DEADLINES & UPDATES

SENDING PERSONAL IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION (PII) VIA E-MAIL

E-mail has been used on a regular basis to discuss referrals and eligibilities of students. However, new rules will change how we share and discuss issues that include personal identifiable information. Reminder: You can no longer e-mail names of students, referral or eligibility data, test scores, etc., for us to review. If you need to submit any information that contains PII to us, please call or e-mail to let us know. Then you can either send a fax or we can send you a link to upload the information to the ALSDE secure file transfer system.

GIFTED MONITORING THROUGH ASSIST

Compliance monitoring, including gifted monitoring, will be completed through the online ASSIST system. Training to use the system is provided by Logan Searcy in Research and Development at the ALSDE. Using this system, you will complete the Compliance Checklist online. Using the ASSIST GT monitoring template provided on the thumb drive and via e-mail reminders, you will upload required evidence and documentation on selected items. The names of student folders reviewed will be sent using the ALSDE secure file transfer system. You will receive a link that allows you to upload the document with the student names. This link may only be used once. Create a document with the names and upload the document using the link. Once you have uploaded the document, we receive an e-mail to download the document. Then we will send you a link to download the additional folder names for monitoring review. If you have any questions regarding these new procedures, please call or e-mail us.

SECOND GRADE CHILD FIND LEA SUMMARY REPORT
DEADLINE: APRIL 17, 2015

All students in the top two quadrants of each teacher form will be referred for gifted/enrichment services. The gifted specialist sends the school report from Second Grade Child Find to the coordinator who compiles the data into the LEA Summary report. This report shows the total number of referrals by race/ethnicity from each school. This report may be submitted any time after the first semester but no later than April 17, 2015.

GIFTED REFERRAL TRACKING LOG

Periodically review the tracking log to ensure accuracy. This will alleviate the “mad rush” in September prior to submitting the report.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GIFTED WEBINARS

Based on the PD Survey from August and September, the following webinars will be offered live and recorded. These webinars are not required, but are available for those individuals who need the information/training. The STI-PD emailed links have not been received by most attendees. Therefore, you will find the webinar links below. Please make sure you register in STI-PD to receive credit. You can click the link or copy and paste into your URL window. You could also add this to your calendar and paste the link into the notes section. These recorded webinars will eventually be added to the gifted Web site under Video Gallery and Teacher Resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Title</th>
<th>STI-PD #</th>
<th>Dates and Times</th>
<th>Recorded webinar link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STISETS for Gifted Forms</td>
<td>SESGift0019</td>
<td>October 10, 2014 9:00 AM or 2:00 PM</td>
<td><a href="https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/lsr.php?RCID=2051ccbd6e7644733bb6c49570891f6c">https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/lsr.php?RCID=2051ccbd6e7644733bb6c49570891f6c</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Gifted Specialist</td>
<td>SESGift0020</td>
<td>October 17, 2014 9:00 AM or 2:00 PM</td>
<td><a href="https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/ldr.php?RCID=38f2bdfb9c400d3b30fcdh8e134e93062">https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/ldr.php?RCID=38f2bdfb9c400d3b30fcdh8e134e93062</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Coordinator for Gifted</td>
<td>SESGift0021</td>
<td>October 31, 2014 9:00 AM or 2:00 PM</td>
<td><a href="https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/lsr.php?RCID=6c97d7ad">https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/lsr.php?RCID=6c97d7ad</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Have You Read…?
Reigniting Creativity and Innovation

www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2014/12/22/reigniting-creativity-and-innovation

“If you hear a voice within you say, ‘You cannot paint,’ then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced.” Vincent Van Gogh
This author, Jeff Rubingh, poses the question, “Why is it that, while artistic tools have become so advanced and provide artists with the opportunity to become so much more productive, the amount of art and the quality of art produced by artists has dropped so dramatically?” He provides data from the classical era compared to modern and answers his question with multiple reasons. At the end of the article he provides five suggestions to increase creativity in the classroom. What do you think?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>iPad Apps for Gifted Learners</th>
<th>SESGift0022</th>
<th>November 7, 2014 10:00 AM or 2:00 PM</th>
<th><a href="https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/lr.php?RCID=493d31f781e4df5b8e5950dfe876024">https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/lr.php?RCID=493d31f781e4df5b8e5950dfe876024</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project-based Learning vs. Problem-Based Learning</td>
<td>SESGift0024</td>
<td>November 21, 2014 10:00 AM or 2:00 PM</td>
<td><a href="https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/lr.php?RCID=058261d4664439927e0f47a399fe19">https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/lr.php?RCID=058261d4664439927e0f47a399fe19</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiating for Gifted Learners in the General Education Classrooms</td>
<td>SESGift0025</td>
<td>December 5, 2014 10:00 AM or 2:00 PM</td>
<td><a href="https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/lr.php?RCID=b0152e6eb4e6fa326ed98a72eca8e">https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/lr.php?RCID=b0152e6eb4e6fa326ed98a72eca8e</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Consultative Services</td>
<td>SESGift0026</td>
<td>December 12, 2014 10:00 AM or 2:00 PM</td>
<td>Coming soon.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are the current, live webinars or online course. Just click the link to attend. Please note that these webinars have two time options. The links for each are provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Title</th>
<th>STI-PD</th>
<th>Dates and Times</th>
<th>Link to webinar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Learning</td>
<td>SESGift0023</td>
<td>March 20, 2015 10:00 AM 2:00 PM</td>
<td><a href="https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/j.php?MTID=m0d2dbf5cac82093da4d97f475940a4c1">https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/j.php?MTID=m0d2dbf5cac82093da4d97f475940a4c1</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept-based Curriculum Writing 2015</td>
<td>SESGift0038</td>
<td>Ten-week, online MOODLE course starting January 26</td>
<td><a href="http://atim.cc/course/view.php?id=775">http://atim.cc/course/view.php?id=775</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently, this is the scheduled face-to-face workshop to develop a concept-based curriculum unit or gifted pull-out classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Title</th>
<th>STI-PD</th>
<th>Dates and Times</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept-Based Curriculum Writing</td>
<td>MEGA Conference</td>
<td>Face-to-face at MEGA Conference</td>
<td>Wednesday, July 22, and Thursday, July 23, of MEGA Conference will be devoted to concept-based curriculum writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SCOPE & SEQUENCE WEBINARS**

