

LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Superintendent of Schools
155 Merrimack Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 08152

Phone: (978) 674-4324
Fax: (978) 937-7609
E-mail: jdurkin@lowell.k12.ma.us



Course on Voting Process and Municipal Government

To: Members of the City Council
From: Jeannine Durkin, Acting Superintendent of Schools
Date: August 30, 2018
Re: Course on Voting Process and the Functions of Municipal Government

The attached report is in response to the motion below presented by Councilor Edward Kennedy at the June 12, 2018 City Council Meeting.

Voting Process and Functions of Municipal Government

[By Edward Kennedy]: Requesting that the Superintendent and The School Committee Consider Establishing A Mini Course To Be Part Of The Curriculum For Lowell High School Seniors And Adult Education Students That Would Cover The Voting Process In Lowell And The Functions Of Municipal Government.



LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL
50 Fr. Morissette Blvd.
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

Tel. 978-937-8901
Fax. 978-937-8902

Marianne Busteed, *Head of School*
Robert DeLossa, *Academic Chair, Social Studies*

e-mail: mbusteed@lowell.k12.ma.us
e-mail: rdelossa@lowell.k12.ma.us

To: Jeannine Durkin, *Acting Superintendent, Lowell Public Schools*
From: Robert DeLossa, *Academic Chair, Social Studies Dept., Lowell High School*
Date: 30 August 2018
Re: Information related to the Motion by Councilor Kennedy as follows:

Voting Process and Functions of Municipal Government

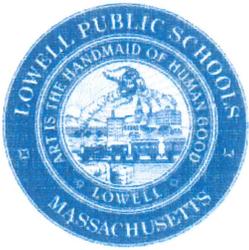
[By Edward Kennedy]: *Requesting that the Superintendent and The School Committee Consider Establishing A Mini Course To Be Part Of The Curriculum For Lowell High School Seniors And Adult Education Students That Would Cover The Voting Process In Lowell And The Functions Of Municipal Government.*

Students at LHS are required to take 4 semesters (10 credits) of US History. Within those courses required for graduation as well as Freshman World History, all state requirements (both in MA law: Title XII Ch. 71§2) and the requirements of the new (6/26/18) MA Frameworks for Social Studies are met. In fact, LHS ensures that students exceed these basic requirements before graduation, incorporating parts of the National Council for the Social Studies standards and an action civics program, Generation Citizen.

1. In Freshman World History students study the basic building blocks of American democratic republicanism:
 - Athenian democracy
 - Roman laws
 - Pre-Enlightenment and Enlightenment thinkers (Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu)
2. In the survey of US History courses students learn basic MA and U.S. civic structures.
3. Until AY19 students in US History survey courses have participated in Generation Citizen, which reinforces U.S., MA, and municipal (Lowell) civic structures, along with the reinforcement of citizen participation in civic structures through hands-on participation in civic projects.
4. During AY19 and thereafter, LHS maintains a course entitled *American Civics Past and Present* (SOC.4371) in which comprehensive civics (U.S., MA, Lowell) will be covered (or reinforced if presented in earlier courses). All juniors in AY20 and thereafter will be required to take this course. This course includes participation in Generation Citizen and covers the following:
 - Meaning and importance of civics in the democratic tradition
 - Declaration of Independence
 - philosophical/ideological sources
 - Constitution of the United States
 - philosophical/ideological sources
 - debates and compromises
 - amendments and how they have changed the Constitution as a living document
 - Emphasis on the Bill of Rights, 13th, 14th, 15th, 19th Amendments
 - nature of the rule of law within the Constitution
 - Constitutional structure of government (checks and balances; federal/state/individual rights)

- MA Constitution
 - philosophical/ideological sources
 - influence on the U.S. Constitution
- Municipal Structures in MA
 - Relationship between cities/towns, counties, and the Commonwealth
 - Lowell's municipal structure as stipulated in MGL Ch. 43
 - The place of municipal ordinances in citizens' daily lives
- The role of NGOs (non-governmental organizations/community organizations) in Civic Life
- Voting: mechanics, laws, politics (U.S., MA, Lowell)
- The Flag Code of the U.S.
- Provisions of 36 U.S.C. (Patriotic and National Observances, Ceremonies, and Organizations), 301; and, 4 U.S.C. (Flag, Seal, the Seat of Government, States), 4–10
- Major U.S. Supreme Court and MA Supreme Judicial Court cases and their role in the expansion of civil liberties in American and MA history
- Major U.S. and MA laws and their effect on civil liberties in American and MA history
- Hands-on, project-based civics through Generation Citizen and reinforcement of the above

5. As of AY2019, additions to civics instruction will be addressed through SOC.4371. The course will be refined during AY2019, the first year it is being offered.



