



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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INTERIM STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 27, 2018

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent 
Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports

SUBJECT: Social Studies Taskforce Membership

The Michigan Department of Education is establishing a Social Studies Taskforce to review and act upon the feedback from the Online Public Survey and the Listen and Learn sessions that have been held since the middle of May. The goal of the Taskforce is to update the Michigan Social Studies Standards with the end that the proposed standards are "fewer, clearer, and higher." The resulting standards, when approved, will provide improved guidance for Michigan teachers and administrators.

The updated Social Studies Standards will help Michigan become a Top 10 performing state in 10 years by providing quality Social Studies Standards. This effort will help Michigan achieve that status by addressing Strategic Goal #1: "Provide every child access to an aligned, high-quality P-20 system from early childhood to post-secondary attainment – through a multi-stakeholder collaboration with business and industry, labor, and higher education—to maximize lifetime learning and success."

The Social Studies Taskforce will be comprised of six subcommittees: K-4 standards, 5th/8th/ High School United States History & Geography, 6th/7th/High School World History & Geography, Economics, Civics/Core Values, and a Bias Review team. Each subcommittee will be chaired by two of the original social studies authors to maintain continuity in the process.

The Social Studies Taskforce members will be selected based on a set of criteria that include educational background, teaching experience, ethnic/cultural diversity, and geographic diversity. In addition to social studies educators, school administrators and academicians, the membership will be comprised of students, teachers, parents, and community members so that the voice of multiple Michigan stakeholders is represented.

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A member need not meet all criteria, but each subcommittee must be representative of the following criteria:

- A degree in social studies education, elementary education or the equivalent.
- Experience teaching Social Studies at the K-5, 6-8, or high school level or its equivalent.
- Represent a perspective or perspectives important to the development of the social studies standards. The representatives should represent a larger audience.
- Knowledge/experience with teaching the Constitution at the local school or college/university level, participated in constitutional studies, experience with application of the Constitution.
- A degree in English language arts or its equivalent and experience teaching same as well as experience with integration of English language arts into other content areas such as social studies. (Applicable at all levels of the K – 12 spectrum.)
- Represent the geographic diversity of the state.
- Represent ethnic/cultural diversity of the state.
- Represent the age and gender of the state.
- Sub-committee specific criteria that demonstrate a working knowledge and experience with the development and application of social studies standards applicable to a specific area of social studies standards.

The Taskforce will hold an organizational meeting on October 15, 2018 in Lansing, Michigan. The final meeting of the Taskforce will be held December 19, 2018 also in Lansing, Michigan. Up to three additional meetings will be held between those dates to complete the work. Since the timeline is short, we ask that applicants hold the date of October 15th. Those selected for the Taskforce, will be notified and we are hopeful that all will be able to attend.

Those interested in serving on the Taskforce are asked to submit an [online application](#), including a one-page summary of their resume/Curriculum Vitae, no later than noon on Wednesday, October 3, 2018. The Social Studies writers will meet, review the applications and establish the sub-committees based on the criteria. Finalized lists will be reviewed by Department personnel for final approval. Upon approval, the members of the sub-committees will be notified and invited to join the Taskforce. Those not selected will be informed of the decision with a list of those serving on the Taskforce.

Please share this information with staff, students, and community members that may be interested and who would bring a knowledge of social studies to the work of the Taskforce.

Please direct all questions to Jim Cameron at Cameronj3@michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance