



# STATE CIVIC EDUCATION

— T O O L K I T —



The Council  
of State  
Governments



EDUCATION COMMISSION  
OF THE STATES



# STATE CIVIC EDUCATION TOOLKIT

December 2017

## LEAD AUTHORS

**Elizabeth Whitehouse**  
*The Council of State  
Governments*

**Paul J. Baumann**  
*National Center for Learning  
and Civic Engagement*

**Jan Brennan**  
*National Center for Learning  
and Civic Engagement*

## CIVIC EDUCATION LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS

**Barbara Cegavske**  
*Secretary of State, Nevada*

**Ms. Tammy Waller**  
*Director, K-12 Social Studies  
and World Languages  
Arizona Department of Education*

**Ms. Deborah Genzer**  
*Lead Staff, Chief Justice's  
Civic Learning Initiative  
Judicial Council of California*

**Representative Brian Prince**  
*Georgia House of Representatives*

**Representative Jeff Thompson**  
*Idaho House of Representatives*

**Dr. Shawn Healy**  
*Director, Democracy Program  
McCormick Foundation*

**Dr. Paul Baumann**  
*Director, National Center for  
Learning and Civic Engagement*

**Ms. Jan Brennan**  
*National Center for Learning  
and Civic Engagement*

**Senator Tod Bowman**  
*Iowa State Senate*

**Senator Jimmy Higdon**  
*Senate Majority Whip,  
Kentucky State Senate*

**The Honorable Pamila Brown**  
*Maryland Judiciary*

**Ms. Abby Kiesa**  
*Director of Impact, CIRCLE*

**Representative Marvin Abney**  
*Deputy Majority Leader, Rhode  
Island General Assembly*

**Ms. Janis Kyser**  
*Director, Tennessee Center for  
Civic Learning and Engagement*

**Mrs. Karen Peterson**  
*Education Policy Specialist,  
Office of the Utah Governor*

**The Honorable James Dillard**  
*Member, Virginia State  
Board of Education*

**Mr. Robert Paulson**  
*General Counsel, West Virginia  
Department of Administration*

**Representative Elgie Sims**  
*Illinois House of Representatives*

**Representative Sondra Erickson**  
*Chair, Minnesota House  
Education Committee*

**Senator Howard Stephenson**  
*Utah State Senate*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kelley Arnold  
Katherine Barrett  
Abbey Bowe  
Theresa Carroll

Courtney Daniel  
Richard Greene  
Shawntaye Hopkins  
Lisa McKinney

John Mountjoy  
Gladys Parks



**The Council  
of State  
Governments**

Founded in 1933, The Council of State Governments is our nation's only organization serving all three branches of state government. CSG is a region-based forum that fosters the exchange of insights and ideas to help state officials shape public policy. This offers unparalleled regional, national and international opportunities to network, develop leaders, collaborate and create problem-solving partnerships.



**EDUCATION  
COMMISSION**  
OF THE STATES

Education Commission of the States serves as a partner to state policymakers by providing personalized support and helping education leaders come together and learn from one another. Through our programs and services, policymakers gain the insight and experience needed to create effective education policy. Visit [www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org).

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CIVICS 101</b> .....	8
1. State Leaders and Civic Education .....	8
2. What is Civic Education? .....	10
3. The Historic Civic Mission of Schools .....	10
4. What Does Effective Civic Learning Look Like? .....	11
5. The State of American Civic Education .....	11
6. Why Civic Education Matters .....	15
<b>STAKEHOLDERS &amp; COALITION-BUILDING</b> .....	17
<b>CREATING A STATE STRATEGY</b> .....	20
<b>CIVICS EDUCATION MEDIA KIT</b> .....	21
<b>STATE CIVIC EDUCATION POLICIES</b> .....	22
1. Civic Mission of Schools .....	22
2. Civic Education Investments .....	23
3. Effective Practices for Civic Learning .....	23
a. Classroom Instruction/Standards and Curriculum .....	23
b. Discussion of Current Events and Controversial Issues .....	25
c. Service Learning .....	26
d. Extracurricular Activities .....	27
e. Student Governance .....	27
f. Participation and Simulations in Democratic Experiences .....	28
4. Coalition Building and Baseline Data .....	30
5. Civic Education Summit and Initiative .....	30
6. Civic Education Task Force or Commission .....	30
7. Teacher Pre-service Training and Licensure .....	33
8. Teacher Professional Development .....	34
9. Civic Assessment Requirements .....	35
10. Inclusion of Civics in Accountability Systems .....	36
<b>RESOURCES FOR STATE LEADERS</b> .....	37
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	43
Endnotes .....	44
Civics Supports Worksheets .....	49

# Foreword

The key to sustaining our democratic republic is an engaged and informed citizenry. A 2015 study conducted by the Pew Research Center shows that Americans have a near all-time-low level of trust in the government, with only 19 percent of respondents agreeing that they trust the federal government most or all of the time.<sup>1</sup> Two factors contribute to this mistrust: a lack of knowledge about government and a perceived lack of agency—the belief in one’s ability to make decisions and take actions that lead to positive outcomes. Without sufficient understanding of how to participate in civic life and belief in each individual’s capacity to make meaningful contributions to their communities and country, American citizens have disengaged. A key indicator of our collective civic disengagement, voter turnout, is a barometer of our failing civic health. The United States ranks 28th out of 35 member nations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD, in terms of voter turnout.<sup>2</sup>

Waning levels of public trust in government and public engagement are alarming and must be addressed. Our nation’s public and private education institutions, both K-12 and postsecondary, are its greatest asset and investing in a strong education for all is the best fortification against this decline in our civic health. Specifically, civic education is at the heart of what it takes to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills and beliefs needed for a thriving American republic.

The success of America’s great democratic experiment is at risk, however, because students’ performance in civics is in a grave state. The Nation’s Report Card released by the U.S. Department of Education in 2014 shows that only 23 percent of 8th graders scored at or above proficient in civics.<sup>3</sup> Further, a well-documented “civic empowerment gap,” equal in magnitude and impact to the better-known achievement gap, shows that characteristics such as socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity predict the likelihood that students have high-quality civic learning opportunities.<sup>4</sup> Students who are most disadvantaged have far fewer chances than their better off peers to learn about our system of government and practice how they can participate meaningfully in making their communities and country a better place for all.

An informed electorate is one of the most powerful ways to support a successful democracy. The knowledge, skills and disposition gained through civic education are critical precursors to increasing levels of civic participation in our democratic republic. “We the people” will be greatly impacted by the choice to invest—or not invest—in civic education. Civic education must become a priority for the sake of the next generation of Americans and, particularly, for those most vulnerable to having their voices lost within the political process.

Some states have taken steps to improve civic education, but more support is needed. Few states’ systems of postsecondary institutions have any civic education requirements for all students. Although at least 40 states require a high school course in American government or civics, many of these requirements lack strict quality standards or research-based curriculum.<sup>5</sup> Then, too, standard textbooks often emphasize the federal government and neglect important information about state and local policies and processes.<sup>6</sup> Students need to fully understand American federalism in order to navigate the complexities of civic life. They need to understand how to address issues handled by state and local government—education and transportation, for example—and understand why and how to contact state and local office holders, who are often far more accessible than their federal counterparts.

This Civic Education Toolkit was created to meet these needs by providing support to those striving to improve civic education at the state level. Every state is unique and has a different path to engaging citizens and improving civic education. This toolkit encompasses resources and an action plan that are customizable to meet the individual needs of each state.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Adkins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Adkins  
Executive Director/CEO  
The Council of State Governments



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Baumann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Baumann  
Director of National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement  
Education Commission of the States

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This Civic Education Toolkit is intended to help stakeholders from all three branches of government, as well as other members of the civic education community in their mission to improve state civic education. There are many unique strategies stakeholders can use to effectively engage students. To effectively use this guide, the icons below denote methods and examples that may be particularly useful to leaders from each branch of government, leaders in the K-12 education community, leaders in the higher education community, and leaders working with non-governmental organizations.



Executive



Legislative



Judicial



K-12



Higher Education



Non-governmental Organization

# CIVICS 101

Many policymakers recall an early civic education experience—taking a trip to the state capitol, participating in a mock legislative debate or writing a letter to their state representative—that first spurred their interest in public service. America’s democratic republic depends on visionary leaders, as well as an informed and engaged electorate. We are not born with the capacity to effectively engage as citizens, but rather young people must be taught the knowledge, skills and dispositions that will prepare them for civic participation. In fact, providing a civic education that prepares youth for citizenship is a core purpose of public education. An effective civic education not only gives students an understanding of American history, government, economics and geography, but develops their cognitive and participatory skills and empowers young people to become change leaders in their communities.

As civic education offerings in public schools have been significantly reduced over the last several decades,<sup>7</sup> the civic literacy of both American students<sup>8</sup> and adults<sup>9</sup> have similarly declined. State policymakers have expressed strong interest in how to reinvigorate civic learning and reverse this decline.

**This Civic Education State Policy Toolkit will help you accomplish the following:**

- 1 Assess the current status of civic education policy in your state, higher education system, school district or institution and identify strategic opportunities for improvement;
- 2 Understand and communicate the historic obligation of public education to develop citizens;
- 3 Understand and explain the poor status of civic learning outcomes for students and the implications for our country and future;
- 4 Increase civic learning about states and local governments and increase individuals’ propensities for engagement at these levels of government;
- 5 Identify and develop civic education supporters and coalitions;
- 6 Inform development of civic education policies;
- 7 Identify resources to guide and support civic education advocacy efforts.

## 1 | STATE LEADERS AND CIVIC EDUCATION

Policymakers have a vested interest in promoting high-quality civic education for students who will become the electorate. An informed and engaged public is a crucial element of a robust election process and critical to promulgating the broad buy-in needed for successful policymaking and policy implementation efforts.



### Executive Branch

Executive branch engagement in strengthening civic education varies widely across the states. Governors’ offices play an important role in developing education policy, representing the public voice, establishing state priorities and creating the state budget. State departments of education, state boards of education, university systems and the executive branch play a leadership role in establishing and implementing civic education policy. Secretaries of state have a strong focus on voter engagement and turnout, and often recognize students, teachers and schools with high quality civic learning and engagement outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

The executive branch can support civic engagement in a variety of ways. One option is to actively give youth the opportunity to participate in the political process. Political simulations are helpful for learning the ins and outs of government, but true engagement is more easily accessed when young people become stakeholders.

In 2001, Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack formed the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, or SIYAC, to give young people an avenue to voice the issues that are important to them. SIYAC is nonpartisan and is comprised of Iowan youth between the ages of 14 and 20, who apply and serve two year terms. SIYAC has the opportunity to present its unique agenda to policymakers during the legislative session. After being established by Vilsack, SIYAC was officially adopted into Iowan code in 2009.<sup>11</sup> Some of the issues for which SIYAC has advocated include sexual violence education, mental health education, expanding voting rights to youth and radon testing for public schools. In addition to advocating for policy changes, SIYAC conducts large-scale community service projects.



### Legislative Branch

Legislators represent the voices of the electorate—a job that is considerably harder when these voices are faltering. Mistrust in the government fostered by a lack of knowledge results in broad disengagement from the political process and absence of constituents’ voices in policymaking. While elected and appointed officials often become the faces of government, the more critical components in American democracy are connected



## Knowledge of our system of government, our rights and responsibilities as citizens, is not handed down through the gene pool... it must be taught and we have much work to do!"

—Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

citizens. By making civic education a policy priority, legislators can contribute to a more efficient and productive government. A strong foundation in civic education encourages citizens to become connected, which in turn better facilitates legislators' actions as representatives of their constituents.

Legislators can support civic education both inside and outside the classroom. Passing legislation that encourages or requires strong and effective civic education in schools and postsecondary institutions is an obvious and necessary step, but engaging with students as role models is potentially just as important. Legislative bodies from across the country support a broad range of civic education efforts, which range from leadership of advocacy alliances or establishment of a legislative commission or task force, to civic education bills and classroom participation. Policies might address civic education standards and curriculum, course requirements, pedagogy, assessment, accountability, teacher licensure, teacher professional development and funding for civic programs or teacher training.

As Table 2 shows in section 4 below, research identifying six effective practices for civic learning demonstrates that one of the most effective ways for students to learn about political processes is to participate in civic and political processes. If students are aware of their ability to enact change, they will become more likely to engage in political processes. Mock legislative programs, such as YMCA Youth and Government initiatives can help students learn by placing them directly in the process. In Kentucky, the Kentucky YMCA Youth Association hosts the Kentucky Youth Assembly, or KYA. KYA is a "3-day experiential learning program in which students serve as part of a model state government." Leading up to the conference, students research and write bills regarding state policy issues. At the conference, students debate and vote on these bills, complete with a youth governor with the power to veto. In addition to becoming youth legislators, students have the option to join the media corps, work as a lobbyist or be selected as a presiding officer.

Students often say they leave these programs knowing their voice matters and they are inspired to enter the actual world of policy. For example, students from St. Agnes School and Notre Dame Academy in Kentucky recently presented a bill that would eliminate corporal punishment in public schools and institutions. After intense research, the students developed such a passion for their bill that they decided to contact Kentucky state Rep. Jim Wayne. Wayne has since filed the bill with the Kentucky General Assembly.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to programs helping teach students about the political process, legislators can make themselves available as resources to students interested in getting involved, in order to maintain a high level of political efficacy among young constituents. Washington high-

lights several legislative civic education programs, ranging from page and internship programs, to Civic Education Day and State Government in the Classroom.<sup>13</sup> To facilitate interaction between lawmakers and students, legislators can access a series of lesson plans and activities designed for effective civic education experiences. A Day in the Life of a Legislator introduces students to common legislative activities such as committee hearings, constituent meetings and bill development. Other modules focus on voting and bill writing. The state's annual Civic Education Day provides an opportunity for legislators to highlight civic education efforts and honor outstanding civics educators in an online gallery.



### Judicial Branch

In 2014, The Annenberg Public Policy Center released worrisome results from a national survey. According to the finalized report, only one-third of Americans could name all three branches of government while one-third couldn't name any. Additionally, respondents showed a remarkable gap in knowledge about the separation of powers. Just over one-third thought that "it was the intention of the Founding Fathers to have each branch hold a lot of power, but the president have the final say."<sup>14</sup>

Without a clear idea of how an independent judiciary is supposed to operate, Americans are unlikely to trust the courts. As a result, unpopular rulings may be met with more opposition and less understanding, which compromises the courts' legitimacy. The role of the judicial branch in civic education typically involves the development and support of law-related education programs.

California's judiciary has been a major force in recent efforts to strengthen and expand the state's civic education efforts. The Power of Democracy initiative has been driven by the leadership of State Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye and engages all levels of California courts, as well as the state and local bar associations to improve civic awareness, learning and engagement.<sup>15</sup> In partnership with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye in 2013 established the California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning, which has outlined a Blueprint for Action to revitalize civic learning in the state.<sup>16</sup> The California Courts recognize exemplary efforts to engage K-12 students in civic learning and engagement through an annual Civic Learning Award for California public schools, co-sponsored by Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye and State Superintendent Torlakson.<sup>17</sup>

## 2 | WHAT IS CIVIC EDUCATION?

In the United States, productive civic engagement requires: (1) Civic literacy—knowledge of the history, principles and foundations of our American democracy; (2) Civic skills—the ability to participate in civic and democratic processes through inquiry and action; and (3) Civic dispositions—a shared civic ethos that guides and undergirds our individual and collective actions. According to the National Council for the Social Studies, “People demonstrate civic engagement when they address public problems individually and collaboratively and when they maintain, strengthen and improve communities and societies. Thus, civics is, in part, the study of how people participate in governing society.”<sup>18</sup>

Educators from early childhood through postsecondary increasingly use the phrase “civic learning and engagement” to encompass the full breadth of student outcomes incorporated into civics. As shown in Table 1 below, the civic education field, with the leadership of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, has identified a multifaceted and interdependent set of competencies for student learning in civics. These competencies are recognition that civic learning encompasses far more than civic literacy, but also necessarily includes preparation of students’ thinking, acting and ethical reasoning.

## 3 | THE HISTORIC CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS

*“Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives. ...What spectacle can be more edifying or more seasonable, than that of Liberty & Learning, each leaning on the other for their mutual and surest support?” —James Madison<sup>20</sup>*

The founders of our universal system of free public education made education for citizenship a core part of the mission of public education, equal to workplace preparation. Horace Mann, a 19th century American educational reformer and politician, advocated for free public education largely as a mechanism for preservation of our system of government. Mann wrote, “Education is our only political safety. Outside of this ark all is deluge.”<sup>21</sup> Today, some government leaders, including retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, have carried Mann’s thoughts forward to the 21st century. As O’Connor notes, “The practice of democracy is not passed down through the gene pool. It must be taught and learned anew by each generation of citizens.”<sup>22</sup> This determination to educate young Americans about their rights and responsibilities as citizens is known as the civic mission of schools.<sup>23</sup>

# Civic Competencies for Students<sup>19</sup>

Table 1

### CIVIC KNOWLEDGE

**Civic content knowledge includes both core knowledge and the ability to apply knowledge to different circumstances and settings.**

What does it include?

- Key historical periods, episodes, cases, themes and experiences of individuals and groups in U.S. history
- Principles, documents and ideas essential to constitutional democracy
- Relationship between historical documents, principles and episodes and contemporary issues
- Structures, processes, and functions of government; powers of branches and levels of government
- Political vehicles for representing public opinion and effecting political change
- Mechanisms and structure of the U.S. legal system
- Relationship between government and other sectors
- Political and civic heroes
- Social and political networks for making change
- Social movements and struggles, particularly those that address issues as yet unresolved
- Structural analyses of social problems and systemic solutions to making change

**IMPACT** Civic literacy as a goal for every student.

### INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

**Intellectual civic skills encompass knowing how to identify, assess, interpret, describe, analyze and explain matters of concern in civic life.**

What does it include?

- Critical thinking
- Perspective-taking
- Understanding, interpreting and critiquing various media
- Understanding, interpreting and critiquing different points of view
- Expressing one’s opinions
- Active listening
- Identifying public problems
- Drawing connections between democratic concepts and principles and one’s own life experience

**IMPACT** Civic inquiry understood as a part of how we think, regardless of our field of study.

Americans support the historic civic mission of schools. Over the course of 33 years of Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup polling on American attitudes on education, respondents have overwhelmingly concurred with the statement that “educating young people for responsible citizenship” should be the primary goal of our schools. These results, which are consistent whether or not respondents have children in either public or private school, suggest that our shared conviction that the school’s central mission is educating young people for citizenship has not wavered over time.<sup>24</sup>

## 4 | WHAT DOES EFFECTIVE CIVIC LEARNING LOOK LIKE?

Although civic education received more of a focus in the pre-1960’s K-12 curriculum, instruction during this period was primarily delivered through textbook-based classroom lectures centered on civic knowledge. While these approaches are adequate for teaching students about history and government, they are inadequate for preparing students to participate in civic life. We argue that the “six proven practices for civic education,”<sup>25</sup> as described in Table 2 below, and whose development was led by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, provide guidance on how to fully develop students’ civic knowledge, skills and dispositions. These high-engage-

ment pedagogies and integrated approaches include traditional civics and government courses and more active approaches to learning that when used in combination with each other offer a balanced, effective approach to prepare students for civic life.

