

Hi,

April 4, 1949 marks the birthday of NATO when 12 countries came together in the defense of freedom. April 22 is Earth Day and April 24 is Arbor Day (NJ celebrates on the last Friday in April). The environment and climate issues are critical lessons for students and many schools plan schoolwide activities. To Unsubscribe from our newsletter, send an email to [hb288@sasmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:hb288@sasmail.rutgers.edu) Hank Bitten, Executive Director

## **NJCSS News**

**Celebrating the semiquincentennial of our *Declaration of Independence* in 2026!**

**A Publication of the New Jersey Council for the Social Studies**

A print copy is available on our website, [www.njcss.org](http://www.njcss.org)

**April 2026**

[hb288@sasmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:hb288@sasmail.rutgers.edu)

**Celebrating 250 Years!**

### ***Guillam Demarest, Bergen County***

*My memory is failing me from hunger as I am held prisoner in the Sugar Prison on Liberty Street in New York City. My father visited me four times this week insisting that I should swear an Oath of Loyalty to the king to secure my release and save my young life. I believe in the Declaration of Independence, but our army is losing every battle. Help me with my painful decision.*



[My Story](#) [Documentary Video](#)

***2026 History Happened Here Expo***

May 28, 2026

Livingston Student Center

84 Joyce Kilmer Avenue

Piscataway, NJ 08854

**[Nomination Form!](#)**

**Deadline is April 17, 2026**

The HHH Expo is a celebration of student research, creativity, and historical inquiry. The Expo recognizes students who have demonstrated thoughtful engagement with meaningful historical questions through strong research and creative presentation. Selected honorees will have the opportunity to showcase their projects and share their learning with peers, families, educators, and members of the community.

We encourage you to nominate students whose work reflects strong historical thinking, originality, and dedication to the research process. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to share their work with a broader audience and to be recognized for their academic achievements.

## ***“Road to Liberty Through Their Eyes” is Coming in May!***



### **Information**

Produced by EagleVision Productions, Inc. (EVP), **Road to Liberty Through Their Eyes** is a one-hour documentary and educational project to commemorate America's 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026. It's a remarkable story of perseverance, survival, and triumph, which captures the formative years of the American Revolution with a focus on the New York/New Jersey Campaign of 1776 that needs to be retold for a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience.

**NJ PBS plans to broadcast the documentary in May and we will announce the date and time when we receive it.**

EVP is currently working on producing ten educational webisodes and a Teacher's Guide for 5-12 grade students that will be available to teachers at no charge.. The NJCSS convened a small focus group in 2025 and contributed to the topics that will be addressed in the webisodes, and Joe Refinski (NJCSS member) will serve as EVPs Curriculum Writer for the Teacher's Guide, which will be made available on EVPs website in June 2026.

### **2026 NJCSS Conference**

**Monday, October 19, 2026**

8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Busch Student Center at Rutgers University  
604 Bartholomew Road  
Piscataway, NJ 08854

## ***Road Map for a Changing World: Connecting, Engaging & Inspiring***

**Call for Proposals** (Deadline: June 15, 2026)

**Exhibitor Registration** (Deadline: September 5, 2026)

**Conference Registration** (\$25 for Preservice and Retired Teachers)

***Vote for Your NJCSS Team by May 31, 2026***

**[Click Here to Vote for 4 Regional and 2 At-Large Directors](#)**

# Teacher Resources

## Arbor Day

Arbor Day was first celebrated in Nebraska on April 10, 1874, following a proclamation by Gov. Robert W. Furnas. In less than a decade. In 1882, its observance become a national event. Nebraska made Arbor Day a legal holiday in 1885. An estimated one million trees were planted during the first Arbor Day. Today, countries around the world set aside one day each year to celebrate trees.

## Earth Day

When I was in high school we used leaded gas, leaded paint, and dumped human and chemical waste into the rivers of New Jersey. The publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 raised public awareness and concern for living organisms, the environment and the inextricable links between pollution and public health.

Senator Gaylord Nelson from Wisconsin announced the idea for a teach-in on college campuses to the national media in 1969. April 22, a weekday falling between Spring Break and Final Exams, became the official date.

