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor."

* There have been two U.S. Presidents who have been impeached by the House of Representatives in U.S. history: Andrew Johnson in the years following the Civil War, and Bill Clinton in 1998. Both were found not guilty by the Senate and thus allowed to remain in office.

* The only other time an impeachment inquiry has started against a President was of Richard Nixon. He resigned before the process could be brought to a vote in the House of Representatives.

* In US history, just 19 federal officials — one senator, one Cabinet secretary, two presidents, and 15 judges — were impeached. Eight have been convicted and removed from office, all of them federal judges, the latest of which happened in 2010.

I hope you have found this helpful and that it will unlock curiosity inspired conversations at home.

Yours in History,

Thanks to Jason Pusey. Minn. teacher, who decided to involve families in his study of current events.

Soldiers & Sailors Hall!

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

S&S is pleased to announce that we have once again received funding to support our **Bus Scholarship Program**.

Don't forget contact S&S about VIP Tours and Footlocker program.

For more information visit our web site:

<https://soldiersandsailorshall.org>

Classrooms Without Borders (CWB)

Upcoming Programs & Seminar Meetings

REGISTER NOW!

Rodef Shalom • 4905 5th • Pittsburgh, PA 15213
2020 Poland Seminar

Sunday, December 8, 2019 • 1-2pm • [RSVP](#) » [More Info](#) »

2020 Discovering Italy Seminar

Sunday, December 8, 2019 • 2:30- 3:30 • [RSVP](#) » [More Info](#) »

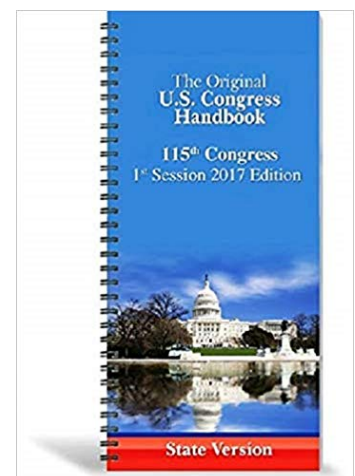
2020 Israel Educational Leadership

Sunday, December 15, 2019 • 12:30- 1:30 pm • [RSVP](#) » [More Info](#) »

Classrooms Without Borders (CWB) is a non-profit educational organization founded in 2011 by Dr. Zipora Gur as an independently funded program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh. CWB is a premier provider of experiential, professional development and continuing education for educators, students and learners in Israel and Holocaust education throughout Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio. CWB offers unique travel experiences enriched with rigorous content, scholarly readings, internationally renowned speakers, exhibits, arts and direct applications to classroom instruction.

The Original U.S. Congress Handbook: 116th Congress, 1st ...

...Detailed Member profiles including biographies and committee assignments. Full-color photos of members of Congress, Supreme Court Justices, and executive branch officials. Color-coded party affiliation key each profile prominently displays party affiliation. Complete contact information chiefs of staff, legislative directors, schedulers, and press secretaries. Pronunciation guide name pronunciations for each profile help you make a great impression every time. Executive branch, Cabinet and Supreme Court listings including biographies.



The Point

For

Western Pennsylvania
Social Studies Educators

EDITORS

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The Point is the
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WPCSS was a non-profit 501c
organization dedicated to promoting
the teaching and learning of social
studies in Western Pennsylvania

Leo West

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Minn. 3rd-graders lead cities for civics lessons

Third-grade students from a Minnesota elementary school helped develop fictional communities and held a meeting at city hall, complete with students playing roles as civic leaders and advocates for or opposed to a proposed shopping mall that threatened an orchard. Nisswa City Administrator Jenny Max says the exercise helps students learn how government works within the community.

[Brainerd Dispatch \(Minn.\) \(10/26\)](#)

Maine students learn history with New England dances

Students at one Maine school are learning traditional New England dances such as line, square and circle dancing as part of the state's bicentennial celebration. Teachers say the students are learning the steps as well as the historical significance of the dances.



[Foster's Daily Democrat \(Dover, N.H.\) \(free registr](#)

Folklore connects Va. students to local history

Seventh-graders at William Monroe Middle School in Stanardsville, Va., are learning about local history and folklore in language arts class. Teacher Allison Hughes brought in members of the Greene County Historical Society to tell students about their area's history, and later this year they will take a walking tour of the town.

