

**HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GENERAL CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
ACTION REPORT**

May 16, 2023

High School Social Science Sequence Change Request

Background Information

According to MSDE, Maryland public school students must, as part of their graduation requirements, successfully complete three high school social science courses. Those courses are US History, American Government, and World History. Up until 2020, students also had to pass the American Government High School Assessment (HSA). Beginning in 2021, MSDE piloted an end-of-course (EOC) Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) in American Government.

Currently, HCPS students take American Government in their freshman year, World History in their sophomore year, and US History in their junior year. They may also take the Advanced Placement equivalent of these courses and may also take the HCC US History equivalent course. HCPS is one of five LEAs in the state of Maryland (Carroll, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Worcester) that has this course sequence. Eighteen LEAs (Allegheny, Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Calvert, Caroline, Charles, Frederick, Garrett, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, PG, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico) have a sequence of US History 9, American Government 10, and World History 11. Baltimore County, beginning in SY2022-23, is offering US History 9 and allowing schools to choose whether to offer World History 10 and American Government 11 or vice versa.

The Office of Social Sciences is proposing to switch the HCPS sequence to US History 9, American Government 10, US History 11. This would provide a more cohesive comprehensive program of study from elementary to middle to high school, as students take the first half of US History in Grade 8. This would also provide essential background knowledge of US History prior to students taking American Government. American Government is also a challenging course for freshmen, as the concepts are abstract and require higher levels of thinking and disciplinary tools that are more advanced. Moving American Government closer to when students are 18 and enjoy full citizenship rights will make the content more meaningful and relevant to students. This will also align us to the majority of LEAs, allowing for ease of integration to students transferring from other Maryland districts and broadening our ability to collaborate with other districts. We also believe that another year of maturation will be beneficial to students' performance on the MCAP, while the move to an EOC model for MCAP provides us with more flexibility to support students struggling to successfully complete the course, thereby counterbalancing the loss of one year of potential remediation.

The Office of Social Sciences surveyed the high school principals to gather feedback on this potential shift. All principals are in support of this shift with the majority favoring a one-year

transition period in which all freshmen, sophomores, and juniors will take US History. Principals provided feedback on needs, unintended consequences, and questions. In a level-alike meeting, we discussed and addressed those concerns and communicated next steps for communicating with teachers, counselors, and families.

Requested Action

The Office of Social Sciences requests a change in the sequence for the three graduation-required courses, to reflect US History in 9th grade, American Government in 10th grade, and World History in 11th grade.