A series of webinars regarding the Scope and Sequence (S&S) will take place during the 2014-2015 school year. Each webinar will focus on one of the main standards in the S&S, such as metacognition, critical thinking, and social-emotional. We will concentrate on how to embed these items into your unit, the resources and models available to use and why this item is critical in order for gifted learners to reach their potential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD Title</th>
<th>PD #</th>
<th>Dates and Time</th>
<th>Webinar link</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S &amp; S: Cognitive-Critical Thinking</td>
<td>SESGift0028</td>
<td>January 23, 2015 2:00 PM</td>
<td><a href="https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/j.php?MTID=m0c487a618b04166a42e9b94c8a8ec37">https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/j.php?MTID=m0c487a618b04166a42e9b94c8a8ec37</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S &amp; S: Cognitive-Creative Thinking</td>
<td>SESGift0029</td>
<td>February 6, 2015 2:00 PM</td>
<td><a href="https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/j.php?MTID=m0c487a618b04166a42e9b94c8a8ec37">https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/j.php?MTID=m0c487a618b04166a42e9b94c8a8ec37</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S &amp; S: Cognitive-Creative Problem Solving</td>
<td>SESGift0030</td>
<td>February 13, 2015 2:00 PM</td>
<td><a href="https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/j.php?MTID=m4b5c69f1e9ab704055b860003a7d0d8b">https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/j.php?MTID=m4b5c69f1e9ab704055b860003a7d0d8b</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S &amp; S: Cognitive-Research Skills</td>
<td>SESGift0031</td>
<td>February 20, 2015 2:00 PM</td>
<td><a href="https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/j.php?MTID=mb7003a86cf34036ac70c7433c91574f">https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/j.php?MTID=mb7003a86cf34036ac70c7433c91574f</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**NEW GT SPECIALIST MONTHLY MEETINGS**

As a follow-up to the New Gifted Specialist meeting, we will host monthly meetings to provide support and guidance for new specialists. Meetings will take place the second Friday of each month at 1:00 PM. The next meeting is Friday, January 9, 2015. The web link is https://alsde.webex.com/alsde/j.php?MTID=m557ab6483cd88f4d9ba33bda514eb03e

You can register in STI-PD using the PD Title No.-SESGift0037 or PD Title-New Gifted Specialist Meeting. However, you are not required to attend any or all of the meetings, or need to be a new gifted specialist. We will have the webinar room door open for anyone that would like to “step in!”

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**Ripped Apart: A Civil War Mystery**

To mark the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War, the Smithsonian Museum is releasing its first educational game app, “Ripped Apart: A Civil War Mystery” in January 2015! Players assume the role of a Smithsonian intern to solve the puzzles, find clues, decipher documents, and explore cartes de visites, small photographs collected and traded among family members and friends in the mid-19th century.

“The app aims to simulate the type of investigative work done by our curators, fellows, and interns and to provide players with the same thrill of discovery we experience when solving a historical mystery,” said Carrie Kotcho, Director of Education and Outreach at the museum.

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**StemCon**

[http://rocketcenter.com/educators/STEMCon](http://rocketcenter.com/educators/STEMCon)

**June 4-7, 2015 OR July 9-12, 2015**

**Application Deadline: February 3, 2015**

The U.S. Space & Rocket Center® is offering scholarships to educators from Marshall Space Flight Center’s five-state region to attend a four-day, three-night professional development session featuring NASA-focused STEM content and resources. STEMcon sessions will be offered June 4-7, 2015, and July 9-12, 2015. The Marshall Space Flight Center region includes Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri and Tennessee. This is a terrific opportunity to learn new ways to bring science to life both inside and outside the classroom.

STEMcon provides 32 hours of intensive classroom, laboratory and training time. During the program, educators participate in astronaut-style training and simulations, along with activities designed to promote lifelong learning. All lessons and activities are correlated to Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and other national standards and are ready to use in various educational settings.

Funding for this program is provided by a grant from the NASA Competitive Program for Science Museums and Planetariums. The scholarship includes tuition, meals, lodging, lesson, materials and a stipend to help offset travel expenses.

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**Annual Conference of Environmental Education Association of Alabama (EEAA)**

“Alabama’s Biodiversity: It’s in our Hands!”

[http://eeaa.us](http://eeaa.us)

**March 19-21, 2015**

Join this group of formal and informal educators at the 4H Center in Columbiana, AL, to learn more about the world around you. The keynote speaker, Scot Duncan will present the “Southern Wonders” highlighting the state’s amazing biodiversity. Concurrent sessions and field trip will highlight the incredible biodiversity found in our state. Friday’s field trip includes:
• **Creating Outdoor Classrooms with Native Plants:** During this trip, you’ll travel to Jemison, Alabama, for a walking tour of *Petals from the Past* and learn about native plants and their benefits in school gardens.