## 5 | THE STATE OF AMERICAN CIVIC EDUCATION

### K-12 Civic Education Policies

While all states require some coursework in civics, history, government and/or social studies, the breadth and depth of the requirements are generally lower than those from some decades ago and vary widely by state.

State civic education policies currently function in the context of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, passed in December 2015. As the primary federal legislation that guides K-12 education, ESSA has important implications for state civic learning. Most importantly, ESSA shifts significant responsibility for education policy decisions to the states, relieving some of the pressure of federal testing and accountability requirements and creating more flexibility to enhance social studies and civic education.

## PARTICIPATORY SKILLS

**Civic participatory skills encompass knowing how to cope in groups and organizational settings, interface with elected officials and community representatives, communicate perspectives and arguments, and plan strategically for civic change.**

What does it include?

- Engaging in dialogue with those who hold different perspectives
- Active listening
- Communicating through public speaking, letter writing, petitioning, canvassing, lobbying, protesting
- Managing, organizing, participating in groups
- Building consensus and forging coalitions
- Community mapping
- Utilizing electoral processes
- Utilizing non-electoral means to voice opinion (protest, petitioning, surveying, letter writing, boycotting and so on)
- Planning and running meetings
- Utilizing strategic networks for public ends
- Organizing and demonstrating

**IMPACT** Civic action—in many forms—as a lifelong practice.

## CIVIC DISPOSITIONS

**Civic dispositions include the fundamental beliefs and constitutional principles of American society, expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and other significant documents, speeches and writings of the nation.**

What does it include?

- Tolerance and respect
- Appreciation of difference
- Rejection of violence
- Concern with the rights and welfare of others
- Commitment to balancing personal liberties with social responsibility to others
- Personal efficacy
- Sense of belonging to a group or polity
- Readiness to compromise personal interests to achieve shared ends
- Desire for community involvement
- Attentiveness (to civic matters, the news, etc.)

**IMPACT** Civic ethos governing our actions, both individually and collectively.

## 1

### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

High-quality instruction in civics and government, history, economics, geography and democracy is the foundation of civic learning. Such instruction, however, must be relevant and interesting so that students develop an understanding of their future role as engaged, informed citizens.

#### EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

---

We the People // Project Citizen // Street Law

## 2

### DISCUSSION OF CURRENT EVENTS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Political controversy is a natural part of the democratic process. Classroom discussions that center on current local, national and international issues and events, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives, allow students to learn how to engage constructively with political issues and events that affect them.

#### EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

---

Facing History and Ourselves // Annenberg Classroom

## 3

### SERVICE-LEARNING

Service-learning integrates intentional teaching with experiential learning that engages students as agents of change in their communities. Students acquire and apply cross-disciplinary, standards-based, academic content and college and career readiness skills to address student-identified real world community issues and problems.

#### EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

---

Districts in Action // Earth Force

## 4

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular activities provide students with opportunities to apply civic learning competencies to real-life contexts while developing self-efficacy and finding positive ways to contribute to their communities.

#### EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

---

Speech and Debate Clubs // 4-H // Future Business Leaders of America // Key Club International

## 5

### SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Student councils and other school governance opportunities, particularly those that allow for student participation in meaningful issues and that address student concerns, are laboratories for students to gain practical experience in civics and democracy.

#### EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

---

Constitution High School (Philadelphia, PA) // Prince George's County School Board (MD)

## 6

### PARTICIPATION IN AND SIMULATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

Participation in actual democratic processes and policymaking, as well as simulations of these processes and policymaking, teach students 21st century skills such as public speaking, teamwork, close reading, analytical thinking and the ability to argue both sides of a topic.

#### EXAMPLE PROGRAMS

---

iCivics // Mikva Challenge // Generation Citizen // Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate // Annenberg Presidential Learning Center at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute

Policymakers should be aware of the following ESSA provisions:

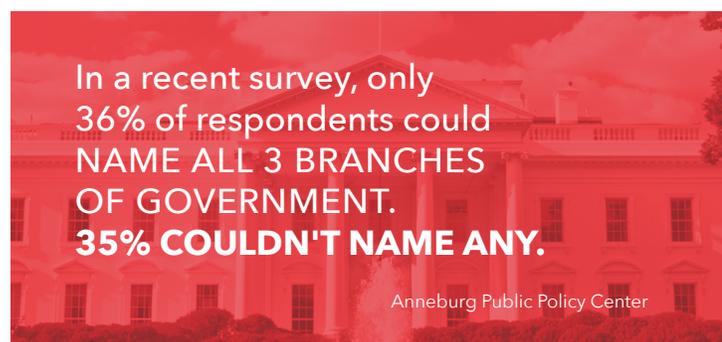
- ESSA prioritizes a “well-rounded education” including civics and government, history, economics, and geography instruction. The expansion of civic education courses and requirements can be a part of state strategies to provide a well-rounded education.
- State measures of school quality and student success are required under ESSA’s Title I. Many potential measures, from student engagement and school climate to absenteeism and graduation rates may be positively impacted by civic learning. High engagement practices that allow students to discuss and to apply civic knowledge and skills to address real-world issues have been demonstrated to be particularly effective in improving a wide range of student outcomes and academic achievement.
- ESSA Title I funds may be used broadly for the development of standards and assessments, including those for social studies and civics.
- ESSA Title II funding can be used to prepare and support teachers. This support could be applied to better prepare teachers in all disciplines to incorporate civic learning and engagement opportunities and to utilize applied service-learning pedagogies to improve student outcomes.
- ESSA Title II also provides competitive funding for teacher academies to strengthen the knowledge and preparation for teaching history, civics and government education.
- ESSA Title IV provides student support and academic enrichment funding for a well-rounded education, which could be directed to either discrete civics or government courses or integrated civic learning opportunities.

For additional information, consult *ESSA: Mapping Opportunities for Civic Education* from Education Commission of the States.

### Declining Civic Education Opportunities

Recent decades have seen a decline in civic education course offerings, requirements and instructional time. Several studies find that social studies has suffered disproportionately from testing requirements. Forty-four percent of school districts cut instructional time from social studies and other subjects to accommodate language and math—an average reduction of 32 percent in instructional time for these subjects.<sup>27</sup>

The quality of civic education is criticized in a study by the Albert Shanker Institute as too little too late. The research found that courses focused too narrowly on historical knowledge at the expense of preparing youth for civic participation. The report calls for more robust civic curriculum starting in elementary school and for engaged learning opportunities that cultivate the values essential to a strong democracy.<sup>28</sup>



### Student Civic Literacy in K-12 Schools

In the most recent 2014 National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, exam administered to eighth-graders, only 18 percent of eighth-graders demonstrated proficiency in U.S. history,<sup>29</sup> 23 percent demonstrated proficiency in civics<sup>30</sup> and 27 percent scored proficient in geography.<sup>31</sup> These results are consistent with previous NAEP exams and indicate that efforts to increase civic literacy over the last decade have not been successful. The previous 2010 NAEP exams show similarly low proficiency rates for students in other grades, with only 27 percent of fourth-graders and 24 percent of 12th-graders rated proficient in civics.<sup>32</sup>

Not only is civics and history proficiency low overall, but NAEP testing demonstrates continuing and significant proficiency gaps for low-income and minority students. While an average of 32 percent of white eighth-grade students were proficient in U.S. history, geography and civics on the 2014 NAEP test, an average of only 9 percent of black, Hispanic and low-income eighth-grade students were proficient and a disastrous 1.3 percent of eighth-grade English-language learners tested proficient.<sup>33</sup> This result was again consistent with previous NAEP results, showing persistent gaps for student subgroups in all of the tested grade levels (4th, 8th, 12th) in 2010.<sup>34</sup> The dramatically lower proficiency rates for low income and minority students reflect both general gaps in academic achievement and more limited opportunities for high-quality civic learning. Research demonstrates that urban schools with more diverse and low-income students “provide fewer and lower-quality civic opportunities,”<sup>35</sup> and Generation Citizen reports that students in low-income schools are only half as likely to study how laws are made and 30 percent less likely to participate in high-engagement activities such as debates,<sup>36</sup> the type of high-quality teaching practices that most effectively boost civic learning and participation.

The impact of low levels civic literacy is being seen in the attitudes and civic participation of youth. A 2014 California survey found that the majority of high school seniors did not view “being actively involved in state and local issues as their responsibility.”<sup>37</sup> Analysis of the 2016 national election shows that only half of eligible youth ages 18-29 voted,<sup>38</sup> the lowest voter turnout of any age group.<sup>39</sup> The United States ranks 28th in voter participation out of the 35 developed democratic states in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.<sup>40</sup>



## Higher Education Civic Education Policies

Higher education policies tend to be very decentralized, with most governance, curricular and pedagogical decisions made at the system or institutional level. With regards to civics, such fragmentation has borne a weak focus on civics across most public postsecondary systems and institutions.

