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No Action, No Solution: Air Quality in the Imperial Valley

In August 2014, the document [Revitalizing K-12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint for Action](#) was presented to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the California State Supreme Court Chief. This Blueprint outlines a plan of action for students, teachers, administrators, business and community leaders, courts, and local government and elected officials to take action to improve civic learning in all California schools and communities.

Jose Flores, a teacher at Brawley Union High School (BUHS), embraced the recommendations and the following article, written by BUHS student Emily Swaim, is an example of what happens when students are engaged in problem solving in their own communities.

Emily's article, *No Action, No Solution* from the March 2017 [Desert Report](#) is presented in its original format except for the addition of hyperlinks.

"Air pollutants in the Imperial Valley impact the public's health and can be exceedingly dangerous to young ones, elderly, and those living with certain medical conditions. These pollutants can cause a variety of lung diseases and respiratory problems including emphysema and asthma, as well as inducing brain and nervous system damage. Air pollutants also affect those with chronic allergies by irritating the eyes, nose, and throat, and even causing rashes or hives. Every year, our local hospitals and clinics are overwhelmed with patients complaining of respiratory issues, exacerbations to asthma, chronic coughing and such. Residents of Imperial Valley have come to expect this as a result of living here.

Many are referred to local specialists or over the mountains to San Diego professionals. Some have even made the decision to relocate permanently.

According to [CaliforniaBreathing.org](#), approximately 23,000 people in the Imperial Valley have been diagnosed with asthma; 28% of which are children under the age of 18. Asthma is a chronic disease that inflames airways and causes recurrent wheezing, coughing, difficulty breathing, and chest tightness. Asthma attacks can be mild to deadly. The Imperial Valley has the highest rate of both emergency visits and hospitalizations for asthma among school-age children in the state of California.

Speaking from personal experience, living with asthma is very burdensome. Leaving the house without an inhaler is not an option. When the air quality is low, it can be very hard to try to catch your breath throughout the day. When I was younger, nebulizer breathing treatments were very common for me. The nebulizer machine was extremely daunting for me because it was loud and had the tendency to make me feel jittery and shaky. Asthma is very common in my family, affecting my older cousin, my younger sister, my grandfather, and myself. I also live with chronic severe environmental allergies. As a child, I was tested for all sorts of different irritants, and came up positive for almost all outdoor allergens. Upon consultation with an asthma and allergy specialist, I was informed that I am living in the worst possible area for a person with allergies and asthma. The only solution for this would be to move out of this geographical area. I can't imagine how many others in the country suffer from the same dilemma. The Imperial Valley issues alerts that residents can utilize free of charge to check when air quality throughout the Imperial Valley is at unsafe levels.

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California Dashboard:

Education and Legislative Issues

Weaverville Joss House
State Historic Park



The Temple of the Forest
Beneath the Clouds

The Chinese population of Weaverville started to decline after the 1850s, as gold ore became scarcer, and many left to work on railroad construction. By 1931 only 16 were counted in town. In 1933 the Weaverville Chamber of Commerce went on record in support of making the Joss House a State Historic Park, but nothing came of the proposal for another 23 years. Without the efforts of Moon Lim Lee, the Weaverville Joss House probably would not have survived.

In an effort to preserve this important part of California's Chinese tradition, the temple became a part of the California State Park System in 1956. Many of the historical objects have been restored and the structure itself stabilized.

Source:
https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=457

No Action, No Solution, continued.

Alerts can be sent via email, text, or cell phone. The website to sign up for these alerts is [here](#).

Air pollutants in the valley arise from many different origins, including local agricultural fields, Mexico, and the Salton Sea. The Salton Sea has become one of the largest problems in Southern California. The Sea has progressively been shrinking for years now and its shoreline is expected to recede between three and twenty feet more in the near future. As the Sea continues to evaporate, it is exposing its toxic floor. Arsenic, selenium, chromium, zinc, lead, and pesticides, including DDT, an insecticide that has been banned for nearly forty years, are all found on the lake bottom. If the Salton Sea were to completely dry up, all of those pernicious chemicals would be exposed. At least 21,120 acres of sediments would be at the mercy of hot, dry, desert winds.

These tiny particles could then be inhaled by individuals and pose as a deadly health hazard. Dust blown from the Salton Sea could reach from the Imperial County to the eastern Riverside County and beyond. This dust would be a much greater problem and cause more harm to residents than the Owen's lake incident in the 1920's.

Since the Imperial Valley is predominantly an agricultural community, the area is flat, dry and open with few trees to buffer the impact when high winds blow. Every day, fields are burned which blows smoke, pollen, dust, and soil from empty abandoned fields into the air we breath. Fine dust and soil from empty abandoned fields also enter our air supply with even the slightest breeze.

