

America 250: Social Studies in Clay

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K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9-12
American History (A)									
African American History (AA)									
						World History (W)			
					Holocaust Education (HE)				
						History of Communism (HC)			
Civics and Government (CG)									
Economics (E)									
				Financial Literacy (FL)					
Geography (G)									
									Humanities (H)
									Psychology (P)
									Sociology (S)

Progression of
Florida's Academic
Standards for
Social Studies



K-12 Social Studies: America 250 Journey

Our instruction begins in Kindergarten and continues through 12th grade, fostering a lifelong commitment to civic participation.



K-2

Foundations of Government, Citizenship, Patriotic Holidays & Symbols



3-5

Structure and Function of Government, Founding Documents, & Political Participation



6-8

Ancient & Enlightenment Influences, Democratic Principles, America's Founding, Citizenship, Government Safeguards, & Landmark Cases

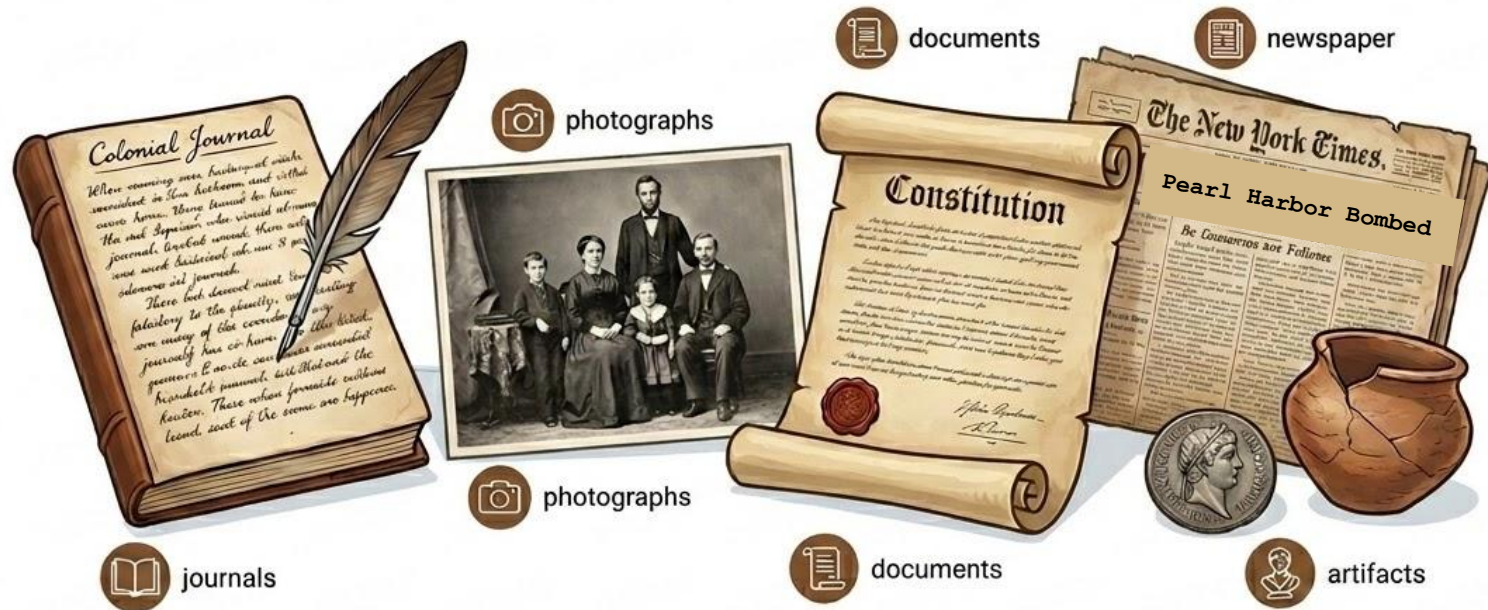


9-12

Enlightenment Influences, Foundational Documents, Citizenship, Elections, Government Safeguards, Landmark Cases, U.S. Foreign Policy

One common thread for K-12...