Of over 1,100 colleges and universities surveyed by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, only 18 percent require a course in U.S. history or government<sup>41</sup> and research finds that even among top ranked American institutions, the “overwhelming majority” do not require any United States history or government course, even for history majors.<sup>42</sup> The Association of American Colleges and Universities calls for civic education to be an integral and systematic component of higher education, overcoming current fragmentation.<sup>43</sup>

There are some indications of change, with more higher education institutions strengthening their commitment to preparing students for civic life. The Florida College System will require students beginning in the 2018-2019 school year to demonstrate civic literacy, either through completion of a civics course or through passage of a civic literacy assessment<sup>44</sup> and California State University at Los Angeles has added eight units in American institutions to its general education requirements. Massachusetts has established civic knowledge as a key outcome for higher education by creating “Preparing Citizens. Providing students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to be active, informed citizens,” as an academic goal. System colleges are in the process of designating courses that include substantial civic engagement activities, tracking student access to civic learning opportunities and developing assessments of civic knowledge, skills and dispositions.

## Student Civic Literacy in Higher Education

Eighty percent of college seniors would have received a “D” or “F” on a test of basic historical and civic knowledge administered by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, or ACTA, to students graduating from 55 top-ranked American colleges and universities.<sup>45</sup> ACTA describes the results of a similar 2015 study of recent college graduates as “abysmal,” citing results that only

around 20 percent of college graduates knew the effect of the Emancipation Proclamation or could identify James Madison as the father of the Constitution and nearly half did not know the terms of members of Congress, while almost 10 percent of college graduates thought Judge Judy Sheindlin, a television personality, was on the U.S. Supreme Court.<sup>46</sup>

The Intercollegiate Studies Institute found that higher education does little to increase understanding of fundamental features of American government, with college graduates scoring only 13 percent higher on the civic knowledge test than those who ended their formal learning with a high school diploma.<sup>47</sup> Results also show that earning a college degree has no influence in promoting the civic participation of students, who are no more likely than the general public to contact public officials, attend a political rally or work on a campaign.<sup>48</sup>

## Adult Civic Literacy

Ample evidence documents the poor state of American civic literacy. The inability of most adults to identify basic civics facts suggests that our nation’s current civic education efforts are insufficient. Only 26 percent of Americans could name all three branches of government, while 31 percent couldn’t name any branch in 2016 research by the Annenberg Public Policy Center. This represents a decline of 30 percent since a similar 2011 study.<sup>49</sup> A *Newsweek* survey found that 38 percent of adults would fail the U.S. naturalization civics test, 70 percent could not identify the constitution as the supreme law of the land,<sup>50</sup> 30 percent of Americans believe the Bill of Rights includes the right to own a home, and 12 percent believe the Bill of Rights includes the right to own a pet.<sup>51</sup>

Lack of civic literacy is not merely an academic question. The lack of general civic literacy erodes democratic values and undermines effective civic participation. For example, 40 percent of Americans favored the idea that Congress could prohibit media reporting on national security issues, in direct contradiction to the First Amendment prohibition on laws infringing on the freedom of the press.<sup>52</sup>

Budget policies provide another example of the impact of poor civic literacy. A World Public Opinion survey



found that Americans' preferred solution to the budget deficit was cutting foreign aid, which Americans estimated to be 27 percent of the federal budget. The actual foreign aid figure is less than 1 percent of the federal budget, demonstrating how little understanding the public has of the federal budget and feasible policy solutions.

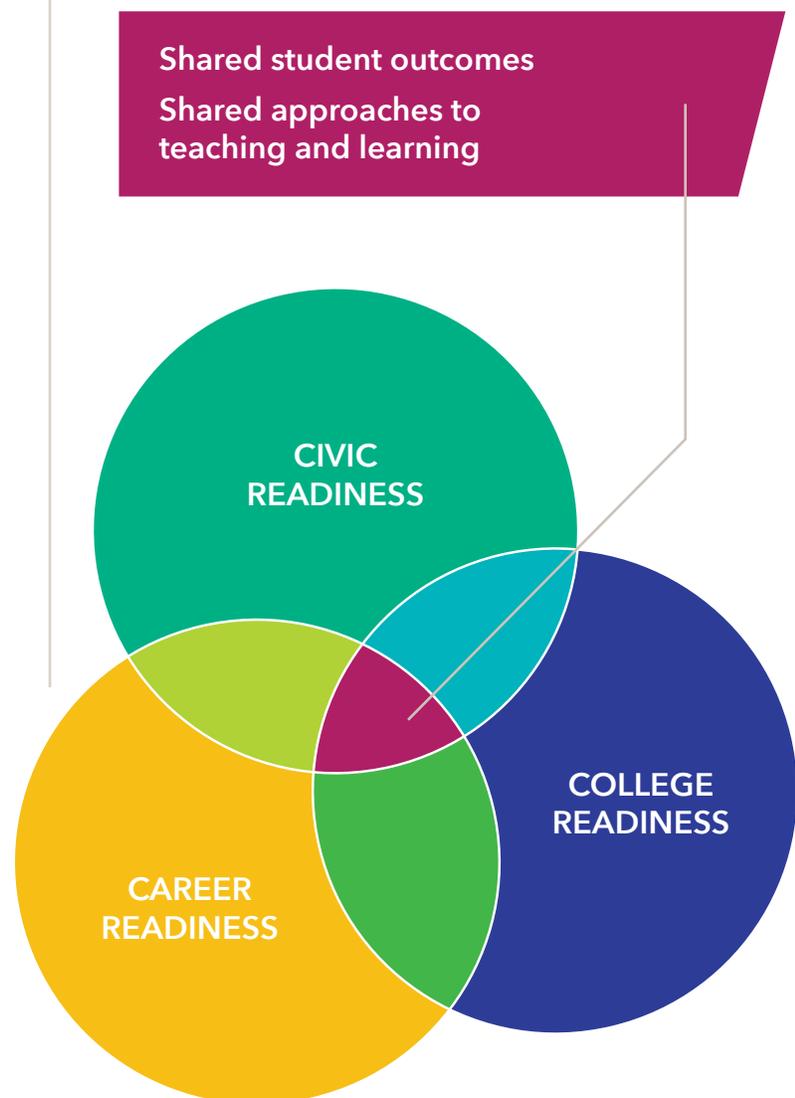
## 6 | WHY CIVIC EDUCATION MATTERS

Civic education in the United States should be a major concern for not only educators and policymakers, but for every American who is concerned about the economic vitality and security of the country. Strong civic education practices lead to equally strong civic learning outcomes. As we have stated, these outcomes include development of students' civic knowledge and civic literacy, cultivation of students' thinking and participatory skills, and formation of students' civic dispositions—the fundamental beliefs and constitutional principles of American society, expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and other significant documents, speeches and writings of the nation. Civic learning fulfills our nation's need for an informed and active electorate, secures our nation's future by promulgating the ideals and ethos of our form of government in every new generation, and helps individuals and groups understand how they are empowered to civic and community engagement. For youth, civic education changes both who they are and what they do. Communities and our democratic society ultimately benefit.

In addition to these worthy aims, high-quality, school-based civic learning supports other social, economic and academic aims such as improving civic equality, improving academic success, building 21st century skills, improving school climate and lowering school dropout rates.<sup>53</sup> This evidence suggests that we ought not force schools to make choices in a false zero-sum game between students' readiness for college and career or civic life. Rather, as illustrated in Figure 1 below, students may be better served if education leaders acknowledge and build policy and practice with a recognition that these three outcomes are mutually reinforcing.

# College, Career and Civic Readiness

Figure 1



[www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org) | @EdCommission



## Exploring the Benefits of Civic Education

Studies document that students who participate in high-quality civic education have:

- Increased civic knowledge, such as understanding the role, structure and processes of government.<sup>54</sup>
  - Enhanced cognitive and analytical skills, including higher order thinking, the ability to interpret evidence, to understand what leads people to make choices, analyze cause and effect and problem-solve.<sup>55</sup>
  - Improved overall academic performance of 2 to 6 percent, particularly in reading comprehension and writing. The link between civics and academics reflects interdisciplinary cognitive skills development and the intellectual value of real world application.<sup>56</sup>
  - Emotional engagement at school is also the noncognitive factor most directly correlated with academic achievement.<sup>57</sup>
  - Amplified career skills generated by 21st century competencies related to civic learning and engagement, such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity, as well as career exploration supported by service learning and community service.<sup>58</sup>
  - Stronger character development, including initiative and self-direction, accountability, leadership and responsibility.<sup>59</sup>
  - Increased multicultural understanding and appreciation and higher tolerance for diverse perspectives and those with differing views.<sup>60</sup>
  - Higher trust in government and public officials and improved respect for government symbols and institutions.<sup>61</sup>
- In addition to the compelling case for school civic learning and engagement based on student impacts, broader social and community benefits occur when students are prepared for active civic engagement. The benefits include:
- Academic success benefits: Students have been shown to have higher overall academic performances, a higher likelihood to graduate, and a higher likelihood to attend college and complete degrees.<sup>62</sup>
  - Strides towards closing the academic achievement gap: Civic education has been shown to narrow the academic achievement gap on the basis of income, racial and ethnic status, and parental education level.<sup>63</sup> Civic education bridges the divide between schools and neighborhoods, with successful students contributing greatly to long-term community health.<sup>64</sup>
  - Economic benefits: Civic education helps to prepare a globally competitive, workforce-ready population with 21st century skills.<sup>65</sup>
  - Equity and equality benefits from inclusive democracy: Civic education helps overcome the civic opportunity gap—voting and other civic participation disparities based on income, racial and ethnic status, and parental education level. Students with less civic education and learning opportunities are more likely to be students of color and low-income young people.<sup>66</sup>
  - Enhanced policies and community outcomes from collective action: Civic education can help to increase citizen input and participation that results in more responsive and improved policy decisions. For example, a new study of municipal transit innovation and improvement found that local citizen advocacy and engagement were the critical factor driving transportation revitalization.<sup>67</sup> Youth have a critically important perspective to offer community improvement efforts and civic learning facilitates their contributions to the public good.<sup>68</sup>
  - Improved representative democracy: Civic education leads to higher voter turnout, particularly among traditionally disenfranchised groups; a better informed electorate and more objective decision-making. Not only is the political participation of youth higher when exposed to civics education, but they create a “trickle up” effect that increases the participation of parents and friends. It is worth noting that research shows no impact of civic education on party affiliation.<sup>69</sup>

# STAKEHOLDERS AND COALITION-BUILDING

Policymakers have several strategies to advance a shared vision, understanding and commitment to civic learning and engagement and to unify and amplify civic education supporters. Civic education advocacy coalitions have successfully promoted local and state policy improvements, as has the creation of civic learning task forces or commissions. Statewide civic education summits have also helped to jumpstart civic education efforts. These strategies can be advanced by executive, legislative or judicial action, as well as by nongovernmental nonprofits and actors. The scope of coalition efforts may focus on K-12 civic education or post-secondary civic learning or encompass the full K-20 educational continuum.

