



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

November 13, 2015

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: National History Teacher of the Year Award

The Virginia Department of Education, in cooperation with the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, HISTORY™ (The History Channel), and Preserve America, announces the annual National History Teacher of the Year Award. This award honors exceptional teachers of American history across the country. One finalist from each state, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense schools, and the U.S. territories is selected annually. From these finalists, a national winner is recognized as the National History Teacher of the Year.

Any full-time middle or high school teacher (grades 7-12) who teaches American history, including local and state history, as his or her primary subject within the framework of his or her school program, and has demonstrated excellence according to the criteria governing the award is eligible for nomination. Nominees will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- At least three years of classroom experience in teaching American history;
- A demonstrated commitment to teaching American history;
- Evidence of creativity and imagination in the classroom; and
- Effective use of documents, artifacts, historic sites, oral histories, and other primary resources to engage students with American history.

Other notes about eligibility:

- Past state and national winners are not eligible;
- Self-nominations are not accepted; and
- Nominees must be planning to teach for at least one year following the award year.

All nominations must be submitted on the Gilder Lehrman Web site at <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/programs-exhibitions/national-history-teacher-year-nomination-form>.

Nominators must include contact information for the nominee and a short statement indicating why the nominee is an outstanding teacher of American history. Nominations can be made by a student, parent, colleague, department head, principal, or superintendent. The deadline for all nominations is Monday, February 15, 2016.

Shortly after they are nominated, all nominees will be contacted by e-mail and will be invited to submit supporting material to the Gilder Lehrman Institute office to be considered for a state award. The following supporting materials are required from each nominee:

- A current résumé/curriculum vitae;

- One letter of support from a supervisor, colleague or other educational professional familiar with the nominee's work. The letter should address the award criteria;
- A one-page statement of the nominee's philosophy of teaching and how it relates specifically to the instruction of American history;
- A sample lesson plan that can be completed in one or two class sessions, demonstrating the use of primary sources (no more than five pages); and
- A sample extended student project demonstrating use of primary documents, artifacts, historic sites, oral histories or other primary resources (no more than fifteen pages).

The deadline for nominated teachers submitting supporting materials to the Gilder Lehrman Institute is Monday, March 28, 2016. Nominees will be asked to send most items electronically.

Each state winner will receive a cash award of \$1,000 and the winner's school will receive an archive of primary historical materials in honor of the state winner.

Winners will be selected by a panel of distinguished history educators under the supervision of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

For additional information, please contact Betsy Barton, specialist for history and social science, Office of Humanities and Early Childhood, by e-mail at Betsy.Barton@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-3454. Additional information on the National History Teacher of the Year program is available at <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/programs-exhibitions/national-history-teacher-year>.

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