



America 250
Celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence

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Gathering of Voices, Brainstorming



Brainstorm an object in your home that represents your family's "American Identity" (a photo, a tool, a letter, or a piece of clothing). Write a short reflection on how this object represents either "change" or "continuity" in the American journey toward freedom and power.

Gathering of Voices, Discussion



Looking at the different objects shared today, what is one 'continuity'—a value or tradition—that seems to connect all of our families despite our different backgrounds?

We saw many objects that represent 'change.' What do these changes tell us about how the 'American Dream' or the definition of freedom has evolved for people over the last 250 years?

Desired Outcomes



Define the goals and purpose of the America 250 Commemoration

Review the considerations associated with planning the America 250 Commemoration

Share the drafted curriculum materials, highlighting their alignment to the stated goals/purpose

Clarify the communication plan for schools and community members



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PRIORITY 1

STUDENT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The Four Cs

Literacies | Knowledge and Skills

GOAL 1: GRADUATION

By 2028, WCPSS will annually graduate **98%** of students prepared to reach their full potential and lead productive lives in a complex and changing world.

By 2028, WCPSS will **eliminate graduation disparities** by race, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status.

Strategic Plan 2023-2028
Pathways to Excellence & Equity



Board Policy 3100 Curriculum Development

- Dedicated, Full-Time Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Team
- Development of a Diverse and Representative Curriculum Committee
- Current Statewide Instructional Standards Serve as a Foundation
- Ongoing Evaluation and Reporting



Board Policy 3530 Citizenship and Character Education

- Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship
- Service to Schools and Communities

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT



WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

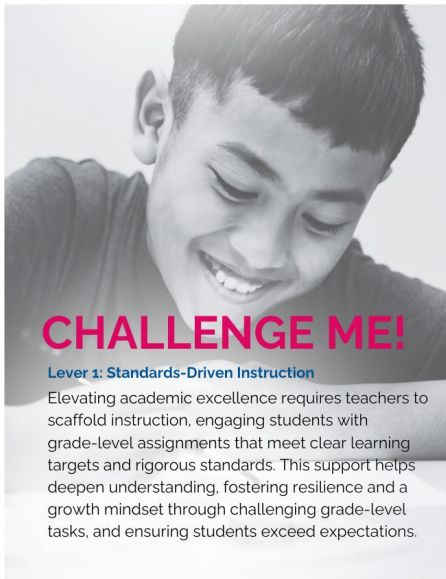
LEARNING MODEL

Leading teaching and learning through the lens of our students.



SEE ME!

Lever 3: Student Well-Being and Resilience
Fostering a positive, inclusive classroom climate, ensuring every student feels safe, welcomed, and respected. Acknowledging students' identities, cultures, and achievements, this approach enhances a sense of belonging.



CHALLENGE ME!

Lever 1: Standards-Driven Instruction
Elevating academic excellence requires teachers to scaffold instruction, engaging students with grade-level assignments that meet clear learning targets and rigorous standards. This support helps deepen understanding, fostering resilience and a growth mindset through challenging grade-level tasks, and ensuring students exceed expectations.



ENGAGE ME!

Lever 2: High-Impact Instructional Strategies
Employing practices that stimulate higher-order thinking, such as integrating writing across the curriculum and utilizing techniques to bolster comprehension. This approach ensures that learning is not only interactive and collaborative but also deeply relevant to students' lives and interests.

