



November 18, 2008

Dear Principals and Social Studies Teachers/Supervisors:

**The American Institute for History Education** is sponsoring **The Capitol Forum on America's Future** in the state of New Jersey, and would like to invite your school as one of the 20 schools to participate. This year will be the second year the Capitol Forum will be run in New Jersey. The Capitol Forum is an experiential civic education initiative that gives high school students a voice in public consideration of current international issues. The program is run on a statewide basis in participating states and involves students both within the social studies classroom and beyond the classroom at their state capitol. The Capitol Forum seeks to raise awareness on critical international issues and to help develop a foundation for long-term civic engagement.

The program takes place in the classroom and at the state capitol. The centerpiece of the program takes place at the State House in Trenton in April when 80 to 100 high school students from 20 schools come as class representatives for an all-day forum. They deliberate about the role they believe our nation should play in an increasingly complex international environment and join in an open forum to share their views with elected officials and policymakers.

**The program begins with a professional development workshop for teachers on January 10th 2008 (snow day January 17<sup>th</sup>)** and involves classroom preparation within the context of the participating teachers' regular courses. One more training day will take place to prepare for the April forum. Following the forum at the state capitol, student representatives return to their own classrooms to lead their fellow students in a dialogue on international issues. The year-long program culminates in a student ballot that is shared with **elected officials and the media.**

**It is a relatively small commitment in terms of time and preparation, but it offers great rewards for the students and teachers.** Teachers will receive curriculum units from the Choices Program of Brown University to conduct the classroom preparation. Beyond the two training sessions and Forum day at the State House, teachers would integrate a one-week unit regarding "America's Role in the World."

If you would like to participate, simply contact me directly at my office via email at [jbray@AIHE.info](mailto:jbray@AIHE.info). Additional information can be found by visiting the Brown University website at [http://www.choices.edu/capitol\\_forum/index.cfm](http://www.choices.edu/capitol_forum/index.cfm). **The deadline to register is December 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

Cordially,

Kenneth A. Gavin  
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*"All of my students who attended last year returned exuberant and energized with the desire to be contributing members of the political process. The enterprise of debating important issues with their counterparts from other school districts created a genuine enthusiasm which they continue to share with their classmates. This has prompted those who did not attend last year to inquire about the Capitol Forum and to look forward to the possibility of attending the event this spring."*

- Marla James, Union Catholic High School