## Advocacy Coalitions

When committed civic learning supporters join together, they can be a powerful force for civic education advances. Key activities for coalitions include:

- Establishing baseline data on civic education offerings and student outcomes
- Establishing a formal civic education advocacy coalition and plan
- Developing messaging and talking points to convey the importance of civic learning and engagement

## Establishing a Baseline

While strong national data documents the decline in civic education offerings and the poor state of civic literacy, many states have found that conducting a baseline study is helpful to document the status of civic education locally and to create a benchmark against which civic learning and engagement progress can be measured. Conducting a benchmark survey of civic learning can provide evidence of deficiencies, that range from unmet course mandates to poor student civic literacy and the need for teacher professional development. These deficiencies, in turn, can guide policy efforts and create urgency. Sample benchmark surveys and baseline reports are included in the State Civic Education Policy Examples section of this toolkit.

## Coalition Efforts

One strategy that states have found successful has been to develop and activate a coalition campaign to champion civic education. Coalition-building will vary across states to meet the unique needs of each community. Civic education coalition efforts may also take place at the level of a state higher education system, or

at the level of school districts or individual institutions. Coalition development may be initiated by the executive, legislative or judicial branch, or by non-governmental civic or education organizations.

## Coalition Membership

One of the lessons learned from previous efforts is the value of broad and inclusive coalition membership. Educators are not the sole stakeholders in the fight for effective civic education. Students' have the greatest stake in ensuring they have the knowledge, skills and values for democratic participation. Civic education is an issue that readily garners parent and family engagement. Business leaders, nonprofit organizations and community members at large are also invested in playing a role in efforts to shape the next generation of American leaders and workforce.

Think beyond the civic education and government communities when establishing a coalition. The quality of civic education in schools affects much more than the health of our democracy. As discussed earlier, civic education can lead to a more efficient and collaborative workforce, more engaged and empathetic community members, and innovative problem solving. Proponents of civic learning may find allies among those who endorse character education, social-emotional learning and 21st century skills, as well as those who support applied and engaged pedagogies, such as project-based learning and service-learning. Finding effective and feasible solutions for improving civic education should involve all of these voices. When establishing a collaborative coalition, include representatives from executive, legislative and judicial branches, the education community, civics program providers, civic and service organizations, funders and media.



# Building Effective Coalitions

Several fundamental building blocks can help to foster the success of a diverse range of coalitions and taskforces. *Practicing What We Teach*, a civic learning advocacy guide developed by the National Council for the Social Studies and Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, identifies seven elements to an effective coalition effort, including:

## FRAME THE ISSUE.

Clarify the issue and articulate why it is important. Create talking points that will resonate with target audiences.

## DEVELOP A CAMPAIGN PLAN.

Create a strategic, flexible plan to guide your campaign. Identify outcomes and how you will measure campaign success. Establish the structure of the coalition and leadership, funding, outreach and communications, and campaign timelines.

## BUILD INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS.

Identify an institutional “home” for your coalition that can support operations and funding.

## IDENTIFY MODELS.

Develop approaches and results from effective models that will guide coalition goals and recommendations, as well as serve as an effective advocacy tool.

## RECRUIT A BI/NONPARTISAN COALITION OF SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATIONS.

Identify and recruit a broad range of stakeholders to join the coalition. Ensure that the coalition is representative of the full diversity of stakeholders and is well connected to reach your target audiences. Select coalition members that can speak with a united voice, rather than pursue their own individual interests.

## FIND CHAMPIONS.

Engage high-profile advocates who can propel coalition outreach and communication efforts.

## BUILD CAPACITY AND ONGOING SUPPORT.

Ensure that coalitions are vigilant and flexible, so as to respond to changing conditions and leadership. The coalition’s role does not end with the passage of civic education policies, but includes overseeing their effective implementation and assessment.

Details of several civic education coalition efforts are included in the State Civic Education Policy Examples section of this toolkit.

Coalitions may wish to provide additional opportunities to ensure diverse input. For example, after drafting preliminary recommendations, the California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning used surveys and public feedback to capture any voices that may have been left out of the initial task force composition.

## Statewide Civic Education Summit or Initiative

A statewide or local summit focused on increasing awareness and commitment to civic learning, or a civic learning initiative launched through a summit, has jump-started efforts in several states. Hosting a summit may be a primary activity of an advocacy coalition or state task force and can be used to expand public, educator or policymaker engagement. Summit sponsorships that eliminate or reduce attendance costs, particularly for students, parents and teachers, will help ensure strong and diverse participation.

Goals for a civic education summit may include:

- Sharing data on the state of civic learning and engagement
- Sharing data on state civics requirements, assessments and accountability
- Conducting a gap analysis comparing state or local civic learning policies against best practices to identify strategic opportunities
- Educating about the six evidence-based effective practices of civic learning and engagement
- Showcasing effective school and extracurricular civic education programs
- Showcasing engaged pedagogical approaches to civic learning, such as service-learning
- Adopting an actionable resolution or summit statement in support of civic education
- Creating and disseminating a report with recommendations for improving civic education

The Council on Public Legal Education in Washington state recently created the Civic Learning Initiative, or CLI, an effort to improve civic education in the state. In January 2017, the CLI held its first statewide summit on civic learning. Those in attendance included members of all three branches of government, local educators, local civic education advocates and students who have participated in youth government simulations. The summit was part of an effort to help the CLI achieve their goal of improving policies and resources needed to improve civic learning in K-12 schools in Washington. CLI participants are also drafting a state-specific version of the national iCivics curriculum. A follow up summit is planned for 2018.

Details of several other civic education summits are included in the State Civic Education Policy Examples section of this toolkit.



## Task Forces and Commissions

Several states have established official groups to explore the current state of civic education and make recommendations for policy improvement. These groups have a variety of names and configurations—task force, commission, special committee, working group, study group—and may be initiated by executive, legislative or judicial action. Commissions that include representatives from all three branches of government, as well as community stakeholders and experts, are most likely to identify goals and implementation strategies that will attract broad support from constituents. The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education both established civic education task forces to address preparing citizens as a goal across K-16 state public education.<sup>70</sup> Another example is the Virginia Commission on Civics Education, which was created in 2005 by the Virginia General Assembly and supported by the executive branch. Included among the 23 members were the governor, the lieutenant governor and other executive branch officials. These members offer the unique perspective of implementation, which can help the commission to make practical and feasible recommendations.

The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools found successful commissions share the following characteristics:

- Established by a policymakers or state officials
- Has a mandate to thoroughly examine current policy and practice
- Is empowered to make substantive recommendations to policymakers
- Has widely inclusive membership of stakeholders and policymakers (typically written into the establishing legislation or policy)
- Has operating resources secured from the state or private sector donations
- Issues a report of its proceedings, findings and recommendations
- Has follow-up mechanisms to advocate for its recommendations

Utah provides an example of a legislatively established task force. The Utah Commission on Civic and Character Education, established by the Utah Legislature (Utah Code 67-1a-10) is statutorily tasked with:

- Providing leadership for the state's commitment to civic and character education in public schools, institutions of higher education and the larger community;
- Making recommendations to school boards and administrators; and
- Promoting coalitions and collaborative efforts that foster informed and civil public discourse and responsible citizenship.

The commission carries out these tasks by funding and implementing commission-developed initiatives, or by partnering in selected programs which meet commission objectives and which benefit students or citizens across the state. Additionally, the commission also issues small grants to teachers, schools, community organizations or other entities to encourage and support various activities, which may not have a statewide audience, but which promote commission ideals.

Task forces may arise through a variety of mechanisms other than legislative action. For example, California Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye worked with California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson to form the California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning. The task force included leaders from law, education, business and labor groups, with the charge of analyzing the state of civic education in California and providing recommendations on how to improve K-12 civic education. The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education in 2012 created the Study Group on Civic Learning and Engagement with a mandate to detail policy and implementation strategies to advance the state-established goal of “preparing citizens.”

Additional details about these and other task forces and commissions are included in the State Civic Education Policy Examples section of this Toolkit.

# CREATING A STATE STRATEGY

The following resources will assist education stakeholders to assess the current status of civic learning and engagement in their state, district or institution; to compare current policies against evidence-based best practices and to identify strategic opportunities to improve civic education.

