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DPS: 2011-56

MEMORANDUM

TO: District School Superintendents

FROM: Dr. Frances Haithcock

DATE: May 13, 2011

SUBJECT: Civics Education Content in K-12 English Language Arts Curriculum

Senate Bill 1096, the *Justice Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Education Act*, passed by the 2010 Florida Legislature includes revisions to section 1003.41, *Florida Statutes*, relating to civics education within English language arts classes. Specifically, this legislation states that *beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, the reading portion of the language arts curriculum shall include civics education content for all grade levels*. The intent of this new legislation is that selected civics benchmarks be taught in the English language arts curriculum, not separately, but naturally woven in to fit whatever reading topics are taking place in the classroom.

In order for educators to prepare for this change in English language arts curriculum, the Florida Legislature provided initial funding to the Lou Frey Institute at the University of Central Florida, in partnership with the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship. In January 2011, The Lou Frey Institute convened a committee of English language arts and social studies educators to identify content in state adopted language arts instructional materials that already contain civics content, as well as where gaps exist.

After judicious research, approximately three civics benchmarks per grade level have been delineated to be included in the English language arts curriculum. Each of these civics benchmarks has been aligned to a language arts benchmark that seems a natural fit. This alignment of civics and language arts benchmarks is provided as a suggestion only. Each selected grade-level civics benchmark may be aligned to any other applicable English language arts benchmark at the corresponding grade.

DR. FRANCES HAITHCOCK
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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The grades K through 12 civics education content benchmarks have been added to the *Remarks and Examples* section of the Next Generation Sunshine State English language arts course descriptions located on the standards database at www.floridastandards.org. The grades K through 12 civics and language arts benchmark alignment is listed in *Attachment A*.

Additional resources for classroom implementation of this new civics legislation are anticipated for completion for use during the 2011-12 school year. For additional information, please contact Susan Watt, Language Arts Curriculum Specialist, at (850) 245-0766, or via email at Susan.Watt@fldoe.org.

FH/sw

Attachment

cc: Assistant Superintendents for Curriculum
English Language Arts Supervisors
Reading Supervisors
Social Studies Supervisors
School Principals