

8th Grade Civics Trip to Washington D.C.

**School Committee
Presentation & Proposal
October 21, 2019**

Topics

The background of the slide is a faded, light blue-tinted photograph of the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. The Washington Monument is the central focus, a tall, white, obelisk-shaped structure. To its right, the U.S. Capitol building is visible, featuring its iconic white dome. In the foreground, the Lincoln Memorial is partially visible on the left side. The overall scene is set against a clear, light blue sky.

- **Background**
- **Proposal & Rationale**
- **Curriculum Connections**
- **Logistics**

Background

In June 2018 the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released a revised curriculum framework for History and Social Sciences, which puts a greater emphasis on civics across all grade levels. On November 8, 2018, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker signed bill S2631, an Act to promote and enhance civic engagement in Massachusetts students. The goals of this law are, in part, to increase voter participation (especially at the local level), increase people's engagement in community service work, and inspire citizens to protect and promote our democratic institutions. This new law requires eighth-grade students to participate in at least one student-led, non-partisan civics project. The 8th grade curriculum has a direct focus on government and civics, with topics including: the philosophical foundations of the U.S. political system, the development and institutions of the U.S. government, rights and responsibilities of citizens, the Constitution, Amendments and Supreme Court decisions, and the freedom of the press and news/media literacy.

Proposal

On June 8-11, 2021, eighth grade students from Curtis Middle School will travel to Washington D.C. for the purpose of researching and engaging in civic and government-related activities. Students will visit civic landmarks and view original documents of democracy. They will better understand the history, structure, purpose, and processes of the U.S. government and important persons in governmental history. They will gain civil and historical perspectives by visiting various museums addressing such topics as the Holocaust and African-American history.



Rationale

Research has shown that place-based learning offers many benefits for students. It increases student engagement which promotes greater understanding of concepts and diverse perspectives. It provides equitable access for all students to learn while engaging in social-based activities. It facilitates students' ability to synthesize their classroom learning with authentic environments and real-life situations.

We the People

of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common Defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article I

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who, when elected, shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and including Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.

The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and in every subsequent Term of Years, in such Manner as they shall direct. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but each State shall have at least one Representative, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualification requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

There shall be no Title of Nobility.

Section 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Electors in each State.

Section 4. Immediately after they shall be assembled in consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Clauses. The first of these Clauses of the first Election shall be vested at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Clause at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Clause at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise during the Term of the Senators of any State, the Executive Power may make temporary Appointments until the next Meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies.

No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who, when elected, shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless he be equally elected.

The Senate shall choose their other Officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the Absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the Office of the President.

Curriculum Connections

We the People

Summary of Grade 8 Curriculum:

Students study the roots and foundations of U.S. democracy, how and why it has developed over time, and the role of individuals in maintaining a healthy democracy. They study these topics by exploring guiding questions such as, “How have concepts of liberty and justice affected the United States democratic system of government?” and “How can power be balanced in government?”

Curriculum Mission:

Education for Civic Life in a Democracy

The primary purpose of a history & social science curriculum is to prepare students to have the knowledge and skills to become thoughtful and active participants in a democratic society and complex world.



Curriculum Vision:

All students will be educated in the histories of MA, the U.S., and the world. They will be prepared to make informed civic choices and assume responsibility for strengthening equality, justice, and liberty in and beyond the U.S.

Guiding Principles:

An effective history and social science education...

(allows for students) to study history and social science every year, from pre-kindergarten through grade 12.

improves reading comprehension by increasing students' content knowledge.

teaches students about using data analysis and digital tools as research and presentation techniques in the social sciences.

builds students' capacities for research, reasoning, making logical arguments, and thinking for themselves.

incorporates the study of current events and news/media literacy.

Guiding Principles:

An effective history and social science education...

teaches students about the legacy of democratic government.

teaches students to think historically...with the intent of helping students understand that their lives are connected to the long sweep of history.

incorporates diverse perspectives and acknowledges that perceptions of events are affected by race, ethnicity, culture, religion, education, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and personal experience.

integrates knowledge from many fields of study. The Content Standards are designed...not as isolated facts to be simply memorized, but as useable knowledge to be integrated into an understanding of the world.

develops social and emotional skills... These skills are also practical civic skills that students need to engage effectively with others in the public problem solving of civic and democratic life.