## State Civic Education Framework<sup>71</sup>

This framework, when used with the following gap analysis tool, can help guide policymakers through the process of formulating civic education policy. The framework is adaptable and allows policymakers to tailor-make policy that help their states to advance civic learning outcomes for all students.

Effective state policies for civic education need to address the following key elements:

**Civic Mission:** The civic purpose of education is identified as co-equal with college and career.

**Civic education investments:** A revised paradigm for education — and an associated realignment of education investments — is made to achieve the civic mission of schools.

**Standards and Curricula:** Standards and curriculum for civic learning at each grade level, preschool through postsecondary.

**Inquiry-based Instruction:** Standards include inquiry-based instruction that results in students taking informed action and demonstration of learning.

**Integration:** Civic learning is integrated across all academic disciplines and taught as a stand-alone course.

**Pre-service Teacher Preparation:** Pre-service licensure and accreditation supports teachers as civic educators.

**Professional Development:** Teacher training in civic education and engaged pedagogies supports teachers as civic educators.

**Assessment:** Assessments of student progress toward civic learning outcomes is used to measure student performance and inform instructional efforts.

**Accountability:** Accountability indicators measure teacher, district and school/institution performance in civic education.

**Community Impact:** Measures include the community impact of student civic learning and engagement courses and activities.

## State Civic Education Policy Gap Analysis Tool<sup>72</sup>

This tool uses a seven-step process to assist policymakers in comparing their current civic education policy and practices with established evidence-based best practices and competitive benchmarks.

## Civics Supports...Your Priorities

Policymakers face a myriad of education issues, so while the preparation of young people for active and informed participation in our democratic republic should be supported as a worthwhile goal in itself, civic education proponents can also take advantage of strong linkages between effective civic learning and other educational priorities, such as improved academic performance, attendance, graduation rates and 21st century career readiness skills. The contribution of civic learning and engagement to other educational outcomes stems from civic content in history, government, geography and economics, as well as from student-centered, community-focused teaching pedagogies used in effective civic learning. The Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, also provides a critical opportunity to link civic learning with state ESSA plans and noncognitive indicators of school quality and student success, such as chronic absenteeism, school climate and student engagement. These Civics Supports briefs share research linking civic learning and engagement with improvements in:

- College and career readiness
- Student academic achievement
- Reduction in student subgroup achievement gaps
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)
- Attendance and graduation
- School climate
- Trust in government
- Civic and voting participation
- Common ESSA indicators

These worksheets can be found beginning on page 49.

# CIVIC EDUCATION MEDIA KIT

The implementation of a successful civic learning initiative relies on the support and involvement of many different stakeholders. A key aspect of garnering community support lies in promotion. As previously noted, organizations that promote service-learning, project-based learning, youth activism, and other causes parallel to civic engagement can be helpful allies when promoting and enacting a civic learning initiative.

## Tools for Promotion

- A press release announcing the start or completion of a civic education initiative
- Social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) posts—either from the professional accounts of stakeholders and initiative-leaders, or from accounts created specifically for the civic education initiative being implemented
- Public events that allow state leaders to speak to this issue

## Key Talking Points for Civic Education Promotion

This toolkit provides you with the information you need to promote civic education and its benefits. Here are a few key talking points to synthesize the importance of civic education:

- Civic learning and engagement can lead to broad social and community benefits
  - Civic education has been shown to narrow the achievement gap
  - Civic education can lead to a more inclusive democracy, which in turn can increase equity across many realms
  - Increased citizen input can result in more responsive and improved policy decisions
  - Civic learning can lead to more engaged and innovative community members
- A commitment to civic learning and engagement can help states meet part of the goals set forth by ESSA.
- Several states have seen positive results and an increase in awareness and commitment to civic learning following statewide civic learning initiatives or commissions. It can be helpful to point to other states' efforts (Section V) when promoting an initiative.

## Sample Press Release

This press release is an example that can be tailored to fit individual state initiative needs

DATE

(INSERT NAME) Works with CSG and NCLCE to Improve Civic Education Initiatives, or, (CREATES YOUR INITIATIVE) in (INSERT STATE)

CITY, STATE—(INSERT NAME AND TITLE) is working with the National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement (NCLCE), a center within Education Commission of the States (ECS), and the Council of State Governments (CSG) to improve civic learning in (INSERT STATE). According to research gathered by NCLCE and CSG, the state of civic education is alarming in the U.S. Experts suggest that improving civic education initiatives—both in the classroom and out—can lead to an increased sense of political efficacy and knowledge for students. Encouraging students to become involved with the political process in turn leads to healthier communities and an informed electorate.

(INSERT NAME) has commissioned a taskforce designed to research an initiative to bolster civic learning and education in (INSERT STATE). The taskforce is being created using the civic education toolkit prepared by NCLCE and CSG. The team will consist of stakeholders from within all sectors of the community, and it will be tasked with formulating a plan specifically tailored to target civic education in (INSERT STATE).

(INSERT YOUR QUOTE ABOUT THE PROJECT.)

# STATE CIVIC EDUCATION POLICIES

A helpful resource is Education Commission of the States' comprehensive 50-state database of state civic education policies.<sup>73</sup> The database will help you to identify your current state policies, compare policies on civic education issues across all 50 states and identify sample legislation and policies that may inform your approach. The database can be searched by state or by civic education topics, including:

- Individual state civic education profiles
- State standards for civics or citizenship education
- Curriculum frameworks for civics or citizenship education
- High school graduation requirements in civics
- State assessments including civics, citizenship education or social studies
- The inclusion of civics, citizenship education or social studies in state accountability systems
- State statutes that address civics, citizenship education or social studies
- State administrative code that addresses civics, citizenship education or social studies

A companion report, *50-State Comparison: Civic Education*<sup>74</sup>, identifies trends and highlights examples.

This section of the toolkit provides examples of state civic learning and engagement policies. We have attempted to include examples originating from all three branches of government, understanding that many of the specifics of how and where state civic education policy is addressed will vary depending on your state education governance structure, leadership priorities and dynamics of program provision.

## 1 | CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS

Preparation of students for full participation in civic life may be identified as a co-equal purpose of education, along with preparation for college and careers. This civic mission can be embedded within the missions, guiding principles and identified goals of the state constitution, state board of education, state department of elementary and secondary education, state department of higher

education, school districts, or individual institutions. Articulating preparation for citizenship and civic participation in visions, mission statements and goals grounds the commitment to civic learning and engagement.

The North Carolina State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction's vision is, "Every public school student will graduate ready for post-secondary education and work, prepared to be a globally engaged and productive citizen," and identifies as a goal, "Every student in the North Carolina Public School System graduates from high school prepared for work, further education and citizenship."

"Iowa students will become productive citizens in a democratic society, and successful participants in a global community," according to the vision of the Iowa Department of Education, which articulates as a guiding principle that, "A quality education system is essential to a successful democracy, lifelong learning, and a vibrant economy."

"Preparing citizens: Providing students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to be engaged, informed citizens," was established as a key outcome for the Massachusetts public higher education system and contributes to the vision of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education to "produce the best-educated citizenry and workforce in the country."

Tennessee establishes its vision for the role of education in citizenship preparation through statute. "The general assembly finds that: (1) Effective and responsible participation in political life as competent citizens requires the acquisition of a body of knowledge and of intellectual and participatory skills; (2) It is essential to the future health of our republic that all citizens be knowledgeable about democratic principles and practices, including fundamental documents such as the state and federal constitutions, the Declaration of Independence, and the Gettysburg Address; (3) Individuals who have a clear and full understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a republic are more likely to exercise and defend those rights and responsibilities; and (4) Providing civic education and promoting good citizenship and understanding fundamental democratic principles should be core missions of Tennessee secondary schools."<sup>75</sup>

The American Bar Association Division for Public Education identifies the goal of "fostering the knowledge, skills and values students need to function effectively in a society defined by its democratic institutions, pluralism and the rule of law."





## New Trends

Some state policymakers have expressed concern that state and local history and government be a part of students' civic education, rather than a solely federal focus. A number of states have, or are considering action, to enhance civic learning and engagement at the state and local level.

In May 2017, Tennessee passed the Sen. Douglas Henry Tennessee History Act (HB 1169/SB 0894) requiring completion of a course in Tennessee history.

## 2 | CIVIC EDUCATION INVESTMENTS



The Virginia Standards of Learning Innovation Committee grant program, approved by the General Assembly in 2015, supports innovative teaching and learning. Awarded \$50,000 in July 2017, Chesterfield County school district will train 30 teachers in service-learning project-based activities with cohorts of 50 disengaged or underperforming 10th graders at two high schools. Students will complete a minimum of two cross-curricular, community-based projects in collaboration with county agencies.

Utah's State Capitol Field Trip Funding (Utah HB 363) authorizes the state board to award \$150,000 in annual grants to districts and charter schools to pay for transportation costs related to student field trips to the state capitol. The legislation directs the state board to adopt rules establishing procedures for applying for and awarding grants, and specifying how grant money should be allocated among districts and charter schools.



The California Youth Leadership Project (SB 803) creates in the State Treasury of California, a fund to accept donations through a state income tax check-off and authorizes the project to accept gifts and grants from any source. The legislation provides for several established California programs that give youth opportunities to participate in government to apply for scholarships to help fund costs for underserved youth ages 14–18 who would otherwise be unable to participate.

## 3 | EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR CIVIC LEARNING

A critical focus of civic education is to ensure that students have the appropriate knowledge of historical periods, people and events that have shaped our democratic republic and that they have an understanding of how government works. Research has demonstrated, however, that innovative opportunities beyond traditional civic instruction and rote memorization test preparation, identified as the six practices for effective civic learning, lead to stronger and more comprehensive student learning outcomes. Use of the term "civic learning and engagement" is becoming the norm, reflecting this expanded interest in civic skills and dispositions, and in engaging experiences that will foster civic participation.

### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION/STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM

Schools provide instruction in government, history, economics, law and democracy. Forty-eight states include civics as a specific strand in their standards. Most states identify competencies related to civic knowledge and understanding of government, while some states go further to identify competencies that involve active student participation in civic projects. Twenty states provide curriculum frameworks to support civic instruction.

For more, access *50-State Comparison: State Standards for Civics or Citizenship Education*.

### Academic Standards and Curriculum

Civics standards and curriculum frameworks vary considerably by state, from establishing a minimal course recommendation that defers to local decision-making and implementation, to extensive requirements for courses, content and student outcomes at specific grade levels.

Hawaii statute HRS §302A-321 establishes, "Minimum curriculum includes each of the following core content areas: (1) Language arts; (2) Mathematics; (3) Science; and (4) Social studies."





Administrative code in Indiana establishes that, “The social studies requirement shall include the following:  
 (A) Two (2) credits in United States history.  
 (B) One (1) credit in United States government.  
 (C) One (1) credit in another social studies course.

Sec. 2. (a) Each public and nonpublic high school shall provide a required course that is: (1) not less than one (1) year of school work; and (2) in the: (A) historical; (B) political; (C) civic; (D) sociological; (E) economical; and (F) philosophical; aspects of the constitutions of Indiana and the United States. (b) The state board shall: (1) prescribe the course described in this section and the course’s appropriate outlines; and (2) adopt the necessary textbooks for uniform instruction. (c) A high school student may not receive a diploma unless the student has successfully completed the interdisciplinary course described in this section.<sup>76</sup>

Sec. 4. (a) Each public school and nonpublic school shall provide within the two (2) weeks preceding a general election for all students in grades 6 through 12 five (5) full recitation periods of class discussion concerning: (1) the system of government in Indiana and in the United States; (2) methods of voting; (3) party structures; (4) election laws; and (5) the responsibilities of citizen participation in government and in elections. (b) A student may not receive a high school diploma unless the student has completed a two (2) semester course in American history.<sup>77</sup>



The Alabama Social Studies Course of Study (grade-level standards) include a strand of standards for civics and government. The goal of the civics and government strand is to “enable students to become informed, responsible participants in political life and to function as competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of the constitutional democracy that established the republic of the United States of America.” While the civics and government strand is embedded in each grade level, students in seventh grade concentrate on the area of civics during the instructional year, and 12th grade students focus on United States government. Sample standards/benchmarks include: identifying rights and responsibilities of citizens within the family, classroom, school and community (Kindergarten), recognizing functions of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution (third grade), describing individual and civic responsibilities of citizens of the United States and determining ways to participate in the political process (seventh grade), and describing the process of local, state and national elections, including the organization, role and constituency of political parties (12th grade).



Pennsylvania statutes establish the following course of study for social studies. “During grades seven through twelve inclusive, there shall be included at least four semesters or equivalent study in the history and government of that portion of America which has become the United States of America, and of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, of such nature, kind or quality, as to have for its purpose the developing, teaching and presentation of the principles and ideals of the American republican

representative form of government, as portrayed and experienced by the acts and policies of the framers of the Declaration of Independence and framers of the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights. The study of the history of the United States, including the study of the Constitution of the United States and the study of the history and Constitution of this Commonwealth ... Such instruction shall have for its purpose also the instilling into every boy and girl who comes out of our public, private and parochial schools their solemn duty and obligation to exercise intelligently their voting privilege and to understand the advantages of the American republican form of government as compared with various other forms of government.”<sup>78</sup>



South Carolina outlines an integrated approach to civic education in their Social Studies Academic Standards. The standards are not organized in strands; instead, civic content is embedded throughout and can also be found in the grade-level and course-specific “social studies literacy skills for the 21st century.”<sup>79</sup>

Going beyond regular grade level instruction, Mississippi administrative code requires that “all high schools must offer at least one advanced placement course in each of the four core areas (mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies).”<sup>80</sup>

## The C3 Framework



A significant influence on new state social studies and civics standards and curriculum is the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, released in 2013 by the National Council for the Social Studies. The C3 Framework describes an inquiry arc, in which students develop questions, apply disciplinary concepts, evaluate sources and evidence, communicate conclusions and take informed action. Some states have explicitly drawn from the C3 Framework, while in other states, the language of updated standards suggests an influence.

*Michigan Social Studies C3 Update: A Plan for Adoption and Implementation* provides an overview of how the C3 Framework guides updates to their state social studies standards.

West Virginia Social Studies Standards, updated in 2016, incorporate inquiry and informed action in alignment with the C3 Framework, including, “Students must be able to research issues, form reasoned opinions, support their positions and engage in the political process.”

## Supplemental Civics Programs

State civic education requirements may also be met through partnerships with stand-alone civics programs that include lesson plans and curriculum aligned with academic standards. Links to civic education programs are included in the resources section of this toolkit. Examples of stand-alone programs include We the People, iCivics and Annenberg Classroom. The role of policy-makers in supporting stand-alone civics programming includes establishing academic standards to which the

programs must align and funding for program activities or teacher professional development.



Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education, the educational arm of the Louisiana Bar Association, works to coordinate, implement and develop law and civic education programs and educator training as part of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education enacted into law by the Louisiana Legislature in 2003. Its primary programs include Lawyers in the Classroom and Judges in the Classroom, Law Day and Constitution Day activities, We the People mock congressional hearing competition, the Open Doors to Federal Courts program, and Awards for Outstanding State Civics Teacher and Civics in Action student awards.



Another example of the judiciary supporting civics instruction is the implementation of local civics and law academies. Civics and law academies are opportunities to engage students beyond the classroom as they explore how laws and the constitution apply to their daily lives. The American Bar Association provides curriculum and support for lawyers, judges, teachers and other civic advocates to host these academies locally.

### Higher Education

Higher education governance structures mean that civic education and learning policies and requirements are typically created at the institutional or degree program level. Several public higher education systems, however, have led civic learning initiatives intended to strengthen students' civic learning outcomes.



Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, Florida HB 7069 will begin requiring post-secondary students to demonstrate civic literacy through the completion of a civics course or assessment.



Massachusetts' state system of public higher education is the first to adopt civic learning as an expectation for all students. As outlined in the state's *Preparing Citizens*

report, institutions within the state system must articulate how they will equip "students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to be engaged, informed citizens."<sup>81</sup> To facilitate the preparing citizens goal, the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education has developed course designations that identify courses in which students participate in substantial civic engagement activity linked to course learning goals and that provides reciprocal benefits to both the students and the broader community beyond the classroom.

### DISCUSSION OF CURRENT EVENTS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Schools incorporate discussion of current local, national and international issues and events into the classroom, which increases the relevance of curriculum to young people. Civics programs emphasizing discussion of controversial issues include Facing History and Ourselves and Mikva Challenge. This civic learning practice has taken on new urgency as educators struggle to support students' development of media literacy and their ability to distinguish legitimate from fake news.



Nebraska expands the topics required to be covered in the high school civic curriculum to include "active participation in the improvement of a citizen's community, state, country, and world, and the value and practice of civil discourse between opposing interests."<sup>82</sup>



Virginia history and social science standards identify the importance of discussion of controversial issues, and state that, "Civics instruction should provide regular opportunities at each grade level for students to develop a basic understanding of politics and government and to practice the skills of good citizenship. It should instill relevant skills so that students can assess political resources, deal intelligently with controversy, and understand the consequences of policy decisions."<sup>83</sup>

Tennessee civics is embedded in "contemporary issues" and "United States government and civics" high school courses.<sup>84</sup>



# New Trends

We observe emerging trends toward the incorporation of global citizenship, digital citizenship and media literacy language and policies into social studies and civics standards and curriculum.

## MEDIA LITERACY AND DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Connecticut SB 949, passed June 2017, creates an advisory council within the Department of Education relating to digital citizenship, internet safety and media literacy.

Washington state's SB 5449, signed by the governor in April 2017, requires the office of the superintendent of public instruction to survey teacher-librarians, principals and technology directors to understand how they are currently integrating digital citizenship and media literacy education in their curriculum, and create a web-based location with links to recommended successful practices and resources to support digital citizenship, media literacy and internet safety.

## POLICE RELATIONS

New Jersey Bill A1114, passed in 2017 unanimously by the General Assembly, requires each school district to instruct students on their rights, as well as the ins and outs of dealing with law enforcement.

# Challenges

One barrier to policies promoting the discussion of controversial events is a concern that discussions may become politicized or influence the political views and orientation of students. Diana Hess, dean of UW-Madison's School of Education and co-author of *The Political Classroom: Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education*<sup>85</sup>, presents a coherent plan for providing students with a nonpartisan political education and for improving the quality of classroom deliberations. This includes criteria and ethical guidance for identifying legitimate controversies with multiple and competing views and for conducting classroom discussions to benefit learning.

## SERVICE LEARNING

Schools provide students with the opportunity to acquire and apply cross-disciplinary, standards-based content and curriculum through service projects that address real world situations and community issues.

Educators are turning to experiential learning and real-world experiences to improve and expand student outcomes. As a part of a comprehensive civic education, service-learning allows students to apply civic knowledge to gain practical skills and experience in how local government works and how citizens can influence community priorities and decisions. At the same time, pedagogies that engage students in applied learning, such as service-learning, support the development of 21st century competencies and college and career readiness.

