

**Commission on Civics Education**  
**Thursday, November 06, 2008**  
**Virginia Historical Society**  
**Richmond, Virginia**  
**10 a.m.**

**Meeting Summary**

The Commission on Civics Education, established by House Bill 1769 as an advisory commission in the executive branch of state government, held its tenth meeting on November 6, 2008.

**Members Present**

Dr. Stephen G. Bragaw  
Thomas C. Coen  
The Honorable James H. Dillard, II  
Glen H. Hoptman  
The Honorable William Roscoe Reynolds  
J. Westwood Smithers, Jr.  
Richard C. Sullivan, Jr.  
Kathryn Williams

**Members Absent**

The Honorable Kenneth C. Alexander  
Jeffrey A. Finch  
Dr. Sheila G. Hill  
The Honorable Stephen Newman  
The Honorable Beverly J. Sherwood  
Ginger Stanley  
Kenneth S. Stroupe, Jr.  
The Honorable Robert Tata  
The Honorable R. Lee Ware, Jr.

**Other Persons in Attendance**

Gwen Bailey  
Joel M. Dexter  
Nathan Hatfield  
Maggie Massie

**Ex-Officio Present**

Jean Bankos (Designee for The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine)  
Dr. Linda Wallinger (Designee for Dr. Patricia I. Wright)

**Ex-Officio Absent**

Dr. Mark E. Emblidge  
Jeremy Greenfield (Designee for The Honorable Bill Bolling)  
Alison Landry (Designee for The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell)  
Dr. Barbara A. Perry

**Department of Education**

Betsy Barton  
Beverly Thurston

**Welcome**

The Honorable William Roscoe Reynolds called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. and confirmed the roll call. The minutes from the August 5, 2008, meeting of the Commission on Civics Education were approved.

## Presentations and Discussions

Glen Hoptman:

- Presented information about the 2008 *Virginia Civics Education Summit*.
  - The *Summit* was located at the Capitol Building on September 19, 2008, during Civics Week.
  - An audience of approximately 150 teachers attended the *Summit*.
  - A wider audience was reached through the Web cast of the presentations and through questions received online.
  - Speakers at the *Summit* included David Wilkins, Kirkland and Ellis Professor of Law, Harvard Law School; Lee Rainie, Director, Pew Internet and American Life Project; and Dr. Joseph Kahne, Dean of the School of Education, Mills College.
  - Topics included “The Hidden Dimension of Civic Education and Engagement”, “Virtual Civic Engagement”, and an update on the new Civics Standards of Learning and Curriculum Frameworks.
  - Robert Holsworth of Virginia Commonwealth University also gave an overview of the upcoming elections.
  - Attendees received books related to civics instruction and engagement as well as information from local and state organizations and institutions.

There was general praise on the content as well as the planning and organization of the *Virginia Civics Education Summit* from members of the Commission who had attended. There were reports that the *Summit* was well received by the attendees. The Web cast was also seen as a great enhancement, both in terms of reaching a wider audience and in terms of the quality of its production. Commission members were impressed by the technology related presentations and their potential to offer a chance for civic engagement to more people through online communities.

The Honorable James H. Dillard, II:

- Led the discussion of ways to continue the Civics Commission’s mission in light of budget reductions that eliminated funding for the Commission. There were several approaches:
  - One proposal was to make the Commission fully independent so that it could more easily accept funding from non state sources.
  - Other methods would continue a relationship with the Virginia Department of Education but transfer a degree of control to another authority.
  - Legislation might change the Civics Commission to make it more like some of the other semi-independent or fully independent commissions.
- Presented information concerning continued efforts to provide a Virginia-specific textbook on Civics.
  - Pearson has agreed to add several chapters on Virginia government to its civics textbook’s teacher’s edition.
  - There will be no change in the government text used for the high school course.

Commission members offered various institutions who could assume control of the Commission or serve as possible partners for the Department of Education in continuing the Commission. Among them were:

1. The Virginia Historical Society
2. The Center for the Constitution at Montpelier
3. The legislative branch in Virginia

There was agreement that the Commission could benefit from some sort of continued relationship with the Virginia Department of Education because of the success of the *Summit* and access to the expertise of people at the Department. There were also questions about some of the current independent commissions and how they operate. Senator Reynolds agreed to move forward with exploring the options available through legislation.

### **Adjournment**

The Honorable William Roscoe Reynolds adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.