• **Pioneer Village Tour:** For this trip you will be ferried across Lay Lake on a pontoon boat for a tour of the 4H Center’s Pioneer Village. Trip is easy to moderate due to the amount of walking.

• **Oak Mountain State Park Wildlife Rehabilitation Center:** Travel to the Alabama Wildlife Center which is “Alabama’s oldest and largest wildlife rehabilitation facility and annually receives almost 1,800 birds from over 100 different species.” This is sure to be an interesting trip. The trip is considered easy to moderate due to some uphill hiking.

• **The Science of Glass:** You’ll stay on site for this “trip” as Linda Munoz and Kay Stone share information on the science of glass and some different ways to teach it in your classroom. You will also create a unique piece of art.

**Pre-Conference Surprises!**

This year EEAA will offer two pre-conference day-long workshops to provide resources to both formal and informal Environmental Education (EE) providers.

**Choice One:**

**Leopold Education Project Workshop**

Co-sponsored by EEAA and Legacy: Partners in Environmental Education. The Leopold Education Project is a perfect blend of literature and natural science. Leopold teaches his readers to see the landscape and the interrelatedness of all organisms. Quoting Leopold, “The objective is to teach the student to see the land, to understand what he sees, and enjoy what he understands.” For more information, visit the Aldo Leopold Foundation at [www.aldoleopold.org](http://www.aldoleopold.org).

- Learn more about Aldo Leopold.
- Participate in several activities presented in the material.
- Receive $100 in curriculum materials to accompany Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac*.
- Workshop materials include:
  - Leopold Education Project curriculum guide consisting of 21 lesson plans designed to align with the essays found in Aldo Leopold’s conservation classic, *A Sand County Almanac*.
  - Exploration Task Cards featuring prompts in helping people of all ages explore the outdoors through different activities based on essays from *A Sand County Almanac*.
  - Exploring the Outdoors with Aldo Leopold hands-on activities teaching observation skills, plant and animal identification, natural history, land stewardship, and outdoors skills.
  - A CD featuring a slide presentation to teach digital photography.
  - Green Fire documentary film highlighting Leopold’s extraordinary career, and tracing how he shaped and influenced the modern environmental movement.

For more information, contact Anita Salinas at 251-422-5161 or [asalinas@mcpss.com](mailto:asalinas@mcpss.com)

**Choice Two:**

**Environmental Education (EE) In the Classroom**

*Time: 9:00-3:00*

Cost: $25.00 per person. Lunch is included.

Your students can name 100 corporate logos but cannot identify ten birds in their schoolyard. What do your students really know about the world around them? Are you looking for hands-on, real world activities to engage students in authentic learning? The EE is more than Earth Day! Join professors, scientists, and teachers as we model how to easily integrate EE activities into your current curriculum in science, language art, social studies, math, art, etc. We will spend the day engaged in EE activities that are aligned to the College and Career Ready Standards and STEM/STREAM. Experience education from a different perspective: in the schoolyard. Learn how to use your schoolyard as a field trip location for learning experiences and leave the workshop with an EE kit filled with resources ready to use in Grades K-12 classrooms!

**Why teach EE?**

Research studies show that when core subjects are taught using the environment as an integrating context, there is:

- Reduced discipline and classroom management problems.
- Increased engagement, and enthusiasm for learning.
- Increased critical and creative thinking skills and problem-solving abilities.
- Increased student pride and ownership in accomplishments.
- Increased achievement.

Workshop materials include:

- Posters of Alabama wildlife, plants, and environment, such as, birds, plants, soils, and waterways,
Multiple curriculum guides aligned to College and Career Ready Standards with activities that are multi-disciplinary and ready-to-use.

PowerPoint presentations that motivate and engage students to explore the schoolyard.

Children’s Literature books.

Field guides to use on your school grounds.

List of Alabama EE experts to use as consultants, speakers, mentors for students.

For more information, contact Shirley Farrell at sfarrell@alsde.edu or 334-242-8317

Talents Unlimited Conference
“Catch the Wave!”
March 23-March 27, 2015
Mobile, AL

Talents Unlimited is a research-based critical and creative thinking model that aligns with any curriculum. Educators will be trained on the model, then have the opportunity to observe its implementation in a Talents Unlimited Demonstration Site. Participants will attend breakout sessions to address content areas and plan for school wide training with their team. The conference schedule is differentiated to meet your needs: Choose from

- 2-Day Initial Training
- 2-Day Immersion in Talents Unlimited Demonstration Site
- 1-Day Mini-Sessions

Lunch will be provided each day. An administrator can register for FREE with a five-person school team! For registration or more information please read the flier at the end of the newsletter and/or contact Kelly Lomax, Talents Unlimited Supervisor at 251-221-5178 or klomax@mcpss.com.

