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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Anastasios Kamoutsas

DATE: January 13, 2026

SUBJECT: Launch of the Presidential 1776 Award – A Nationwide Civics Competition

The U.S. Department of Education has announced the launch of the *Presidential 1776 Award*, a nationwide competition designed to recognize and celebrate high school students' exceptional knowledge of American civics and the principles upon which our nation was founded. The press release may be viewed in its entirety here: <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-launches-presidential-1776-award-celebrate-americas-semiquincentennial>.

This award program offers a unique opportunity for students to engage deeply with our nation's history, and it serves as a precursor to the upcoming 250th anniversary celebrations of America's founding. The competition will consist of three rounds:

- **Round One:**
 - Held in February 2026, students will take an online, timed, multiple-choice exam, *The Impossible Civics Test*.
 - This qualifying round will challenge students with up to 4,000 civics questions, testing their knowledge of American history and founding principles.
 - The top four finalists from each state will advance to the next round.
- **Round Two:**
 - In May 2026, the state finalists will compete in regional semifinals, participating in short answer verbal examinations.
 - The top four students from each region will move on to the national finals.
- **Round Three:**
 - The national finals will be held in Washington, D.C., in June 2026.
 - Students will participate in a final verbal round, and the top three winners will receive scholarships totaling \$250,000.

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This competition is administered by the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation, which will develop the questions and serve as the judge for the event. The foundation's mission is rooted in strengthening the teaching of the U.S. Constitution and American history.

We encourage you to share this exciting opportunity with high school students across your districts. This competition not only offers students a chance to win prestigious scholarships but also fosters a deeper understanding of the values that shape our nation.

For further details and to access the competition's official registration, please visit the Presidential 1776 Award page, located here: <https://www.presidential1776award.org/>.

Thank you for your continued support of educational initiatives that inspire and challenge our students.

AK/pb