Standards of Practice

- 1. Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, & dispositions**
- 2. Develop focused questions or problems & conduct inquiries**
- 3. Organize information from multiple sources**
- 4. Analyze purpose & point of view; distinguish fact from opinion**
- 5. Evaluate the credibility & relevance of sources**
- 6. Argue or explain conclusions with valid reasoning & evidence**
- 7. Determine next steps and take appropriate action**

Itinerary:

- ★ Library of Congress
- ★ U.S. Supreme Court
- ★ U.S. Capitol Building
- ★ Presidential Monuments

Learning Standard:

- ★ Topic 2: The development of the United States government
- ★ Topic 3: The institutions of United States government
 - 3.1 Distinguish the three branches of government (separation of powers): Congress as the legislative branch, the Presidency and the executive agencies as the executive branch, and the Supreme Court and other federal inferior courts as the judicial branch.
- ★ Topic 4: Rights and responsibilities of citizens
 - 4.7. Apply knowledge of the meaning of leadership and the qualities of good leaders to evaluate political leaders at the community, the state and national levels.
 - 4.9. Explain the importance of public service, and identify career and other opportunities in public service at the local, state, and national levels.
 - 4.11. Examine the varied understandings of the role of elected representatives and discuss those who have demonstrated political courage or those whose actions have failed to live up to the ideals.

Itinerary:

Learning Standard:

- ★ National Archives
- ★ War Memorials
- ★ Museum of African American History & Culture
- ★ Holocaust Museum
- ★ Arlington National Cemetery & Wreath Laying Ceremony
- ★ Other Smithsonian Museums

★ *Topic 2: The development of the United States government using key Primary Sources:*

The Declaration of Independence, The Federalist Number 10, The Constitution of the United States, The U.S. Bill of Rights

★ *Topic 4: Rights and responsibilities of citizens*

4.2 Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens (e.g., voting, serving as a juror, paying taxes, serving in the military, running for and holding elected office) as compared to non-citizens.

4.3. Distinguish among civic, political, and private life

★ *Topic 5: The Constitution, Amendments, and Supreme Court decisions*

5.4 Explain the historical context and significance of laws enacted by Congress that have expanded the civil rights and equal protection for race, gender, disability...and explain how the evolving understanding of human rights has affected the movement for civil rights for all.

5.6b Interpretations of the due process clause and the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment,

Logistics:

Investigation
2018–2019



Planning
2019–2020



Implementation
2020–2021

Phase I: Investigation

Time Task

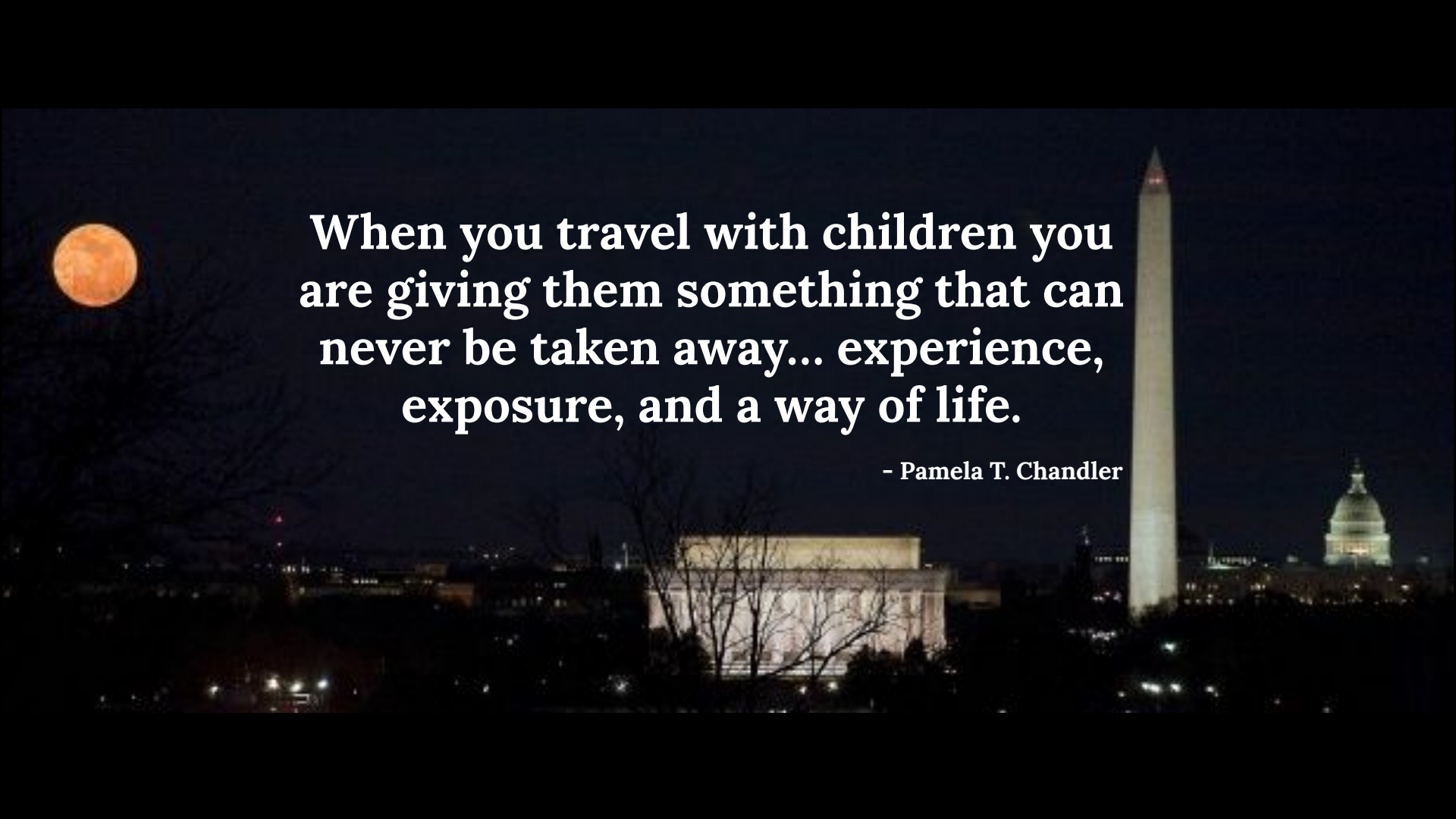
July 2018	Representatives from the history department attended DESE Civics Institute and began curriculum review
Oct. 2018-April 2019	Collected quotes from travel companies; researched and designed scenarios for logistics
Nov. 2018	Consulted w/ trip coordinators from Marshfield and Attleboro and obtained sample handbooks
February 13, 2019	Conducted Staff Survey
February 2019	Presented data to Social Studies Steering Committee
March 21, 2019	Attended Grade Level Meeting to share information/ideas/feedback, etc.
April 5, 2019	Conducted 2nd Staff Survey
Nov. 2018-Sept. 2019	Held series of meetings with administrative leadership
Sept. 27, 2019	Attended a Curtis CPO executive board meeting to introduce program

Phase 2: Planning

Sept. 2019	Formed DC Planning Committee: Principal, 8th grade House Administrator, Wellness Coordinator, Resource Officer, 3 grade 8 teachers
Sept. 23, 2019	Attended a Part II Parent Information Night (New York)
Oct. 21, 2019	Presentation & Proposal to School Committee
Oct. 24, 2019	Attend a Part I Parent Information Night (Quebec)
Nov. 2019	Negotiate contract w/ Education First Educational Tours
Fall 2019-Winter 2020	Organize & Plan Logistics: Cost, Scholarships, Fundraising
Winter-Spring 2020	Handbooks: Safety, Medical Protocol, and Code of Conduct; Housing, Itinerary, Contracts
Spring 2020	Staffing

Phase 3: Implementation

Dec. 2019-May 2021	Fundraising
April 2020	Create D.C. Website
May 2020	Parent Info. Night I: With EF; wellness components; registration opens
Sept. 2020	Confirm transportation, luggage guidelines, plan food/water for busses
Sept. 2020	Form parent support team
Jan. 2021	Recruit chaperones
Feb. 2021	Distribute t-shirt order form
Mar. 2021	Roommate survey to students; T-shirt orders due
Mar. - Apr. 2021	Roommate designations
April 2021	Travel day logistics; assign chaperones & busses; distribute release forms
April 2021	Parent Info. Night II: Itinerary, travel day logistics; release forms due
May 2021	Communicate roommate/chaperone/bus assignments; chaperone orientation
June 4, 2021	Student assembly; Distribute t-shirts, backpacks, (digital) handbooks
June 7, 2021	Luggage collection (tentative); t-shirt order corrections
June 8-11, 2021	Travel
June 14-18, 2021	Post-trip debrief meeting

A nighttime photograph of the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. The Washington Monument is a tall, white, obelisk-shaped structure on the right side of the image. The U.S. Capitol building is visible in the background on the right, illuminated with lights. A large, bright, orange-red full moon is visible in the dark sky on the left side of the image. The foreground is dark, with some silhouettes of trees and buildings.

**When you travel with children you
are giving them something that can
never be taken away... experience,
exposure, and a way of life.**

- Pamela T. Chandler