Primary Source Analysis



2nd Grade Lesson

SS.2.CG.3.1 Identify the Constitution of the United States as the supreme law of the land.

- Students will recognize that the United States has a written constitution.
- Students will identify the United States as a constitutional republic.

All About Me: U.S. Constitution

I was **written** on September 17, 1787, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



I currently live at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

I am over 230 years old!

I am known as the “**supreme law of land**”. This means that any laws made at the national, state, or local levels of government have to follow me.

I am divided into seven sections. Each section organizes a different piece of our government.

My organization and words set up our form of government. **We are a constitutional republic.** This means that:



- People have the power
- People elect representatives to serve in government positions (like the president and Congress)
- Elected representatives have to follow me and protect your rights.



Directions:

In **yellow**: highlight when the constitution was written

In **green**: highlight what the constitution is known as

In **orange**: highlight what form of government the United States is



5th Grade Lesson

SS.5.CG.1.1 Recognize that the Declaration of Independence affirms that every U.S. citizen has certain unalienable rights.

- Students will identify the grievances detailed in the Declaration of Independence.
- Students will describe the idea of "unalienable rights" in the Declaration of Independence as it relates to each citizen.
- Students will discuss the consequences of governments not recognizing that citizens have certain unalienable rights.

The Declaration of Independence: A Break-Up Letter

Directions: As you read, highlight the grievances listed.

Breaking up is hard to do. And it's even harder when it's with a king. But the colonists had to take a stand. King George III and Parliament had gone too far, and enough was enough. People's rights were at stake! The thirteen original colonies of the United States were once under Great Britain's rule. King George III was a **tyrannical ruler** (one who was abusing his power by treating his subjects in cruel ways).

Representatives from each of the thirteen colonies attended a Continental Congress to organize their thoughts. The Founders outlined their **grievances** (complaints) in the Declaration of Independence. This famous letter was written to the King but was meant for the colonists and the whole world to see. The Founders believed that King George III was violating their **unalienable rights**. Unalienable rights are rights you are born with, ones the government cannot take away. These rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The Continental Congress was frustrated at the way the British government didn't respect their rights. The colonists believed that all people had the right to self-government and wanted better treatment from their leader.

What are unalienable rights?

The colonists were taking a big risk by sending this letter. They traded goods with Great Britain; many colonists still had family overseas. Still, the Continental Congress made a **unanimous decision** (everyone agreed), and the Declaration of Independence was **ratified** (approved) on July 4, 1776.

The Declaration outlined 27 different grievances against King George III. Each of these grievances showed how he violated the unalienable rights of colonists. Some were about the high taxes Parliament was charging. Others were about the unfair judges and leaders he placed in control throughout the colonies. He also cut off colonial trade routes to other countries, demanded that British soldiers be housed in everyday colonists' homes, and wouldn't let colonists elect their own leaders. Parliament was making all these laws for the colonies while in England, and the colonists didn't get a say at all. This is where the famous phrase "no taxation without representation" came from. Colonists felt it was unfair they had to pay high taxes when they weren't allowed to represent themselves in the British Parliament. The colonists asked King George III to help fix this multiple times, and he ignored them.

The colonists believed that the purpose of the government was to protect the rights of the people. Since that was not happening, the colonists believed it was their right to cut ties with British rule and create a new government. The Declaration of Independence made it clear that the time had come.

How did the colonists respond when their rights were violated?

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly we have suffered this form of Government to stand nearly two centuries, and still to remain one of the most beloved and longest lived in the world.

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce us to absolute Tyranny, it is our right, it is our duty, to throw off such Government, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

We have submitted to the most abusive and oppressive Government, and have suffered the most oppressive and tyrannical Government to stand nearly two centuries, and still to remain one of the most beloved and longest lived in the world.

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7th/8th Grade Lesson

SS.7.CG.1.3 Trace the impact that the Magna Carta, Mayflower Compact, English Bill of Rights and Thomas Paine's Common Sense had on colonists' views of government.

