



**Daron Absher** has been an AP Government and Politics teacher at Carbondale Community High School since 2001. While at CCHS, Absher has organized and sponsored the AP Government Washington D.C. Internship Program which matches students with government agencies for a one-week internship each March. He has served on the CCHS Democracy School Committee, sponsored the CCHS Model United Nations club, CCHS Student Council, and was a Dual Credit

Political Science Instructor through John A. Logan Community College. He has also served as the President of the Carbondale Community High School Education Association, and was chair of the CCHS Social Studies Department.



**Jason M. Artman** is the Social Studies Department Chairperson at Mendota Township High School, where he teaches Civics, U.S. History, and Honors U.S. History. Artman has participated in the National History Project's Doing History: Reconsidering the American History Course, the Center for Civic Education's We the People professional development conference, and twice participated in the U.S. Department of Education's Teaching American History Grant program.



**Jennifer Burdette** is currently a teacher at Spoon River Valley High School in London Mills, IL. She has taught for seven years in west central Illinois in the subject areas of American history, government, current events, geography and world history. She was a three year participant in the Teaching American History grant through the Macomb ROE.



**Scott Burgess** of Danville High School in Danville, Illinois has been teaching the social sciences for 30 years. He currently teaches Government, AP United States Government, AP Micro and Macroeconomics. Scott has coached several sports and served on various leadership committees throughout his tenure. He is a contributing author in the politics and leadership section of *Teaching Lincoln: Legacies and Classroom Strategies*. Mr. Burgess has earned his Illinois endorsement in gifted education. Scott

received a B.A. in History from Eureka College and a M.S. in Education Administration from Eastern Illinois University.



**Connie Charlesworth** retired in June from Triopia-Jr-Sr. High School, with 30 years of experience teaching history, government, civics, law, geography, genealogy and Lion's Quest to students in grades 7-12. She is a former president of the Triopia Federation of teachers. Charlesworth has also worked as a civil litigation paralegal, specializing in the areas of labor law, product liability, defamation and administrative law. She worked as a staff member of the Illinois Democratic Party, where she managed the computerized voter file, taught organizing to county parties and worked as a fundraiser. Charlesworth has also worked as a legal researcher for various state agencies. She is a past instructor for the Illinois State Bar Association's Summer Law Camps, offered at Lincoln Land Community College. She has coached teams and served as a judge for the Illinois Bar Association's Mock Trial Competition. She volunteers as a costumed interpreter for the Underground Railroad Committee of the Morgan County Historical Society, leading tours of Jacksonville's nine UGRR sites.



**Mr. Christopher Busse**, O'Fallon Township High School, O'Fallon, Illinois. Social Studies Department Chair. Education -- University of Illinois (1991), Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (2000), McKendree University (2010). Recognition -- Supreme Court Summer Institute (2002), Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award (2010), Constitutional Right Foundation Barbara O'Donnell Teach of the Year (2011). Experience -- Brown County High School, Mt. Sterling Illinois; Normal Community High School, Normal, Illinois; Belleville West High School, Belleville, Illinois; O'Fallon Township High School, O'Fallon, Illinois. Courses taught -- AP Political Science, AP Comparative Politics, American Government, Civics, Economics, Psychology, United States History, and The American Legal System.



**Jennifer Conlon** teaches Government, ESL through AP, at Maine East High School which became a Democracy School in 2013. She also sponsors Democracy, Maine East's Government and Politics Club. She has facilitated student participation in elections, helped students run Citizenship workshops to prepare adults for the test, coached students in grant-writing to secure funding for home wifi for students without, and tried to bring the larger world to her students, including skyping with a grad active in the Syrian Revolution. Over the past several years, she has worked to include service learning in her classes and to make simulations increasingly authentic. A former attorney and Congressional staffer, she enjoys making democracy accessible to all her students and is delighted to help others do the same.



Lead teacher mentor **Mary Ellen Daneels** is a National Board Certified teacher who has taught at West Chicago Community High School for 26 years. She has been recognized as the Law-related Educator of the Year from the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Chicago, Teacher of the Year by the 19th District of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Civic Education Teacher from the Center for Civic Education. Mary Ellen has presented on service learning, simulations, and the use of controversy in the classroom at the local, state, and national level as well as provided professional development workshops in Estonia, Angola and Belarus. A member of the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition, Mary Ellen has advocated for civic education before federal and state lawmakers. She serves on the Board of Directors for the National Council of the Social Studies and recently worked on a task force to revise Social Studies standards in the state of Illinois.



**Scott Ehlers** teaches American Government and AP American Government and Politics at Moline High School in Moline Illinois, where he also serves as the Chair of the Social Studies Department, and chairs the K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Committee. He is a member of the school's Leadership Team and currently serves on the Moline Education Association's Executive Board, as well as being a delegate on the Illinois Education Association Region 18 Council. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Northern Illinois University and his Masters in Educational Administration from Western Illinois University.



**Randy Fritz** taught history, government, geography, and other social studies-related courses at Williamsfield High School for 31 years, including part-time for the first seven years after he retired. He was a member of the Citizens Utility Board for 15 years, its president for 10 of them. Before that he was on the village board of Williamsfield for 10 years, and since leaving CUB has served on the board of the Williamsfield Public Library District. He received his bachelors (1971) and masters (1994) degrees from Western Illinois University in Political Science and History, respectively. He founded the Williamsfield Area Development Corporation (WADCo) in the mid-1980s, a community development concern. He was also one of the founders of Voice of the Prairie, a group that advocated and lobbied for a larger presence in Illinois legislative issues. He writes for the Weekly Post, a new Elmwood, Illinois-area newspaper.



**Rick Gaebe** has been a social studies/English teacher at Okawville Jr. Sr. High School for the past 27 years. He graduated from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale with a B.A. in English/Education. He earned his M.A. in English composition from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. Rick has coached baseball at both the jr. high and high school levels all 27 years. He enjoys teaching civics and encouraging kids to take an active role in politics and most of all, their community organizations and churches. Rick and his wife, Mary Beth, reside in Okawville and have one son, Carl, who is a graduate of St. Louis Christian College.



After 21 years in the U.S. Navy, **Mike Haak** started teaching at Olympia HS (Stanford IL) in 2002, where he remains. He has taught World History, Human Geography, and a collaborative American History/Government class for challenged students. He now teaches Contemporary U.S. History and American Government/Law to upperclassmen. He is a charter member of the Empowered CivicsI (formerly New Birth of Freedom) Civic Education Project (co-sponsored by CRF-Chicago and the Mikva Challenge). Mike is looking forward to the mentoring experience...as much to learn for himself as to help others.



**Jim Hammer**, Social Studies Teacher, Department Chair and Community Service Coordinator at Effingham High School. He has taught 20th Century U.S. History, American Government, and AP United States Government and Politics for the past 17 years.



**Jane Hicks**, a graduate from Illinois State University, has been in education since 1994. For eighteen of those years, she has taught civics, history, and anthropology at Edwardsville High School. Prior to that Hicks taught English in Sapporo, Japan. While at Edwardsville, Hicks has served on numerous curriculum committees and has helped to design a semester-long course about government and democracy. She is pleased by the state of Illinois' new commitment to civics education.



**Justin Jacobek** has been teaching for 12 years at Morton West H.S. in Berwyn, IL. He graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a B.A. in Social Science in 2005, and received his M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction from Saint Xavier University in 2008. Justin has taught American Government and a Legislative Simulation course at Morton. He currently teaches AP US History. In his 12 years at Morton, Justin has annually brought in registrars to register his seniors to vote, he started a Mock Trial Team, and also served as a faculty advisor for Morton's Debate Team and Class Cabinet. Justin was also a member of the McCormick Foundation Teacher Advisory Council. Justin lives in Oak Forest, Illinois with his wife Nancy and two sons; Henry and Walter.



**Necia Lirely Jannings**, educator and author of "The Bridge - Civics for Young Citizens", a curriculum for civic education. Necia is a presenter of programs and workshops on civic engagement and community involvement for teachers, students, and organizations.



