

**American Civics Committee**

Elementary Media Center, Twin River Public School

PO Box 640

Genoa, NE 68640

Monday, February 16, 2026 7:30 PM

Alex Cornwell: Present  
John Nelson: Present  
John Reeg: Present  
Jennifer Swantek: Present  
Chelsa Thompson: Present  
Jeremy Vetick: Present

1. Meeting Called to Order

1.1. Open Meeting Law

1.2. Meeting Properly Published and Posted.

2. Roll Call

2.1. Excused/Unexcused Absences

3. Special meeting for the purpose of fulfilling statutory requirements over civics.

3.1. Review of Nebraska State Statute 79-724 and Board Policy 2002.

3.2. Review Twin River Public Schools's compliance with state statute.

4. Public comment regarding civics.

5. Adjourn

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Jennifer Swantek, Board President

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John Reeg, Board Secretary

**79-724. Committee on American civics; created; duties; school board, State Board of Education, and superintendent; duties.**

It is the responsibility of society to ensure that youth are given the opportunity to become competent, responsible, patriotic, and civil citizens to ensure a strong, stable, just, and prosperous America. Such a citizenry necessitates that every member thereof be knowledgeable of our nation's history, government, geography, and economic system. The youth in our state should be committed to the ideals and values of our country's democracy and the constitutional republic established by the people. Schools should help prepare our youth to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good. Civic competence is necessary to sustain and improve our democratic way of life and must be taught in all public, private, denominational, and parochial schools. A central role of schools is to impart civic knowledge and skills that help our youth to see the relevance of a civic dimension for their lives. Students should be made fully aware of the liberties, opportunities, and advantages we possess and the sacrifices and struggles of those through whose efforts these benefits were gained. Since young people are most susceptible to the acceptance of principles and doctrines that will influence them throughout their lives, it is one of the first duties of our educational system to conduct its activities, choose its textbooks, and arrange its curriculum in such a way that the youth of our state have the opportunity to become competent, responsible, patriotic, and civil American citizens.

(1) The school board of each school district shall, at the beginning of each calendar year, appoint from its members a committee of three, to be known as the committee on American civics, which shall:

(a) Hold no fewer than two public meetings annually, at least one when public testimony is accepted;

(b) Keep minutes of each meeting showing the time and place of the meeting, which members were present or absent, and the substance and details of all matters discussed;

(c) Examine and ensure that the social studies curriculum used in the district is aligned with the social studies standards adopted pursuant to section 79-760.01 and teaches foundational knowledge in civics, history, economics, financial literacy, and geography;

(d) Review and approve the social studies curriculum to ensure that it stresses the services of the men and women who played a crucial role in the achievement of national independence, establishment of our constitutional government, and preservation of the union and includes the incorporation of multicultural education as set forth in sections 79-719 to 79-723 in order to instill a pride and respect for the nation's institutions and not be merely a recital of events and dates;

(e) Ensure that any curriculum recommended or approved by the committee on American civics is made readily accessible to the public and contains a reference to this section;

(f) Ensure that the district develops and utilizes formative, interim, and summative assessments to measure student mastery of the social studies standards adopted pursuant to section 79-760.01;

(g) Ensure that the social studies curriculum in the district incorporates one or more of the following for each student:

(i) Administration of a written test that is identical to the entire civics portion of the naturalization test used by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services prior to the completion of eighth grade and again prior to the completion of twelfth grade with the individual score from each test for each student made available to a parent or guardian of such student; or

(ii) Attendance or participation between the commencement of eighth grade and completion of twelfth grade in a meeting of a public body as defined by section 84-1409 followed by the completion of a project or paper in which each student demonstrates or discusses the personal learning experience of such student related to such attendance or participation; or

(iii) Completion of a project or paper and a class presentation between the commencement of eighth grade and the completion of twelfth grade on a person or persons or an event commemorated by a holiday listed in subdivision (6) of this section or on a topic related to such person or persons or event; and

(h) Take all such other steps as will assure the carrying out of the provisions of this section and provide a report to the school board regarding the committee's findings and recommendations.