- Students will identify the important ideas contained in the Magna Carta (e.g., due process of law, limitation of government power, right to justice, right to a fair trial), Mayflower Compact (e.g., consent of the governed, self-government), English Bill of Rights (e.g., right to life, liberty and property; no taxation without representation; right to a speedy and fair jury trial; no excessive punishments) and Common Sense (representative self-government).

Evaluating the Impact on Government

Directions: Using what you have learned about the big ideas from each document (Magna Carta, Mayflower Compact, English Bill of Rights, and *Common Sense*), determine how these influences appear in the U.S. Constitution. Read each U.S. Constitution passage below, mark text that helps you identify the big idea, and write the main idea in your own words. In the third column, write the big idea that is being discussed in the passage from the U.S. Constitution.

U.S. Constitution Passage	What does this mean in your own words	Big Idea
"We the People of the United States...do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."		
"This Constitution and the laws of the United States ... shall be the supreme law of the land." All government officials "shall be bound by an oath to support this constitution." – Article VI		
The first ten amendments in the Bill of Rights guarantees certain rights and freedoms that include: Freedom of speech, the press, and religion, right to petition the government and to bear arms		
The U.S. Constitution created three branches of government. Each branch is given the power to check, or limit the power of the other two. The system of checks and balances keeps any one branch from getting too powerful.		
"No person shall...be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law" U.S. Constitution, 5th Amendment		

Colonial Influences

Name: _____

Hey! Anyone Have Any Good Ideas?

Our Founding Fathers did not invent the American system of government out of thin air. They, like the other colonists, were influenced by many different ideas and traditions. The biggest influence came from their British heritage. (Remember the colonists WERE British until the American Revolution!) Events in British history and things that were happening during their own time affected the way the Founders thought government should work.

The Founders didn't have the Internet, so they got their ideas from books and other printed materials. What would have been on the minds of American colonists on the verge of a revolution? Let's take a peek at what might have been on the shelf of a private colonial library ...



King v. Nobles: Round One

Way back in the Middle Ages, England was ruled by a king who shared some of his powers with the wealthy nobility. The nobility would carry out the king's wishes, and the king would allow the nobles to make some local decisions. But in the early 1200s, King John tried to take all the power for himself! The angry nobles fought back. In 1215, they created a document called the **Magna Carta** that limited the power of the king and protected certain rights for the nobles. The nobility was powerful enough to force King John to sign the Magna Carta. This was a big deal because it introduced the concepts of *limited government*, *rule of law*, and *due process*. It also helped create the nation's Parliament (kind of like Congress in the U.S.).

The Magna Carta

We, the nobles, demand:

- A limit on the king's powers
- Laws and punishments to be fair and equal
- Due process of the law and fair trials
- Property rights



Before

After



The Mayflower Compact

When we land, we will:

- create our own government
- agree that the laws will be followed by everyone
- make sure that the new government will serve the common good

I Think We Took a Wrong Turn!

Fast forward over 400 years. The next document in the colonial library is the **Mayflower Compact**. It was written to solve a basic problem: Who is in charge? The Pilgrims left England in a ship called the Mayflower headed for the Virginia colony in 1620. A strong storm blew the ship off course, and they ended up in what is now Massachusetts. This area was not under the control of the company that sent them, so the Pilgrims were in independent territory. They needed a government—fast! The men agreed to create a new government and to follow its rules. In exchange, they would all protect each other. This is called *self-government*.



12th Grade Lesson

SS.912.CG.1.5 Explain how the U.S. Constitution and its amendments uphold the following political principles: checks and balances, consent of the governed, democracy, due process of law, federalism, individual rights, limited government, representative government, republicanism, rule of law and separation of powers.

- Students will explain how the structure and function of the U.S. government reflects these political principles.
- Students will differentiate between republicanism and democracy, and discuss how the United States reflects both.
- Students will describe compromises made during the Constitutional Convention (e.g., the Great Compromise, the Three-Fifths Compromise, the Electoral College).

THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

"I confess that I do not entirely approve of this Constitution at present, but Sir, I am not sure I shall never approve it: For having lived long, I have experienced many Instances of being oblig'd, by better Information or fuller Consideration, to change Opinions even on important Subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that the older I grow the more apt I am to doubt my own Judgment and to pay more Respect to the Judgment of others."

