

# iHistorian<sup>©</sup>

(inform - inspire - instruct)

A K-12 Resource for ALL History / Social Studies Teachers

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## Mastering Your Parent-Teacher Conferences

If your school site does not have a set protocol for parent-teacher conferences (beyond ... “here is when they are scheduled”), you may want to take this time to prepare for this great opportunity to develop relationships that will benefit the students. Scanning multiple resources and experiences, here are some ways to get the most out of your conferences.

1. **Have a plan or outline on what you hope to accomplish** - Conferences can vary in length depending on your grade level. Remind yourself that your plan should be flexible to the needs of the conference.
2. **Have a Greeting** - have a standard, professional...

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## Around the State, Legislature (H/SS Updates)

- AB 331 - Pupil instruction: high school graduation requirements: ethnic studies for high school is currently in revision for model curriculum; expected to become a requirement for 2024/25 school year. Status: awaiting vote in appropriations.

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## Are Your Students “Civic-Ready”? (K-3)

Can the students relate laws to their personal everyday lives? Do they have a tangible understanding of what laws are and equally important, why they are necessary and how they work? Try Curriculum Leadership Institute’s recently revised lessons on [Life, Liberty and Law](#) for K-3.

## Constitution Day Conference Updates (All grades)

On Saturday, September 14, 2019, I was able to attend the 15th Annual Constitution Day Conference: Resources for Teachers, K-12 at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library - [Keynote Address](#) Speaker Kenneth Morris. Notes and links from the four sessions are included here:

1. **State Seal of Civic Engagement** (graduating seniors) - a special seal attached to a high school

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## CDE Professional Learning & Curriculum Resources

Assembly Bill 97 allocated funding to provide professional development and resources for teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals on the History-Social Science Framework, including, but not ...

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## Columbus Day? *Letting Kids Decide*

Columbus Day is celebrated in the United States, Spain, and many countries in Latin America. Whether Christopher Columbus is thought of positively or negatively depends on point-of-view. The following lessons, resources, activities, and videos present a range of opinions. [\(K-5\)](#) [\(6-8\)](#) [\(9-12\)](#)

## Upcoming Dates

- 10/2-4 - [MS Parent Conferences](#) (Min. Days)
- 10/3 - [Regional College & Career Fair](#) - 4-8PM, Agua Caliente Resort, RM
- 10/4 - [End of First Quarter](#) (HS)
- 10/7 - [District PD Day \(Schedule\)](#)

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### Mastering Your Parent-Teacher Conferences

2. *(continued)* but welcoming greeting.
3. **Offer conversation starters** - when parents get a chance to share what is on their mind, you bring them into partnership in teaching their child. Most parents are much more nervous about the conference than you are.
  - a. “What did your child like about school last year?”
  - b. “What are some things you would like him/her to accomplish this year?”
  - c. “Do you have any concerns?”
4. **Engage students** - in the conversation about their progress, goals, and achievements (after all, the conference is about their success).
5. **Stay Positive** - Conferences are about bringing solutions to the table to help the student be successful. You may have concerns to address, but recognizing positives sets a tone of collaboration.
6. **Keep perspective on meeting purpose** - Concerns can and should be addressed, but keep perspective. Address just one or two concerns and propose a solution that student/parent/teacher all have a role in implementing. Expressing too many concerns can seem overwhelming and unattainable.
7. **Know your current reality** - Having done multiple teacher conferences at my last school site, I had come to realize that parents wanted to know about (so I incorporated it into my narrative for the meeting):
  - a. Homework policy/frequency
  - b. Tutoring options
  - c. Make up work options
  - d. How to best reach the teacher if something comes up

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### Mastering Your Parent-Teacher Conferences

8. **Take notes** - shows parents that not only do you care about their child, but gives you something to follow up with
  - a. Send a follow up email of the conference - thanking them for attending, a brief example of one or two items discussed (it doesn't need to be a recap of the meeting), and an “open door” for them to reach out in the future. I typically had a “form” letter that I would “personalize” with information from the meeting and send it out. It only takes a moment to do, but benefits you, the student, and the parent in the long run.
  - b. Instead of an email, it could be notes in the student information system that the parents can see.
9. **Avoid educational jargon** - while we use terms like formative and summative assessment, IEP, 504, rigor, etc. on a regular basis, many of these types of terms are new to most parents. If these need to be discussed, don't avoid them, just use more non-technical language.
10. **Finish strong** - have a positive closing, thank them for attending, and leave an open invitation to any necessary follow up. If you've had a productive conference, most parents won't need to follow up, but “offering” puts the parents at ease and leaves the impression of collaboration for the benefit of the student.

