

## H.B. Whitehorne Students Advance to the National History Day Contest

By Miss Rebecca Hadjiloucas



*From left to right: Meghan Kenneally, Emma Sheehan, Ella Mathewson, and Miss Rebecca Hadjiloucas at a winners' circle workshop at William Paterson University on May 9, 2018*

Three eighth grade students from H.B. Whitehorne Middle School have been chosen to represent the state of New Jersey at the 2018 National History Day Contest at the University of Maryland, College Park. There, they will join other students from across the country to celebrate their historical research and compete for a coveted national medal.

Eighth-graders Ella Mathewson, Emma Sheehan, and Meghan Kenneally earned top honors at the New Jersey History Day state competition held at William Paterson University of New Jersey on May 5, 2018. New Jersey History Day is an educational program designed for students in grades 6-12. Throughout the school year, students conduct research of primary and secondary resources in order to prepare presentations based on an annual theme. The program culminates in a series of contests held at the regional, state, and national level.

The H.B. Whitehorne students created a website showcasing the historic importance of the women's suffrage movement in connection with this year's theme: conflict and compromise. Their website features

primary source images, quotes, analysis of historical documents, and seeks to connect the women's suffrage movement to continued progress surrounding women's rights and equality in the present day.

The eighth-graders faced many of the same difficulties that established historians face when grappling with their own research. Selecting and narrowing down a topic, in addition to finding, evaluating, and interpreting sources, placed the students at the forefront of their own learning. This kind of problem-based inquiry establishes unique opportunities for discovery that textbooks and lectures simply cannot; it helps students bring social studies to life. Building research skills and practicing proper citations by working with Mrs. Jennifer Kleinknecht, the knowledgeable media specialist, reinforces the importance of all stages of the research process. Additionally, while one of the greatest sources of nerves for the students has been in anticipating their presentation and interaction with judges, they all agree that this public speaking experience is valuable. In this way, Verona's inclusion of the National History Day model is of significant advantage to students, especially in preparing them for the rigor of AP level courses at the high school and beyond, into college and career.

Their teacher, Miss Rebecca Hadjiloucas, is proud of her students' continued dedication to refining their historical argument and website design. She encourages students at the middle school who are interested in history to pursue the History Day elective, which is offered in the second marking period of their eighth grade year.

H.B. Whitehorne Middle School and the Verona School District congratulate Ella, Emma, and Meghan for their hard work and wish them continued success! For more information on New Jersey History Day, please contact the state coordinator at [njhistoryday@wpunj.edu](mailto:njhistoryday@wpunj.edu) or visit the National History Day website at <http://nhd.org>.