

## **Scholars of Distinction: Civics Program Overview**

### **Program Criteria**

Civics, for purposes of the Minnesota Scholars of Distinction, is defined by the knowledge and skills that must be exhibited by the applicant. Students must demonstrate skills necessary to identify, access, analyze and present complex civics information. They should be able to apply principles of civics to public policy issues, utilizing founding documents and demonstrating knowledge of the role of civics participation.

Each applicant is expected to pursue the study of Civics to demonstrate knowledge of how civics is used to develop understanding of human behavior, laws, government, citizenship and public policy; how events and policies impact individual, community and government behavior; and how the application of Constitutional principles can have varied consequences and enact social change.

### **Assessment Elements**

The assessment process will involve three reviewers that will use a rubric to evaluate evidence of civics skills comprehension, the effectiveness of the project based on student goals and presentations, and the student's ability to research and analyze at a high level.

### **Project Specifics**

Applicants must submit a research-based Civics Project demonstrating scholarly excellence and personal experience.

Project is to be submitted electronically in a format that is clearly organized. The content must include all of the following items (see below for more details):

- Annotated K-12 resume, with testimonials
- Personal statement
- Project development narrative
- Project content
- Annotated bibliography and reflective essay
- Documentation of public presentation of project

## **Personal Statements and Supporting Documents**

### **1. Annotated K-12 resume**

- a. The resume should reflect the pathways and experiences that have led the student to qualify as a Scholar of Distinction in Civics.
- b. List educational experiences that prepared the student for excellence in Civics, including specific coursework or training and independent studies.
- c. Identify engagement with Civics and the development of skills and understanding.
- d. Word-process and follow a resume format.

### **2. Testimonials (included in resume)**

- a. Identify two individuals familiar with scholar's research and actions related to the project.
- b. Obtain permission and submit the individual's name, position/title, telephone number and a sentence on why you identified this person.
- c. Contact may be made at the discretion of the reviewers.

### **3. Personal statement of one to two pages**

- a. In your own words, describe what Civics is and why it is important.
- b. Explain your previous experiences, present studies and future goals in the study of Civics.
- c. List project goal(s) and clearly explain how and why project goal(s) were established and the research and actions taken to accomplish the goal(s).
- d. Word-process and double-space.

### **4. Project development narrative of two to three pages**

- a. Describe the scholar's significant commitment and project's goal(s) and objective(s), as well as challenges and successes.
- b. Explain project process from start to finish, outlining key steps that led to project completion.
- c. Review personal growth as well as project results/impact on others.
- d. Scan in supporting material and place within narrative or reference and use as addendum. Examples may include photos, press notices, event programs, etc.
- e. Include project log(s), journal, reports and self-evaluation.

- f. Conclude narrative with recommendations for others seeking to replicate the project.
- g. Word-process and double-space.

## **5. Project Content**

- a. The final format of the project could be one of the following: research paper, tabletop exhibit, documentary video, or interactive website.
- b. The project content should state a clear thesis statement or argument that explains the relevance of the chosen topic and convincingly support the thesis within the project.
- c. The project should demonstrate that the applicant can
  - i. Apply principles of the Constitution and other founding documents to public policy issues, current or historical
  - ii. Show knowledge of the role of civic duty and participation in a democratic society
  - iii. Acquire, organize and analyze primary and secondary governmental sources
- d. The project should use a variety of sources to analyze and compare perspectives, and should cite and document sources in a bibliography.

## **6. Annotated bibliography and essay**

- a. Prepare an annotated bibliography with a substantial number of primary and secondary sources that show depth and breadth of scholar's understanding of Civics and the scholar's particular research topic. Citation and annotation formats must be consistent.
- b. Reflect on the sources and prepare a one-to-two page essay on how the sources influenced the project's intent, analysis and components.
- c. Word-process and follow a structured format.

## **7. Documentation of public presentation of project**

- a. Document public presentation(s) to audience(s) outside classroom/school environment. Examples may include organizations with an interest or stake in the project: a civic group, peer education, public library, etc.
- b. Documentation may include script/outline, photos, program or CD.
- c. Include evidence of feedback, review or evaluation and personal reflection.

## Consultation

Civics project consultants are available through the [Center for Social Studies Education](#). Contact [Jessica.ellison@mnhs.org](mailto:Jessica.ellison@mnhs.org), 651-259-3427.

