



America 250 | CT Commission
Education Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 27, 2023

Attendees (All Virtual):

Commission Members:

- Stephen Armstrong
- Deborah Schander
- Sally Whipple

Subcommittee Members:

- Shaelyn Amaio
- Joshua Carter
- Elizabeth Devine
- Becky Gomez
- Richard Hersh
- Christine Jewell
- Danielle Johnson

- Nicole Jones
- Bilal Sekou
- Rebecca Taber
- Sam Tondreau
- Ruth Garby Torres
- Fiona Vernal
- Matthew Warshauer
- Tracey Wilson

CTH Staff:

- Gregg Mangan
- Cyndi Tolosa

The meeting began at 3:03 PM

Subcommittee members introduced themselves and Cyndi Tolosa provided background information about the Commission.

The group, whose members include classroom educators, academics, and museum educators, discussed how the subcommittee could best serve America 250 | CT.

Major themes included:

- Provide frameworks and essential questions that different groups can use to develop conversations about varied topics related to America 250 | CT.
- Set an intention to work toward coherent activities that result in meaningful learning.
- Look to the future with a focus on student voice that enables young people to explore the history and ideals around the Declaration and express their perspectives on democracy, freedom, and equality.

Suggestions included:

- Collect existing resources that can be shared and referenced through the creation of a Google document.
- Take note of ties to Connecticut's curriculum and helping teachers make connections with local stories that support and inform national stories.
- Support a proposed CCSU student conference focused on the concept of declarations of independence, the philosophical underpinnings of the US Declaration, its global impact, and how middle and high school students think about

those concepts and impacts today.

- Focus on student voice by thinking less about what we tell students, and more about what they can tell us about how they interact with ideas of freedom and equality.
- Use the tools we have – curriculum and frameworks – to create an essential question that students can explore.
- Do not provide “the answers,” but rather a framework and mechanism for those questions to be asked and answered in a wide variety of ways by a wide variety of people.
- Work intentionally to create something of lasting benefit by creating a coherent way to teach the history and ideas around the Declaration and find ways to engage students more fully.
- Avoid random efforts that dilute the power of the content and potential engagement. Run a common thread of learning and inquiry through all grades to make the learning more meaningful and lasting.
- Create an intergenerational congress when young people can ask parents, elders, and community members about what engagement and democracy means to them.
- Provide a flexible framework to help organizations develop conversations about the wide variety of topics the Commission will work with.
- Step beyond the past to help people understand the present moment, democratic practices, procedures, and ideas, and what the future might look like depending on the choices we make about democracy today.
- Encourage engagement.
- Support and inspire educators as they address engagement, student voice, and the history and ideals of the declaration in the classroom.
- Ensure that we help people explore and understand how all people interacted with, were impacted by, or contributed to the ideas of the Declaration and systems of governance that were laid out 250 years ago. The story is incomplete if we don't surface lasting ramifications for tribal nations and the impacts of slavery.
- Involve libraries in sharing resources and creating opportunities for shared learning, particularly in terms of hosting speakers and conversations that invite varied perspectives.
- Create learning hubs with libraries and museums.

Stephen Armstrong asked for a small group of Subcommittee members to develop a set of broad guiding principles based on the discussion.

The meeting ended at 4:17 PM

Next Meeting: Late July or early August, TBD