

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Demarest Middle School's Teacher Visits Mt. Vernon, VA**

Demarest, NJ August 18, 2017 - Demarest Middle School's seventh grade Social Studies teacher, Mr. Andrew Lefer, traveled to George Washington's Mount Vernon to participate in a five day, residential professional development program from July 11<sup>th</sup> to July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The George Washington Teacher's Institute program Lefer attended, First in Business: George Washington, Mount Vernon, and the New Nation, included an intensive study led by noted independent historian Dr. Bruce Ragsdale. Participants collaborated with Mount Vernon's knowledgeable historians, curators, and educators while on site.

In addition to studying George Washington's lesser-known role as a businessman, participants explored 18<sup>th</sup> century economic policy during the founding of the New Nation. They studies the economics of a southern plantation that relied on enslaved labor and paired hands-on 18<sup>th</sup> century historic activities with primary sources to explore the skills used and sources available that connect cross-curricular subjects in the classroom.

Institute participants from around the country included K-12 teachers, librarians, and media specialists selected by the George Washington Teachers Institute in a competitive application process. Mr. Lefer expresses his experience, "It was a transformative experience for me. Having the opportunity to be surrounded by history and learning about our greatest Founding Father reminded me of why I began teaching history in the first place. I learned more about Washington that I though was possible and I am excited to share what I have learned with my students."

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