



**America 250 | CT Commission
Education Subcommittee Meeting
Monday, August 18, 2025 at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom
Minutes**

Recording:

Attendees

Subcommittee

Stephen Armstrong, Chair
Bilal Sekou, Co-Chair
Danielle Johnson
Megan Altomare
Ruth Garby Torres
James Dowling-Healey
Allison Norrie
Fiona Vernal
Peter Moran
Rhonda Kiest
Chris Newell
Paula Mann-Agnew
Kathy Hermes

Staff

Cyndi Tolosa
Khalil Quotap
Mike Kemezis

The meeting started at 3:32 p.m.

1. Welcome & Updates

Steve Armstrong opened the meeting by asking subcommittee members to share one exciting thing that has happened since the last education meeting. After all subcommittee members shared, Bilal Sekou provided a brief overview of how elections are administered on the state level. Cyndi Tolosa provided an update on funding for the commission's work, as well as the current relationship between the state commission, the national commission, and the White House Task Force 250.

2. America 250 | CT Educator Packet

- a. Share final product: [Curriculum Resources](#)
- b. Professional development: [Recording](#)

Mike Kemezis provided an update on the educator resource packet, which was primarily developed by Misa Giroux, CTH's Digital Education Manager. The packet includes lesson plans with background information, standard alignment, lesson activities, primary sources, worksheets, etc. for Grades 3, 5, 8, and high school. Each has been aligned to one of the commission's four themes, and is published on the website in PDF, Microsoft Word, and Google Doc formats. Khalil Quotap added that lesson plans link out to additional resources, including Teach It lessons and [ConnecticutHistory.org](#) articles on related topics for further classroom exploration. B. Sekou asked for clarification on how these resources will be disseminated - M. Kemezis noted that it will be shared via CTH's networks and in partnership with CCSS. C. Tolosa requested assistance from S. Armstrong and others on the subcommittee in getting the packet

in the hands of curriculum coordinators and their equivalent statewide. C. Tolosa briefly reviewed the packet and opened it up for questions from the subcommittee - no questions were asked.

3. Local History Project Recognition Program
 - a. Local research
 - b. Connections with local historical societies
 - c. Connections with local 250th committees

S. Armstrong opened the conversation on creating a recognition program for school, teachers, and/or students who participate in a local history project tied to the 250th. He asked for input from the classroom teachers on the call on how to best recognize participants. Danielle Johnson recommended recognizing schools/teachers for participating on a larger level, but also individual students, as there may be many smaller schools where only a few students or a specific program (i.e., gifted) might participate, and they should be recognized as well.

Paula Mann-Agnew called the conversation back to the educator packet, and recommended that it be shared with community-based organizations (i.e. Artists' Collective, Girl/Boy Scouts) who might be interested in using it with their groups in a different way, including "disguising learning" in their activities. D. Johnson added that many afterschool programs, including those run by the Boys & Girls Club, require students to complete some type of academic work before recreational activities - and that if students do not have homework, they may need a backup activity to complete. Allison Norrie suggested a student ambassador-type program to be the go-between for teachers and programs, and volunteered to help coordinate if this was adopted.

S. Armstrong returned the conversation to the local history project, and asked for feedback on whether teachers/schools might take this up. D. Johnson recommended that local committees reach out to schools individually to offer to collaborate, as teachers are unlikely to be able to initiate the partnership and generally don't have funding for programs like this. She noted that teachers are more likely to be able to participate if outside groups can give them prepared resources, volunteer to come into the classroom as speakers, etc. A. Norrie noted that many historical societies may not have the resources to participate in something like this. Chris Newell agreed, but further noted that there are historical societies who would like this content and could be reached through the Connecticut League of Museums. Fiona Vernal noted that historical societies are also working on exhibits that are tied into the themes of the commission and would be easy for teachers to plug into - she offered to provide a list of known exhibits. C. Tolosa clarified that CTH staff is looking to create a concise list of items that teachers, local committees, and historical societies can do to participate.

4. National Updates
 - a. iCivics Materials Coming
 - b. [Ken Burns Documentary](#) (PBS)
 - c. [The Founders Museum](#) (White House)
 - d. Learning Lunch Box (Cosi - [request form](#))
 - e. Trail of Independence (White House)
 - f. Presidential 1776 Award (White House)
 - a. Patriot Games (White House)

C. Tolosa shared details about the above nationally-available resources relevant to educators.

5. Other business as needed

S. Armstrong shared that he and CTH staff will be presenting at the CCSS conference on October 17, 2025.

The meeting ended at 4:40 p.m.