Earth Day inspired 20 million Americans (10% of the population) to take to the streets, parks and auditoriums to demonstrate against the impacts of 150 years of industrial development on human health. Earth Day initiated the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Superfund, Toxics Substances Control Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Clean Water Act. The Environmental Protection Agency, the ban of DDT and lead in gasoline are other major accomplishments. **Earth Day is an international celebration in 192 countries with about one billion people participating every year.**

## Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History Teacher Seminars Online

The Gilder Lehrman Institute is once again offering ten Teacher Seminars Online, giving K–12 educators, librarians, community college instructors, and museum professionals the opportunity to study with eminent American history professors and dive deep into primary sources with master teachers. New to 2026, each seminar will be composed of live lectures, Q&A sessions, and opportunities for discussion with scholars, Gilder Lehrman master teachers, partner organizations, and your peers.

Registration for Teacher Seminars is just \$25 per seminar (with discounts available for three or more registrations), and each seminar comprises between 11 and 17 professional development hours. Learn more about and register for our ten Teacher Seminars Online. [REGISTER TODAY!](#)

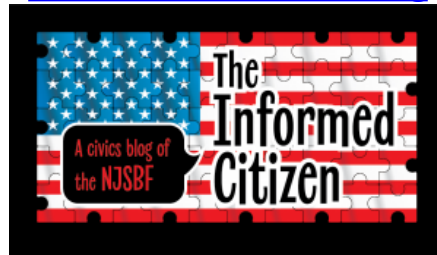
## Obama Presidential Center Opening June 2026



[Take a Look!](#)  
[Library](#)

## New Jersey State Bar Foundation

### The Informed Citizen Blog



### Engaging & Amazing Resources



Contact Aracely Suto at [asuto@njsbf.org](mailto:asuto@njsbf.org).

## National Constitution Center

### *Story Themes for Elementary and Middle School Students*

Participating teachers can choose a story theme from select constitutional topics that best align with what they are teaching in their curriculum. The specific artifact tied to each story theme will remain a mystery until the day of the program, adding an element of surprise for students. Through this exploration, students will connect with the past, the Constitution, and the ways these historical themes shape our world today.

**First Amendment**

**Civil Rights**

**American Revolution**

**Voting Rights**

**Slavery**

**Civil War**

### Schedule a Story

## New Jersey Center for Civic Education

### *Engaging Students in Middle School Civics*

**Tuesday, April 14, 2026 - 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Busch Student Center, Rutgers University, Piscataway**

Contact Craig Uplinger [cu88@scarletmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:cu88@scarletmail.rutgers.edu)

The Laura Wooten Civics Law (2021) requires that every New Jersey middle school provide a separate course of study in civics. This **free**, all-day workshop will provide suggested curriculum guides, civics content and instructional strategies to help teachers meet the mandate in ways that motivates students to become informed and active citizens. The workshop will run from 8:30 - 3:00. Free textbook samples and a catered breakfast and lunch will be provided. Please bring a laptop. Internet access is available.

### Register Today!

## Energizing Young Voters

### The League of Women Voters NJ

## New Jersey High School Voter Registration Week is April 13 to 19

Public schools have a responsibility to prepare young people to engage in democracy. To support high schools, the League of Women Voters is in a partnership with The Civics Center.

The Civics Center provides virtual evening information sessions for students and educators along with a comprehensive and customized **NJ Educator/Student Toolkit** that details every step following a timeline. We have seen high schools register over 100 students per event. That is outstanding! The toolkit is available on the website. <https://thecivicscenter.org>

The Civics Center has developed a map of NJ that shows the gap of unregistered youth in each county. <https://data.thecivicscenter.org/> Click on your county to understand how many 17 and 18 year old voter registrations are needed to close that gap.

17 year olds can register to vote **if they will be 18** by the General Election on November 3rd, that they are eligible to vote in the upcoming Primary on June 2nd.

Pull your teams together today! Your students will have a rich interactive civics experience developing their leadership skills and civic expertise.

<https://thecivicscenter.org>

Sign up for your virtual Civics Center information session using the QR code.



## AAPI of New Jersey

### Teach Asian American Stories

<https://aapinewjersey.org/events/>



**April 11, 10:30 am - 12:00 pm**

Together, we are stronger than fear! Please join AAPI NJ and partners for visits to support immigrant-owned small businesses Paterson as they brace for escalated ICE activity.



### Comedy Night

**April 16, 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm**

**Porta 499 Bloomfield Ave, Montclair, United States**

AAPI New Jersey Presents: Comedy Night! Come out, unwind, and share some laughs with your community! We've put together a fantastic night of stand-up comedy featuring some seriously talented folks: [...]



