

Commission on Civics Education
Monday, September 18, 2006
The Virginia Historical Society
Richmond, Virginia
2 p.m.

Meeting Summary

The Commission on Civics Education, established by House Bill 1769 as an advisory commission in the executive branch of state government, held its fourth meeting on June 5, 2006.

Members Present

The Honorable Kenneth C. Alexander
Dr. Stephen G. Bragaw
Thomas C. Coen
The Honorable James H. Dillard, II
Dr. Sheila G. Hill
Glen H. Hoptman
The Honorable William Roscoe Reynolds
Ginger Stanley
Kenneth S. Stroupe, Jr.
Richard C. Sullivan, Jr.
The Honorable Robert Tata
Kathryn Williams

Ex-Officio Present

Jean Bankos (Designee for The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine)
Dr. Linda Wallinger (Designee for Billy K. Cannaday, Jr.)

Ex-Officio Absent

Dr. Mark E. Emblidge
Jeremy Greenfield (Designee for The Honorable Bill Bolling)
David E. Johnson (Designee for The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell)
Dr. Barbara A. Perry

Members Absent

Carmela C. Bills
The Honorable Frederick M. Quayle
The Honorable Beverly J. Sherwood
J. Westwood Smithers, Jr.
The Honorable R. Lee Ware, Jr.

Department of Education

Betsy Barton
Joel M. Dexter
Dr. Beverly Thurston

Other Persons in Attendance

Sarah Finley
Meg Heubeck
Jennifer Merrill
Kendall Tyree
Fernando Winnegan

Welcome

The Honorable Robert Tata called the meeting to order at 2 p.m. and completed the roll call. The minutes from the June 5, 2006, meeting of the Commission on Civics Education were approved.

Presentations and Discussions

Betsy Barton:

- Gave an overview of the new *Everyday Civics* Web site (<http://civics.pwnet.org>) that has been created as part of the Civics Commission's ongoing efforts to improve the teaching of civics in Virginia.
- Introduced the site's various components:
 - Teacher Resources - contains documents, lesson plans, and suggestions for sources of ideas and organizations that might have relevance.
 - Announcements - indicates upcoming events related to civics.
 - Constitution Day - to be held on September 18, 2006.
 - Commission - gives information about the commission.
 - Discussion Board - (pending) for teachers to share ideas and to request information.
 - Media - currently a live link to a view of the state capitol, in the future it will feature sessions of the Virginia Senate.
 - Civics Seal - shows the seal and indicates the criteria for awarding it to graduating seniors.
- Briefly reviewed the content and sessions that are related to the Virginia *Standards of Learning* available for every grade level and course.

A discussion followed concerning the capabilities of the site and ways to extend it either through additional digital resources or through print media. There was also exploration of the capabilities of the media link that currently views the state capitol. It was explained that it is a "place holder" but that there are many options long term. There was also discussion of adding links to the site to the citizenship test study guide.

Glen Hoptman:

- Proposed the use of a portion of the commission's budget to create and disseminate a resource for teachers such as:
 - An expanded treatment of the presentation by Dr. Peter Stearns made to the commission earlier this year. In addition to the expanded text of the presentation, the publication might include suggested lesson plans, a bibliography, and other resources.
 - A short history of the growth of democracy in Virginia and an exploration of the extensions and challenges to individual rights throughout Virginia's history. While the House of Burgesses and selected documents served as examples to other colonies and national bodies, there were also times when rights were preserved or expanded only after a struggle.
 - A guide to understanding local and statewide elections.
 - Selected screens from the *Everyday Civics* Web site (<http://civics.pwnet.org>).

An extended discussion followed. One issue was what media to use. While information is increasingly being delivered digitally, there is still a place for print media. One option could be printing a brief overview of the *Everyday Civics* Web site including

the URL for the site and sending it to all schools. There was also a suggestion that the commission funds might be used as “seed money” to start the process and have another agent or company assume responsibility at that point.

Meg Heubeck and Jennifer Merrill:

- Presented information about the Youth Leadership Initiative, including:
 - The Internet Mock Election – vote online for real candidates.
 - A More Perfect Union – students manage the campaign of a fictional candidate.
 - E-Congress – an online legislative simulation.
 - Lesson Plans – rigorous teacher developed plans.

Concern was expressed that there might be some duplication of effort by the various civic and civics organizations. However, it was pointed out that it did not hurt to have the message repeated and that people got their information from a variety of sources. Having multiple organizations encouraging the same behavior and ideas was seen as a positive situation.

The discussion of Glen Hoptman’s suggestions was resumed. However, a decision was postponed pending further study.

After a reorganization of the subcommittees, chairmen were asked to meet with their subcommittees in preparation for the next meeting. The Commission on Civics Education will meet on December 4, 2006, at the Virginia Historical Society.

Adjournment

Delegate Tata adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.