In the early 1950's, air pollution management was initiated to help reduce the effects of pollution on

residents in California. Today there are over one hundred air monitoring stations in the state. In the center plaza of Brawley Union High School, there is an air quality flag that is changed every single day according to the data from imperialvalleyair.org. There are small steps being taken to help inform the community about the quality of our air from day to day. However, not much is being done to eliminate pollutants in the air. The County of Imperial has mandated that all dirt roads should be watered down in order to prevent excessive dust, as well as any vehicles driving down roads along fields must follow a strict slow speed limit as to avoid working up dust.

If you asked me how important I thought it was to take steps in improving our air quality in the valley, I would say that it is crucial that we, the Imperial Valley, as well as the bordering counties, work together in addressing the current exacerbations along with any future issues that may arise. Being that we are one of the top agricultural areas in the state of California, we need to make appropriate improvements for the future of agriculture as well as the safety for those residing here. With the support of air quality alerts, county rules and regulation, Department of Motor Vehicles regulations, and local healthcare resources, we can join forces in improving the condition of our air and educate our community in the importance of it. If nothing is done about our air problems, citizens of the valley will eventually be driven out permanently due to major health problems that will without a doubt rise."

The author, Emily Swaim, will graduate from BUHS in June. She is an avid outdoor lover and a member of the National Society of High School Scholars and the Brawley Chapter of [FFA](#). She plans to continue into higher education with the goal of becoming a veterinary technician.

In the Zone: Professional Development and Instructional Resources

The Civic Learning Award (CLA) recipients were announced in February and schools have had their award visits! The CLA for public schools is co-sponsored by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson and California Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye.

- The award program has three levels: Awards of Excellence, Distinction, and Merit.
- The list of schools that earned awards for 2017 can be found on the [California Courts Web page](#).

California Civic Learning Institute for Kindergarten through Grade Twelve (K–12) Educators

This year-long institute will equip K–12 educators with tools and strategies to build civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions for all students to become informed, engaged citizens.

Learn how to frame civic inquiries, facilitate research and investigations to distinguish “real” from “fake” information, engage students in civil dialogue about controversial issues, and help them reach conclusions to take informed, responsible, civic action.

July 24–28, 2017; September 25, 2017; spring date TBD, and a Civic Learning Student Showcase in spring 2018, Los Angeles, California

Registration information available [here](#). **Registration deadline is July 7, 2017.**

Legislative Update for June!

There has been some movement on the proposed legislation that would impact History–Social Science (HSS). The following is the most recent information:

[Assembly Bill \(AB\) 24](#), the Seal of Civic Engagement, was passed by the Assembly. The bill is currently in the Senate Committee on Education.

[AB 155](#) and [Senate Bill \(SB\) 203](#) have both been amended to require the writing of a model curriculum in media literacy as well as a professional development module to guide teachers’ use of the model curriculum. At this time, they are both “held under submission,” which mean that the bills have stalled in committee with members wanting to work or discuss the bill more. There is no motion for the bill to progress out of committee.

[SB 135](#) has been amended to develop a model curriculum in media literacy for K–12. This changes the original bill that would have integrated media literacy into the social sciences curriculum. This bill passed in the Senate and is now in the Assembly.

[SB 583](#) has been amended and changed to *High school graduation course requirements: economics: financial literacy*. The bill proposes that students passing a Financial Education elective course would get credit for the semester of economics that is required for high school graduation. This replaces the requirement of an additional Financial Education course towards graduation that the original bill proposed. This bill is in its third reading on the Senate floor.

[AB 617](#), which was introduced as voter education and registration bill, has now been gutted and replaced with an English language learner school advisory committee bill.

[AB 858](#), which would require the Superintendent to convene a Financial Literacy Advisory Committee, is in its third reading in the Assembly.

[AB 189](#) has been amended to require that a model curriculum in service learning be developed for adoption by districts. The bill no longer requires service learning as a graduation requirement. The bill is in its second reading.

[AB 738](#), model curriculum in Native American studies, has moved to Assembly floor for a third reading.

Finally, [AB 761](#), which would have HSS added to the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, has had its hearing postponed in the Committee on Education.

In the Zone: Professional Development and Instructional Resources, continued

Presidential and Congressional Academies for American History and Civics

The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) Office of Innovation and Improvement will open applications for both the Presidential and Congressional Academies grants on May 31, 2017. The application deadline will be July 15, 2017. There will be four grants available for a total of \$300,000–\$700,000. For more information please go to the [DOE Funding Opportunities Web page](#) and look for CFDA #84,477A.

Both Academies are meant to:

- expand and strengthen participant knowledge of American History and civics
- be conducted in the summer of no less than two weeks and no more than six weeks of instruction
- be led by a team of primary scholars and core teachers

Although the application is anticipated to open later this month, the four grants will only occur if funding is available.

Teaching the HSS Framework—Launch Conferences

Conferences will include instructional resources and programs for educators to support implementation of California's new HSS Framework. Registration is still open for the Fall 2017 and Winter 2018 locations and dates below:

Three conferences hosted by the History Project:

- *September 28, 2017* at Santa Clara County of Education
- *October 11, 2017* at Cal Poly Pomona
- Register [here](#).