Winter of Webinars
http://greenteacher.com/webinars/

Upcoming webinars from Green Teacher magazine are an interactive way for educators to kick start their 2015 learning goals! Green Teacher webinars provide professional development, with the option of earning a certificate upon completion. The series features some of the most important thinkers in the field of environmental education addressing vital and relevant topics. Starting in January we have a growing list of webinars, with absolutely FREE registration available to all. Click the link to register.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engaging (Urban) Youth in Outdoor Education</th>
<th>Envirothon – what? why? how?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>with Keith Williams</td>
<td>with Jessica Kakneviucius</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, January 13th from 7:30-8:30 pm EST/6:30-7:30 CST</td>
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<td>Students are more disconnected from being outside than ever before which presents additional challenges to the outdoor educator. In addition students are distracted by electronics and numerous pop culture diversions. Urban students are especially removed from the natural world so that the simple act of being outside in the woods becomes a big deal. To be effective, environmental and outdoor education must be relevant for its constituents. This session will discuss theory and techniques for engaging even the toughest of students in the outdoors.</td>
<td>Thursday, January 22nd from 7:30-8:30 pm EST /6:30-7:30 CST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envirothon is one of North America’s largest outdoor environmental competitions – reaching over 500,000 students each year in 57 US states and Canadian provinces. The program aims to give high school students the opportunity to directly interact with the natural world and learn important skills directly from those working in the natural resources. With many students becoming disconnected from the environment, this program offers a new way for teenagers to get engaged and explore potential future career pathways. Learn how you can get involved in Envirothon, and what it can do for your students.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Taking Kids to the Community</th>
<th>Citizen Science Tackles Invasive Species</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>with Bob Coulter</td>
<td>with Christine Voyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, January 28th from 7:30-8:30 pm EST/6:30-7:30 CST</td>
<td>Wednesday, February 25th from 7:30-8:30pm EST/6:30-7:30 CST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It takes a lot more energy, persistence, and vision to take your kids past the scripted curriculum and engage them in real-world, community-based work. In this information-packed webinar, Bob Coulter will be sharing his own experiences based on 30 years of direct work with kids, along with insights from two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From creeping vines to munching beetles to pinching crabs, invasive species are on the move. Monitoring the spread and mitigating the impacts invasive species wreak can be daunting tasks for scientists and managers. They need classrooms and communities to help. As students and community members contribute</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
National Science Foundation-funded research projects he led that explored the ways in which teachers who get their kids out in the community are different: How they see their jobs, how they see learning, and how they see childhood. If you’re getting out in the community, you’re a star. Come see what makes you special, and pick up some research-based tips to expand your practice.

Observations and expertise to invasive species citizen science efforts, they learn about local ecosystems, engage in science practices, and use 21st century skills like collaboration and problem solving. In this webinar, Christine Voyer will share resources and the steps needed to help engage.

**Popping the Bubble Wrap for Child Health**
with Mariana Brussoni
Tuesday, March 10th from 7:30-8:30pm
EST/6:30-7:30 CST

Do we overprotect our children? Might our attempts to keep children safe actually do more harm than good? This webinar will consider these questions and what we might be able to do to restore balance. Mariana will share some tools for talking to parents, educators and others about the importance of risk taking, and will provide an example from her research showing the effects of good play space design on children’s behavior.

Sponsored by Green Teacher Magazine.

**NEWS FROM AAGC**

**Presentations at the AAGC Conference**
http://alabamagifted.org

Although the call for Proposals is still months away, start thinking about presenting at the annual conference. During gifted program monitoring, we see fabulous concept-based units, activities, culminating performance tasks, service learning projects, etc. Please share with your colleagues the wonderful things you are doing. Gifted Specialists want to know what other systems are doing, what additional forms are used to help them work smarter and not harder, how do other systems conduct Second Grade Child Find (timelines), etc. Please consider sharing your hard work with the student outcomes (if appropriate). The conference is only as good as the presentations. Please share those wonderful things you do!

**GEM -Gifted Education Month**
http://www.alabamagifted.org

January is Gifted Education Month. During this month you are encouraged to invite legislators to your classroom to see what gifted education is all about. The AAGC Executive Board has created a calendar of suggestions of what you and your students can do to advocate for gifted education. For details, please read the letter and calendar at the end of this newsletter. The AAGC organization asks that you share your GEM activities with them. Please share your photos and news with Amy Waine at bamswaine@aol.com.

**GRANT & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

**My Macy’s District Grants Program**
http://www.federated-fds.com/community/grant-information/district-grants/instructions.aspx

**Deadline: Ongoing**

The My Macy’s District Grants Program provides funding to charitable organizations from coast to coast for general operating project and program support. This organization program areas within schools of After-School, Arts, Early Childhood, General Education, Health/PE, Math, Reading, Science/Environmental, Social Studies, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). Click on the link to learn more about this grant and the online application process.
Classroom Grants
http://www.aaeteachers.org/index.php/classroom-grant-application
Deadline: March 1, 2015
Grants are available from the Association of American Educators (AAE) Foundation for up to $500. Classroom grants can be used for a variety of projects and materials, including but not limited to books, software, calculators, math manipulatives, art supplies, audio-visual equipment, and lab materials. Funds must be used within one year of the application deadline. Classroom grants are available to all full-time educators who have not received a scholarship or grant from AAE in the previous three grant cycles (or 18 months). Awards are competitive. AAE members receive additional weight in the scoring rubric.

Fund for Teachers Professional Development Grants
http://www.fundforteachers.org/
Deadline: January 29, 2015
Fund for Teachers provides PK-12 teachers with up to $5,000 per person or $10,000 per team (two or more eligible teachers) to support professional development activities. Applicants must have a minimum of three years classroom teaching experience, spend at least 50 percent of their time in the classroom, and intend to return to teaching in their district in the following consecutive school year. All funds must be expended in summer 2015. (Teachers who are employed by year-long institutions may use their funds during the equivalent of their summer vacation).

Lowe’s® Toolbox for Education®
http://www.fundforteachers.org/
Deadline: February 13, 2015
Each year, the Lowe’s Toolbox for Education grants program contributes more than $5 million to fund improvements at public schools in the United States. Projects should fall into one of the following categories: technology upgrades, tools for STEM programs, facility renovations and safety improvements. What project have you wanted to implement? Apply now for this grant which provides funding for projects of $2000-$5000.

INSPIRATION by VENSPIRED
http://venspired.com/6155-2/
You can download this poster at the above URL.

