

January 24, 2023

Re: S. F. 618 - Civics Course as Graduation Requirement

Dear Chair Cwodzinski and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA), Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD), Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA), and Minnesota Rural Education Association we would like to share some important concerns about SF 618 which requires one credit in civics in either the 11th or 12th grade. We have testified in the past and wanted to place our concerns on the record again this session.



Reduces student electives

MN High school students have 36 months to complete the required 22.5 credits to graduate. Those required credits don't allow a lot of room for the classes students have worked so hard to master and want to continue throughout high school. There have been several bills seeking a course for credit, and while the topics are all important, looking at it from a 30,000 foot view, it puts students and families, especially within their senior year, in a position where they won't be able to take courses of choice, like CTE courses, or higher level language, math or science courses. Courses that could impact a career or post-secondary decision as well.



Civics currently exists within our school's curriculum. Students begin the study civics in grades 7 and 8, understanding Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote and participate in elections, apply inquiry and analysis skills and take action to solve problems and shape public policy. It continues in depth in grades 9-12. Documentation on the standards and benchmarks is attached for your review.

Costs

We would be happy to work together to strengthen personal finance and civics education through the implementation of the new social studies standards. Please note that implementing new curriculum is very costly and it is important that school districts can implement any changes in the next revision cycle.

Local Control

We appreciate your commitment to strengthening civics education. However, our members believe curriculum decisions are best made at the local level by school boards working with their staff, students, and community. Our members believe that requiring a full civics credit in 11th or 12th grade is too prescriptive and would create significant scheduling challenges and limit academic opportunities for high school students. Choice is important to our families. Accordingly, we respectfully oppose SF 618 in its current form.

Grades 9-12: Citizenship and Government

Grade	Strand	Substrand	Standard Understand that...	Code	Benchmark
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	1. Civic Skills	1. Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote and participate in elections, apply inquiry and analysis skills and take action to solve problems and shape public policy.	9.1.1.1.1	Demonstrate skills that enable people to monitor and influence state, local and national affairs. <i>For example:</i> Working with others; conducting civil conversations; articulating ideas and interests; negotiating differences and managing conflict with people or groups who have different perspectives; using parliamentary procedures; building consensus.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	1. Civic Skills	1. Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote and participate in elections, apply inquiry and analysis skills and take action to solve problems and shape public policy.	9.1.1.1.2	Demonstrate the skills necessary to participate in the election process, including registering to vote, identifying and evaluating candidates and issues, and casting a ballot.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	1. Civic Skills	1. Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote and participate in elections, apply inquiry and analysis skills and take action to solve problems and shape public policy.	9.1.1.1.3	Evaluate sources of information and various forms of political persuasion for validity, accuracy, ideology, emotional appeals, bias and prejudice.

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9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	1. Civic Skills	1. Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote and participate in elections, apply inquiry and analysis skills and take action to solve problems and shape public policy.	9.1.1.1.4	Examine a public policy issue by defining the problem, developing alternative courses of action, evaluating the consequences of each alternative, selecting a course of action, and designing a plan to implement the action and resolve the problem.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	2. Civic Values and Principles of Democracy	3. The United States is based on democratic values and principles that include liberty, individual rights, justice, equality, the rule of law, limited government, common good, popular sovereignty, majority rule and minority rights.	9.1.2.3.1	Analyze how constitutionalism preserves fundamental societal values, protects individual freedoms and rights, promotes the general welfare, and responds to changing circumstances and beliefs by defining and limiting the powers of government.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	2. Civic Values and Principles of Democracy	3. The United States is based on democratic values and principles that include liberty, individual rights, justice, equality, the rule of law, limited government, common good, popular sovereignty, majority rule and minority rights.	9.1.2.3.2	Identify the sources of governmental authority; explain popular sovereignty (consent of the governed) as the source of legitimate governmental authority in a representative democracy or republic.

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9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	2. Civic Values and Principles of Democracy	3. The United States is based on democratic values and principles that include liberty, individual rights, justice, equality, the rule of law, limited government, common good, popular sovereignty, majority rule and minority rights.	9.1.2.3.3	Define and provide examples of foundational ideas of American government which are embedded in founding era documents: natural rights philosophy, social contract, civic virtue, popular sovereignty, constitutionalism, representative democracy, political factions, federalism and individual rights. <i>For example:</i> Documents—Mayflower Compact, English Bill of Rights, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, the Constitution, selected Federalist Papers (such as 10, 39, 51, 78), the Bill of Rights.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	2. Civic Values and Principles of Democracy	3. The United States is based on democratic values and principles that include liberty, individual rights, justice, equality, the rule of law, limited government, common good, popular sovereignty, majority rule and minority rights.	9.1.2.3.4	Analyze how the following tools of civic engagement are used to influence the American political system: civil disobedience, initiative, referendum and recall.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	2. Civic Values and Principles of Democracy	3. The United States is based on democratic values and principles that include liberty, individual rights, justice, equality, the rule of law, limited government, common good, popular sovereignty, majority rule and minority rights.	9.1.2.3.5	Analyze the tensions between the government's dual role of protecting individual rights and promoting the general welfare, the struggle between majority rule and minority rights, and the conflict between diversity and unity.

Grade	Strand	Substrand	Standard Understand that...	Code	Benchmark
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	3. Rights and Responsibilities	4. Individuals in a republic have rights, duties and responsibilities.	9.1.3.4.1	Analyze the meaning and importance of rights in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights and subsequent amendments; compare and contrast these with rights in the Minnesota Constitution.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	3. Rights and Responsibilities	4. Individuals in a republic have rights, duties and responsibilities.	9.1.3.4.2	Explain the scope and limits of rights protected by the First and Second Amendments and changes created by legislative action and court interpretation.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	3. Rights and Responsibilities	4. Individuals in a republic have rights, duties and responsibilities.	9.1.3.4.3	Explain the scope and limits of rights of the accused under the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth Amendments and changes created by legislative action and court interpretation.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	3. Rights and Responsibilities	4. Individuals in a republic have rights, duties and responsibilities.	9.1.3.4.4	Explain the current and historical interpretations of the principles of due process and equal protection of the law; analyze the protections provided by the 14th Amendment.

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9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	3. Rights and Responsibilities	4. Individuals in a republic have rights, duties and responsibilities.	9.1.3.4.5	Explain the responsibilities and duties for all individuals (citizens and non-citizens) in a republic. <i>For example:</i> Paying taxes, obeying the law, responding to government requests such as subpoenas, informed participation in voting and public decision-making, developing and defending positions on public policy issues, monitoring, influencing decision-making.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	3. Rights and Responsibilities	5. Citizenship and its rights and duties are established by law.	9.1.3.5.1	Define the legal meaning of citizenship in the United States, describe the process and requirements for citizenship, and explain the duties of citizenship including service in court proceedings (jury duty) and selective service registration (males).
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	3. Rights and Responsibilities	5. Citizenship and its rights and duties are established by law.	9.1.3.5.2	Describe the process of naturalization; explain the role of the federal government in establishing immigration policies.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	4. Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	6. The United States government has specific functions that are determined by the way that power is delegated and controlled among various bodies: the three levels (federal, state, local) and the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of government.	9.1.4.6.1	Explain federalism and the provisions of the United States Constitution which delegate to the federal government the powers necessary to fulfill the purposes for which it was established; distinguish between those powers and the powers retained by the people and the states. <i>For example:</i> Necessary and Proper Clause (“elastic clause”), Commerce Clause, Ninth and 10th Amendments.