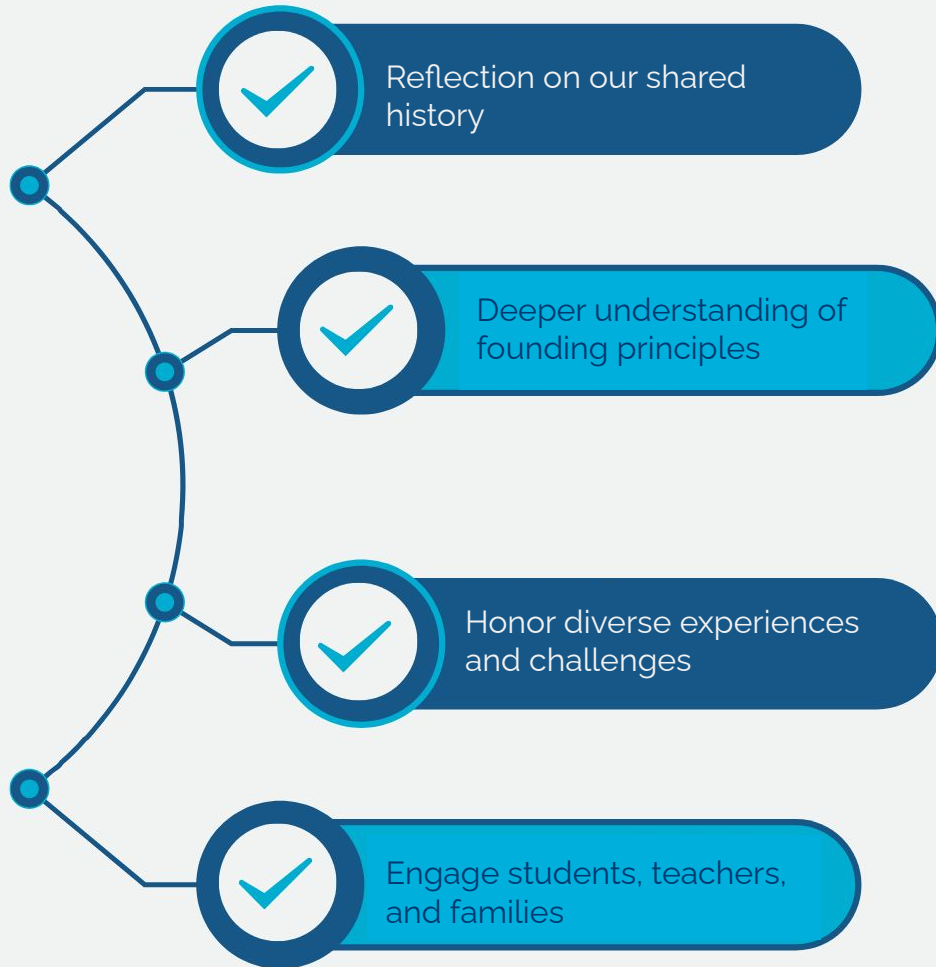


KNOW ME!

Lever 1: Standards-Driven Instruction
Utilizing formative assessments allows us to personalize learning experiences for our students through strategically using formative assessments. By analyzing these assessments, educators can design their teaching to meet each student's unique needs. This facet of the model emphasizes understanding each student's academic and behavioral health needs, enabling educators to tailor instruction and interventions.



Goals and Purpose

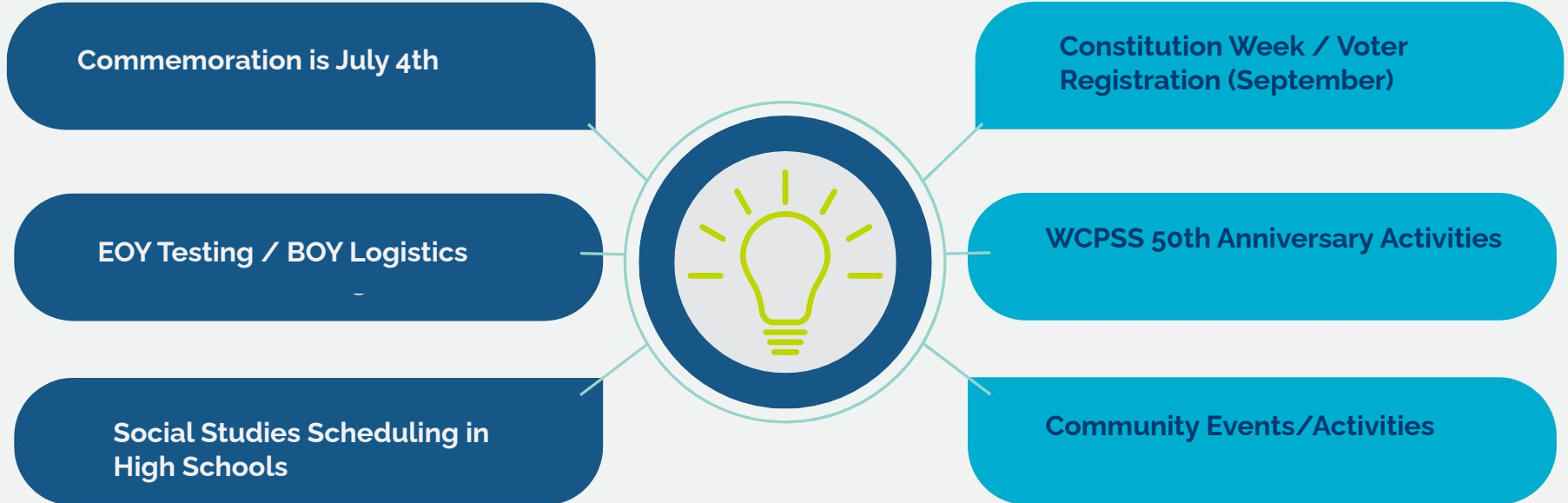




Considerations

Planning & Implementing Appropriate Activities

Reflecting on our current commemorative processes and timing of the America 250 Commemoration in relation to school calendars, we've identified several areas of note that have informed our planning process.



America 250 NC



The North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources collaborated with academics, public historians, and educators to identify three interpretive themes to guide their content development.

Visions of Freedom	Gathering of Voices	Common Ground
The American Revolution was a beginning of a continual journey for North Carolinians to see true freedom.	North Carolina's many voices inspire future generations to create and lead.	Places carry our stories of struggle, creation, and connection to one another.

Timeline: America 250 Commemoration



America 250: Celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence



SCHOOL GUIDANCE | Last updated 4/27/2026

Purpose

In 2026, the United States will mark 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This commemoration is an opportunity for the Wake County Public School System to engage students, families, and partners in a reflection on our shared history. Our goal is to inspire a deeper understanding of our nation's founding principles—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—while honoring the diverse experiences and challenges that have shaped North Carolina and the American spirit today.