“One of the most important lessons we can teach kids is to fully embrace the idea of ‘being yourself.’ The best thing you can resolve to become this year is “you.” You are enough. This poster reminds us that gifted students can and will mask who they are in order to “fit in” with their age peers. We can help students understand who they are and that “they are enough!” They do not have to be something they are not, just to have friends. Real friends want their friends to be themselves. Something similar to this has been on Face Book, focused on helping women to know that they are enough! We all need an extra pat on the back and a hug.

CONTESTS & OTHER REAL-WORLD AUDIENCES
ALSDE GIFTED WEB PAGE
Deadline: Ongoing
Keep sending those photos!

Letters About Literature
http://www.read.gov/letters/
Deadline: January 15, 2015
There is still time to participate! Letters About Literature (LAL) is a reading and writing contest for students in grades 4-12. Students are asked to read a book, poem or speech and write to that author (living or dead) about how the book affected them personally. Letters are judged on state and national levels. Tens of thousands of students from across the country enter LAL each year. If you are in Grades 4-12, you are eligible to enter the LAL reading and writing contest. Here are the Rules and
Guidelines. Here is a Teaching Guide. The LAL Teaching Guide provides activities teachers can use to guide their students through the book discussion and letter-writing process. The guide addresses the LAL teaching strategies and ways in which the program can dovetail with national standards for teaching reading and writing as well as Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Workshops are included are worksheets for duplication and assessment checklists.

C-SPAN StudentCam
http://www.studentcam.org/
Deadline: January 20, 2015

StudentCam is C-SPAN’s annual national video documentary competition that encourages students to think critically about issues that affect our communities and our nation. Students in grades 6-12 are asked to create a short (5-7 minute) video documentary on a topic related to the competition theme listed below. The theme is “The Three Branches and You.” Tell a story that demonstrates how a policy, law, or action by either the executive, legislative, or judicial branch has affected you or your community. Students may compete individually, or in teams of either 2 or 3 members. All documentaries must contain a small amount of supporting C-SPAN footage that relates to the chosen topic. Downloadable C-SPAN footage can be found here. C-SPAN’s philosophy is to show varying sides of each issue. StudentCam documentaries must show a variety of points of view related to the chosen topic.

Great American Can Roundup
http://www.cancentral.com/recycling-sustainability/programs-initiatives/great-american-can-roundup
Deadline: Register by January 16, 2015

Schools compete to recycle the most aluminum cans per capita between America Recycles Day (November 15, 2014) and Earth Day (April 22, 2015). Not only will your school earn money from recycling cans, but you could be named “National Champion” and receive a prize of $5,000. Each state will have a “State Champion” named and receive $1,000. For more information, click on the link.

ExploraVision Awards
http://www.exploravision.org/
Deadline: January 30, 2015

Sponsored by Toshiba and the NSTA, ExploraVision encourages K-12 students of all interests, skills, and ability levels to create and explore a vision of future technology by combining their imaginations with the tools of science. All inventions and innovations should result from creative thinking and problem solving. To enter ExploraVision, students will work in groups of 2-4 people — simulating a real research and development (R&D) team. A teacher will serve as team coach, and teams can also choose an optional mentor. ExploraVision prizes include a savings bond worth up to $10,000, technology for schools, and a special gift for each student, teacher, and mentor.

Trees Rock! Video & Essay Contests
Essay Deadline: February 6, 2015

Students in Grades 3-8 enrolled in a state accredited elementary school are invited to enter the Scotties Trees Rock! Video and essay contests for the chance to win up to $10,000 for their school. For more information or to register, click the link above. Essay Contest: Essays should answer the question, “Why are trees so important to you and your community?” Essays should be 150 words or less. Winners and their teachers will each receive a $250 gift card. Essay entries are due February 6, 2015. Age Groups: 3rd Grade, 4th Grade, 5th Grade, 6th Grade, 7th Grade, 8th Grade, Adults.

Belk Service Learning Challenge
http://www.belkservicelearningchallenge.com/challenge
Deadline: February 27, 2015

Belk, Discovery Education, and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) invite teachers to lead students in Grades 6-8 in the application of science, technology, and social studies concepts to community issues with the Belk Service Learning Challenge. The goal is to support and strengthen the community while improving students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Teachers will approve teams of two, three, or four middle school students to work together to create a one- to two-minute video addressing a community problem. Teachers will provide guidance to the students in creating and developing the video entry. Teachers will also register the team and submit the entry on the website. The video entry must include the following components:
• A complete description of a community problem, including why it was chosen and how it impacts the community.
• A detailed summary of the team's research, including who or what is impacted the most by the problem, the current situation related to the issue, what led to the problem, and what has been done to address it.
• An action plan and a clear plan to scale the project to a broader audience.

To learn more about this challenge or to apply, click this link:
http://www.belkservicelearningchallenge.com/challenge

BOOK-TEACHER OR STUDENT

2014 Nerdy Book Awards


These categories are listed on the Nerdy Book Club Web site. The rest of the categories will appear in the February FoG. The link to each category is included to read the introduction from each blogger. Click the link to read more about the selections from each announcer.