"On the whole, Sir, I cannot help expressing a Wish, that every Member of the Convention who may still have Objections to it, would put his Name to the Declaration."

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of Franklin's key points?
2. When in your life did you have to compromise?
 - a. What was successful?
 - b. What did you gain?
 - c. What did you have to give up?

Key Principles in the U.S. Constitution

Directions: Using the text of the U.S. Constitution (including amendments), record evidence/examples of how the Constitution and government of the United States reflects and upholds these principles.

Principle	What It Means	What It Looks Like
checks and balances	a principle of government that allows each branch of government to limit the power of the other branches	
consent of the governed	the idea that government gains its power/authority from the people	
democracy	a form of government in which political power is held by the people; can be direct (each individual person makes decisions) or indirect (people elect representatives to make decisions)	
due process of law	the right of people accused of crimes to have laws that treat them fairly, so that they cannot lose their life or freedom without having their legal rights protected	
federalism	the division of power between the national government and state governments	



DBQ, History Labs, and Primary Source Projects

Document C

Source: Warren, Joseph. An Oration Delivered March 5th, 1772. At the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston, to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770, second edition, Edes and Gill, 1772.

Note: Joseph Warren was a doctor and revolutionary leader from Massachusetts who helped organize the Boston Tea Party. He gave this speech to remember those who died in the Boston Massacre and also to outline the colonists' complaints against the British.

Vocabulary Note: Obligated means obligated or required.

... I am very much at loss to know [how] the inhabitants (residents) of this province can be called FREE SUBJECTS, when they are **obliged** to obey such laws made for them by men three thousand miles off, whom they know not, and whom they never have empowered to act for them [and] without even asking their consent....

Document Analysis:

1. When was this document written and who is the author?

2. Who is Dr. Warren talking about when he says "inhabitants of this province"?

3. Who are the "men three thousand miles off"?

4. Why does Warren think it is wrong for the colonists to obey laws made without their consent?

5. Is Warren's argument more of an economic (money) argument or a political (power) argument? Explain your reasoning.

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

SS.5.A.5.3 Explain the significance of historical documents including key political concepts, origins of these concepts, and their role in American independence.

Essential Question: To what extent did the Declaration of Independence establish the foundation of American government?

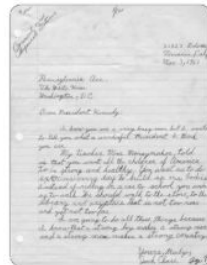
Source	Main Idea / Message / Important Details	How does this document answer the essential question?
Source 1 Excerpt from article about the signing of Declaration of Independence		
Source 2 Declaration of Independence		
Source 3 Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence		
Source 4 Excerpt from Thomas Jefferson's Autobiography		

Summary Statement:

Student Reproducibles

Balancing Power

Letter to JFK



This letter is from nine-year-old Jack Chase to President John F. Kennedy.

Americans like to write to the president. The president gets many letters. Americans tell the president about their lives. They ask questions, too. They write what they want for America.

This letter is from a young boy named Jack Chase. Jack wrote to President Kennedy. He told the president that he wants to get more exercise. He wants to grow strong. President Kennedy wanted kids to be more active. Jack wrote that he plans to do that.

The president has a lot of jobs. He or she is the leader of the U.S. government. The president visits other leaders, too. He or she is in charge of the armed forces. The president picks men and women to serve on the Supreme Court. Being president is a hard job. But it can make a big difference!