**Heather Johnson** is the History Department chair for Gibault Catholic High School. In addition to teaching Honors Civics and History for the past nine years, she helped implement the school's 1:1 program. Johnson is also the Technology Instructional Specialist for Gibault, a new position created after completing her Master's Degree in Education from Lindenwood University. In this position, Johnson provides technology training, leadership, and support to teachers to enhance instructional practices.



**Andy Kerley** is the Social Studies department Chair at Cerro Gordo High School in Cerro Gordo, Illinois. Entering into my 7th year at CG I have taught World History, American History, Constitutional Government, Sociology and Driver's Education. In addition to my teaching duties I serve as the Head Football Coach, Head Strength and Conditioning Coach and Scholastic Bowl Coach. I live in CG with my wife who teaches 3rd Grade and my two children Mia and Jack.



**Katie Knopp** teaches American Government, Online American Government, and World Geography at Neuqua Valley High School in Naperville. She is a product of District 204, having attended Hill Middle School and Waubonsie Valley. A 1999 graduate of University of Missouri-Columbia where she earned a degree in Communications. She has also earned two Master's Degrees in Teaching and Educational Leadership from National Louis and St. Francis respectfully. Katie has worked with McCormick Foundation in the past evaluating and coaching schools that are trying to obtain Democracy School accreditation. In addition to being a teacher, Katie is the Vice President High School for IPEA, a Youth and Government Sponsor and a National Board Certified teacher. Katie has taught for 13 years.



**Teresa Kruger** is currently an Instructional Mentor and the K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator for Belvidere District #100 in Belvidere, IL. She also serves as the Region 2 Representative to Illinois Council for the Social Studies. Teresa has been a secondary social studies educator for over 20 years and recognizes the important role of civic education. Her doctoral dissertation focused on the teaching of controversial issues in secondary social studies and she co-authored the book chapter, "Oliver, Shaver, and Newmann's Public Issues's Model: Promoting Productive Civic Discussions" in *Educating About Social Issues in the 20th and 21st Centuries*.



**Bob Lehmann**, is a teacher at Westville High School where he has taught a wide variety of Social Studies classes for the last 23 years. Bob's special interests include the study of the Holocaust, the American Revolution especially the life and career of Samuel Adams, American Government, and the World Wars. Bob holds two masters degrees in Secondary Education and American History. He retired from the US Army after a 28 year career in 2007 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.



**Lisa Luangsomkham** is a Social Studies instructor at Joliet Central High School. She currently teaches AP U.S. Government and Politics, AP Microeconomics, and U.S. History. Mrs. Luangsomkham is a member of JTHS's Instructional Leadership Team. She is also the Head Coach of the girls badminton team and Co-Sponsor of the Human Relations Club. She can be reached at 815-774-7400 ext. 44990 and [lluangsomkham@jths.org](mailto:lluangsomkham@jths.org).



**Bradley Marcy**, the Illinois Civics Teacher Mentor for the Mason/Tazewell/Woodford ROE, is the History Department Chairperson for LeRoy High School in LeRoy, Illinois. Bradley is a combat veteran of the Iraq War where he served in 2003-2004 as a Military Policemen and a 2009 Graduate of Illinois State University. Bradley is a three-time presenter at the ISU, ROE17 and McLean County Museum of History's *History Educators Symposium* and will be writing his Master's Thesis on *The History of Civic Education in America*.



**Heather McCurdy** serves as the Director of Curriculum at Reavis High School in Burbank. With 19 years' experience in the classroom, McCurdy has worked with organizations like the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Chicago and the Center for Civic Education to build lessons that ask students to explore what it means to be an engaged citizen. McCurdy's work also includes coordinating service learning projects and government observation lessons that ask students to build a better understanding of terms like civic virtue and civic engagement as part of the service/government observation experience.



**Grant Murray** is the Social Studies Department Chair at Antioch Community High School in Antioch, Illinois. Murray led ACHS in its pursuit of Democracy School recognition, which was achieved in 2015. Murray is an active member of the Democracy School Network, including presenting on current and controversial topics at the 2016 Illinois Civic Mission Coalition Convening and connecting with the community at NCSS 2015 in New Orleans. Murray continues to lead his school's push for civic education across the curriculum.