(2) All social studies courses approved for grade levels as provided by this section shall include and adequately stress contributions of all ethnic groups to (a) the development and growth of America into a great nation, (b) art, music, education, medicine, literature, science, politics, and government, and (c) the military in all of this nation's wars.

(3) All grades of all public, private, denominational, and parochial schools, below the sixth grade, shall devote at least one hour per week to exercises or teaching periods for the following purpose:

(a) The discussion of noteworthy events pertaining to American history or the exceptional acts of individuals and groups of Americans;

(b) The historical background, memorization, and singing of patriotic songs such as the Star-Spangled Banner and America the Beautiful;

(c) The development of respect for the American flag as a symbol of freedom and the sacrifices of those who secured that freedom; and

(d) Instruction as to proper conduct in the presentation of the American flag.

(4) In at least two of the three grades from the fifth grade to the eighth grade in all public, private, denominational, and parochial schools, time shall be set aside for the teaching of American history from the social studies curriculum, which shall be taught in such a manner that all students are given the opportunity to (a) become competent, responsible, patriotic, and civil citizens who possess a deep understanding of and respect for both the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Nebraska and (b) prepare to preserve, protect, and defend freedom and democracy in our nation and our world.

(5) In at least two courses in every high school, time shall be devoted to the teaching of civics and American history as outlined in the social studies standards adopted pursuant to section 79-760.01, during which specific attention shall be given to the following matters:

(a) The Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Constitution of Nebraska, and the structure and function of local government in this state;

(b) The benefits and advantages of representative government, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in our government, and the dangers and fallacies of forms of government that restrict individual freedoms or possess antidemocratic ideals such as, but not limited to, Nazism and communism;

(c) The duties of citizenship, which include active participation in the improvement of a citizen's community, state, country, and world and the value and practice of civil discourse between opposing interests; and

(d) The application of knowledge in civics, history, economics, financial literacy, and geography to address societal issues.

(6) Appropriate patriotic exercises suitable to the occasion shall be held under the direction of the superintendent in every public, private, denominational, and parochial school on George Washington's birthday, Abraham Lincoln's birthday, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, Native American Heritage Day, Constitution Day, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Thanksgiving Day, or on the day or week preceding or following such holiday, if the school is in session.

(7) Every school board, the State Board of Education, and the superintendent of each school district in the state shall be held directly responsible in the order named for carrying out this section. Neglect thereof by any employee may be considered a cause for dismissal.

**Source:** Laws 1949, c. 256, § 19, p. 697; Laws 1969, c. 705, § 1, p. 2705; Laws 1971, LB 292, § 3; R.S.1943, (1994), § 79-213; Laws 1996, LB 900, § 398; Laws 1999, LB 272, § 86; Laws 2011, LB544, § 1; Laws 2019, LB399, § 1.

#### **Cross References**

**Flag display requirements**, see section 79-707.

## **2002 Organization of the Board**

### **1. Membership, Term and Election**

- a. The Board of Education shall be comprised of six members who will be elected at large.
- b. Those who wish to serve on the board shall file, be elected, and serve terms of office on the board according to law.

### **2. Internal Organization and Officers**

#### **a. President**

- i. At the regular January meeting, the board shall elect from among its members a president who shall serve in that capacity for one year.
- ii. The president shall preside at all board meetings, and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by law or by action of the board.

#### **b. Vice President**

- i. At the regular January meeting, the board shall elect from among its members a vice president who shall serve in that capacity for one year.
- ii. The vice president shall preside in the absence of the president, and shall perform such other duties as are assigned by the board.