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9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	4. Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	6. The United States government has specific functions that are determined by the way that power is delegated and controlled among various bodies: the three levels (federal, state, local) and the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of government.	9.1.4.6.2	Explain the purposes, organization, functions and processes of the legislative branch as enumerated in Article I of the United States Constitution.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	4. Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	6. The United States government has specific functions that are determined by the way that power is delegated and controlled among various bodies: the three levels (federal, state, local) and the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of government.	9.1.4.6.3	Explain the purposes, organization, functions and processes of the executive branch as enumerated in Article II of the United States Constitution.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	4. Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	6. The United States government has specific functions that are determined by the way that power is delegated and controlled among various bodies: the three levels (federal, state, local) and the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of government.	9.1.4.6.4	Explain the purposes, organization, functions and processes of the judicial branch as enumerated in Article III of the United States Constitution.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	4. Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	6. The United States government has specific functions that are determined by the way that power is delegated and controlled among various bodies: the three levels (federal, state, local) and the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of government.	9.1.4.6.5	Describe the systems of enumerated and implied powers, separation of powers, and checks and balances.

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9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	4. Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	6. The United States government has specific functions that are determined by the way that power is delegated and controlled among various bodies: the three levels (federal, state, local) and the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of government.	9.1.4.6.6	Evaluate the importance of an independent judiciary, judicial review and the rule of law.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	4. Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	6. The United States government has specific functions that are determined by the way that power is delegated and controlled among various bodies: the three levels (federal, state, local) and the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of government.	9.1.4.6.7	Explain the powers and operations of the state of Minnesota government as defined in its Constitution and its relationship with the federal government.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	4. Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	6. The United States government has specific functions that are determined by the way that power is delegated and controlled among various bodies: the three levels (federal, state, local) and the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of government.	9.1.4.6.8	Explain the powers and operations of local (county, city, school board, and township) government in Minnesota.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	4. Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	6. The United States government has specific functions that are determined by the way that power is delegated and controlled among various bodies: the three levels (federal, state, local) and the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of government.	9.1.4.6.9	Compare and contrast the budgets of the United States and Minnesota governments describing the major sources of revenue and categories of spending for each. <i>For example:</i> Sources of revenue—sales, income and property taxes, fees. Categories of spending—leases (mineral, water, oil, lumber), defense, public safety, education, entitlements, transportation, welfare.

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9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	5. Relationships of the United States to Other Nations and Organizations	10. The United States establishes and maintains relationships and interacts with indigenous nations and other sovereign nations, and plays a key role in world affairs.	9.1.5.10.1	Explain how tribal sovereignty establishes a unique relationship between American Indian Nations and the United States government.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	5. Relationships of the United States to Other Nations and Organizations	10. The United States establishes and maintains relationships and interacts with indigenous nations and other sovereign nations, and plays a key role in world affairs.	9.1.5.10.2	Evaluate the effectiveness of diplomacy and other foreign policy tools used by the United States government and other nations in historical or contemporary times.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	5. Relationships of the United States to Other Nations and Organizations	10. The United States establishes and maintains relationships and interacts with indigenous nations and other sovereign nations, and plays a key role in world affairs.	9.1.5.10.3	Explain why governments interact in world affairs; describe how the United States government develops and carries out United States foreign policy, including treaty-making.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	5. Relationships of the United States to Other Nations and Organizations	11. International political and economic institutions influence world affairs and United States foreign policy.	9.1.5.11.1	Describe how individuals, businesses, labor and other groups influence United States foreign policy.

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9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	5. Relationships of the United States to Other Nations and Organizations	11. International political and economic institutions influence world affairs and United States foreign policy.	9.1.5.11.2	Explain the role of international law in world affairs; evaluate the impact of the participation of nation states in international organizations. <i>For example:</i> International organizations— United Nations, Arab League, World Trade Organization, African Union, European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Organization of American States.
9 10 11 12	1. Citizenship and Government	5. Relationships of the United States to Other Nations and Organizations	12. Governments are based on different political philosophies and purposes; governments establish and maintain relationships with varied types of other governments.	9.1.5.12.1	Compare the philosophies, structures and operations of different types of governments in other countries with those in the United States. <i>For example:</i> Different types of governments—monarchies, theocracies, dictatorships, representative governments.