What is America 250?

America 250 (or the Semiquincentennial) is the nationwide commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Orchestrated by the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission, this milestone serves as a pivotal opportunity to reflect on the country's shared history, honor the diverse voices—including Indigenous, enslaved, and immigrant communities—that have shaped the American spirit, and inspire a deeper commitment to the founding principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. From local community events to national educational initiatives, the effort aims to engage all Americans in a collective journey to strengthen the "unfinished work" of our democracy.

What are our desired outcomes with this work?

As a district, we hope to accomplish the following:

- Highlight the diverse voices (Indigenous, enslaved, immigrant, and women) that have shaped North Carolina's history over the last 250 years. As our nation approaches its 250th anniversary, WCPSS recognizes this as a pivotal opportunity to examine our shared history through a more inclusive lens. By centering America 250 within our curriculum and community outreach, we aim to move beyond traditional narratives to ensure every student sees their ancestors' contributions as foundational to the American story.
- Core Belief #3: The Board of Education, superintendent, and all staff value a diverse school community that is inviting, respectful, inclusive, feasible, and supportive. This work is part of our district's ongoing efforts to ensure that our work is inclusive and supportive of all parts of our community. Specifically, our hope is to ensure that all students and families see themselves shed up in a positive light within our district.
- Core Belief #3: Well-supported, highly effective, and dedicated principals, teachers, and staff are essential to success for all students. By intentionally sharing resources with and educating school staff and leaders on the culture and heritage of our students, we will in the long-term create a greater likelihood that school staff will be able to create meaningful instructional activities where EVERY student accurately sees their culture and heritage reflected in their learning.

School Guidance Document

Month & NC-Aligned Theme	Audience	Grades K-5 Resources	Secondary Resources
<p>May - June 2026</p> <p>Visions of Freedom</p>	<p>School-Based Staff</p>	<p>Visions of Freedom Resources</p>	<p>Visions of Freedom Resources</p>
<p>Week of July 4th, 2026</p> <p>Gathering of Voices</p>	<p>Community Members & Families</p>	<p>Gathering of Voices Resources</p> <p>Encuentro de Voces</p>	<p>Gathering of Voices Resources</p> <p>Encuentro de Voces</p>
<p>July - August 2026</p> <p>Common Ground</p>	<p>School-Based Staff</p>	<p>Common Ground Resources</p>	<p>Common Ground Resources</p>

Resources: America 250 Commemoration

Goal: Reflect on Shared
History

- **The "Echoes of Our School" Installation:** In the [Common Ground - Elementary](#) document, students create a "Living Museum."
 - **The Roots:** Lower grades reflect on natural history and early rules.
 - **The Trunk:** Middle grades focus on local community figures and landmarks.
 - **The Branches:** Upper grades reflect on struggles for rights and visions for the future.
- **Revolutionary Context:** Both the [Elementary](#) and [Secondary Visions of Freedom](#) documents emphasize identifying Revolutionary-era leaders and movements like Women's Suffrage and the Civil Rights Movement.



Resources: America 250 Commemoration

Goal: Deeper Understanding
of Founding Principles

- **The Heritage Podcast Analysis:** In [Gathering of Voices - Secondary](#), students create a 3 minutes podcast with a family or community member and then write a paragraph linking a personal story of struggle or creativity to one of the founding principles: **Freedom, Equality, or Democracy**.
- **Freedom Quilt:** In [Visions of Freedom - Elementary](#), students draw a "patch" representing a freedom they have today, connecting the promises of 1776 to modern life.
- **Democratic Principles in the State Constitution:** 8th Grade students trace the evolution of the NC State Constitution in this [Visions of Freedom activity](#).



Resources: America 250 Commemoration

Goal: Honor Diverse
Experiences and Challenges

- **Multi-Perspective Storytelling:** The [Gathering of Voices](#) context explicitly states that the commemoration "cannot be told through a single lived experience," aiming to ensure all voices—historic and modern—are heard.
- **Visions for a "More Perfect Union":** Upper elementary students specifically contribute stories of **struggle and rights** to the school's living museum in the [Common Ground](#) activity.
- **The "Unfinished Document":** Middle School students in the [Vision of Freedom](#) activities dive into the preamble of the Declaration and annotate it based on different eras of history.

Resources: America 250 Commemoration

Goal: Engage Students, Teachers, & Families

- **Civic Service Projects (Students & Teachers):** The **America Gives** initiative, found in [Common Ground - Secondary](#) and [Elementary](#), engages the whole school in local volunteerism like community gardens and food banks.
- **Oral History (Families):** The [Gathering of Voices - Secondary](#) activity explicitly moves from the classroom to the home, requiring students to interview family or community elders about their lives.
- **Shared Discovery:** The [Gathering of Voices - Elementary](#) document notes that activities are designed for home and community engagement, encouraging families to see their own history as part of the state's journey.
- **America 250 Bingo:** In [Gathering of Voices - Elementary](#) and [Secondary](#), families are provided with a Bingo activity that encourages exploration of the community and discovery of its deep historical roots.



Communication Plan





Questions?

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