Picture Books


Teri Lesesne announced these winning books. She is the author of the Heinemann title Reading Ladders, is a former middle school teacher, and currently teaches classes in literature for children and young adults as a Professor in the Department of Library Science at Sam Houston State University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Dance Like Starlight: One Ballerina's Dream by Kristy Dempsey</th>
<th>Blizzard by John Rocco</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emily’s Blue Period by Cathleen Daly</td>
<td>Flashlight by Lizi Boyd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flora and the Penguin by Molly Idle</td>
<td>Gaston by Kelly DiPucchio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hooray for Hat by Brian Won</td>
<td>Hug Machine by Scott Campbell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kid Sheriff and the Terrible Toads by Bob Shea and Lane Smith</td>
<td>Little Elliot, Big City by Mike Curato</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louise Loves Art</td>
<td>Kelly Light</td>
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<tr>
<td>My Teacher Is a Monster</td>
<td>Peter Brown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nana in the City</td>
<td>Lauren Castillo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ninja!</td>
<td>Arree Chung</td>
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<tr>
<td>Once Upon an Alphabet</td>
<td>Oliver Jeffers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quest</td>
<td>Aaron Becker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sam and Dave Dig a Hole</td>
<td>Mac Barnett and Jon Klassen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sparky</td>
<td>Jenny Offill</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend</td>
<td>Dan Santat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Book With No Pictures</td>
<td>B.J. Novak</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Farmer and the Clown</td>
<td>Marla Frazee</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Girl and the Bicycle</td>
<td>Mark Pett</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Most Magnificent Thing</td>
<td>Ashley Spires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pigeon Needs a Bath</td>
<td>Mo Willems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Troublemaker</td>
<td>Lauren Castillo</td>
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### Early Readers and Chapter Books

Alyson Beecher, who is the Literacy and Curriculum Specialist with the Pasadena Unified School District in California, announced the Early Readers and Chapter Books Awards. She has a serious book addiction and celebrates books as part of the Nerdy Book Club. You can find her on Twitter as @alybee930 and her blog: Kid Lit Frenzy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My New Friend is So Fun!</th>
<th>Dory Fantasmagory</th>
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<tr>
<td>by Mo Willems</td>
<td>by Abby Hanlon</td>
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<tr>
<th>Waiting is Not Easy</th>
<th>Lulu's Mysterious Mission</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>by Mo Willems</td>
<td>by Judith Viorst</td>
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<tr>
<th>The Chicken Squad: The First Misadventure</th>
<th>Shelter Pet Squad #1: Jelly Bean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>by Doreen Cronin</td>
<td>by Cynthia Lord</td>
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<tr>
<th>Leroy Ninker Saddles Up</th>
<th>Marty McGuire Has Too Many Pets</th>
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<tr>
<td>by Kate DiCamillo</td>
<td>by Kate Messner</td>
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<tr>
<th>Princess in Black</th>
<th>Like Carrot Juice on a Cupcake</th>
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<tr>
<td>by Shannon Hale &amp; Dean Hale</td>
<td>by Julie Sternberg</td>
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### Middle Grades and Young Adult Nonfiction

Donalyn Miller, who has taught fourth, fifth, and sixth grade English and Social Studies, announced the Middle Grades and Young Adult Nonfiction Awards. She is the author of two books about encouraging students to read and fostering lifelong reading habits, *The Book Whisperer* (Jossey-Bass, 2009) and *Reading in the Wild* (Jossey-Bass, 2013). Donalyn co-hosts the monthly Twitter chats, #titletalk (with Nerdy co-founder, Colby Sharp) & #bproots (with Dr. Teri Lesesne), and facilitates the Twitter reading initiative, #bookaday. You can find her on Twitter at @donalynbooks or under a pile of books somewhere, happily reading.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angel Island: Gateway to Gold Mountain</td>
<td>Russell Freedman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beetle Busters: A Rogue Insect and the People Who Track It</td>
<td>Loree Griffin Burns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Girl Dreaming</td>
<td>Jacqueline Woodson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic, Ahoy!: Investigating the Great Pacific Garbage Patch</td>
<td>Patricia Newman and Annie Crawley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bugged: How Insects Changed History</td>
<td>Sarah Albee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red Madness: How a Medical Mystery Changed What We Eat</td>
<td>Gail Jarrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreaming in Indian: Contemporary Native American Voices</td>
<td>Lisa Charleyboy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sisters</td>
<td>Raina Telgemeier</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Deafo</td>
<td>Cece Bell</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia</td>
<td>Candace Fleming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes Wide Open: Going Behind the Environmental Headlines</td>
<td>Paul Fleischman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Star Won’t Go Out: The Life and Words of Esther Grace Earl</td>
<td>Esther Earl</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guys Read: True Stories Edited</td>
<td>Jon Scieszczka</td>
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*Note: The table contains a list of books with their respective authors.*
Colby Shar, who is a third grade teacher in Parma, Michigan, announced the Middle Grades Fiction Awards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absolutely Almost</th>
<th>Nightingale’s Nest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>by Lisa Graff</td>
<td>by Nikki Loftin</td>
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<tr>
<th>Boys of Blur</th>
<th>Rain, Reign</th>
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<tr>
<td>by N.D. Wilson</td>
<td>by Ann M. Martin</td>
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<tr>
<th>Circa Now</th>
<th>Revolution</th>
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<tr>
<td>by Amber McRee Turner</td>
<td>by Deborah Wiles</td>
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<tr>
<th>Courage for Beginners</th>
<th>A Snicker of Magic</th>
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<tr>
<td>by Karen Harrington</td>
<td>by Natalie Lloyd</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dash</th>
<th>The Boundless</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>by Kirby Larson</td>
<td>by Kenneth Oppel</td>
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<tr>
<th>Death by Toilet Paper</th>
<th>The Ghosts of Tupelo Landing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>by Donna Gephart</td>
<td>by Sheila Turnage</td>
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<th>Five, Six, Seven, Nate</th>
<th>The Meaning of Maggie</th>
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<tr>
<td>by Tim Federle</td>
<td>by Jean Sovern</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Fourteenth Goldfish</em></td>
<td>Jennifer Holm</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Night Gardener</em></td>
<td>Jonathan Auxier</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Great Greene Heist</em></td>
<td>Varian Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Riverman</em></td>
<td>Aaron Starmer</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Greenglass House</em></td>
<td>Kate Milford</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Secret Hum of a Daisy</em></td>
<td>Tracy Holzcer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Half a Chance</em></td>
<td>Cynthia Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Witch’s Boy</em></td>
<td>Kelly Barnhill</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>How to Outrun a Crocodile When Your Shoes Are Untied</em></td>
<td>Jess Keating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Upside Down in the Middle of Nowhere</em></td>
<td>Julie Lamana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Mark of the Dragonfly</em></td>
<td>Jaleigh Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>West of the Moon</em></td>
<td>Margi Preus</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Nest</em></td>
<td>Esther Ehrlich</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This Web site provides a five-minute video explaining one component, *cartes de visites* or small photographs, from the new education app available free from the Smithsonian Institute. This new app based on real people and events in history. Curators and educators used the Museum's rich collections to develop the game and its characters. To download the app checkout the APPs section of the newsletter.

