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TO: Council President Pro Tem Mary Sheffield

FROM: David Whitaker, Director, Legislative Policy Division 

DATE: October 25, 2021

RE: **Requesting Report on Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD)
Civics Course Curriculum**

Council President Pro-Tem Sheffield requested LPD write a report regarding the Civics Course Curriculum currently being implemented at Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD). LPD contacted DPSCD's "Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction" Department to obtain information that wasn't readily on DPSCD's website. This report will detail LPD's findings, and the documentation received from DPSCD.

Currently, topics related to Civics are taught as an activity or project in Social Studies classes for kindergarten through ninth grade. A complete Civics course is taught in the tenth grade. DPSCD provided an overview of its Civics Course Curriculum implementation at each grade level, which can be found on Attachment A. Proceeding receipt of Attachment A, LPD submitted a list of questions to DPSCD (Attachment B) that were answered via a phone call with the Department. The information discussed in that phone call is detailed below.

DPSCD has implemented a 1-year pilot program called "InquireD" for grades K-4 in 2021-2022 School Year. This program, is currently being offered in 30 schools that voluntarily chose to be a part of the pilot program. InquireD has a digital textbook that is printed and shipped to schools. The pilot period will close at the end of the 2021-22 school year. DPSCD intends to expand the InquireD program to all schools for kindergarten through fourth grade in the district during the 2022-23 school year, after they've received and evaluated feedback from the "Social Studies Equity Taskforce" regarding the success of the program.

The taskforce was created to track the progress and success of programs within the district. The taskforce will conclude its role and present its findings in the Spring of 2022. DPSCD may also expand the InquirED program to other grade levels, however this has not been decided yet. The success of the pilot will be determined by teacher feedback, the task force findings, and an Inquiry Advocate that is familiar with the program and works in the school to ensure effective implementation of the program.

The other schools in the district that did not participate in the InquirED pilot program are using materials from “Studies Weekly,” which is a newspaper/magazine with corresponding worksheets that are printed and shipped to the schools.

“Detroit History” is offered in grades k-5 and tenth grade. The district is preparing to implement this unit for grades eight and nine in the 2022-23 school year. The purpose of the Detroit History civics discussion is to allow students to see themselves in the coursework. Therefore, it was written with the local history of Detroit in mind. It is based on activities/projects that inspire students to envision their role in society.

School Year 2021-22 is the second year the “Savaas” unit has been implemented across the district in grades six through eight and tenth grade. Savass includes a textbook and workbook that is shipped to schools.

“The DBQ Project” has been used in DPSCD schools for four years. It began as pilot program in fifth and eighth grades and expanded last year to include grades five through eleven. The DBQ project is a digital platform with printable workbooks. Workbooks are printed for grades five through eight and remains digitally accessible for high school students.

“Facing History & Ourselves,” “NK 360,” and “Learning for Justice” are all free, digital programs available online for teachers to print materials on an as-need basis, when a subject requires more information or a more in-depth discussion. Each project using these programs engages students learning from a hands-on approach. Anyone can access this information after setting up an account, including parents, teacher, or students.

Resources for each Program/Unit

Program/Unit:	Website:
1. InquirED	https://www.inquired.org/
2. Savaas	https://savvasrealize.com/#/
3. The DBQ Project	https://www.dbqproject.com/
4. Studies Weekly	https://www.studiesweekly.com/
5. Learning for Justice	https://www.learningforjustice.org/
6. Facing History & Ourselves	https://www.facinghistory.org/
7. NK 360	https://www.socialstudies.org/tssp/native-knowledge-360-nmai

Please do not hesitate to contact LPD if there any further questions or concerns.

ATTACHMENT A

Office of Social Studies
Civics Education in DPSCD



Core Civic Principles

Our goals for Social Studies civic education include the following principles:

- Affirm student identity and the communities they belong to as central to our student’s perspectives.
- Value youth voice in driving their learning through inquiry-based lessons.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in a participatory democracy by creating *Taking Informed Action* activities and projects.
- Educate students in levers of power from federal government to state and local government.
- Build in learning on media literacy, including current events exploration.

Course	Unit	Materials
Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigating School: The Civics and Government standards call for students to learn about the reasons for school rules, ways in which they engaged in self-discipline, and be able to identify American symbols. This unit gives students the opportunity to explore their school to identify school norms, build a 3d map of their school (where students can identify an American flag as a classroom marker), and ways in which students can take responsibility for their actions and the idea of consequences. 	InquirED (pilot in ~30 schools)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civics and Government: The Civics and Government standards call for students to learn about the reasons for school rules, ways in which they engage in self-discipline, and be able to identify American symbols. This unit explores the different levels of government, important government documents like the Bill of Rights, and important US symbols. 	Studies Weekly
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detroit History: The Civic Participation standards calls for students to participate in projects that help inform others. This unit provides students the opportunity to develop a transportation plan for the City of Detroit after learning about transportation in Detroit over time. 	Detroit History materials
Grade 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Engagement: The Civics and Government standards calls for students to “explain important rights and how, when, and where members of American society demonstrate their responsibilities by actively participating in civic life.” In this unit, after students learn about the Americans with Disabilities Act, students find an issue important to them and engage in a Taking Informed Action project that gives them the opportunity to plan for change on that issue. 	InquirED (pilot in ~30 schools)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civics and Government: The Civics and Government standards calls for students to explore the use of power with authority and without authority. In this unit, students explore the communities they belong to and how their membership in different communities creates different roles and responsibilities. 	Studies Weekly

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ATTACHMENT A (continued)

Office of Social Studies
Civics Education in DPSCD



Course	Unit	Materials
Grade 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Needs and Wants: The Civics and Government standards calls for students to "Identify services commonly provided by local governments." In this unit, students build a model community, learning how local government provides services, then brainstorming ideas of local government services in their model community. 	InquirED (pilot in ~30 schools)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civics and Government: The Civics and Government standards calls for students to understand how local government affects people's lives, including the enforcement of laws. In this unit, students explore where and how laws apply to everyone. 	Studies Weekly
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detroit History: The Civic Participation standards calls for students to participate in projects that help inform others. In this unit, students create a 3d map of a Detroit neighborhood, outlining all the things that make that neighborhood special. 	Detroit History
Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our State's History: The Civic Participation standards calls for students to explore the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. In this unit, students explore the rights of freedom in early state history. 	InquirED (pilot in ~30 schools)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civics and Government: The Civics and Government standards calls for students to identify the three branches of government in Michigan and their powers. In this unit, students complete a graphic organizer helping to distinguish between the three branches of government. 	Studies Weekly
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detroit History: The Civic Participation standards calls for students to participate in projects that help inform others. In this unit, students put General William Hull on trial for his surrender of Detroit in the War of 1812, examining multiple perspectives about his role and others' role in the surrender. 	Detroit History
Grade 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights and Responsibilities: The Civics and Government standards calls for students to explore the purposes of government as outlined in the Preamble to the Constitution. In this unit, students explore the Preamble and the Constitution of the United States as primary source documents to deepen their understanding of democratic principles of the US. 	InquirED (pilot in ~30 schools)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civics and Government: The Civics and Government standards calls for students to explore ways in which the Constitution limits the powers of the federal government. In this unit, students explore the first, second, and fourteenth amendments in depth. 	Studies Weekly
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detroit History: The Civic Participation standards asks students to participate in projects to inform others. In this unit, students explore migration and immigration to Detroit culminating in a project that invites students to create an historical artifact for a migration or immigration story they study. 	Detroit History

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ATTACHMENT A (continued)

Office of Social Studies
Civics Education in DPSCD



Course	Unit	Materials
Grade 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detroit History: The Civic Participation standards asks students to participate in projects to inform others. In this unit, students explore the untold stories of people who built Detroit from the Denison Family, where the father started the first recognized Black militia, to the indigenous people who created trade networks within the city. At the conclusion of the unit, students create a newspaper to share these untold stories. 	Detroit History
Grade 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Units: The Civics and Government standards ask students to compare and contrast various forms of government all over the world. In this world geography course, students spend time in each unit exploring the different forms of government in the region in which they are studying. 	Savvas
Grade 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Roman and Byzantine Empires: The Civic Participation standards asks students to explore a question of public policy in modern day or historically. In this unit, students evaluate the governmental systems of Rome and Athens and determine which had a better system. 	The DBQ Project
Grade 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconstruction: The Civic Participation standards asks students to explore how individuals advance issues of public policy. In this unit, students answer the DBQ question: Who killed Reconstruction? 	The DBQ Project
Grade 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in America's Role in World and Policy Debates: The Policy Debate standards ask students to "make a persuasive argument on a public policy issue, and justify the position with evidence from historical antecedents and precedents, and Democratic Values or Constitutional Principles." In this unit, students explore drilling in Alaska and its impact. 	The DBQ Project

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ATTACHMENT A (continued)

Office of Social Studies
Civics Education in DPSCD



Course	Unit	Materials
Civics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Units: The state standards call for both a macro dive into Civics at the federal level and a micro dive into Civics at the local level and everything in between. Students cover Civics in the following units: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bending the Arc: Using Your Voice to Promote Change: In this unit, students understand the levers of power and ways to change policy in the United States. Students have the opportunity to craft a Classroom Constitution to set the norms for the classroom experience in this course. Students then use a framework to explore the issues that matter most to them. Next, students analyze the ways in which young people advocated for change during the 1963 Chicago Schools boycott. The unit wraps with students working in groups to complete a project proposal on an issue that matters to them. ○ Civil Society and Foundations of American Government: In this unit, students explore the beginnings of American Government and the people and documents that influenced the structure and functions of the government. Students explore the influence of Enlightenment era philosophers as well as the voices left out of the framing and final draft of the Constitution. ○ Functions of Government in the United States: In this unit, students explore the structure of the US Constitution through a study of Article I, II, and III. Students analyze the balance of power between the three branches, constantly answering supporting questions that help students think about the right balance of power. After studying the first three articles of the Constitution, students then explore foreign policy, federalism, and federal expenditures. ○ Rights and Liberties in America: In this unit, students explore civil liberties in America. Through the textbook, charts, and the DBQ project, students analyze how much power a government should have in various situations. Students first explore whether the inalienable rights are actually inalienable and then move to the rights in the first amendment. Students explore due process and end the unit analyzing the rights in the fourth amendment. Through scenarios and case studies, students should walk away at the end of this unit able to apply the rights in the amendments to various scenarios. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Savvas The DBQ Project Facing History and Ourselves NK 360 Learning for Justice</p>

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ATTACHMENT A (continued)

Office of Social Studies
Civics Education in DPSCD



Course	Unit	Materials
Civics (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elections and Influencers on the Democratic Process: In this unit, students explore the democratic process, from voting rights and qualifications, to analyzing voter mandates in a DBQ. This unit takes students on an historical journey first, giving students the knowledge and background to understand voting rights in the United States over time. Students then explore voter qualification issues, like requiring voter ids. Students next explore their own political leanings and wrap up that learning with an exploration of the Electoral College and whether it should be abolished. Finally, students complete the second DBQ of the course around the viability of voter mandates in the United States. ○ Citizenship: In this unit, students explore the notion of citizenship. Students look at citizenship in the US and citizen rights. Then students explore the ideas of power and citizenship and how each contributes to the idea of a democracy. The unit culminates with the completion of a Taking Informed Action Framework project that asks students to explore ways in which citizens can use power to evoke change. 	<p>Savvas The DBQ Project Facing History and Ourselves NK 360 Learning for Justice</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Detroit History: The DPSCD Citizen Manual and the corresponding workbook modernizes the District’s previous work in Detroit: A Manual for Citizens, last published in 1968. The Citizen Manual and the workbook are designed to work together to help its users develop a deeper understanding of the history of Detroit, its government, the government’s roles and responsibilities, and how citizens of the city can work within the government systems to bring about change. 	<p>Citizen Manual Citizen Manual Workbook</p>
Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Market Economy/National Markets: The Economics standards asks students to explore the ways in which the government plays a role in markets. In these units, students develop a deep understanding of the circular flow model, the federal reserve system, financial markets, and other ways in which the government plays a role in markets. Students also answer the question: Fixing a Broken Economy: Did Obama Get It Right? 	<p>Savvas The DBQ Project</p>
World History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contemporary Global Issues: The World History standards asks students explore contemporary global issues which often involves the role of government and citizens making or changing public policy. In this unit, students reflect on social and environmental challenges and how political and economic relationships on a global scale can result in those challenges. Students answer the question: China’s One Child Policy: Was it a Good Idea? 	<p>McGraw Hill The DBQ Project</p>
Street Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This elective course exposes students to the justice system, but more importantly, builds student’s self-confidence, agency, and empowerment to challenge the status quo of our legal system. 	<p>McGraw Hill</p>

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ATTACHMENT B

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TO: Elizabeth Triden, Senior Director, Social Studies DPSCD

RE: Civics Course Curriculum Questions

Greetings Ms. Triden,

The Legislative Policy Division (LPD) has a few questions regarding the Civics Course Curriculum information provided in the PDF sent on October 13, 2021.

1. DPSCD's website doesn't have any information regarding Civic courses or curriculum information available to students at DPSCD schools.
 - A. Are the "units" described in the PDF, an actual full course or a topic/activity occasionally discussed within another course, such as Social Studies or History class?
 - B. If it is not a full course, what classes does Civics discussions take place? If there is a full course available, at what grade level is the full course taught?
2. The description of Civics courses stops at grade 9 on page three (3), then goes into an overview description of civics coursework on page four (4) and the top of page five (5) in the PDF provided by DPSCD.
 - A. Does the Civics course instruction stop at grade 9? If not, can DPSCD provide more detail on Civics coursework after grade 9?

Furthermore, page four (4) and the top of page five (5) of the PDF, details Civics activities without specifying which grade level those activities or "units" are implemented.

B. At what grade level are these "units" implemented?

3. The program InquirED is mentioned at several grade levels. The PDF also states this is a pilot program in 30 schools.

ATTACHMENT B (continued)

- A. Why only 30 schools?
 - B. Are there plans to expand to other schools?
 - C. How long has the pilot program been implemented?
 - D. When is the pilot period over? Just this year
 - E. How does DPSCD determine if the pilot is successful?
4. There are several programs/materials listed as the source of the information used to cover certain topics within the Civics coursework instruction, such as InquirED, Detroit History, Studies Weekly, Savaas, The DBQ Project, Facing History and Ourselves, NK 360, and Learning for Justice.
- A. Can you provide more information on these programs and materials?
 - B. Do these programs have a course book, workbook, dittos, etc. to guide students through the study of Civics?
 - C. How long has DPSCD been using these programs?