#### **c. Secretary**

- i. At the regular January meeting, the board shall elect a secretary who need not be a member of the board. The secretary shall serve in that capacity for one year. If the secretary is a member of the board, an assistant secretary may be named and his or her duties and compensation set by the board.
- ii. The secretary shall see that an accurate record of the proceedings of the board is kept, that a copy of the

proceedings is provided to each board member and to the superintendent, and that a concise summary of each month's meeting is published along with a list of all approved claims. The secretary shall perform such other duties as are prescribed by law and assigned by the board.

d. Treasurer

- i. A treasurer from the board will be designated on a year-to-year basis.
- ii. The treasurer will sign checks and certain other documents. The treasurer is the custodian of the monies of the district.
- iii. The treasurer shall give bond or equivalent insurance coverage payable to the district as prescribed by law with the cost of the bond being paid by the district.
- iv. The treasurer shall issue no warrant of payment of claim against the district until such claim has been duly authorized by the board and has been duly countersigned by the president.
- v. The vice president or secretary may sign any warrant in the absence of either the president or the treasurer.

3. Board Officer Voting and Tie Breakers

- a. The vote to elect board officers may be taken by secret ballot, but the total number of votes for each candidate shall be recorded in the minutes.
- b. In the event any officer cannot be elected by a majority after 10 votes; no votes occur after ten motions fail for lack of a "second,"; or no member volunteers to serve as an officer for a particular position, the tie will be broken by the applicable method:
  - i. If the board is split between two members, the officer will be determined by coin flip. The winning member will be the officer for the upcoming year unless the position changes by action of the board.
  - ii. If the board is split between more than two members who wish to serve as the officer, any member wanting to serve

as the officer will put his or her name into a drawing. The name drawn out will be the officer for the upcoming year unless the position changes by action of the board.

- iii. If no member is willing to serve as an officer for a position which is required to be a member of the board, all non-officers' names will be put into a drawing. The name drawn out will be the officer for the upcoming year unless the position changes by action of the board.

#### 4. Committees

- a. The board shall authorize such special committees as it deems necessary. The board president shall appoint members to the committee, and designate its function, tasks it is to perform, and a completion date for its work.
- b. On or before the beginning of each calendar year, the board shall appoint three members to form a Committee on American Civics. The committee's duties shall be those prescribed by Nebraska statutes, which include:
  - i. Hold no fewer than two public meetings annually, at least one when public testimony is accepted;
  - ii. Keep minutes of each meeting showing the time and place of the meeting, which members were present or absent, and the substance and details of all matters discussed;
  - iii. Examine and ensure that the social studies curriculum used in the district is aligned with the social studies standards adopted pursuant to section 79-760.01 and teaches foundational knowledge in civics, history, economics, financial literacy, and geography;
  - iv. Review and approve the social studies curriculum to ensure that it stresses the services of the men and women who played a crucial role in the achievement of national independence, establishment of our constitutional government, and preservation of the union and includes the incorporation of multicultural education as set forth in sections 79-719 to 79-723 in order to instill a pride and respect for the nation's institutions and not be merely a recital of events and dates;
  - v. Ensure that any curriculum recommended or approved by the committee on American civics is made readily accessible to the public and contains a reference to this section;

- vi. Ensure that the district develops and utilizes formative, interim, and summative assessments to measure student mastery of the social studies standards adopted pursuant to section 79-760.01;
- vii. Ensure that the social studies curriculum in the district incorporates one or more of the following for each student:
  - 1. Administration of a written test that is identical to the entire civics portion of the naturalization test used by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services prior to the completion of eighth grade and again prior to the completion of twelfth grade with the individual score from each test for each student made available to a parent or guardian of such student; or
  - 2. Attendance or participation between the commencement of eighth grade and completion of twelfth grade in a meeting of a public body as defined by section 84-1409 followed by the completion of a project or paper in which each student demonstrates or discusses the personal learning experience of such student related to such attendance or participation; or
  - 3. Completion of a project or paper and a class presentation between the commencement of eighth grade and the completion of twelfth grade on a person or persons or an event commemorated by a holiday listed in section 79-724(6) or on a topic related to such person or persons or event; and
- viii. Take all such other steps as will assure the carrying out of the provisions of this section and provide a report to the school board regarding the committee's findings and recommendations.