### Color Run 2026

**April 26, 8:30 am - 11:30 am**

**Brookdale Park Montclair, New Jersey**

Join us for a vibrant 5k race and 1-mile fun run in celebration of Holi and Songkran! Holi—the Hindu “Festival of Colors” and “Festival of Spring

## **The Teach Asian American Stories K–5 Teacher Residency Pilot Program for K–5 teachers**

Over the course of 13 months, TAAS K–5 Residents will receive professional development, coaching, and mentorship focused on AAPI histories and pedagogies, curriculum development, and meaningful curricular intervention. The program is supported by Dr. Karishma Desai of Rutgers University’s Graduate School of Education.

**The application deadline is Sunday, April 5 at 11:59 PM.**

[More Info & Apply](#)

### **Application Requirements**

This K-5 Teacher Residency is for teachers:

- In K-5 New Jersey public schools, certified in elementary education;
- Committed to teaching Asian American and Pacific Islander narratives and histories in their classrooms; and
- Interested in advancing their teaching practice through thirteen (13) months of professional development with experienced facilitators in this field, culminating in developing a final curricular project.

### **Program Requirements**

Workshops: Virtual kickoff on May 27, 2026, followed by several full-day sessions June–August 2026 and January 2027 (primarily in Montclair, NJ), plus monthly virtual meetings from September 2026–June 2027

Mentorship: Monthly group mentoring (Oct 2026–May 2027) with additional 1:1 virtual support available as needed

Independent Work: Curriculum development assignments throughout the program

Final Project: Implement a curricular project by May 2027, with a final report due June 2027

#### **Grant Details**

Residents will receive:

\$3,000 stipend (paid in five installments)

Up to \$500 for classroom materials

A collection of foundational AAPI history books

50 hours of professional development and a completion credential co-signed by Rutgers University and Teach Asian American Stories

## **Japan Society**

### **K-12 School Gallery Tours**

School Gallery Tours invite students to observe, discuss, and explore various Japanese art forms and their rich historical backgrounds through seasonal exhibitions led by experienced museum educators and teaching artists.

[Learn More](#)



### **K-12 Arts & Culture Workshops**

Japan Society Arts and Culture Workshops introduce and connect students to the dynamic historic and contemporary culture of Japan through engaging workshops led by experienced teaching artists.

[Learn More](#)

## **NJ Department of Education Learning Lounge**

### **[Future Learning Lounge Social Studies Sessions](#)**

**April 8, 2026**

***NJSLS Learning Lounge: Revolutionary Schools - A Local History Primer***

Type of Event: Announcement

Time: 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

[Click here for more information.](#)

## **Council on Foreign Relations**

[Resources for High School and College](#)

[Three Ways to Teach About Venezuela in a Nonpartisan Way](#)

[Simulation from Technology and Conflict & Warfare](#)

[Cyber Clash with China \(UNSC\)](#)

[Reading from Climate & Energy](#)

[How Climate Change Can Get Even Worse](#)

# Financial Literacy and Economics

WISE

[Financial Literacy Certification](#)

[MoneyWISE](#)

[Personal Finance Certification for Educators](#)

[Quality of Life INNOVATIONS](#)

[W!se Institute](#)

[Engineered Green Economics \(EGE\)](#)

[Services](#)

## New York Federal Reserve Bank

### [Comic Book Series](#)

Middle & High School

Online and Print copies



*How Does Monetary Policy Work?*

*How Do I Use Economics in My Life?*

*How Do We Get the Things We Want?*

*What Is an Economy?*

*A Story of Interest*

*The Story of Monetary Policy*

*The Story of the Federal Reserve System*

## The New York Historical

[Curriculum Library](#)

### Virtual Outreach Series

Discover our bounty of live, remote lessons on topics ranging from colonial America to the Civil War and Reconstruction to World War II and the civil rights movement. In each one-hour online lesson, a New York Historical educator conducts a lively and interactive conversation with students as they examine artifacts, paintings, documents, and virtual exhibitions.

Students are invited to work collaboratively to find answers to history's big questions, and in the process, develop their critical thinking skills and expand their understanding of our collective past.

Virtual programs last up to one hour and are booked according to your schedule. All lessons cost a flat rate of \$120.

