



NORWIN SCHOOL DISTRICT

NORWIN HIGH SCHOOL

DR. MICHAEL CHOBY
PRINCIPAL

MR. TIMOTHY McCABE
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

MR. ROCCO TELLI
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to recommend Gertrude Tesar for participation in the National Endowment for the Humanities Institute being hosted by the Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Education Initiative at Penn State. Gertrude has been teaching Social Studies at Norwin High School since 2021 and has been increasing in her role in curriculum design, assessment development, and extracurricular programs like the Euro Challenge competition.

Gertrude has been essential in developing Norwin High School's 9th Grade United States History curriculum with a focus on events between 1820-1914. Her past research conducted during her undergraduate studies of women's and American Indian history have updated our understanding by infusing scholarly works and historical artifacts into our course materials and has increased student achievement. The material has resulted in more diverse means of student engagement and assessment beyond multiple choice quizzes, like independent research, projects, and student writing samples.

In the present political environment, the social studies department has been under increased scrutiny, especially when teaching about the factual events of slavery and Reconstruction. It is hoped that Gertrude's participation in this program will not only provide further guidance, materials, and methods for teaching topics pertaining to the Holocaust, genocide, and human rights, but also increase the legitimacy and importance of these topics in our school curriculum.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Act 70 (2014) requires schools to teach about The Holocaust, genocide, and human rights violations. Gertrude will use her experience at the Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Education Initiative at Penn State to develop professional development for the Secondary Social Studies Department. The hope is that her participation will result in systemic changes to the curriculum at Norwin, by not only increasing the engagement of students, but the professional development of her fellow pedagogues. This is why I highly recommend Gertrude Tesar for consideration to this National Endowment for the Humanities institute. She really is this awesome.

Sincerely,

J. Scott Polen Ph.D.
Social Studies Curriculum Leader and Teacher
Norwin High School



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