Frederick A. Abisi Adult Education Center

Lowell Public Schools

408 Merrimack Street • Lowell, MA 01854
Telephone: 978-937-8989 • Fax: 978-458-9007
www.lowelladulthoodeducation.com

Elizabeth McKiernan
Director

Acting Superintendent Jeannine Durkin

Lowell Public Schools

August 29, 2018

Jeannine – Please find attached an Outline for Functions of Local Government. A course will be developed and formally incorporated into our curriculum at Abisi Adult Education Center. During this past school year, we had assigned an instructor to work with interested second language learners on History and Civics. There was significant interest among students, and we planned to include the same class during the 18-19 school year. We intend to address the numerous topics mentioned in the Outline, with consideration given to all levels of students' abilities.

In addition, for many years we have done 'walking tours' of Lowell with students to enlighten them on the many services available to Lowell residents. This activity will be continued and considered part of the curriculum. Our staff is well versed on the resources available to our student population. As an example, our students participate in annual presentations on Domestic Violence provided by the City Manager's Task Force on Domestic Violence. We have also conducted voter registration drives with the assistance of Eda Matchak and her staff in the City Election and Census Office.

We look forward to further developing this important piece of our curriculum.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth McKiernan

Director, Abisi Adult Education Center

Outline for Functions of Local Government, mini course

For Adult Education Students

Lowell, MA

Abisi Adult Education Center

Students will be made aware of the many public services available to all residents of Lowell including police and fire protection, k-12 and adult education, municipal services, voting accessibility, and library accessibility.

POLICE AND FIRE

- > Students will tour facilities at Arcand Drive
- > Representatives from departments will be invited to present to our students at Abisi Center
- > Students are encouraged to consider careers in police and fire prevention
- > Students reward points will be earned for all activities involved

EDUCATION

- > Students will see that the Adult Ed Center is a main component of the Lowell Public Schools
- > Coordination between adult students and the school attended by their child is greatly encouraged
 - to promote parent/staff relationships
 - to assist child with homework, etc.
- > Student reward points are awarded for most interactions

MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS

- > The Election Commission will certify voting registration for appropriate students and assign polling places
- > Public works departments assist students with bill paying, establishing accounts for services like water, sewer, etc.
- > Public records office is helpful with birth records, marriage records, etc.

- > Mini field trips across the street to City Hall are easily arranged to introduce students to above offices
- > Again, student reward points are awarded for activities around above services

LIBRARY

- > The Pollard Memorial Library is just across the street from our center
- > Students are assisted with obtaining library cards by individual teachers at the center
- > They are encouraged to check out books and access technology
- > The Richardson-designed Romanesque building houses treasured pieces of art and the walls are adorned with the same
- > Student reward points are accumulated for these activities, as well.

Each teacher will edit and select topics considered appropriate for his (her)class.

VOTING

A mini course designed for use by instructors at Abisi Adult Education Center

It is the privilege and duty of each citizen in the United States to vote in all federal, state, and municipal elections.

WHO CAN VOTE?

Citizens 18 years of age and older may register to vote with appropriate documentation

- > at the election commission at Lowell City Hall
- >when they obtain or renew their driver's license.

You will need to prove citizenship, residency, and date of birth.

Student reward points are awarded for registering to vote and for actually voting.

TYPES OF ELECTIONS

- > Primary elections usually held in September allow voters to select candidates to run for office. In state and federal elections, the voter must choose which political party he wants to participate in for that election. For classes with higher English proficiency, an explanation of differences between and among parties is appropriate.

> General elections are held each November. Odd numbered years will be for municipal seats, even numbered years for state and federal offices. Every 4 years the offices of President and Vice President are elected.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

> In the odd numbered years, voters choose from candidates to serve as City Councilor or School Committee Person.

> City Councilor, elected for 2 years

Nine members serve. The first duty is to choose among them who will serve as Mayor of the City of Lowell. The Mayor chairs the weekly meetings and selects members of various committees.

The City Council oversees the general operation of municipal services by hiring a City Manager as chief executive officer.

The Mayor and City Manager have offices in Lowell City Hall.

Mini field trips should be arranged to view these offices and attend an actual City Council meeting.

> The Mayor is also a voting member and chair of the School Committee. This committee usually meets every other week and is comprised of 6 members who serve for 2 years plus the Mayor.

The School Committee hires a Superintendent of Schools to oversee all school operations.

ACTIVITIES

> Students are encouraged to attend an actual School Committee meeting held at City Hall

> Mock elections are held at the Abisi Center so that students who are working on citizenship will experience the procedure of voting in federal and city elections.

> The Mayor and/or Council members and/or School Committee members should be invited to meet and greet students.

Student reward points are awarded for all above activities.