## 5. Vacancies

- a. A vacancy on the board of education shall exist when any one of the following occurs:
  - i. A member submits his or her formal resignation from the board.
  - ii. A member removes himself or herself from the district or is absent from the district for a continuous period of sixty days.

- iii. A member misses more than two consecutive regular board meetings unless excused by a majority of the remaining members.
  - iv. Such other reasons as are set forth in Nebraska statutes.
- b. The board shall make note the vacancy in its minutes and shall give notice of the date the vacancy occurred, the office vacated, and the length of the unexpired term to (1) the election commissioner or county clerk, and (2) the public by published notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the district.
  - c. Vacancies shall be filled in the manner set forth in Nebraska statutes.

Adopted on: August 7, 2017

Revised on: July 30, 2018; July 15, 2019

Reviewed on: March 27, 2025

# Twin River Public Schools Compliance with Americanism Statute

## School Board Committee

Chelsa Thompson - Chair

Jennifer Swantek

Jeremy Vetick

## [Social Studies curriculum alignment to the Standards](#)

Naturalization Test (must be by the end of the 8th grade and again by 12th grade)

- 8th Grade takes the Naturalization Test at the end of the school year
- 9th Grade Civics group project over the history and importance of various American holidays, including Constitution Day

## Elementary Curriculum -

- Discussion of noteworthy events pertaining to American history or the exceptional acts of individuals and groups of Americans
  - 1st grade learns about how America became a country, the Declaration of Independence and American symbols. We also learn about Abraham Lincoln and George Washington.
  - 3rd Grade studies George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, MLK. We also cover how America came to be a country, civic behavior, community participation and citizenship.
  - 4th grades watches Museum Live videos from Durham Museum on MLK and Native American Heritage
  - 4th grade discusses the American Revolution in Unit 7 of the CKLA curriculum.
  - 5th Grade - We learn about American History from the pre-Columbian era to the Revolution. We discuss important events, watch BrainPOP videos, articles from Ducksters, and iXL skills to reinforce the topics learned in class.
  - 6th Grade watches zoom recordings from Durham Museum on Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Native American Heritage
- The historical background, memorization, and singing of patriotic songs such as the Star-Spangled Banner and America the beautiful
  - Kindergarten: Has a lesson in our social studies curriculum: Symbols of Our Country- One of the sections includes "Songs of Our Country." In this section it

talks about “The Star Spangled Banner” and how it’s about a battle during the War of 1812.

- 1st Grade: We learn “You’re a Grand Old Flag” was written to show our love for the flag. “My Country ‘tis of Thee” was written for school children to help them honor our past and to give thanks for freedom.
  
- Development of respect for the American flag as a symbol of freedom and the sacrifices of those who secured that freedom
  - PK-12th grade does the pledge of allegiance daily.
  - Kindergarten: Has a lesson in our social studies curriculum: Symbols of Our Country- we learn about the American flag and how we say the pledge to show honor and respect.
  - 1st Grade learns about the history of the flag and its symbolism.
  - 5th grade does iXL skills that are over American symbols, landmarks, and monuments.
  
- Instruction as to proper conduct in the presentation of the American flag
  - 3rd Grade - Instruction on proper flag presentation and kids are reminded before saying the Pledge of Allegiance in the classroom.

Grades 5th to 8th - At least two of those grades need to focus on American History.

1. 8th Grade American History
  - a. Covers pre-Columbian history through Reconstruction
  - b. Citizenship test at the end of the second semester
2. 5th Grade American History
  - a. Covers pre-Columbian history through the Revolution.