**Student Discovery Sets**

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/student-discovery-sets/

The new Library of Congress (LOC) Student Discovery Sets bring together historical artifacts and one-of-a-kind documents on a wide range of topics, from history to science to literature. Interactive tools let students zoom in, draw to highlight details, and conduct open-ended primary source analysis. Full teaching resources are available for each set. These are offered free through iBook.

**Optical Illusion Photographs from Nature**


On December 08, 2014, Alessia Etkin posted a collection of 20 incredible photographs. Having the camera in the right hands at the right place can capture nature as never seen before. Their first appearance may deceive you. Here given are 20 optical illusions, which are rare, stunning and can only be found in nature. These could be used for great story starters, examples of creating photographic illusions, discussions on perspectives, and/or using illusions in film and video to create mood, plot, and scenery.

**National Geographic Covers**


“The cover of National Geographic is an invitation. ‘Come look,’ it says. ‘See what wonder the world contains.’”—Chris Johns, former Editor in Chief. This site features a few covers from this iconic magazine.

**World Digital Library (WDL)**

http://www.wdl.org/en/

The World Digital Library (WDL) is a project of the U.S. Library of Congress, carried out with the support of the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), and in cooperation with libraries, archives, museums, educational institutions, and international organizations from around the world. Search 11,051 primary source documents from 193 countries between 1200 BCE and 2000 CE. The WDL makes it possible to discover, study, and enjoy cultural treasures and significant historical documents on one site, in a variety of ways. Content on the WDL includes books, manuscripts, maps, newspapers, journals, prints and photographs, sound recordings, and films. The WDL items can be browsed by place, time, topic, type of item, language, and contributing institution. The search feature can be used to search all of the metadata and descriptions and the full text of printed books on the site. Each item on the WDL is accompanied by an item-level description that explains its significance and historical context. Additional information about selected items is provided by curator videos. Other features include advanced image-viewing, timelines, interactive maps, and in-depth thematic sections on selected topics (in preparation).

**BookBub**

https://www.bookbub.com/home/

BookBub alerts you to limited-time free & discounted ebooks matched to your interests. It's free to join, you can read on any device, and the books are yours to own. What is unique is that children's literature is included in the interest categories. You can select picture books and novels. This will help you find literature to use on your devices at discounted to free prices!

**Public Domain Photos**

Although these photos are in the public domain, students must cite the photographic source.

**Pixabay**

http://pixabay.com/

Pixabay is a repository of high quality public domain photographs, graphics, and drawings.

**Every Stock Photo**
This site is a search engine for free which come from many sources and are licensed-specific. Once you click on the photo you can click on the license tab to determine the requirements and how the photo may be used.

**Morgue File**

http://www.morguefile.com/archive/

This is a free collection of high quality photographs. The photos do have licenses with requirements of how the photo may be used or how to cite the source.

**The Commons: Flickr**

https://www.flickr.com/commons

In collaboration with The Library of Congress, the Commons launched this Web site on January 16, 2008. Currently many institutes and individuals contribute photographs to be used by the public. Each photograph has a license that explains requirements for use.

### AFFECTIVE RESOURCES

**10 Social & Emotional Needs of the Gifted**


Ian Byrd in his newsletter, Byrdseed, provides a list of ten social and emotional issues of gifted learners. Each item includes a brief overview with links to additional readings. Click the link to learn about each of the following needs. These ten items are

1. Strengths can be flip sides of the coin.
2. Asynchronous development of physical, emotional, cognitive, and social growth.
3. Doubt their giftedness.
4. Social challenges from peers and adults.
5. Older students may take fewer risks.
7. Shyness is a trait shared by many gifted learners.
9. Diverse teaching methods to meet needs.
10. Need to learn about their giftedness.

### SCIENCE TIDBIT


The European Space Agency’s orbiting Rosetta spacecraft is expected to come within four miles of the surface of comet 67P/Churyumov–Gerasimenko in February 2015. The low flyby will be an opportunity for Rosetta to obtain imagery with a resolution of a few inches per pixel.

### FIELD EXPERIENCES

The purpose of the field study experience is to enhance and enrich the content and skills from units of study. The trip becomes an embedded activity within the concept-based curriculum unit. This month’s featured trip is **Memorial Hall Museum Online** at [http://memorialhall.mass.edu/exhibits/index.html](http://memorialhall.mass.edu/exhibits/index.html).

This Web site offers a look at history in New England. Choose from several themes:

- **Turns of the Centuries** - An interactive exhibit that focuses on three past "turns of the centuries"—1700, 1800 and 1900. Each of these Turns was a major benchmark in American history: the Colonial period; the Federal period; and the Progressive and Colonial Revival period. In the exhibit, five themes are explored across these time periods: Native Americans, African Americans, Newcomers (settlers, and immigrants), the Land, and Family Life.

