

Dear Parents/ Guardians,

Schools from across the nation participate in a co-curricular event called National History Day (NHD). **All Reagan IB 10<sup>th</sup> grade US History students** will participate this year, joining another 10,000 Wisconsin students and over 600,000 from across the United States. For the past two years, Reagan IB was proud to have students attend the national event at the University of Maryland in College Park, MD.

NHD, a yearlong educational program sponsored in our state by the Wisconsin Historical Society, connects students with the study of history by engaging them in the process of discovery and interpretation of historical topics. Through in-depth historical research, students produce dramatic performances, exhibits, multimedia documentaries, papers and websites based on an annual theme. During the 2015-16 school year, students will explore the theme "Exploration, Encounter, Exchange in History". Students will be required to present their NHD projects in their US History classroom during the week of December 7<sup>th</sup>. Students with "Advanced" projects will be asked to participate in a series of competitive events beginning at Reagan IB on January 27<sup>th</sup> and continuing with regional, state and national events in the spring. Parents/ Guardians are highly encouraged to attend the school event. Students who successfully present their projects during the week of December 7<sup>th</sup> will exempt from their final exam for Semester I. Participation following this presentation is optional but highly encouraged.

Over the course of this project, we hope you will see the many benefits of NHD for your teen. Rather than simply reading a textbook and memorizing dates, your student will learn history **by doing history**. They will develop research, critical thinking, analysis and presentation skills. 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.

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:

- Listen to your teen's ideas as they work on selecting a topic, doing their research and creating a project.
- Help your student access research by providing transportation to libraries.
- Be supportive of your student as they complete a long-term project and help them manage deadlines.
- Remember that the final project must be the work of the student. You can do things *with* your teen, but not *for* them, unless it would be dangerous for the student to complete the task themselves.
- 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 <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Content.aspx?dsNav=N:1111> (National History Day in Wisconsin) and <http://www.nhd.org/> (the official NHD website).

Sincerely,

Maggie Holtgreive  
David Walker  
Joe Koester

