

Meet our 2021-2022 Teacher Advisory Council

Whitney Beck



Whitney Beck is a Nationally Board Certified Teacher who currently teaches 3rd grade at Maybeury Elementary in Henrico County Public Schools. Originally from Hanover County, she attended James Madison University and will be graduating from Averett University with her Masters Degree in Administration and Supervision in December of 2020. Along with incorporating respectful discourse into her classroom, she is passionate about using primary sources to spark wonder and create authentic learning experiences for elementary students.

Kisha Christian



Kisha is a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University with a Bachelor's of Science in Sociology and a Masters in Teaching. She is a licensed Elementary Teacher in Richmond Public Schools since 2000. Currently, she teaches 3rd grade at Oak Grove Bellemeade Elementary School. She is a part of the VCU Clinical Faculty Level I, works with RPS History department as an Instructional Lead for her school, and is a member of the National Council of History Education. Outside of school she is active at her church and leads Junior Girl Scouts. Personally she is a financial member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated. She has been married for 15 years and have 2 children!

Carrie Lillard



Carrie is a fourth grade teacher in Rockingham County in her eighth year of teaching. She graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies in 2012 and with a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction in 2013, both from Virginia Tech. She recently served as a judge for Virginia's Virtual History Day in April 2020 and loved getting to see the depth of knowledge students had to share through their projects. When she's not figuring out ways to incorporate "Hamilton: An American Musical" in her classroom, you can find her reading, baking, cheering on the Hokies in Lane Stadium, and loving on her nieces and nephews, both canine and human.

LaShanda Melendez



LaShanda is a Virginia native and graduated from Christopher Newport University with a degree in history. She has taught for 18 years, including third grade gifted students in Newport News Public Schools, middle school science at a private school in Newport News, and second and fourth grades in Richmond Public Schools. She currently teaches fourth grade in Henrico County Public Schools. In addition to holding an endorsement in PreK-6 elementary education, LaShanda holds endorsements in English as a Second Language PreK-12 and Gifted Education PreK-12. LaShanda serves as the Social Studies Core Content Teacher for Ward Elementary and participated in the Weinstein Properties Story of Virginia Teachers Institute at the VHMC in 2019.

Nancy Pierpont



Nancy Pierpont is a veteran educator who works to find new and engaging ways to connect the curriculum to her students' experiences. She has taught at Fairfield Middle School in Henrico County for the past eighteen years and has served as department chair for the past eleven years. She is currently a social studies professional development facilitator for the VCU School of Education's Urban Educator Collaborative initiative, and previously served as a mentor teacher in the Service Learning Practicum program through VCU, as well as acting as a curriculum writer for Henrico and working with VDOE on various social studies committees. In addition to her school, district, and state commitments and service, Nancy is also Girl Scout leader & service unit volunteer.

Rhonda Shannon



Rhonda D. Shannon is an Exceptional Education teacher in the Richmond City Public Schools System where she currently teaches 4th Grade. Rhonda earned both her B.S. and M.S. degrees at Virginia State University. She is an advocate that all children can learn given the proper materials and education. Ms. Shannon teaches and implements positive choices, and critical developmental skills to her students while providing a nurturing environment to them daily. Rhonda serves faithfully in her community through her church, the Second Union Baptist Church in Goochland County. She is a proud member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Delta Omega Chapter, and she is a member of the Order of Eastern Star, Prince Hall Affiliated, Poinsettia Chapter #222. Her hobbies include arts and crafts, shopping, and a new-found interest in gardening.

Kathryn Smith



Kathryn has taught public high school students a mixture of United States History, Psychology and Economics for the last 8 years. She recently moved to Richmond with my husband and schnauzer-poodle puppy dog. They love exploring the many historical sites and delicious food the city has to offer. Virginia has a rich, diverse history that students can analyze for truly meaningful learning experiences. Kathryn works to empower her students to critically examine the world around them and make connections from history to their life, present communities, and future endeavors.