- **Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704** - This Web site explores a dramatic pre-dawn assault in Deerfield, Massachusetts. This raid took place in 1704 in contested lands; was it an unprovoked, brutal attack on an innocent village of English settlers? Was it a justified military action against a stockade settlement in a Native homeland? Or was it something else? Explore this Web site and hear all sides of the story—then you decide.

- **Shay’s Rebellion and the Making of a Nation** - Only three years after the American Revolution ended, thousands of Massachusetts’ citizens took up arms against their new state government. This Web site tells the story of Shays’ Rebellion, and a crucial period in our nation’s founding when the survival of the republican experiment in government was neither destined nor assured.
• **Arts and Crafts Moment in Deerfield Web Site** - In the early 20th century, Deerfield, Massachusetts was home to a distinctive manifestation of the American Arts and Crafts Movement. Artisans here created exquisite Colonial-inspired needlework as well as rugs, basketry, pottery, metalwork, furniture and weavings. Useful as well as beautiful, the art objects presented in this website are set against the historical and cultural backdrop of a unique time and place.

• **African Americans in Early Rural New England** - Explore African American history in New England and discover a little-known chapter of their story of slavery and freedom in America.

• **Civil War Roll Call** - Interested in the Civil War? Browse highlights from our online collection of Civil War-related objects, images and documents, or explore our interactive features. This Web site’s home page offers teacher lessons and other online collections.

As with any field trip experience, what before, during, and after experiences have you planned for students to further the studies of the concept-based curriculum? What Essential Understandings will students discover through Essential Questions and/or Scaffold Questions as they experience the field study? What questions would you add to your “virtual field trip” for other classes to use for research and exploration?

**CONCEPT-BASED CURRICULUM**

**EUs, EQs, SQs**

This month’s featured EUs are related to History. Each concept-based unit would only have 3-5 EUs. Remember that all SQs may not be used because your students may have the prior knowledge. One EU could take months to teach. The SQs are listed but the activities to help students answer the questions are not included. What additional scaffold questions can you add to these EUs? What activities would you include with the questions? These are a sample of EUs associated with History. In addition, Talents Unlimited stems will be included each month to demonstrate how easy it is to embed this critical and creative thinking skills model into concept-based curriculum.

**Essential Understandings, Essential Questions, and Scaffold Questions:**

**EU:** Conflict resolution can involve aggression, compromise, cooperation, and change.

**EQ:** How can conflict resolution involve aggression, compromise, cooperation, and change?

**SQ:** What is conflict?

**SQ:** What causes conflict?

**Activity: Talents Unlimited** - Forecasting skill #1 Students will work in small groups to predict many, varied causes of conflict. Students will create a list of these causes and share them in whole group.

**SQ:** Have you been in conflict?

**SQ:** What is conflict resolution?

**SQ:** What is power?

**SQ:** How is power gained, used, and justified?

**SQ:** How do competing interests influence how power is distributed and exercised?

**SQ:** How are governments created, structured maintained, and changed?

**SQ:** What happens in the absence of government?

**SQ:** What is aggression?

**SQ:** What causes aggression?

**SQ:** Tell me about a time you were aggressive?

**SQ:** Is aggression positive or negative. Explain your answer?

**SQ:** What is compromise?

**SQ:** What would happen if no one compromised?

**SQ:** What is cooperation?

**SQ:** What is change?

**SQ:** Name things that can change.

**SQ:** Do only living things change? Why or why not?

**SQ:** How does conflict resolution involve aggression?

**SQ:** How does conflict resolution involve compromise?

**SQ:** How does conflict resolution involve cooperation?

**SQ:** How does conflict resolution involve change?

**EU:** People develop systems to manage conflict and create order.

**EQ:** Why do people develop systems to manage conflict and create order?

**SQ:** What are systems?

**SQ:** Name systems that you have studied.
SQ: Categorize the systems into man-made and occurring in nature.
SQ: Name systems to which you belong.
SQ: What systems are created by people?
SQ: How do systems create order?
SQ: How do systems manage conflict?

EU: People respond to and resolve conflicts in a variety of ways.
EQ: Why do people respond to and resolve conflicts in a variety of ways?
SQ: Can an individual make a difference in history?
SQ: Why do people respond to situations in different ways?
  Activity: A current issue could be used as the activity to look at the different sides of the issue.
SQ: Why do people fight?
  Activity: You could use a historical or current event to determine the cause(s) for the fight. A simulation would also create the “Aha” learning moment! Students may discuss current school or community issues that could lead to a service learning project.
SQ: What is worth fighting for?
SQ: What is revolution?
SQ: How do people resolve conflicts?

EU: Democratic societies must balance the rights and responsibilities of individuals with the common good.
EQ: How must democratic societies balance the rights and responsibilities of individuals with the common good?

EU: Local, national, and international relationships are affected by economic transactions.
EQ: How are local, national, and international relationships affected by economic transactions?

EU: Decisions concerning the allocation and use of economic resources impact individuals and groups.
EQ: How do decisions concerning the allocation and use of economic resources impact individuals and groups?

EU: Geography influences needs, culture, opportunities, choices, interests, and skills.
EQ: How does geography influence needs, culture, opportunities, choices, interests, and skills?

EU: Knowledge of the past helps one understand the present and make decisions about the future.
EQ: How does knowledge of the past help one understand the present and make decisions about the future?

EU: Scientific and technological developments affect people’s lives and the environment, and transform societies.
EQ: How does scientific and technological developments affect people’s lives and the environment, and transform societies?