Statement of Purpose

12th grade American Government

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Typically, when one thinks of Social Studies curriculum in this county, they think of learning the state names and capitals in elementary school, geography in middle school and the various wars that this county has fought during high school. We think of pre and post-Civil War and our country’s fight for Independence. Other great strides that we have taken such as involvement in the Korean War, Vietnam and both World Wars are learned about as well. Students are asked to memorize a plethora of facts surrounding these different events in history and then regurgitate them on standardized tests. They may be able to answer multiple choice questions on a test, but do they know why these different events were important? Do they understand the role that the American Government played in deciding different outcomes?

I propose an American Government curriculum for all 12th graders in attendance. This class is vitally important because it will link the historical events that the students have studied over the years together. Students that are about to end their secondary education and become active citizens need to understand the fundamentals of the government in which they are about to play a role. They will take part in the democratic process by becoming registered voters.

The curriculum that I am proposing will be inquiry and project based. Students will be taught the facts of American Government and then given the opportunity to explore and provide their opinion of the different topics. I want students to not only know the concepts, but understand how they work and see them in action. Among many other activities, students will participate in mock trials, mock elections and learn about the Civil Rights Movement that took place in this country. The Ohio Department of Education addresses Government content standards for Social Studies by stating that “Civic participation embraces the ideal that an individual actively engages in his or her community, state or nation for the common good. Students need to practice effective communication skills including negotiation, compromise and collaboration. Skills in accessing and analyzing information are essential for citizens in a democracy”.

The purpose of an American Government course for all 12th grade students is to prepare them to become active citizens and participate regularly in the democratic process. They will come to a higher level of understanding of the principles that the government was founded upon and how it functions. Students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate and synthesize government on the national, state and local level in order to be comfortable and confident in understanding political issues.

References

Ohio Department of Education (2010). Academic Content Standards for Social Studies. Columbus, OH.