



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: May 11, 2022

To: Local Educational Agency Leads, Administrators of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities

Route To: Principals, Assistant Superintendents of Curriculum and Instruction, Social Studies Supervisors, Social Studies Instructional Coaches and Teachers

From: Jorden Schiff, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Field Support and Services

Deadline: For implementation 2022-2023 school year

Implementation of the New Middle School Civics Law

On July 23, 2021 the Governor signed into law [P.L. 2021, c.185](#) (Chapter 185) which requires that, “Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education shall provide a course of study in civics, which shall be taken by all students in an appropriate middle school grade. The course shall address: the values and principles underlying the American system of constitutional democracy; the function and limitations of government; and the role of a citizen in a democratic society. The board shall ensure that the course of study includes a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the equivalent.”

Implementation

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has interpreted the implementation of this course of study in civics as the following:

- Middle School is defined as sixth, seventh and eighth grades for purposes of implementing [P.L. 2021, c.185](#).
- The instruction **does not** need to be scheduled as standalone civics classes, but the civics content must be addressed within the social studies scheduled instructional classes.
 - The law is supported by the [New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies](#). Coordinating civics-related core ideas and performance expectations can be found in standards 6.1 U.S. History and 6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century.
- Scheduling configuration that provides at least two **consecutive** quarters (or one semester, if equivalent in a system of four quarters/academic year) of civics instruction across the social studies curriculum in grades 6 through 8.
- Examples of scheduling configurations can include, but is not limited to:
 - Any two consecutive quarters or one semester, if equivalent in a system of four quarters/academic year in any grade 6 through 8.
 - Consecutive quarters may also mean the fourth quarter of one grade and the first quarter of the next grade.

Compliance with [P.L. 2021, c.185](#)

The NJDOE will evaluate the implementation of Chapter 185 beginning in the 2022-2023 New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) monitoring.

- Chapter 185 requirements will be evaluated via Instruction and Program Indicator 12, which assesses the alignment of a district’s social studies curriculum to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS). The full text of Indicator 12 can be found on page 4 of the [NJQSAC DPR](#).

- The NJDOE can accept any scheduling configuration that provides at least two **consecutive** quarters (or one semester, if equivalent in a system of four quarters/academic year) of civics instruction across the social studies curriculum in grades 6-8. The instruction **does not** need to be in standalone civics classes.
 - Specifically, to evaluate a district's compliance with Chapter 185, the NJDOE will review the district's curriculum scope and sequence for inclusion of civics instruction. If the curriculum documents do not make explicit that the district provides two consecutive quarters or equivalent of instruction in grades 6-8, county office staff will interview the relevant school district personnel for details on the mandated inclusion of civics instruction in the social studies curriculum.

Contact information

For additional information about the implementation of middle school civics please reach out to your [County Office of Education](#). School districts can also email standards@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
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