



STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Special Broadcast Message from Acting Commissioner Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D.

Special Broadcast – January 7, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

I am sending this special broadcast because I believe in the healing, fellowship, communication and restorative power of community. The scene that unfolded yesterday in the Capitol Building was profoundly unsettling. To witness the emboldened disrespect for the laws and civic institutions that govern this country, should be a concern for all of us.

As a former classroom teacher, I am still processing the best way to discuss these events with students. How would I approach the weighty task of offering the necessary historical, social, and political context, while at the same time providing students the space and tools needed to unpack the emotional shock?

I think of my colleagues, who spent the day hoping for the safety of friends and family in our nation’s capital. I sympathize with all those who witnessed and/or were directly impacted by what happened in the Capitol building. This serves as a reminder that a lot of healing needs to occur. There is a responsibility that the education system must bear for this travesty: how can we effectively improve education in civics and government?

I know I am not the only member of the education community struggling to comprehend this. I encourage all educators and families around the State to have these open and frank dialogues with students, colleagues, friends, and relatives. Every watershed moment like this provides an opportunity for reflection, processing, education, and improvement. It is our responsibility to utilize these moments to improve our understanding of the conditions that created them, and to advance our own social, emotional, and interpersonal growth in order to better process – or prevent – the next challenging moment.

To that end, I am providing a list of resources that districts can use to guide lessons related to the current conditions. Thank you for attention to this message. I appreciate the work you do each day to help students and educators with this mission-critical work.

Sincerely

Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D.
Acting Commissioner of Education

Resources for School Districts

Resource	Description	Grade Band(s)
When Bad Things Are Happening	Resource to support educators in facilitating discussions when crisis occurs.	K-12

Responding to Insurrection at the U.S. Capitol	Resource offering educators the guidance on the early classroom reflections following the incidents at the U.S. Capitol.	K-12
Resources for a Civil Classroom and Future Voters Project from Teaching Tolerance	Resources (e.g., current events discussion guides) and lessons that are easily adapted for in-person, asynchronous, or virtual learning.	K-12
Teach 2020 from the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility	Classroom activities on key 2020 election issues and SEL/restorative practices resources under TeachableMoment lessons bank.	K-12
Teaching Resources for the 2020 Elections from Facing History	Resources designed to help students think critically about the role of elections, voting, and civic participation in creating and sustaining a just and healthy democracy.	K-12
iCivics	Provides free resources on civic education. Includes resources for the 2020 presidential election, as well as remote learning toolkits for educators and families.	K-12
Teaching about Elections and Teaching Civics through an Anti-Bias Lens from the Anti-Defamation League	Lesson plans, family resources, and classroom guidelines for teaching about elections, and a series of webinars connecting current challenges to Civics education.	K-12
Sesame Workshop Social Impact Initiatives and Sesame Street in Communities	Resources to guide conversations with students about racism, gender equity, trauma, and other topics.	PK-3
" Core Ethical Values to Build Your School of Character ," from the School for Ethical Education	Slide presentation including an overview of research and evidence-based practices for developing and implementing core values in schools.	K-12
Guide to Developing and Implementing Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.	Guidance designed to help schools integrate and implement a school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations into their school climate and culture.	K-12
SEL Guidance in Response to the 2020 Election	Guidance designed for educators to consider the election's impact to their social and emotional needs and resources to support open discussions and collective well-being.	K-12