

**League of Women Voters Spokane
Meeting with Social Studies Department Leaders (North Central High School)
March 19, 2018**

Attending: Spokane District 81 --Department Leaders in Social Studies; Susie Gerard, Social Studies Coordinator; League—Bev Austin, Mardell Cochran, Gretchen McDevitt, Beth Pellicciotti, Sylvia Oliver

High Schools Represented: North Central, Rogers, Shadle, and The Community School and On Track.

Susie Gerard introduced the League members (as a group). Bev Austin gave an overview of the League's mission (Making Democracy Work for All) and the non-partisan commitment the League makes to candidates and campaigning. However, she also emphasized that the League does take positions on policies.

The League hosts candidate forums for both primary and general elections and does extensive voter registration. The League registers approximately 60 new citizens to vote following the monthly naturalization ceremony. The League is especially interested in reaching out to young voters.

1. General discussion:

These teachers of civics education:

- help young, potential voters become informed about issues and candidates.
- set up assignments in which students research and debate both sides of issues/policies
- review the ballot (for that high school's district) with students and provide instructions for completing the ballot
- take students to Olympia (one teacher took students to a Town Hall meeting --back and forth to Olympia in one day!)
- give students instructions on how to register to vote online.
- plan student voting during Fall Semester
- respond to new law letting 17 year olds sign up to vote in election by which they turn 18

Teacher recommendations for League involvement

- come into classrooms to register students after first two weeks in May (which is time set aside for AP tests)
- help students register to vote online
- plan to be guest speakers next fall
- observe civics lessons in high school classrooms
- help recruit guest speakers of local importance (how can students be politically active in Spokane?)
- distribute League of Women Voters' material (one teacher asked for multiple copies of brochure which showed local, state, and national candidates)
- send teachers contact information of League members attending meeting and the teachers will contact us with next steps.

Possible next steps by League (in coordination with Susie Gerard):

- plan high school specific registration in May (Bev Austin)
- discuss with Susie Gerard voter registration for fall semester (Bev Austin)
- observe civics education lessons in classrooms (if invited). *This is important.* We will do a better job preparing a presentation, if we can observe *what* students are taught in civics and *how* the material is taught in civics before we present our own material.
- give presentations on the League and the importance of voting to high school students
- coordinate other speakers (especially local speakers) to high school classes
- supply League materials to high school teachers (through Susie Gerard) for the teachers' use and distribution to students
- invite high school teacher(s) and students to upcoming events and speakers sponsored by League. Local public officials presenting at a League luncheon might be a great fit for inviting one civics class at a time.
- be available to judge student debates, papers, etc. on civics education (Susan Gray is advancing our information on best practices in this area).
- recognize students with special interest and accomplishment in civics education

Summary for *The Voter*

On Monday, March 19, 2018, five members of the LWVSA met with leaders of social studies departments for Spokane District 81. Susie Gerard, a social studies coordinator for District 81 and recent presenter to the LWVSA on civics education, coordinated the meeting. League representatives were Bev Austin, Mardell Cochran, Gretchen McDevitt, Beth Pellicciotti, and Sylvia Oliver, all members of the newly formed civics education committee of the LWVSA.

Bev Austin reviewed the League's mission, its nonpartisan stance on candidates and campaigning, and its extensive research and support of selected issues and policies. These leaders of teaching civics education provided an overview of their work. In addition to following the civics education curriculum, they provided many examples of how they engage their students in the voting process, including:

- helping young, potential voters become informed about issues and candidates.
- setting up assignments in which students research and debate both sides of issues/policies
- reviewing the ballot (for that high school's district) with students and provide instructions for completing the ballot
- taking students to Olympia (one teacher took students to a Town Hall meeting --back and forth to Olympia in one day)

- giving students instructions on how to register to vote online.
- planning student voting during Fall Semester
- responding to new law letting 17 year olds sign up to vote in election by which they turn 18

The department leaders and League members discussed various ways that the League members could become more involved in civics education in the schools. These ideas focused on League members:

- coming into classrooms to register students after first two weeks in May (the first two weeks of May is set aside for AP tests)
- helping students register to vote online
- planning to be guest speakers next fall
- observing civics lessons in high school classrooms
- helping recruit guest speakers of local importance (how can students be politically active in Spokane?)
- distributing League of Women Voters' material (one department leader asked for multiple copies of brochure which showed local, state, and national candidates)

The next step is to set up the May 2018 voter registration in the high schools, with support coming from members of the Civics Education Committee, Bev Austin (Voter Services) and Susie Gerard for District 81.