**Larry Pahl** has taught at the junior high, high school and college level, in the U.S. and abroad, in public and private settings, at schools large and small. He has taught AP, regular and special education. He currently teaches World History and Civics at Bartlett High School in Bartlett, IL, and with the Illinois Virtual School. He was appointed to the Governor's Task Force on Civics Education and fought hard for the passage of the Illinois law requiring a Civics course.



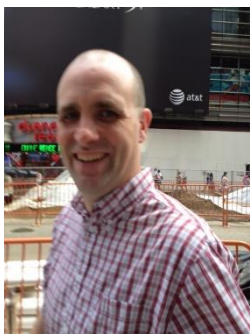
**John Pellikan** is a National Board Certified Social Science teacher who serves as the International Studies Division Leader at Prairie Ridge High School. He successfully led Prairie Ridge in becoming the first school in McHenry County to be recognized as a Democracy School in 2015. Pellikan has been a presenter at NCSS multiple times, runs an annual workshop for U.S. History teachers with such speakers as Eric Foner and James Loewen, leads staff development in C3 instruction, and has experience working to modify curriculum to be aligned with the ultimate goal of educating an informed and active citizenry. He has been a regular participant in various civics-based conversations and looks forward to working with educators across the state to help students better fulfill their role as citizen.



**Andrea Seipp**, social studies teacher at Belleville East High School in Belleville, IL. Andrea has taught Civics and U.S. History at Belleville East for the past ten years and also served as the Head Girls Basketball Coach up until last season. Prior to teaching at Belleville East, Andrea also taught 7th grade social studies for five years at Breese District 12 in Breese, IL. At Belleville East, Andrea led the social studies department through the Democracy School application process in 2014 and now serves as the school's Democracy School Team Leader. Andrea also chairs the Faculty Scholarship Selection Committee, co-chairs the Renaissance program, represents the social studies department on the school's Climate Committee, and serves as a Senior Olympic Coach.



**Kristin Shanks**, a social studies teacher at Danville High School, has taught government or civics education for the entirety of her eight year career. Kristin has a social studies teacher certification with a specific designation in political science. She has worked extensively within her district on curriculum and planning in government/civics education.



**Blake Strong** has been teaching high school social studies and English at Paw Paw High School for the last eleven years and has worked as a public school teacher for nineteen years at the secondary level. He earned a Bachelor of Arts with a history major and English minor in 1994 from Eastern Illinois University with teacher certification. In addition to this, he earned a master's degree in English from Eastern Illinois University in 2005. He has also been involved in coaching basketball and other extra-curricular activities.





**Steven Stukenberg** has been a Social Science teacher at Jacobs High School (District 300) for the past 20 years. Stukenberg has taught Social Science classes ranging from US History, World history and Government but specializes in Honors/AP Government. He has been a sponsor of student clubs like Student Council, Political Activist club, Government Club, and Music performance club. Stukenberg has a passion for politics and participates in various governmental functions on the city and county level.



**Kelli Tufo**, teacher and Assistant Department Chairperson at Neuqua Valley High School, has taught social studies for 21 years - all in Indian Prairie District 204. A political science major, Tufo has regularly taught American Government at the college preparatory and Advanced Placement levels. She is the longtime head advisor of Youth and Government and serves on its state organization's Program Board. Tufo is also an original member of Neuqua Valley's Democracy School Team and is a certified Danielson

evaluator.



**Cathy Unsbee** has been a social studies teacher at Normal Community West High School since 2008. She often teaches U.S. History, World History, and/or Psychology, and is a co-sponsor for the Mock Trial team. Recently she has been involved with transitioning the U.S. History course to standards-based grading and has presented at conferences/institutes about her experiences with that.



**Jim Vera** is the Social Studies Department Chair at Oswego East High School in Oswego, Illinois. This will be his 10th year in that position. Vera also serves on the Advisory Board of the Democracy School Network, and has been committed to promoting the Civic mission in high school education for the past 25 years as a teacher. He is a member of the National Council for Social Studies and has participated in Close-Up Washington and the StreetLaw Supreme Court Summer Institute for Teachers.