Dear Parent or Guardian, June 16, 2020

This year your student will be participating in an exciting project called National History Day, joining 2500 other students in Idaho and 600,000 from across the nation. NHD is an education program sponsored by the Idaho State Historical Society. Rather than simply reading a textbook and memorizing dates, your student will learn history ***by doing history***. They will develop important 21st century skills like research, critical thinking, and. Most importantly, by actively participating in a project that appeals to their own interests and talents, students become engaged learners and develop confidence in their academic abilities.

History Day has a theme. This year the theme is: **“Communication in History: The Key to Understanding.”** Your student will study this theme and choose a topic to research. This topic will be historical, not a current event. They will find many different kinds of information in books, encyclopedias, websites, or in public and college libraries.

History Day students share their work by creating a project. Students can work as an individual or in a group. They will choose from one of five different formats:

**Exhibit:** An exhibit is a visual representation of your research, much like a small museum exhibit. Most students use a tri-fold board to display pictures, information etc. There is a 500 word limit that applies to all text that appears on the exhibit entry.

**Paper:** Paper must be 1,500 to 2,500 words, and is the only category that must be completed individually.

**Performance:** The performance should portray your topic in an original production, not exceeding ten minutes.

**Website:** A historical website has both text and visuals presenting factual information as well as supporting examples about your topic and tied to your theme choice.

**Documentary:** This original production should showcase your ability to use audiovisual equipment to communicate your topic. You may use film, video, audio, computers, and graphic presentations. It may not exceed ten minutes.

In order to make this a memorable learning experience, we need the support of all our families. We will introduce History Day to students and go over all of the requirements in class. There will be a few important deadlines that students will have to meet. The deadlines are as follows:

1. Thursday, October 1 - Parent Night (to discuss the stages of research)
2. Tuesday, October 13 - Topics must be submitted for teacher approval
3. Thursday, October 29 - Thesis proposal and preliminary annotated bibliography due (6 sources due)
4. Thursday, November 12 - Annotated Bibliography (15 sources due)
5. Tuesday, December 8 - Project outline/plan/storyboard due
6. Tuesday, January 13 - Process paper and bibliography due
7. Wednesday, January 20 -Projects due

The deadlines are a way to ensure that our students are making adequate progress towards completing the project. Since the deadlines are clearly stated and made aware in advance, students will lose points for missing a deadline. Deadlines are not suggestions, but dates that we expect the desired work to be completed. Students will be given more specific information on all aspects of the project as the deadlines approach.

Participation in the project is a big commitment of time. The grade received on the project will be part of the students’ third and fourth quarter grades. There are many benefits to NHD. Our objectives for incorporating NHD as a classroom assignment are:

* To provide students with 21st century skills including: critical thinking and problem solving, research, writing, ability to determine the credibility of information, digital literacy, communication, collaboration, time management, and self-direction.
* To help students be engaged and ethical citizens
* To encourage the study of history using innovation and creative expression in a variety of ways
* To encourage a sense of history as a process
* To involve parents and other members of the community in students’ education

Students will have the option to enter their project in a series of competitions. At these contests, judges will interview students about their ideas and project creation. **Parents and families are welcome to attend!** At each contest, projects will be selected to advance to the next level.

* **Regional** – 5 Regional events take place across the state in February and March. Talk with your teacher about the date.
* **State** – May 1, 2021
* **National** – June 14-18, 2021

Parents, teachers and other adults play an important support role in the NHD process. You can help in many ways, while still allowing your teen to have ownership over the following project. You can:

1. Listen to your student’s ideas as they work on selecting a topic, doing their research and creating a project.
2. Help your student access research by providing transportation to libraries.
3. Be supportive of your student as they complete a long-term project and help them manage deadlines.
4. Remember that the final project must be the work of the student. You can do things *with* your student, but not *for* them, unless it would be dangerous for the student to complete the task themselves.
5. Remind your student that creating an NHD project is a huge accomplishment and to be proud of this regardless of the results of the NHD competition cycle.

Your student’s teachers are more than willing to answer any questions you might have over the course of this project. You can also find more information about the program at both www.history.idaho.gov/nhdi (National History Day in Idaho) and http://www.nhd.org (the official NHD website).

Thank you,

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