[The Daily Progress \(Charlottesville, Va.\)/Greene County Record \(10/2](#)

Teachers advised to ID context of history sources

It's important to identify context before content when teachers are vetting sources of material for history classes, writes Paul Franz, the director of research at MBZ Labs and a former educator. In this article, Franz suggests that teachers consider using sources such as the National Archives and the Newseum, where materials have already been vetted.

[EdSurge \(10/29](#)

Teachers adopt sketchnoting in their classrooms

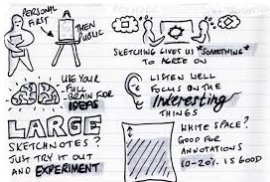
Some educators are promoting a form of visual note-taking called sketchnoting, saying it can help students better understand and process what they have learned in class. Fifth-grade teacher Rayna Freedman says most of her students continued sketchnoting in the year since introducing the idea as a one-month trial.

[KQED-TV/FM \(San Francisco\) \(11/3\)](#)

Why students struggle to spot "fake news"

Some studies indicate that students -- sometimes viewed as digital natives -- often have difficulty determining whether information found online is true. Washington Post columnist Jay Mathews writes about a study by researchers from Stanford University that found students have little to no training in how to read and fact-check information found on social media and other online platforms.

[The Washington Post \(tiered subscription model\)](#)



Students learn about slavery aboard replica ship

Students in New York recently learned about the Supreme Court decision in the United States v. Schooner Amistad case aboard a replica of the slave ship. Social studies teacher Brian Toussaint says the tour and sailing on the ship enhances learning in class by the students, who are studying the colonies and the slave trade. [Suffolk Times \(Long Island, N.Y.\) \(10/30\)](#)



Storytelling helps students understand racism

Reading to End Racism is a program in Boulder County, Colo., bringing community volunteers into area schools to use storytelling to help students understand racism. Volunteers read one of 250 books to students, sharing their own experiences and discussing the ideas and themes of the books with students. [Chalkbeat/Colorado \(10/31\)](#)



8th-grade teacher promotes civility when discussing current events

[The Hechinger Report \(10/30\)](#)

'I threw the original syllabus out the window and changed my approach'

Related: [How social studies can help young kids make sense of the world](#)



How to strengthen Native American lessons

Educators should seek ways to integrate lessons on Native Americans throughout the curriculum and not limit those lessons to the lead-up to Thanksgiving, asserts children's and young adult author Cynthia Leitich Smith. She and other experts suggest teachers look for opportunities in their own communities, identify Native American voices to highlight and avoid teaching generalities about Native Americans. [Education Dive \(11/6\)](#)



Museum teaches students about history, art of Native Americans

[The Daily News \(Wahpeton, N.D.\) \(10/26\)](#)

Sixth-grade Breckenridge students visited the Red Door Art Gallery in Wahpeton to learn about Native American art and history from Lise and Rita Erdrich on Friday, Oct. 25.

The Erdrichs told the students stories about their family, art, and other Native American art.



Learn The Real Story of Native Culture in History and Today

<https://powwo.ws/2neUS0F>

Related Info – Our favorite Native American movies on Netflix

Learning with documentary movies and TV series captures the mind and helps you experience the truth about a particular time, place, or people in a more engaging way. Native American documentaries have shown glimpses of both historical events, individuals, and current issues that have to do with the first nation's people who have called the Americas home for far longer than European settlers.



Report: Rural students face challenges

Students in rural areas often face unique challenges, such as lack of access to advanced courses and resources, according to a report released Thursday by the Rural School and Community Trust. The report finds 9.3 million US students attend rural schools and identifies five priority states: Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

[Education Week \(tiered subscription model\) \(11/7\)](#)

Grant to help iCivics develop history "roadmap"

Curriculum and advocacy group iCivics, in partnership with several universities, has been awarded a \$650,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the US Department of Education to create a content "roadmap" for history and civics teachers. The group's leaders say they want to focus on using "the arc of American history" to teach civics and provide flexibility to allow states to create their own standards.

