

# Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission

Workgroup 3: EDUCATION  
The Honorable Algie T. Howell, Jr., *Chairman*

## PROPOSED OBJECTIVES FOR WORKGROUP 3: EDUCATION

Work Group 3: Education has responsibility for the oversight and monitoring of:

- Involvement of schools, students, teachers, administration, and PTAs
- SOL review and resources, curriculum framework, resources for teachers, etc.
- Teacher institutes
- Higher education involvement
- Law school symposia
- Public library involvement
- Document preservation project

- R. 1. Involvement of the education community (e.g. public and private schools, institutions of higher education, students, teachers, administrators, instructional related personnel and support staff, PTAs and other professional education organizations)

**Objective:** To stimulate awareness, enhance knowledge, and promote interest and appreciation of this era in American history and life, (ii) place events in historical context, particularly relative to new research findings, and (iii) facilitate an understanding of the significance of this historical period to contemporary society.

- Strategy:**
- Facilitate the development of instructional-related activities that will promote the theme(s) to be established for the commemoration by Workgroup 2 (Signature Events and Activities).
  - Coordinate with Workgroup 1 (Coordination) to identify and provide information regarding available age-appropriate educational, cultural, and experiential opportunities within localities which will supplement instruction and reinforce the theme(s).
  - Design and distribute to public and private schools, public libraries, institutions of higher education, and professional education organizations for further distribution, a supplemental educational series to educate students concerning various aspects of the war, such as its characters, the issues, the battles, the timeline, geography, civilian life, military life, socio-medical advances, War-time economics, politics, Reconstruction, and the legacy.
  - Enlist and encourage the assistance of representatives of the larger education community in developing, implementing, and publicizing the Workgroup's initiatives to facilitate their investment in the commemoration.
  - Offer live chats, workshops, and webinars on specific issues for targeted audiences on a rotating schedule; blogs dedicated to selected themes; an intergenerational newsletter; online resources for teachers and administrators; online study guides, games, puzzles, and fun interactives and manipulatives for K-12 students; links on the Commission's website to selected sites to support scholarly research by college students and researchers; a pamphlet chronicling the Commission's work, the commemoration, and the American Civil War.
  - Develop and publish an annotated bibliography designed for multiple age groups and purposes.
  - Establish a competitive writing and an art contest for K-12 students concerning an aspect of the American Civil War for which successful students would receive recognition.
  - Establish an arts exhibit for students K-16, in which students would be asked to interpret and/or capture an aspect(s) of the American Civil War or its legacy.
  - Challenge K-12 students to interpret "Civil War slang" and compare the language to that used today to understand words, terms, and expressions in their historical context and how the meaning of words change over time.
  - Engage Dan Roberts, "A Moment in Time," the HistoryNet.com, National Geographic Society, and the History Channel in specially designed collaborative arrangements to broadcast clips, programs, audiovisual streaming, (e.g. music, literature, and art from the era; conferences; workshops), and maximize available technology to educate students and the public concerning the American Civil War.
  - Promote Virginia as the "American Civil War Classroom."
  - Provide virtual or other online exhibits as an alternative to field trips

## R. 2. SOL review and resources, curriculum framework, resources for teachers, etc.\*

**Objective:** To review the Standards of Learning for History and Social Studies, its curriculum framework, and the Enhanced Scope and Sequence Guides to ensure that the instructional blueprint is current, balanced, and accurate in its account of American Civil War history, preceding, during, and after the War. To stimulate an avid interest in history and the love and appreciation of lifelong learning and academic excellence among students and to promote the development of critical thinking and analytical skills. To promote mastery of academic skills required by SOLs and NCLB, improved SOL pass rates, and increased student knowledge of history, particularly American Civil War history.

**Strategy:** Request the Department of Education staff to brief the workgroup regarding the review process for the History and Social Studies SOLs, technical edits to the History and Social Studies framework and the Scope and Sequence Guides, and the textbook adoption schedule.

\*The technical edits to the History and Social Studies SOLs have been completed.

## R. 3. Teacher institutes

**Objective:** To equip classroom teachers to impart relevant, timely, and historically accurate instruction to students concerning the American Civil War, including, but not limited to its prelude, duration, aftermath, and legacy, through creative and innovative instructional modalities that accommodate student learning styles, are consistent with the Standards of Learning in History and Social Studies, and enable teachers to satisfy in-service training requirements.