High School - At least 2 courses in devoted to Civics and American History:

1. Civics
  - a. Characteristics, duties, and responsibilities of citizenship
  - b. Structures and principles of the Constitution
  - c. The civil liberties gained in the Bill of Rights
  - d. Structure and powers on the three branches of government
  - e. History and purposes of political parties
  - f. Functions of campaigns and elections
  - g. Structure of local and state governments
  
2. 11th grade American History
  - a. Reviews early American history and covers the modern era

## Patriotic Exercises (any grades):

1. George Washington's Birthday
  - a. 1st grade learns about George Washington's involvement in the US becoming an independent nation.
  - b. 3rd Grade - information will be discussed using a Brain Pop/Jr. video with a short quiz afterwards. Students will also complete an art related activity.
  - c. 5th Grade Generally discussed on Presidents' Day. We also discuss his importance when we talk about the Constitutional Convention and the American Revolution.
  - d. 6th Grade watched a zoom recording from Durham Museum on George Washington
  
2. Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
  - a. 3rd Grade - information will be discussed using a Brain Pop/Jr, video with short quiz afterwards. Students will complete an art related activity.
  - b. 5th Grade Generally discussed on Presidents' Day. Things we have done are watch the BrainPOP videos about Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. We have also done reports on different Presidents and their contributions to the country.
  - c. 6th Grade watch a zoom recording from Durham Museum on Abraham Lincoln
  
3. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
  - a. 1st grade reads a Scholastic News about MLK and the progress that has been made with equal rights.
  - b. 3rd Grade - Information has been covered using the Scholastics News Magazine.
  - c. 4th grades joins a Museum Live video with the Durham Museum regarding MLK
  - d. 5th Grade - BraiPOP video on Civil Rights and Martin Luther King Jr. We read the article on Ducksters about Martin Luther King Jr. We also discuss him when we do our reading unit on segregation, we learn about Rosa Parks in Unit 1 of CKLA.
  - e. 6th Grade Zoom with Durham Museum on Martin Luther King
  
4. Native American Heritage Day (Friday after Thanksgiving)
  - a. 3rd Grade: Information has been discussed using a Brain Pop/Jr, video with short quiz afterwards. Other years I have used a Google Slide activity.
  - b. 5th Grade: Unit 2 of CKLA discusses the Maya, Inca, and Aztec civilizations. We do discuss the Native Americans on Indigenous Peoples' Day. In Chapter 1 in Social Studies, we discuss "The First Americans". We also learn about the Native American groups throughout the United States and how they were affected by Europeans settling in the United States.
  - c. 6th Grade Youtube Video on Native American Heritage and their importance in Nebraska History

5. Constitution Day

- a. 3rd Grade: Watched a You-Tube Video for kids and completed a worksheet.
- b. 5th Grade: We form groups and do an activity about how the men of the Constitutional Convention felt about the responsibilities of creating the Constitution. We also watch a BrainPOP video and read books about creating the Constitution and the Constitutional Convention. We also learn about the Constitution when we are learning about the Revolution.
- c. 9th Grade Civics group project over the history and importance of various American holidays, including Constitution Day

6. Memorial Day

- a. 3rd Grade - Information will be discussed using a Brain Pop/Jr, video with a short quiz afterwards.
- b. 5th Grade - We discuss Memorial Day when we learn about Veterans Day. We watch a BrainPOP video and discuss the difference between the two holidays and their importance. We also read articles about Memorial Day in class.
- c. 6th Grade will either watch a zoom recording from Durham Museum or watch a Youtube Video/Do a discussion on Memorial Day in the United States
- d. Boys' basketball helps with the American Legion service at the cemetery

7. Veterans Day - All school assembly held with vocal and instrumental songs and speeches. Community members are invited to come and Veterans are honored. The school partners with the American Legion to present the program.

8. Thanksgiving Day

- a. 1st grade makes a bracelet to help us remember the story of Thanksgiving.
- b. 3rd Grade: Completed math related Thanksgiving activities.
- c. 4th grade watches a Brain Pop video over Thanksgiving Day, completes activity along with a quiz
- d. 5th Grade: Watch BrainPOP video on Thanksgiving. We discuss the Pilgrims in Social Studies chapter 3 and talk about their relationship with the Native Americans and why they left England for New England.
- e. 6th Grade-Youtube Video/Discussion on Native American and Colony relationships and Thanksgiving