

Date Created:	<b>11-12-2013</b>
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Attachments:	

1 ..Title

2 A MOTION in support of the Civics for All Initiative.

3 ..Body

4 WHEREAS, a basic understanding of the rights and duties of citizenship are  
5 essential to sustaining democracy and civic life, both nationally and in King County, and

6 WHEREAS, a national and local "civics gap" has formed and is disenfranchising  
7 minority and at-risk students, especially in low-income elementary schools where math  
8 and literacy test-prep pressures have made civics scarce, and

9 WHEREAS, the civics gap follows students from K-12 school into voting age  
10 adulthood so that only twenty-one percent of eighteen-through-twenty-nine-year-olds  
11 voted in federal elections in 2010 and far, far fewer vote in local elections, and

12 WHEREAS, the Civics for All Initiative is an independent effort, originated with  
13 a group of high school students and with broad community support, that proposes a  
14 specific K-12 curriculum for Seattle Public Schools, comprised of six elements:

15 1. Voting and elections: hold mock elections in all schools every November, with  
16 the assistance of the King County department of elections and the Secretary of State, and  
17 encourage students to register family members to vote;

18 2. Social studies: require three civics classroom based assessments (CBAs) for  
19 each grade level in order to spark civics education revitalization;

20           3. Media-literacy: promote and embed media literacy in curriculum lessons,  
21 primarily in social-studies and language arts classrooms that include electoral politics and  
22 current events;

23           4. Civics across the curriculum/civics across the core: promote and infuse into  
24 all academic disciplines and grades interdisciplinary civics awareness lessons and civics  
25 texts that support common core literacy standards;

26           5. Civics website: establish and maintain a central website containing civics  
27 across the curriculum where teachers can share methods and lessons that incorporate  
28 civics lessons into curricula; and

29           6. Professional development: provide instructors professional development  
30 training days during implementation that is dedicated to teaching civics across the K-12  
31 curriculum and developing a common instructional language and framework that can  
32 connect all grades, teachers and other employees to civics learning, and

33           WHEREAS, the Civics for All Initiative leadership, comprised by the executive  
34 director and the board of advisors, seeks to have the six elements of the initiative  
35 formally adopted by the Seattle Public school district, and

36           WHEREAS, the executive-director of the Civics for All Initiative was inspired to  
37 write this initiative when the 11th graders of his winter 2011 U.S. History class returned  
38 from a trip to the state capitol in Olympia and the students wrote district administrators of  
39 their unforgettable experience, urging that future high school students be provided with  
40 the same civic learning opportunity, and

41           WHEREAS, the Civics for All Initiative has been vetted by experts from the  
42 University of Washington, Seattle University, Stanford University and the venerable  
43 Center for Civics Education;

44           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

45           A. The King County council encourages educators to develop and facilitate a  
46 quality civics education program for their students;

47           B. The council approves of and endorses the Civics for All Initiative for its  
48 potential to enhance academic achievement, civic knowledge and engagement for nearly  
49 fifty thousand K-12 students in the Seattle school district by motivating and empowering  
50 students with lessons in all academic disciplines that are presented in civic, ethical and  
51 political frameworks.

52           C. The council commends King County department of elections for its interest in  
53 the Civics for All Initiative and commitment to partner with the Initiative and other  
54 election partners and resources, including the Secretary of State's Office in Olympia, to  
55 support mock elections in public schools, which will teach children about the elections  
56 process and how to vote, thus promoting civic participation in order to increase  
57 citizenship involvement and aptitude for life.