Gregory Stallings



Gregory has been teaching for 40 years in all elementary grade levels – during that time he has acted as member of the Virginia Council for Social Studies Board, a Teacher of the Year for Richmond Public Schools, and a curriculum writer. He appreciates that Richmond, and The VMHC, are embracing cultural change and a wholistic approach to teaching history. The Story of Virginia should always strive to be inclusive, so that no matter who a student is, they see themselves in the history they learn.

Sabra Willhite



Sabra has a combined 40 years of elementary school experience in both the Virginia public & independent schools teaching all grade levels K- 5. She is also a charter member of the VMHC Teacher Advisory Council. In addition to serving on the Henrico County Public Schools committee to develop the initial Social Studies SOLs, she also chaired the Lower School Social Studies Curriculum Committee for the Steward School. Sabra believes museums are vital to the understanding of history and continue to be an dynamic part of the elementary learning process both inside and outside the classroom.

Elisabeth Wray



Wray is a free-lance editor and writer who has published two social studies textbooks. She has taught classes in American women's history; Southern women's history; regional and local history including old South, new South, American West, Virginia and Richmond; early and federal America including Age of Jefferson; the U.S. Constitution; European women's history; Victorian England; Western civilization; and interdisciplinary courses in history and art. She has researched American women's history, especially Southern and 19th century history and during times of war; Constitutional history; Virginia history; and American history, Colonial period through 1890.

Wesley Hedgepeth



Wesley lives and breathes the social studies! He currently teaches AP Comparative Politics, AP U.S Government, and world history at Collegiate School in Henrico County, just outside of Richmond, Virginia. In addition to teaching, Wesley advises students, coordinates his school's Model United Nations program, and serves on his school's Civil Dialogue Task Force. Wesley became a member of NCSS in 2009 at the recommendation of his social studies methods professor, and since then has presented at multiple NCSS conferences, attended Summer Leadership Institutes, represented VCSS in the NCSS House of Delegates, and served on both the International Visitors Committee and HOD Assignments Committee. In 2016, Wesley received the Trinity Episcopal School Faculty Discovery Award and traveled to Cape Town, South Africa, where he dove into it's history of neocolonialism and Apartheid. His primary interests lie with equitable education reform, informed civic action, and effective professional development for educators. In his spare time, he regularly volunteers at the Gilded Age Maymont Mansion, spends time with his husband and their three dogs, and gardens.

Krystal Kelly



Krystal Kelly is a 2008 graduate of Livingstone College with a Bachelor of Arts in History degree. In addition, she earned her Master of Arts in Teaching degree with a concentration in History Education from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in 2010. She is licensed in History and Social Studies grades 9 – 12 and English grades 6 – 12. Krystal previously taught AP US and AP European History. In her ninth year of teaching, she currently teaches AP Psychology, Psychology I/II, and African American History at Tallwood High School. She currently serves on the African American History Resources and Design Committee for Virginia Beach City Public Schools and as a senior project advisor at Tallwood. She has previously served as a junior varsity girls basketball coach, advisor to student council, and department chair. Outside of teaching she is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Iota Omega Chapter. She enjoys spending time with her fun-loving one-year old daughter, Egypt.

Stephanie Hammer



Stephanie Hammer, a middle school history teacher in Greene County, has been recognized for her outstanding achievement by the Virginia Daughters of the American Revolution, Virginia History Day, National History Day, and Greene County Public Schools. She has served on the Smithsonian American History Museum Teacher Advisory Group. In addition to creating an engaging curriculum for her classroom, she has written curriculum for the Virginia Experiment Growing Seeds of Democracy, *America on the World Stage: A Global A Global Perspective to U.S. History*, the Virginia Holocaust Museum, and National History Day. She is passionate about helping students grapple with the question, “How did we get to where we are today and where do we go from here?”

Lori Link



Lori Link grew up in Minnesota, but moved to Prince William County in 2005 for a teaching job. 2021 marks her 24th year teaching English/Language Arts. She has taught 7th through 12th grades as well as virtual school, and is passionate about museum-classroom collaborations. She even spent a summer giving tours at a Laura Ingalls Wilder museum in northeast Iowa!

Not Pictured – Wendy Scott