October 7, 2015

Dear Parents,

Your student is about to embark on an exciting research journey called the Utah History Day Contest. Because it will take several months to complete, we have attached a projected outline. It is of utmost importance that your student keeps up with the schedule and does not get behind.

Rather than run off copious amounts of paper, I would like to direct everyone to the National History Day and Utah History Day websites for more information on this year’s theme, topics, and examples of winning projects. It is imperative that you and your student review the information. See the attached website review assignment page.

* Encourage your son/daughter to consider carefully which category (historical paper, documentary, Weebly website, performance, or exhibit) would be best to compete in. Where are your student’s interests and strengths?
* Help your student choose a topic that he/she can be interested in for the next several months. The topic should be unique (not a topic overly used), tie with the theme, narrow, and have at least 25 years historical distance, as well as numerous primary and secondary sources to research.
* Students have the option to work alone or with others for the History Day project. If a group project is preferred, have your student carefully consider who they work with. Schedule and personality conflicts, transportation issues, and balanced workloads should always be considered.
* Require your student to follow ALL the rules stated in the category they choose for their History Day project, respect copyright laws, and always give proper credit for their sources as we complete the project and paper.

**What Students Need to Know to Compete Well at History Day Competition**

* **Where to find good sources for his/her topic.** No judge is impressed at a student who ONLY uses online sources. Besides online sources, go to libraries, universities, contact and interview authorities on your subject, and leave no stone unturned. Get up and out of the computer chair to discover more information on your topic.
* **Primary source versus secondary source.** Students should use a variety/balance of primary and secondary sources during research. 25 good primary and secondary sources is a minimum.
* **Fact vs.** **opinion.**  Use reliable sources that support your thesis.
* **Be able to show opposing points of view (counter claim) to your thesis and refute it.** You are creating an argument for your point of view supported by research.
* **How to write an annotated bibliography correctly in MLA format.** That annotated bibliography is as important as the project itself. Follow MLA rules implicitly.
* **The research process.** Information seeking strategies, how to interview someone, how to organize research, etc.
* **How to write a thesis statement** and stick with it throughout a project.
* **How to pace for a long project.**
* **What’s the bar to reach and go above it.** What does it take to create an excellent historical paper, documentary, Weebly website, performance, or exhibit.

This project will stretch your student more than he/she has ever been stretched before. Please encourage your student all along the way, but do not do it for them. Your son/daughter will be proud him/herself when they’ve accomplished this difficult, but rewarding, research project, and it will give him/her a jump ahead of others in high school and further education.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns. It’s always best to contact by email.

Sincerely,

Ms. Dansie and Mrs. Lefler

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I have reviewed the following websites with my student:

**Introducing the 2016 Exploration, Encounter, Exchange in History Theme** <http://www.nhd.org/classroom-connection/google-hangouts-and-webinars/>

**Contest Information: Annual Theme and Student Project Examples** <http://www.nhd.org/contest-affiliates/>

**Entering the Contest: Getting Started, Conducting Research, Creating an Entry** <http://www.nhd.org/entering-contest/#toggle-id-3>

Parent Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_