Book lessons in two ways:

In-Depth Series: Multiple lessons connected by a major theme

One-off: A single lesson

Is your school or class interested? Choose a grade band below to see a comprehensive list of topics. Then, complete [our booking form](#) and a New York Historical representative will be in touch to discuss program details and payment options.

[Elementary Level Options >](#)

[Secondary Level Options >](#)

[Learn more and book today](#)

[The Academy for American Democracy](#)

The Democracy Project: Confronting the Global Crisis of Governance  
Featuring: Bob Bauer, Samuel Issacharoff, Richard Pildes, Heather Gerken (moderator)  
*Bonnie and Richard Reiss Lecture on Constitutional History and Law*

## **NJSoc Rev War Award to a NJ Teacher, 2026**

### **Application Form**

The New Jersey Society of the Cincinnati (NJSoc) Excellence in Education Award annually honors a notable full-time middle school or high school teacher in the State of New Jersey, in public, private, charter and parochial schools, who excels in teaching the history of the Revolutionary period, and who inspires an appreciation and understanding of the values and ideals of the heroes who fought to establish our nation.

### **The chosen teacher will be awarded a \$1,000 cash prize and certificate of recognition.**

Every effort will be made to have representatives of the NJSoc personally present the award at the candidate's school of instruction. Inclusion of school administration and Board member(s) will underline recognition. In addition, the recipient will be invited to a meeting of the NJSoc.

To receive the award, the recipient must have demonstrated excellence in readily sharing an incisive knowledge of Revolutionary War history, demonstrating a commitment to his or her students, fostering a spirit of patriotism and service to school or community, and civic participation or engagement, relating history to modern life and events, and requiring high academic standards from students.

Candidates will be vetted and recommended by the New Jersey Council on Social Studies (NJCSS). Membership in the NJCSS is not required. **Applications must be submitted by April 15, 2026.** In May, the NJCSS will recommend three candidates to the NJSoc. The final selection shall be made by the Society's Education Committee and approved by the Executive Committee. The award will be presented in September at the commencement of the school year and posted on the NJCSS website, [www.njcss.org](http://www.njcss.org).

**The candidates will be judged by the Education Committee of the NJSoc over five credentials:**

- knowledge of Revolutionary War history,
- a sincere commitment to student learning,
- patriotism to the United States of America,
- relevance or application of the Revolution to modern life,
- and high academic standards in the classroom
- feedback from students, parents, and peers will be considered

*In order to select the recipient among candidates presented, we will require a resume or summary of each candidate's qualifications plus information on educational materials, initiatives, or programs.*

#### **Award Criteria**

- Full-time teacher with at least two-years of experience teaching American history at the middle school or high school level
  - Adheres to or excels at the five credentials stated above
  - Must teach in the State of New Jersey

#### **Award Process**

The NJCSS will require applications to be received by April 15, 2026 and will provide the NJSoc with its nominees by May. Submit applications and supporting documents using the form below. The Education Committee will select the award winner based on summary information provided by the NJCSS and present a candidate to the NJSoc Board of Trustees for approval. The award will be announced in August and presented by Society representatives at the candidate's school of instruction in September. The recipient will be invited to the NJSoc meeting at a time established by the recipient and the President of the NJSoc.

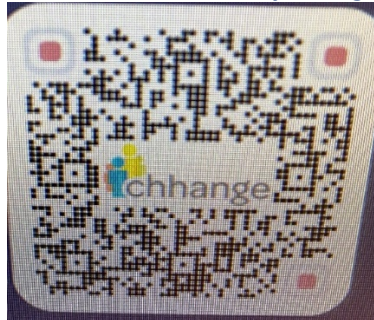
**Begin developing your resume now!**

## Chhange -Center for Holocaust, Human Rights & Genocide Education

Resistance: Mothers' Quest for Justice

Wednesday, May 20, 2026 (9:45 – 12:30) (3 PD Hours) \$10

Brookdale Community College



Chhange's signature annual program, the Colloquium, brings together hundreds of middle and high school students from across New Jersey for a day of learning, dialogue, and civic engagement. Designed specifically for students and educators, the Colloquium centers on themes that reflect Chhange's mission. This year's Colloquium, taking place on May 20, is on Resistance: Mothers' Quest for Justice.