See these and other suggestions from [ASCD](#), [Edutopia](#), [NEA](#), and [Scholastic](#) (just to list a few).

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### Constitution Day Conference Updates (All grades)

1. diploma to recognize students who demonstrate excellence in civics education and participation and have demonstrated an understanding of the U.S. Constitution. [Criteria](#) is currently in final stages of revision. By January 2021, the State Board of Education is expected to take action on implementation.
2. **FAIR Act (K-12)** - An overview - In 2012, the state adopted the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful Act, which expanded the language of the education code to include LGBT and persons with disabilities and their contributions to history into the code. With the adoption of our secondary curriculum, we are in compliance with this act. We as a district are moving forward to find any omissions and correct them. [FAQ](#).
3. **Civil Action Project** (Grades 6-8; also appropriate 9-12) - the Constitutional Rights Foundation produced the CAP ([Civil Action Project](#)), which are free, project-based learning opportunities for students to take civic action on projects that matter to them.
4. **Citizenship Requires a Free Exchange of Ideas and Knowledge of History (K-5)** - Informed citizens use their voice to convey ideas and form opinions. Teachers can encourage students to learn content through the exchange of ideas and conversations, which prepare students for civic life. (e.g. - [Frayer model](#) to teaching vocabulary; [Time Capsule](#) speaking activity)

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### Around the State, Legislature (H/SS Updates)

- [AB 493 - Teachers: LGBTQ Pupil Resources and Training](#) - a bill that would require online training annually to grade 7-12 teachers is being considered. Status: on the Governor's desk 9/20.
- [AB1036 - Elections: civic outreach and voter engagement](#) - creation of a High School Voter Education Pilot Program - Status: on the Governor's desk 9/13.
- [AB1393 - Pupil instruction: model curriculum: Laotian history and cultural studies](#) - adds Laotian history and cultural studies to Hmong history and cultural studies. Status: on the Governor's desk 9/11.
- [AB 852 - Pupil instruction: academic content standards: update of adopted standards](#) - states by January 1, 2021, before a scheduled revision of the curriculum framework, that the State Superintendent of Public Instruction recommend the need, or lack of need to revise the content standards. Status: on the Governor's desk 9/19.
- [AB773 - Voter registration: high school pupils](#) - designates last two full weeks of January and September as "high school voter education weeks." Also requires LEAs to offer students the opportunity to register or preregister to vote during a presentation or assembly on campus. Status: on the Governor's desk 9/13.

Bills on the Governor's desk become law after he signs it, or after 12 days pass without action. The Governor also has a third choice; to veto a bill. Read about these and more in the monthly newsletter from the California Department of Education: History-Social Science Update. To join their mailing list, send a blank email to: [join-history-social-science@mlist.cde.ca.gov](mailto:join-history-social-science@mlist.cde.ca.gov).

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## CDE Professional Learning & Curriculum Resources

limited to Armenian Genocide; labor; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans; and civic education components of the HSS Framework.

Resources are available in these areas:

- [General Social Science](#)
- [California, United States, and World History](#)
- [Civics, Government, and Service Learning](#)
- [Economics and Financial Literacy](#)
- [Geography and Environmental Education](#)
- [Global Education and International Studies](#)
- [Primary Sources](#)

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## Upcoming Dates

- 10/19 - [Jr. Ranger Expo](#) - Indian Canyons, PS
- 10/22 - [BOE Meeting](#) - 6 PM
- 11/1 - [End of First Trimester](#) (ES/MS)
- 11/2 - [Kewet: Native American Learning Day and Market](#) - PSHS (FREE Field Trip Option - email for details - [reves@psusd.us](mailto:reves@psusd.us))
- 11/4 - [History Writing Workshop](#) (HS)
- 11/4-8 - [ES Parent Conferences](#) (Minimum Days)
- 11/7 - [History Writing Workshop](#) (MS)

Do you have upcoming events at your site others should know about? Email [reves@psusd.us](mailto:reves@psusd.us) and let us know.