



NEWS RELEASE

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Waterford School District Receives \$499,689 Teaching American History Grant from the U.S. Department of Education

July 17, 2009, Waterford, Mich. – The Waterford School District is the recipient of the Teaching American History Grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. The Teaching American History Grant is designed to improve student achievement by enhancing teachers' knowledge of traditional American history through intensive ongoing professional development in both content and research-based teaching strategies. Grants fund projects for up to five years, and grantees must partner with one or more organizations that have extensive knowledge of American history, including libraries, museums, nonprofit history or humanities organizations and higher education institutions.

The Waterford School District Project, *Digging into the Past*, involves primarily K-5 teachers throughout the District and focuses on pioneers, local history, Michigan history, and migration. Some of the projects outlined within this grant include: content seminars for participating grant teachers, book studies open to all Waterford staff, afterschool "Pizza and History" lectures, archaeology experiences, summer field trips for teachers to an archaeological excavation of the Midwest Archaeological Center of the National Park Service, field trips to local museums, school history projects, a History Academy for principals, and the creation of History Boxes for classrooms.

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The Project will be centered on one main archaeological excavation which will seek to locate the 1819 homestead of the Oliver Williams family, the first settlers in Waterford, and at least one secondary excavation, the ice house at the Governor Wisner estate in Pontiac. In addition, the project will include a series of test pits at the newly created Waterford Educational Research Center (WERC). "Digs" will also be done on selected school playgrounds.

The Waterford School District partners for this grant include Oakland University, U of M Dearborn, the Midwest Archaeological Center, Henry Ford Museum, Michigan Historical Center, Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society, Oakland County Historical Commission, Waterford Historical Society.

The U.S. Department of Education received 470 applications and only 123 were awarded throughout the country. The Waterford School District was one of three in Michigan to receive this award.

This is the second Teaching American History (TAH) grant awarded to the district. The District was awarded \$499,899 in 2006 for Project HATT (Historians and Teachers Together.) That project will culminate in October of 2009, the same month the new project "Digging into the Past" will officially begin.

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