Founders' Week 2026

Founders' Week 2026:

250 Years of the American Experiment: Preserving the Promise

September 21-25, 2026, in all Clay County Schools

Quick Links

Teacher Background	Statement of Beliefs for Recitation
K-5 District Art Contest	Celebrate Freedom Week Lessons
Elementary Resources	Secondary Resources
List of Community Partners and Contact Information	Freedom Friday Advertisement
"Secondary Civics and Government: Guest Speaker Clerk Tara Green Info"	



Teacher Background

September's Patriotic Programs

Founders' Week

- Local celebration of our founding documents, individuals, and virtues.
- Can be celebrated throughout the month of September, but district's activities will take place the week of September 22nd - 26th.
- Includes Constitution Day and Celebrate Freedom Week

Constitution Day

- Federal requirement commemorating the day the Constitution was signed (Sept. 17th)
- Instruction on the importance of the Constitution and rights and obligations of citizens

Celebrate Freedom Week

- State requirement for the last full week of September
- Students recite part of the Declaration each day
- 3 hours of instruction on the Declaration of Independence in 5th, 7th-8th and 11th grade U.S. History

.....Pssst! Need a quick brush-up on your founding documents? Check out these links --

[Declaration of Independence](#) and [Constitution](#).



Statement of Beliefs

Printable Text for announcements



Statement of Beliefs

Per 1003.421, each day during the last week of September, students must recite a section from the Declaration of Independence.

Another opportunity to explore primary sources!



Going Beyond the Textbook

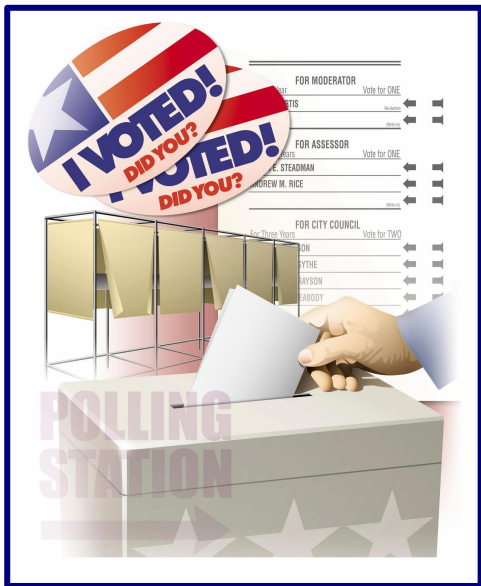
Utilizing local government and community partners to provide experiences that engage our students as young citizens



Naturalization Ceremony at GCJ



Mock Elections and Voter Registration Drives



Clerk of Courts and Clay Archives



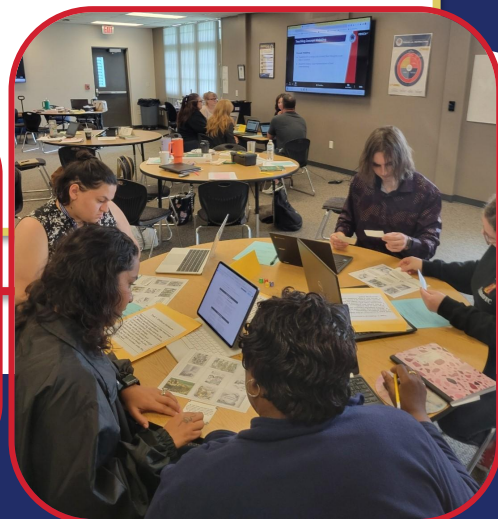
Highly Trained Educators

Our Social Studies teachers are continuously perfecting their craft leading to immense success.



Social Studies: The Stats

- ★26 Professional Learning Sessions
- ★279 teacher support visits, 301 hours
- ★400+ completed the Civics Seal of Excellence Course
- ★8 State-Level Awardees (FCSS)



Social Studies EOC Data

Civics Overall Proficiency				
	2023	2024	2025	
District	79%	83%	84%	+9 pts
State	66%	67%	76%	

US History Overall Proficiency				
	2023	2024	2025	
District	77%	81%	82%	+8 pts
State	63%	68%	74%	

7th Grade Civics is #1 in FL!

Social Studies is #3 in FL!



FCSS Teachers of the Year

Award Recognitions



CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS'

2026 *Social Studies*

TEACHERS AWARDS



“



Richard Montgomery
Lakeside Junior High

**WARREN TRACY BEGINNING
TEACHER AWARD**



“As we approach our nation’s 250th birthday, I believe it is essential for our students to continue their social studies journey, so they can become a well-informed citizen. The social studies courses here in Clay County provide students with the necessary critical thinking skills that are required to evaluate multifaceted topics such as the U.S. legal system, the three branches of the U.S. government and various other civic responsibilities that create a well rounded and informed citizen. Social studies allow for students to explore a vast world of geography and human experiences for a more well-rounded understanding of the world.”

CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS'

2026 Social Studies

TEACHERS AWARDS



Collin Markum
Middleburg High

**EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING
HISTORY AWARD**



“

“Social Studies has always had a special place in my heart. My mother taught middle school and elementary History for 38 years, so I grew up with stories of the people and events that shaped our world. As our nation approaches the 250th anniversary of independence, we have a great opportunity to highlight the people who sacrificed for the fundamental rights we enjoy. By discussing the pivotal decisions and analyzing documents, students can understand their neighbors and communities while learning how they can continue building a more perfect union.”

CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS'

2026 Social Studies

TEACHERS AWARDS



Kristy Dunn

Charles E. Bennett Elementary

**OUTSTANDING SOCIAL STUDIES
TEACHER OF THE YEAR**
IN THE ELEMENTARY DIVISION



"Social Studies Education unlocks a world of knowledge about the social, political, economic, and cultural environments from the past and present. Our world expands exponentially with a greater awareness of geography, natural resources, and the people that walked before us. This knowledge inspires us and gives us a compass to move forward as responsible, informed, and engaged individuals. With informed minds and an understanding about the world around us we can move together towards a better future."

CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS'

2026 Social Studies

TEACHERS AWARDS



Kevin Crawford
Orange Park Junior High

“

"This country was founded on freedoms, rights, and liberties. We, the people, are currently the posterity of the Framers and enjoy said freedoms, rights, and liberties. Students learn about how our great country was founded in Civics. Social Studies is an important teammate to ELA, so reading and understanding our founding documents are vital to the future success of our Constitutional Republic."

**OUTSTANDING SOCIAL STUDIES
TEACHER OF THE YEAR**
IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION



CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS'

2026 Social Studies

TEACHERS AWARDS



Joshua Hailey
Clay High

**OUTSTANDING SOCIAL STUDIES
TEACHER OF THE YEAR
IN THE SENIOR HIGH DIVISION**



“

“Social studies instruction is important because it prepares students for life beyond the classroom. In social studies classes, students practice civil discourse, support their ideas with evidence, and use knowledge of the past to better understand current events. From career-readiness to civic participation, I hope that students leave my history class confident that they have the skills to navigate the present and shape the future.”

CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS'

2026 Social Studies

TEACHERS AWARDS



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Amanda Connelly
Lake Asbury Junior High

**CLAY CIVICS
CHAMPION**



“As we approach our nation's 250th birthday, civics education matters more than ever because democracy depends on informed, thoughtful, and engaged citizens. In the classroom, we are not just teaching students about government and laws, we are helping them find their voice while understanding the responsibility that comes with freedom. Civics gives young people the tools to lead with integrity and participate in shaping the future of their communities and country. At a time when division often feels louder than unity, education has the power to remind students that their actions, choices, and voices truly matter. The future of our democracy will not be determined only by elected leaders, but by the character, knowledge, and civic responsibility we inspire in the next generation.”



Richard Montgomery
Lakeside Junior High

WARREN TRACY BEGINNING
TEACHER AWARD



Collin Markum
Middleburg High

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING
HISTORY AWARD



Amanda Connelly
Lake Asbury Junior High

CLAY CIVICS
CHAMPION

CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS'

OUTSTANDING *Social Studies*

TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

2026



Kristy Dunn
Charles E. Bennett Elementary

OUTSTANDING SOCIAL STUDIES
TEACHER OF THE YEAR
IN THE ELEMENTARY DIVISION



Kevin Crawford
Orange Park Junior High

OUTSTANDING SOCIAL STUDIES
TEACHER OF THE YEAR
IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION



Joshua Hailey
Clay High

OUTSTANDING SOCIAL STUDIES
TEACHER OF THE YEAR
IN THE SENIOR HIGH DIVISION