[Education Week Teacher \(tiered subscription model\) \(11/5\)](#)

Reflecting on "Sesame Street" as program hits milestone

[Edutopia \(11/8\)](#)

It all started with a big, controversial bet that young kids could actually learn from television. In its inaugural seasons, episodes dedicated to the letter n or the number 5 reflected the zeal of its educational mission and its laser-like focus on pedagogy.

What Schools Can Do for Immigrant Students

By U.S. law, all children have the right to a public education, but immigrant students and their families, especially those who are undocumented, often face a climate of unknowns. By gaining clarity on their rights, as well as addressing blind spots within school policies, educators can provide more comprehensive support.

Students use technology to preserve history

[Arkansas Democrat-Gazette \(Little Rock\) \(free registration\) \(11/10\)](#)

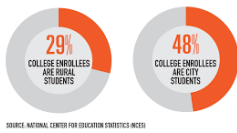
Students in North Little Rock High School's EAST Initiative program are using modern-day technology and ingenuity to make sure the past is not forgotten.

Zombie theme engages students in business class

Students need to understand the importance of financial literacy and preparing for the future, says Hilary Wimmer, Colorado's Teacher of the Year. Wimmer says she likes to spice up her business classes by challenging students to come up with products that would be useful in a zombie apocalypse.

[Chalkbeat/Colorado \(11/8\)](#)

COLLEGE ATTAINMENT RURAL VS URBAN



Every election is determined by the people who show up. Larry Sabato, political scientist, political analyst

NYC high-school's shop class features a union

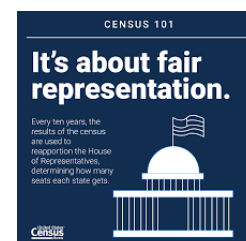
Aviation High School draws students from across New York City who are learning skills that they can use in the aerospace industry, including about the rights of workers to unionize. Teachers José Vaz and Antonio Pepenella say the union experience allows students to choose officers and a union representative, gain experience in mediating conflicts and have a voice in operations of the class. [Education Week \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (11/12)



Ky. students engage in civics through the census

Some students in rural Knott County, Ky., are learning about the importance of the census and are working to educate families and communities about the process and the importance of participating in the 2020 count by the U.S. Census Bureau.

[Education Week \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (11/13)



How to teach students about political media, elections

[EdSurge](#) (11/12)

For social studies educators, a presidential election year is a big deal. It's a nationwide teachable moment in which the entire country is constantly discussing a hearty list of key standards that is supposed to inform our instruction.



Why students should have freedom to think like historians

[EdSurge](#) (11/4)

The 1898 [photograph](#) of the construction of a London underground station drew me in. The workmen were draped across the machinery. They looked simultaneously heroic and indistinct. The men looked straight into the camera, their bodies unmoving, monuments to the age of industrialization that they were meant to represent. At the same time, each hat and mustache was identical to the next—each man seemingly replaceable.



Getting the Full Story

Many students today encounter a story of the American Revolution that omits the perspective of the British and of the Loyalists who supported them. This reduces the complexity of the Revolution and thus makes the actions of our founding generation obvious and inevitable, when nothing could have been further from their lived experiences! This workshop, which includes gallery access, will introduce educators to sources representing diverse perspectives from King George III and Parliament to merchants and common soldiers. It will allow teachers to brainstorm with museum educators and each other how they might include these voices in their classrooms moving forward and consider how tools for practicing historical thinking can apply to contemporary conversations about divisive issues today.

Visit [https://www.amrevmuseum.org/events/cost-revolution-seeing-\"other\"-side](https://www.amrevmuseum.org/events/cost-revolution-seeing-\) for more information.



Should students be required to learn cursive?

Lawmakers in Wisconsin are considering legislation that would mandate cursive instruction in the state's elementary schools. Some educators there praise the benefits of learning cursive, but some schools have dropped the focus on cursive handwriting, particularly after the adoption of Common Core State Standards lent itself to a greater focus on keyboarding proficiency. [Wisconsin Public Radio](#) (11/14)

Online tool counters white nationalism, racism

Oregon high-school social studies teacher Patrick Griffin uses Western States Center's Confronting White Nationalism in Schools, an online tool kit to help counter white nationalism, offensive stereotypes and racist messages from hate groups. Lindsay Schubiner, one of the kit's co-authors, says that some neo-Nazi messages are targeted toward students, some as young as 11. [PBS/NewsHour](#) (11/19)

Are teachers demoralized?