## Submission Process

1. Complete the [Intent to Apply](#).
2. View the Scholars of Distinction [Important Dates](#) document for the current award cycle timeline.
3. Students are required to arrange for an official, sealed high school transcript to be sent directly to [scholarsofdistinction.MDE@state.mn.us](mailto:scholarsofdistinction.MDE@state.mn.us) or

Minnesota Department of Education  
Attn: Wendy Behrens  
1500 Hwy 36 West  
Roseville, MN 55113

Transcript must be a certified copy sent directly from the applicant's school and must be received by the project deadline.

4. If a transcript is not available contact, [scholarsofdistinction.MDE@state.mn.us](mailto:scholarsofdistinction.MDE@state.mn.us) regarding alternative evidence demonstrating required knowledge base.
5. Complete the elements listed under "Project Specifics", clearly label documents and send in PDF format to [scholarsofdistinction.MDE@state.mn.us](mailto:scholarsofdistinction.MDE@state.mn.us). Zip files, Google documents and redirection and downloads to other sites will not be accepted.

**Scholars of Distinction: Civics Scoring Rubric follows** this document.

## Rubric for Evaluation of Applicants for the Minnesota Scholars of Distinction in Civics

Criterion	Components reflect a level of <b>DISTINCTION</b>	Components reflect a level of <b>HONORABLE MENTION</b>	Components reflect a level of <b>AVERAGE</b>	Components do not qualify
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Personal Statement</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(1 to 2 pages)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>10 points</b></p>	<p><b>Clear and convincing articulation</b> of importance of civics in terms of past experience, present studies and future goals.</p> <p>Scholar <b>clearly and strongly demonstrates</b> the development of skills over time. The work is <b>articulate</b> and shows a longstanding <b>commitment</b> to research in and application of civics knowledge and skills.</p>	<p><b>Substantial</b> evidence of importance of civics in terms of past experience, present studies and future goals.</p> <p>Scholar <b>clearly demonstrates</b> development of skills over time. The work is well-written, and shows a longstanding commitment to research in and application of civics knowledge and skills.</p>	<p><b>Average and predictable</b> evidence of importance of civics in terms of past experience, present studies and future goals.</p> <p>Scholar demonstrates the development of <b>some skills over time</b>. The work shows commitment to a weak or small research project.</p>	<p><b>Sketchy or undeveloped</b> overview of importance of civics in terms of past experience, present studies and future goals.</p> <p>Scholar <b>has not demonstrated</b> the development of some skills over time. The work does not show commitment to researching the project or the skills to do so.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Annotated K-12 Resume</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>10 points</b></p>	<p>Resume reflects education and experiences that have led the student to <b>excel</b> in civics research and application.</p> <p>Academic studies and activities have contributed to <b>significant growth</b> of civics knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Resume preparation demonstrates <b>superior</b> quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Resume reflects education and experiences that have led the student to <b>succeed</b> in civics research and application.</p> <p>Academic studies and activities have contributed to <b>substantial growth</b> of civics knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Resume preparation demonstrates <b>satisfactory</b> quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Resume reflects education and experiences that have led the student to <b>engage</b> in civics research and application.</p> <p>Academic studies and activities <b>have contributed</b> to civics knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Resume preparation demonstrates <b>average</b> quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Resume reflects education and experiences that have led to civics research and application.</p> <p>Academic studies and activities have <b>limited</b> contribution to civics knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Resume preparation demonstrates <b>poor</b> quality for a high school student.</p>

