

José Banda
Superintendent
Seattle Public Schools

Dear Mr. Banda,

I wish to voice my support for the “[Civics for All Initiative](#)” and more generally, for increased civics education in our public schools.

As an elected official in local government, I am keenly aware that too many youth in our community know too little about their government, and many do not care. Our schools have the power to change this. By implementing a robust civics curriculum, fully integrated with other core school subjects, we can educate our youth about the duties and joys of active citizenship and participation in our government. Civics education empowers youth to interact with and support the needs of other citizens and the common good of our local and global community. Civics provides youth with a sense of hope and larger engagement that directly links to increased academic achievement.

I have written you previously regarding my positive experiences with Jon Greenberg’s Center School civics curriculum, noting that for many years, Mr. Greenberg consistently brought his students to county government hearings to listen and testify on issues of importance to them—and to put those concerns in writing to Councilmembers as well. I also noted that Mr. Greenberg is not only the only Seattle teacher to do so, but also the only teacher in *King County* to do so. In meeting with Mr. Greenberg’s students in their classroom to talk with them personally about local government and politics, I have been consistently impressed by the students’ knowledge and activism. It is clear that civics education is essential to raising up our next generation of leaders, and to teaching them to be active, critical thinkers. This kind of young leader is desperately needed in our community.

Like you, I care deeply about the future of our youth and the world that they will inherit and shape as adults. King County government is working hard to do our part to provide better service for our youth as well. The King County Council is currently considering legislation—with broad support—that would direct development of a King County Youth Action Plan to ensure that young people in King County have access to the resources and opportunities they need to become productive adults. More information about this legislation is available online at this [link](#).

Again, I support the “Civics for All Initiative” and hope you are actively considering this proposal and ways to increase civics education in our classrooms.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Larry Phillips, Councilmember
Metropolitan King County Council, District Four
King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue, Room 1200
Seattle, WA 98104-3272
206.296.1004
larry.phillips@kingcounty.gov