Battles over curricula and pressure from high-stakes testing, among other factors, can cause teachers to feel demoralized, said Chrissy Romano-Arribito, a classroom teacher, and Doris Santoro, head of Bowdoin College's education department. In a recent podcast, they, along with another teacher, discuss the effect of demoralization and offer suggestions for addressing it. [EdSurge](#) (11/19)

Does the US have a "reading crisis"?

To address disappointing reading scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the Educational Testing Service has released assessment-based solutions to the nation's "reading crisis." The tools are designed to identify gaps in skills or knowledge, but the testing service cautions that outside influences, such as students' home environment, are factors in achievement. [Education Dive](#) (11/18)

Is greater investment needed in early education?

[The Hechinger Report](#) (11/16)

EAST ST. LOUIS, Ill. — Gloria Hicks steered her minivan through East St. Louis, passing the relics of a bigger, busier city: the abandoned high school whose halls Olympian Jackie Joyner-Kersey once walked, the weedy lot that once held the club where Ike and Tina Turner met, the boarded-up public housing complex where her own daughter once lived. But Hicks, 59, and the two mothers who were riding with her were looking for the city's next generation.

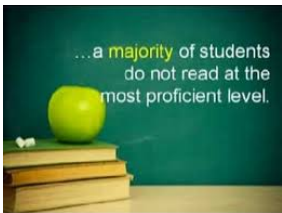
Opinion: Educators should drive ed-tech decisions

Education leaders should play a greater role in driving education-technology decision making, according to Liz Boyles, director of information services for the Troy Community Consolidated School District 30-C in Illinois. In this commentary,

Education costs money, but then so does ignorance.

Sir Claus Moser, statistician

*I never thought I would
practice a lost art. But
you're looking at it.
Apparently, cursive writing
is now on the endangered
list.*



Competitions, PD, and Short-Term Travel Opportunities for Educators:

(Note: Some of these programs are open to pre-service teachers too. If there is any question, contact the program person on the program website and ask!).

- **Funded** National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminars/institutes for K-12 teachers (full and part-time!). Apply by Mar. 1.
- **Funded** U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington DC) programs for middle/high school teachers
 - For experienced Holocaust educators: FULLY FUNDED Museum Teacher Fellowship program. July 6-10. Washington DC. Apply by Feb. 14.
 - For teachers with less than 5 years of experience in teaching about the Holocaust: Belfer National Conference (with some scholarships – apply NOW). English/Language Arts: July 20-22. Social Studies: July 23-25. Washington DC.

Travel abroad programs for teachers. GEEO (Global Exploration for Educators Organization) – non-profit.

WWII Museum in New Orleans. All of the information except, interestingly enough, the program dates, is on: <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/events-programs/educational-travel/student-travel-national-wwii-museum/student-leadership-academy> . There's also a link to apply for funding (by Jan. 31, 2020).

Resources for Educators:

- K-12 teachers: CMES lesson plans has a SEARCH ENGINE. Also, find background sheets, film guides, Youtube lectures, book lists - for all grade levels.
- Lessons/materials to each about the Syrian conflict/refugees.
- “Challenge Islamophobia” website for teachers – with lesson plans, resources, etc.
- ^a Excellent K-12 teacher-created lessons on geography (with literature, history, and/or STEM overlap).
- K-12 book awards for multi-cultural literature
 - a. Middle East book awards – and information on the educators’ group that gives awards.
 - b. K-12 book awards in other world areas, including a “new” East and Southeast Asia book award.



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 WHEN and WHERE
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Registration Open

Registration Rate \$225 Resort Room Rates \$89.57



The massive bulk of the earth does indeed shrink to insignificance in comparison with the size of the heavens. Nicolaus Copernicus, early modern astronomer, mathematician