

Minutes
Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission
School and Teacher Outreach Committee
May 13 2024 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Martha Deiss
Meg Mallory
Elsa Gilbertson
Chris Sheehan
Rich Strum
Victoria Sample
Jonah Spivak
Phil Holland
Lisa Bresler

Absent:

Izzy Provoncha
Laura Trieschmann
Catherine Delneo
Stuart Lillie

I. Welcome and Introductions.

II. Changes to Agenda

Phil wrote letter, not Jonah. Will edit and repost corrected version.

III. April minutes approved.

IV. No public comment.

V. Old Business

Library Conference update

- Members of committee will be presenting at conference on 5/20. Four will be speaking – Izzy giving an overview of commission and work, Phil will speak about past, Cathy Delneo will speak about how Vermont libraries can be involved in 250th and Meg will speak on the historical societies.
- Meg elaborated – her focus will be on how to support Vermont History Day through libraries, potentially encouraging some libraries to offer it as program either through school or public library setting as possible after school activities. Primary focus of her presentation will be Vermont History Day.
- Presentation is on a late slot on the day’s program, so not sure what to expect with attendance. Will focus on our table spot and networking with folks through that.

Phil’s letter to VTCLA

- Prior to meeting, letter was shared that Phil put together for members to review.
- Phil: sees necessity in curriculum directors to make room for something special like this. School curriculum is quite packed with standardized testing prep, catching students up from covid, etc.

- Jonah: would like to end letter from Izzy & Martha with note that they will be reaching out individually to arrange a meeting. Izzy had suggested that as we reach out to curriculum directors what we really need to do is sit down and discuss this with them.
- Martha: would like to combine letter with document stating how increase in social studies work can increase literacy from K-8. CDs are very focused on literacy, so need to tie in our cause with literacy.
- Next steps: attending VTCLA monthly meetings to share resources. Not ready for June agenda and there is no meeting in July, so August is target. Can also meet with Vermont Principal Associations. Next meeting is in August, so Izzy or Jonah would have to reach out as commissioners. Could use same letter to VTCLA potentially.
- Meg: for this to feel impactful, should be something that we are bringing to this audience. For example, we can create a packaged, user friendly for teachers, initiative. Cannot be broad, would like to show up in August with prepared content. Okay to send letter now with broader language, with intent to have more focused content in August.
- Jonah: Can send prepared letter to Jeff Evans, head of VTCLA, about meeting in August.
- Phil: Has a lot of excellent material for Battle of Bennington presentation for seventh grade. Currently on Bennington Museum website, which they modify for presentations. Proposed reaching out to new VT Secretary of Education to introduce her to our committee and the 250th Commission as a whole.
- Lisa: Thinks biggest impact will be in classroom. Teachers listen to teachers. Find teacher leaders that other teachers look to. Feels that will have more power than anything. Curriculum directors are so busy and overwhelmed by all the initiatives going on.
- Committee has tried this with influencers but not getting the kind of traction and response that they need. Would like to make the next big move. We need someone with authority to say that this is a priority and that they want to make it possible for teachers.
- Jonah and Izzy will reach out to Zoe – new sec of ed – about 250th Commission.

GIV- next steps; interdisciplinary lens?

Framework of Resources- discuss additions and Committee member outreach

- Elsa: once sites are open and things have calmed, will work on adding to framework. Will tie in our the state historic sites fit into the framework themes.
- Martha: should we share with outside agencies such as Shelburne Museum?
- Meg: will be building out a 250th tab on Vermont explorers. Will feature different education institutions/organizations that offer things to teachers, such as places to visit with included curriculum. Will keep committee updated as this progresses.
- Martha: would like everyone to continue to populate framework document until 250th website and Meg's tab go up. Document can aid with site building. Would like Lisa to contribute any art lessons that she thinks will tie in to themes as well.

Revolutionary cards

- Meeting set for Meg, Lisa, Izzy, and Chris tomorrow.
- Committee proposed having artwork of all ages on front of cards, possibility of linking cards to youth art month for 2026 (2025 theme has already been selected).
- Students will need background on illustrations they will be drawing, some kind of prompt to guide them or list of people they can portray. Can perhaps include illustrations of places and not just people for all the cards.

- Meg proposed framing this as a cross-curricular activity between library and art class, can tie with literacy. One side will have student art with miniature research on other side. Students can utilize primary research to discover something factual about the card topic. Obviously kindergarteners' work will be different than middle schooler – can celebrate learning across all levels.
- Elsa: wondering how this is going to be distributed when they're done. Will they be made available and sold? At museums, you can have the same learning activity for all ages that you tweak a bit for different age groups.

VI. New Business

Letter to Vermont Principal Association

- Started to discuss this during curriculum director letter.
- Committee will request to get on their schedule as well. Can send version of CD letter from one of the commissioners.

VII. Adjourn

Next Meeting: June 10, 2024

Future Agenda

Strategize future outreach to homeschool families; another follow-up to AOE

- Martha has reached out to homeschool contact – would like to target them with more specific types of questions.
- Fort Ticonderoga hosts Homeschool Day on the first Friday after Labor Day. Had 800 homeschoolers at last event! Stuart said that 250th Committee can have a table to more directly reach homeschool families. Next day is Friday 9/6/24. Open at 9:30am.
- Rich also shared link to NY State council for social studies event on 7/12. \$75 fee but it is a whole day including a cruise and curricula opportunity. Open to VT educators.
- First Friday in December, Lake Morey conference – thoughts on tabling?
- Rich: not sure how big AP courses are in Vermont, but they have a few APUSH teachers that seek other curriculum to teach for remainder of year after AP testing.
- Jonah will speak with Laura about using funding to allow up to 20 teachers in Vermont to go to NY State Council social studies event on 7/12.