Following the plenary session, students participate in breakout workshops led by local Holocaust survivors, second-generation descendants, educators, scholars, and community activists. Topics span family histories of the Holocaust, reflections on post-genocide Rwanda, the war in Ukraine, LGBTQIA+ history, becoming an upstander, and engaging in constructive dialogue—all timely and essential issues for today's students.

[Register Today!](#)

Please reach out to Rachel L. MacAulay at [rachel.macaulay@chhange.org](mailto:rachel.macaulay@chhange.org) or 732-224-1889 with any questions.

**NJCSS Teacher of the Year Awards** (Deadline is April 30, 2026)

[K-5 Elementary Teacher Nomination](#)

[Grades 6-8 Middle School Teacher Nomination](#)

[Grades 9-12 High School Teacher Nomination](#)

## Just for Students!

### Scholarship Opportunity!!

All NJ High Schools

Nine \$1500 awards

and also

An opportunity for a \$5000 award!!



No Essay! Applicants teach one of our FREE civics lessons and create a campaign encouraging their peers to vote!

Contact us at [EYVScholarship@yahoo.com](mailto:EYVScholarship@yahoo.com)

Visit our Website: [Energizing Young Voters](#) for details!

Submission Deadline May 1, 2026

### PRINCETON BATTLEFIELD SOCIETY ANNOUNCES 250<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY DIGITAL HISTORY PROJECT CONTEST FOR NEW JERSEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

March 31, 2026 – Registration Deadline

June 12, 2026 – Final Submission Deadline

By September 11, 2026 – Prize winners notified

Todd Quackenbush, a trustee of the Princeton Battlefield Society (PBS) and speaking on behalf of PBS, has announced a 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary contest for New Jersey high school students. Prizes of \$1,500, \$1,000 and \$500 will be awarded to winners, supported by The George H. and Estelle M. Sands Foundation.

“The upcoming 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Princeton,” explained Quackenbush, “is not only a time to remember America’s past, but an opportunity to ask new questions about it. Our contest invites New Jersey high school students to move beyond memorizing historical facts but instead, think like historians by analyzing historical events and figures, interpreting them, and communicating ideas to a public audience.”

Using digital media, students are encouraged to explore how the American Revolution shaped New Jersey and how its stories continue to influence ideas about leadership, conflict, loyalty, and civic responsibility today. By participating, students will become active interpreters of history during a once-in-a-lifetime anniversary.

Guidelines and information on the contest may be secured on the Princeton Battlefield Society website ([www.pbs1777.org](http://www.pbs1777.org)) or by email to [outreach.pbs1777@gmail.com](mailto:outreach.pbs1777@gmail.com)

Students may submit either: a **Video** (MP4 format – MP4 4K 60 resolution) or an **Audio Podcast** (MP3 format). Submissions must be between **5 and 10 minutes**.

Each submission must focus on an event, person, demographic group, document, or topic related to the **American Revolution (1775–1783) in New Jersey**.

Submissions may take the form of a Documentary, Dramatization, Interview, Animation, Debate, Advertisement, or another creative format.

Each student must work with a **Sponsoring Teacher**, who is currently employed by the student's school To provide guidance on topic selection, research, structure, and content. For home-schooled students, a qualified parent, tutor, or mentor may serve as the Sponsoring Teacher.

## **Prakhina Foundation Awards Program on the Truth About the Holocaust and Stalinist Repression**

[Video of Awards Program on February 8, 2026](#)

The NJCSS supports this important program on human rights and one of our officers speaks at the awards program. It is an important opportunity for students to research dictatorships, totalitarianism, and current events today. The video includes speeches from prominent speakers, student presentations, personal testimony, and the awards program held in Fair Lawn, NJ.

## **Professional Conferences**

**NCSS 2026 – December 4 – 6, Chicago**

**NCSS 2027 – November 19-21, Minneapolis**

**NCSS 2028 – December 1-3, Washington, D.C.**

### **NJ Council for the Social Studies (NJCSS)**

*President:* Joseph Dwyer

*Vice President:* Kaitlin Mahaffey

*Secretary:* Katherine DeVillasanta

*Treasurer:* Michael Kenduck

*Executive Director and Editor:* Hank Bitten

### **NJ Social Studies Supervisors Association (NJSSSA)**

*President,* Aldo Deodino

*Vice-President,* Cindy Assini

*Secretary,* Jean Marie Seal

*Treasurer,* Gabrielle Rendek