

Civically Minded

a weekly newsletter for educators from the Maine DOE

May 9, 2023

Greetings from the DOE!



The glorious spring weather over the past few days has made teachers and students alike turn their thoughts toward the end of the school year. I know this time of year can feel exhausting for everyone at school, but I also always feel an excitement as I reflect on all of the growth and accomplishments the year has brought. I have a daily "attendance question" and this week I'm asking students to share something they learned this year (from any class) or a question that they have based on what they've learned. While the day to day grind can be overwhelming sometimes, these reflective moments are such a powerful connection to our purpose, and a reminder that we really are accomplishing the challenging work of growing together.

-Jess Graham, Civics Teacher Leader Fellow, DOE
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From the Department:

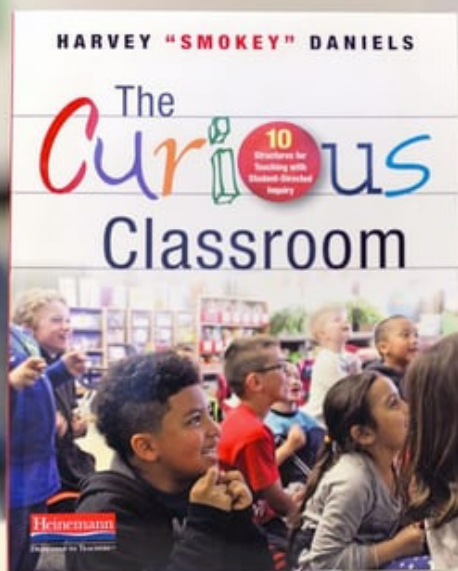
[The Maine Educator Summit will be August 7-10](#)

[The DOE's new and improved calendar for PD and other events can be found HERE.](#)

The department is offering new [PD opportunities](#) around co-teaching for inclusive classrooms.



For teachers:



Recently the Teacher Leader Fellows at the DOE participated in a book study on *The Curious Classroom: 10 Structures for Teaching with Student-Directed Inquiry* by Harvey Daniels. This is a short but powerful framework for thinking about how to shift classroom culture and embrace student engagement, curiosity, and project based learning. Though many of the examples focus on elementary classrooms, the broader concepts are applicable to middle and high school classrooms as well. This text would make a great summer read. It left me energized to continue to build my own capacity to support project based, interdisciplinary learning.

Upcoming opportunities for students:

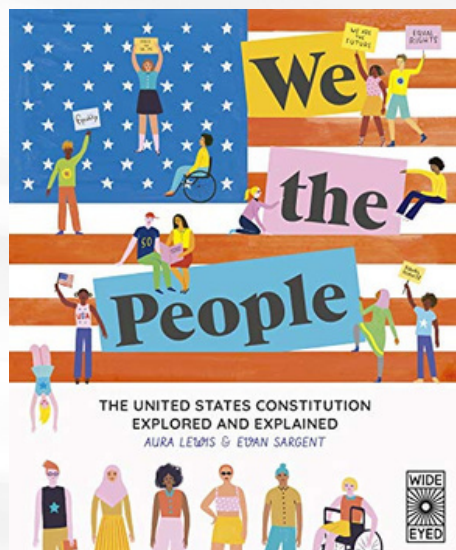
Applications to join [Hardy Girls' Feminist Action Board](#) open May 15. This experience is for girls and nonbinary youth entering grades 9-12 in the 2023-2024 school year.

[Dirigo State, Applications Due May 25](#)

Books to Inspire Civic Thinking

We the People: The United States Constitution Explored and Explained
Evan Sargent and Aura Lewis, illus. by Aura Lewis

[Review in Publishers Weekly](#)



Teaching the Constitution can be an exciting topic for students, especially when the focus is on the Bill of Rights or voting rights amendments. It can also be difficult for students to break down the language, meaning, and debates about each section of our foundational document.

This text is a wonderful way to introduce the Constitution in a readable, relatable way. Questions can be a jumping off point for class discussion, each section could be the starting point for projects digging deeper into specific articles or amendments, and the text would be a useful addition to a classroom library.