Two remaining conferences hosted by California County Superintendents Educational Services Association:

- *September 6, 2017* at Ventura County Office of Education
- *November 1, 2017* at Los Angeles County Office of Education

Register [here](#).

Better Together: California Teachers Summit

Registration is still open for teachers of all subjects and grades who wish to participate in this statewide day of learning by teachers, for teachers. This event will be held at many locations across the state on July 28. Visit the Better Together [Web site](#) to sign up for a location near you.

Recommended Literature List

The CDE's Professional Learning Support Division requests your participation in a survey regarding the [Recommended Literature Prekindergarten through Grade Twelve](#) database. This database helps students, parents and other caretakers, and educators find literature that entertains, informs, and explores new ideas and experiences. The survey requests information on how users search the database as well as feedback and suggestions for improvements. The results of the survey will help guide the discussion on making improvements to the database to better serve users. To participate in this survey, go to <http://surveys2.cde.ca.gov/go/reclitlist2017.asp>.

Please complete the survey even if you have little or no experience in using the list as your insights regarding online tools and resources that you do use will help inform improvements to the database.

A news release will soon announce new award-winning titles recently added to the list.



Addition to the CDE HSS Web pages

A California Indian Resources link has been added to the [California, U.S., and World History](#) Web page for HSS. The link directs users to California State University, Sacramento, which offers resources that address the theme of California Native Americans in K–12.

The new link provides information on summits and conferences; curriculum and lesson plans; and additional resources.

In the Zone: Professional Development and Instructional Resources, continued

Foundation for Teaching Economics offers a summer online course: *Economic Demise of the Soviet Union*.

June 5–July 31, 2017

Registration Fee: \$175

Deadline to Apply: June 3, 2017

Read about the course and find the teacher application [here](#).

Federal Reserve Institute on Economics and Personal Finance, sponsored by The California Council for Economic Education, in partnership with the San Diego Center for Economic Education and in association with seven different Reserve Banks, looks forward to hosting this first-ever opportunity for educators!

The week-long course, designed for middle and high school teachers, will feature interactive lessons, online courses, video Q&A, interactive infographics, and much more.

- Meet San Diego State University Guidance Counselors to learn about being prepared for university study.
- Tour the USS Midway to inform you of the impact of the U.S. military on San Diego's regional economy.
- Observe a bankruptcy trial at the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and receive personal financial literacy lessons developed by the Court.

July 10–14, 2017

San Diego State University

Registration is \$500 and includes on-campus housing, breakfast, lunch, parking, and materials.

[Register](#) today!

The Right Question Institute (RQI)

The RQI, in partnership with the Orange County Department of Education, announces a one-day West Coast Seminar on Best Practices in the Question Formulation Technique (QFT).

The RQI aims to strengthen democracy by teaching a strategy that allows anyone, no matter their educational, income, or literacy level, to learn to ask better questions and participate more effectively in decisions.

August, 9, 2017, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Costa Mesa, CA

For more information and for registration click, [here](#).

The California Three Rs Project

presents a teaching guide called, *Holidays in the Public Schools: Ramadan* by Dr. Margaret Hill. It is a guide for teachers and administrators.

This year, Ramadan begins on May 27, 2017, and lasts until June 25, 2017.

The Muslim holiday of Ramadan is a month-long observance that falls on the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, the holiest month of the year. To Muslims, Ramadan recognizes Muhammad's divine revelation from Allah, as recorded in the Qur'an, or Koran.

This guide for public schools gives students a brief overview of the practices and significance of the Ramadan observance.

Download the guide, including a list of classroom resources and a children's literature list, [here](#).

Workshop: *The Untold Story of the Department of Justice Incarceration of People of Japanese Ancestry*.

August 10–11, 2017

8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

The workshop will be held at the Presidio of San Francisco (Day 1) and Angel Island (Day 2).

This workshop, sponsored by the National Park Service and the National Japanese American Historical Society, will engage participants in open-ended inquiry with primary sources, special exhibitions, and a visit to Angel Island to consider how a list of names evolved into a loss of civil rights for a group of people based on race.

Stipends and resources will be provided. For more information, visit the NPS [Web site](#).

Application deadline: Monday, July 31.

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History-Social Science: Spring 2017 Calendar

June 2017

Sun	M	T	W	Th	F	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

June:**National Safety Month**

- **June 5:** World Environment Day
- **June 14:** National Flag Day

July 2017

Sun	M	T	W	Th	F	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

July:

- **July 4:** [Independence Day](#)

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We would love to hear from you! Please let us know of any events and/or resources you would like to see included in the next edition of the newsletter.

To contribute ideas and/or resources, e-mail Janet Mann at jmann@cde.ca.gov.