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Maryland History and Civics Curricula Receive High Praise from National Organization

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Maryland’s Civics and United States History Standards Earn Grades of B+ and B Respectively from Fordham Institute; Standards Recognized as “Impressive”

BALTIMORE, MD (July 8, 2021) – The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has announced that Maryland’s State standards and frameworks for American History and civics were placed on the Honor Roll by the Fordham Foundation. The Thomas B. Fordham Institute recently released its 2021 report, *The State of State Standards for Civics and U.S. History*, which highlights the Maryland State Department of Education’s (MSDE) emphasis on cultural responsiveness and civic engagement in its curricula. In this year’s report, the State of Maryland earned a B+ in Civics standards and a B in U.S. History standards. Maryland is one of ten states awarded an overall “good” rating.

Dr. Carol Williamson, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, said, “As we strive to enhance our curriculum to be more culturally responsive, we are proud that the Fordham Institute has recognized Maryland’s achievements in promoting equity – not just in education outcomes, but also in the very content of our curricula. We will continue to enhance our Civic and U.S. History standards, as we are committed to ensuring that Maryland students are culturally aware and engaged as citizens in our representative government.”

The strong improvement in grades reflects the work that MSDE has conducted since 2015 to revise the State standards and develop instructional frameworks organized around inquiry, promoting deep investigations of key content, and ensuring students consider events from multiple perspectives. The Maryland High School United States History Framework has the objective that “students will understand that women, African Americans, Native Americans, those with disabilities, those who identify as LGBTQ+, and other racial and religious minorities possess historical agency. Awareness of these perspectives assist student comprehension of the complicated nature of the American story.”

The report states that, in Maryland, “the high school courses in American Government and modern U.S. History are particularly strong” and that “Maryland’s civics standards for the early grades are unusually substantive and thoughtful.” Specific strengths highlighted in the report include: early elementary emphasis on the common good and civic engagement, in-depth coverage of eight key topic areas (including the Constitution and civil rights) in grade 5, comprehensive discussion of the often-overlooked 1970s and 1980s in high school U.S. History, and strong coverage of the Constitutional Convention and Supreme Court cases throughout elementary and secondary education.

This review of jurisdictional United States History and World History standards has been previously conducted in 1998, 2000, 2003, and 2011. While Maryland’s Civics standards have never been rated before, the United States History Standards were rated a C in 2011.

Learn more about Maryland’s social studies curriculum at:

<http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DCAA/Social-Studies/MSSS.aspx>, and read the Fordham Institute’s report at: <https://fordhaminstitute.org/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs/20210623-state-state-standards-civics-and-us-history-20210.pdf#page=15>.

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Fordham Institute Social Studies Standards 7 8 2021

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