**Strategy:**

- Identify and partner with entities in Virginia that offer American Civil War teacher institutes to provide a gateway for professional development of educators on the Civil War and access to primary sources and activities for students.
- Offer scholarships to enable eligible licensed teachers to attend American Civil War teacher institutes.
- Offer financial support to identified teacher institutes to increase the number of teachers able to attend.
- Provide workshops and seminars for pre-service and in-service training of teachers on the American Civil War and related issues.
- Collaborate with institutions of higher education, public libraries, and historical entities to offer mini-workshops for teachers throughout the school year, a speakers bureau for schools and other institutions and community groups, mentors for students and teachers, "Saturday Academy" for the public, and maximize the state's technological infrastructure to deliver programs and online resources.
- Collaborate with the Department of Education and institutions of higher education to establish "American Civil War Teacher Institutes," using the Summer Governor's School model.

## R. 4. Higher education involvement

**Objective:** To marshal the collective assets and expertise of institutions of higher education to promote and coalesce academic inquiry and scholarly research pertaining to the American Civil War. To facilitate public discourse concerning this period in American history, Virginia's role, the legacy of the war, and the implication and application of lessons learned.

**Strategy:**

- Seek alliances and collaborative arrangements with Schools of Education at public and private institutions of higher education, the Department of Education, State Council of Higher Education, and Virginia Community College System to provide:
  - faculty exchange programs
  - resource instructors for K-12 teachers

#### R. 4. Higher education involvement—Continued

**Strategy:**

- conduct research and publish mini briefs on unexplored/under-researched issues and topics related to the Civil War appropriate for scholars and the general public
- host the American Civil War Debates
- offer mini or weekend classes and “American Civil War Weekend” designed for various audiences on aspects of American Civil War history, e.g. K-12 students, teachers, college students, scholars, general public, Civil War buffs. See VCU’s Mini-Medical School Model, Harvard University’s School of Public Health Mini-Rounds, UNC’s health broadcasts as models. Programs could be delivered over the Internet through webcasts or via ODU’s TELETECHNET.
- offer a concert series, in collaboration with the Richmond Symphony, local churches, and other musical groups, featuring music of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Civil War era, and music of African American slaves during this period
- produce DVD’s and CD’s of concerts and make available for purchase by public
- establish the “*HyperHistorian*” Project using the Digital History model at the University of Houston (University of Houston, Chicago Historical Society, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, American Voices, Teachers As Historians Teaching American History, and the National Park Service Consortium), e.g. could provide a link to the Document Preservation Project and other online resources

#### R. 5. Law school symposia

**Objective:** To educate the citizenry and examine, reflectively, the historical, political, social, and legal context of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments of the United States Constitution, their significance to the foundation and reinforcement of the Rule of Law, and the relevance of these Amendments to the legacy of the war and contemporary national and global issues.

- Strategy:**
- Host a conference and/or symposia that addresses the:
    - historical, political, social, and legal context of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments
    - the significance of the Amendments to the Rule of Law
    - the nexus between the Amendments and the legacy of the war relative to their fulfillment and application in American society
  - Publish proceedings of the conference and/or symposia

#### R. 6. Public library involvement

**Objective:** To ensure the broad diffusion of information concerning the commemoration of the sesquicentennial and the availability and access of commemorative materials, documents, exhibits, and resources to citizens throughout the Commonwealth.

- Strategy:**
- Host lunch time, afternoon, and evening lecture series and colloquia related to various aspects of American Civil War history for “targeted” audiences at different locations across the Commonwealth through partnerships with local libraries, professional associations, public and private schools, community organizations, churches, grocery stores, book stores, etc.

#### R. 7. Document preservation project\*\*

**Objective:** To seek and preserve original documents, historical artifacts, and memorabilia of the Civil War era for perpetuity.

- Strategy:**
- Partner with the Library of Virginia, the Virginia Historical Society, and the University of Virginia Center for Digital History, and the Digital History

\*\*The Document preservation project may be re-assigned to Workgroup 2 (Signature Events and Activities)

#### R. 8. Other Objectives for Discussion

- Activities and events related to the respective fields represented by the members of Workgroup 3
- Address the content of history textbooks vis-à-vis the curriculum used to teach American Civil War history