



October 25, 2013

To: Seattle School District SSD Principal's Association (PASS)  
From: Tim Ames, Nathan Hale High School, social studies department chair  
Re: Endorsement of Civics for All in practice

**Letter of Endorsement for Civics for All from Nathan Hale High School:**

The Mission Statement of Nathan Hale High School states that our primary reason for existing as an institution is this simple purpose: "Ensuring that ALL students become honorable, thinking, skillful citizens." Civics education as envisioned by the Civics for All program is the bread and butter of what we are trying to accomplish at Nathan Hale. Just this past week students organized and moderated a Mayoral Forum at Nathan Hale with the participation of Mayor Mike McGinn and Senator Ed Murray as an example of how we seek to implement our Mission Statement. Here at Nathan Hale, many of our social studies department members are already using some of the specific planks of the Civics for All Initiative, including the political spectrum poster, the Essential Questions and the annual mock elections.

In the words of University of Washington professor Walter Parker in his article "Teaching Against Idiocy", Professor Parker argues eloquently about the importance of work like mock elections and our recent Mayoral Forum being a primary focus in our schools:

"...schools are fitting places to lead young people... into citizenship. Schools are not insignificant sources of social progress. At some level, everyone seems to believe this. It is the reason that curriculum debates are often the most impassioned to be found anywhere in society. My view is that the three R's -- mechanically treated and, now, tested with Puritanical fervor -- are not the only essentials needed for the realization of democratic ideals. A proper curriculum for democracy requires both the study and the practice of democracy."

Civics for All is a wonderful way to put into practice the democratic goals that Professor Parker articulates – and given recent events in Washington, D.C., democracy seems to be in need of substantial support from all of us. We urge the Seattle School District to enthusiastically embrace this vision of civic education for the good of our students, for the good of our schools, and for the good of our entire democracy.

**Sincerely Yours,**

**Tim Ames, on behalf of the Nathan Hale High School social studies department**