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<p align="center"><b>Annotated Bibliography and one page Essay</b></p> <p align="center"><b>10 points</b></p>	<p><b>Extensive</b> annotated bibliography of readings that support a broad and comprehensive study of project components.</p> <p>The <b>essay</b> shows a <b>superior understanding</b> of the impact the research has had on scholar and others.</p> <p>The writing reflects <b>superior</b> quality for a high school student.</p>	<p><b>Substantial</b> annotated bibliography of readings showing a broad and comprehensive study of project components.</p> <p>The <b>essay</b> shows a <b>positive understanding</b> of the impact the research has had on scholar and others.</p> <p>The writing reflects <b>high</b> quality for a high school student.</p>	<p><b>Average</b> annotated bibliography of readings that shows a limited study of project components.</p> <p>The <b>essay</b> shows <b>some understanding</b> of the impact the research has had on scholar and others.</p> <p>The writing reflects <b>average</b> quality for a high school student.</p>	<p><b>Undeveloped</b> annotated bibliography of readings that show a cursory study of project components.</p> <p>The <b>essay</b> shows a <b>weak connection</b> of the impact the research has had on scholar and others.</p> <p>The writing reflects poor quality for a high school student.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Project Narrative</b></p> <p align="center"><b>40 points</b></p>	<p><b>Significant evidence</b> presented that the scholar <b>knows and is able to use</b> key concepts and apply civics as identified in the Project Narrative component of the Project Specifics.</p> <p><b>Clear and convincing evidence</b> the scholar conducted a valid study including a <b>comprehensive and concise summary</b> of research and activities.</p>	<p><b>Strong evidence</b> presented that the scholar <b>knows and is able to use</b> concepts and apply civics as identified in the Project Narrative component of the Project Specifics.</p> <p><b>Substantial evidence</b> the scholar conducted a valid study including a <b>comprehensive and concise summary</b> of research and activities.</p>	<p><b>Evidence</b> presented that the <b>scholar knows and is able to use</b> key concepts and apply civics as identified in the Project Narrative component of the Project Specifics.</p> <p><b>Some evidence</b> of scholarly research and activities is provided and process is unclear.</p>	<p><b>Lack of evidence</b> that the scholar <b>knows and is able to use</b> key concepts and apply civics as identified in the Project Narrative component of the Project Specifics.</p> <p>Evidence of research and activities provided were <b>not organized</b> to inform the reader.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Project Narrative</b></p> <p align="center"><b>10 points</b></p>	<p>A <b>superior</b> approach to the project over an <b>appropriate</b> period of time.</p> <p>An <b>innovative or creative</b> project approach, content and methodology.</p>	<p>A <b>valid</b> approach to the project over an <b>appropriate</b> period of time.</p> <p>An <b>innovative or creative</b> project approach, content and methodology.</p>	<p>A <b>limited</b> approach to the project over a <b>short</b> period of time.</p> <p>A <b>narrow</b> project approach, content and methodology.</p>	<p>A <b>sketchy</b> approach to the project over a <b>short</b> period of time.</p> <p>An <b>ordinary</b> project approach, content and methodology.</p>

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<b>Project Narrative</b> (Continue 10 point Value)	<p><b>Only relevant</b> information and supporting materials were included and reliability was assessed.</p> <p><b>Thoughtful reflection</b> on the process, future research and <b>recommendations</b> for others seeking to replicate are included.</p> <p>Organization and writing reflects <b>superior</b> quality for a high school student.</p>	<p><b>Relevant</b> information and materials were included and reliability was assessed.</p> <p><b>Reflection</b> on the process, future research and <b>recommendations</b> for others seeking to replicate are included.</p> <p>Organization and writing reflects <b>high</b> quality for a high school student.</p>	<p><b>Limited relevant</b> information and materials were included, but reliability may be an issue.</p> <p><b>Limited reflection</b> and <b>recommendations</b> for others seeking to replicate the process are included.</p> <p>Organization and writing reflects <b>average</b> quality for a high school student.</p>	<p>Relevance of information and supporting materials was <b>not apparent</b>.</p> <p>Reflection and recommendations for others seeking to replicate were <b>not included</b>.</p> <p>Organization and writing reflects <b>poor</b> quality for a high school student.</p>
<b>Project Presentation</b> <b>15 points</b>	<p>Scholar made a <b>public presentation</b>, created a <b>strong method</b> to assess feedback received, and has <b>reflected</b> on the process with maturity and objectivity.</p>	<p>Scholar made a <b>public presentation</b>, created a <b>satisfactory method</b> to assess feedback received, and has <b>reflected</b> on the process with maturity and objectivity</p>	<p>Scholar made a <b>public presentation</b>, created a <b>weak</b> method to assess feedback received. <b>Little reflection</b> on the process was evident.</p>	<p>Scholar made a <b>presentation</b> with limited feedback. <b>Little or no reflection</b> on the presentation was evident.</p>
<b>Testimonials</b> <b>5 points</b>	<p>Identification and contact information provided.</p>	<p>Identification and contact information provided</p>	<p>Identification and contact information was limited.</p>	<p>Identification and contact information was not provided.</p>

**Reviewer's Comments:**

**Level of Recommendation:**

\_\_\_\_\_Project reflects a level of **DISTINCTION**

\_\_\_\_\_Project reflects a level of **HONORABLE MENTION**

\_\_\_\_\_Project reflects a level of **AVERAGE**

\_\_\_\_\_Project does not qualify for recognition