"The Florida Department of Education shall encourage school districts to initiate, adopt, expand and institutionalize service-learning programs, activities and policies in kindergarten through 12th grade. Service-learning refers to a student-centered, research-based teacher and learning strategy that engages students in meaningful service activities in their schools or communities. Service-learning activities are directly linked to academic curricula, standards and course, district, or state assessments. Service-learning activities foster academic achievement, character development, civic engagement, and career exploration, and enable students to apply curriculum content, skills, and behaviors taught in the classroom."<sup>86</sup>

Missouri specifies, "The state board of education shall encourage the adoption of service-learning programs and projects among school districts. As used in this section, the term 'service-learning program and projects' means a student-centered, research-based method of teaching and learning which engages students of all ages in addressing issues in their school or greater community as part of the academic curriculum. As a result, service-learning fosters academic achievement, civic engagement and character development."<sup>8</sup>

The Virginia Standards of Learning Innovation Committee grant program, approved by the 2015 General Assembly, supports innovative teaching and learning. Awarded \$50,000 in July 2017, Chesterfield County school district will train 30 teachers in service-learning, project-based activities with cohorts of 50 disengaged or underperforming 10th-graders at two high schools. Students will complete a minimum of two cross-curricular, community-based projects in collaboration with county agencies.

West Virginia social studies standards, updated in 2016, incorporate inquiry and informed community action, stating, "Students must learn and practice participatory skills essential for involved citizenry. To develop these skills, the curriculum must extend beyond the school to include experiences in the workplace and service in the community"

Hawaii social studies standards for 9<sup>th</sup> graders require understanding the roles, rights (personal, economic, political) and responsibilities of American citizens and exercising them in civic action by selecting a problem,

# Higher Education



Massachusetts is the first system of public higher education to adopt civic learning as an expectation for all students. After input from the Massachusetts education community, the Board of Higher Education added “Preparing Citizens: Providing students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to be engaged, informed citizens” as a goal included in the Massachusetts Higher Education Vision Project. To facilitate the preparing citizens goal, the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education has facilitated course designations that identify courses in which students participate in substantial civic engagement activity linked to course learning goals, and that provide reciprocal benefits to both the students and the broader community beyond the classroom.



Tulane University adopted a policy in 2006 that requires undergraduates to complete one semester of service-learning course work, typically involving 20–40 hours of practical service work in the community. This is followed by a second semester in which students choose from a variety of public service options. *U.S. News & World Report* identifies higher education institutions with exemplary service-learning programs that can serve as models.

gathering information, proposing a solution, creating an action plan and showing evidence of implementation.<sup>88</sup>

Vermont’s framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities in History and Social Sciences encourages “Learning that involves students’ active participation in projects that address global issues of a social, political, economic, or environmental nature; and is oriented to human rights, social justice, and environmentalism at the local, regional, and global level.”<sup>89</sup>

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Schools offer opportunities for young people to get involved in their communities outside of the classroom. Policymakers encourage and fund extracurricular activities with strong alignment to learning outcomes, including civic learning and engagement. Extracurricular activities also use stand-alone civic programs.



Rhode Island requires by statute that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education strengthen after school and summer learning programs that promote the healthy development of youth and incorporate experiential learning, social/emotional development and project-based activities.<sup>90</sup>

Texas’ Expanded Learning Opportunities Council recommends innovative, hands-on learning approaches to complement the school curriculum, including civic learning and engagement opportunities.<sup>91</sup>

## STUDENT GOVERNANCE

Policymakers can play a supporting role in encouraging student participation in governance by grounding youth governance opportunities in state standards and passing legislation that permits schools and municipalities to expand youth boards, voter registration and voting. Policymakers can also establish official roles for youth in local and state government.



Arizona civic standards benchmarks include: Practicing examples of democracy in action—e.g., voting, making classroom rules (first grade); describing the importance of citizens being actively involved in the democratic process—e.g., voting, student government, etc. (fourth grade); demonstrating the skills and knowledge needed to accomplish public purposes (high school).<sup>92</sup>



Illinois Senate Res. 149 acknowledged that “the original intent of public schools was to prepare children to participate constructively as adult citizens in our democracy,” and encourages schools to become Illinois Democracy Schools, which have an intentional focus on fostering participatory citizenship. Democracy Schools is an initiative of the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition in which schools form a civics team, conduct a schoolwide assessment and promote civic learning across the curriculum, extracurricular activities and school governance. The legislation specifies that each school meeting the criteria will be designated as a Democracy School on their school district report card.



The Massachusetts governor’s Statewide Youth Council, established through executive order No. 501, makes recommendations to the governor on issues the youth of the commonwealth are uniquely positioned to address, including but not limited to civic engagement, education and youth violence.

Massachusetts State Student Advisory Council, or SAC, helps make decisions about state educational policy and student rights. Every secondary school elects two delegates to one of five regional SACs, and each regional council then elects representatives to the state SAC. The chairperson of the state SAC is a full voting member of the Massachusetts Board of Education.



The Maryland Legislature established the Maryland Youth Advisory Council (chapter 559, Acts of 2008, chapter 69, Acts of 2009, and chapter 620, Acts of 2016) to ensure

that Maryland youth are given the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations regarding public policies and programs that affect their future and to take a leadership role in creating meaningful change.



Louisiana's Commission on Civic Education's mission is to educate students about the importance of civic engagement and promote collaboration amongst civic organizations in the state. It appoints youth members to the Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council to "examine and facilitate communication between youth and their legislators on issues of importance to teens."

## PARTICIPATION AND SIMULATIONS IN DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCES

Many schools encourage students to participate in actual or simulated democratic processes and procedures. Participatory experiences, ranging from mock trials to voting and online civics games, engage students both inside and outside the classroom. State departments of education frequently offer resources and recommend stand-alone civics programs, such as We the People mock congressional hearings and Kids Voting and Youth Court, that provide important simulation experiences.



Oklahoma HB 2052 expands character education options, including awarding grants to align character education with state curriculum and demonstrate the link to life skills and career readiness. The bill requires the state department to make available a list of approved research-based character education programs, curricula and materials that may be used by school districts.

Utah HB 327 directs the state board of education to annually report to the education committee the methods used and the results achieved to instruct and prepare students to become informed and responsible citizens through an integrated character and civic education curriculum taught in connection with regular school work.



The California secretary of state conducts two designated high school voter education weeks annually in April and September.



In 2014, Louisiana extended their automatic preregistration system for youth under the age of 18 through HB 501. Each driver's license application serves as an application for voter registration unless the applicant opts out or fails to sign the form.

SB 1134 makes Texas one of many states that allow students to serve as poll workers or election clerks. California Elections Code section 12302 allows county elections officials to assign up to five high school students to serve as poll workers in each election precinct. Student poll workers learn firsthand how elections are run, and provide much needed support at polling place locations. They end their day with a better understanding of the importance of voting and the vital role poll workers play in making our elections run smoothly.



Measure Y1 was placed on the ballot in 2017 by the Berkeley (California) City Council and allows youth aged 16 and 17 years old to vote for the local office of school director.

Teenagers 16-17 years old in Takoma Park and Hyattsville, Maryland, have the right to vote in local contests. Early evidence from Takoma Park indicates the success of city youth voting efforts. In the 2013 election, the turnout of the newly enfranchised voters was double the turnout of voters older than 18, and 72 percent of voters surveyed post-election supported the new lower voting age.

## Policymakers in Schools

In 2015, Arkansas passed HCR 1008 designating September as Take Your Legislator to School Month, encouraging school districts to plan special events with their local legislators. Having legislators directly interact with students



is a great way to improve students' political efficacy and knowledge of the policy realm. By setting aside a distinct time and making themselves available to school districts, legislators are easing the burden on educators to provide real world civic education on their own.



The National Conference of State Legislatures' Legislators Back to School program supports annual classroom visits by legislators, including resource materials for elementary, middle school and high school levels.



Secretaries of state frequently champion youth engagement in the electoral process as a means of strengthening future voting and civic participation. The Nevada secretary of state and superintendent of public instruction collaborate to promote online the Nevada Student Mock Elections program, in conjunction with a comprehensive, cross-curricular program, My Service, My Citizenship.



The Utah Court's Judges in the Classroom program provides a variety of civic education supports, including lesson plans, mock trial resources, courtroom tours and preparation materials, and Law Day, which is celebrated annually on May 1.

Constitution Day, observed on Sept. 17, is one of the events promoted by the Indiana Supreme Court's Courts in the Classroom educational program. Their website provides access to scripted trials based on historic Indiana cases. Intended for teachers to use in their classrooms, these trials, along with lesson plans about the structure of Indiana's courts, historic documents and other resources help teach students about the judiciary.

## Higher Education

The Higher Education Act, or HEA, initially passed in 1965 and repeatedly reauthorized by Congress, directs colleges and universities to distribute voter registration forms to students. Registration and voting is a strong indicator of overall student civic engagement, which many colleges and universities acknowledge as part of a well-rounded college education. Policies related to student participation in voting are typically established on an institutional level. The Campus Vote project identifies best practices for student voter registration efforts on campuses including:

- Establishing a voter information website or incorporating a voter registration widget on the institution's website.
- Conducting social media campaigns with non-partisan voting information.
- Supporting students to overcome voter registration issues, including providing photo identification, a street address (a dorm P.O. box is insufficient for voter registration) and residence documentation, such as zero balance utility bills.
- Conducting voter registration drives on campus.
- Funding voter registration efforts with student government resources.

# U.S. teachers

often only receive one single American government course that is federally focused, and they aren't taught about state governments.

- Providing voter registration information at freshman orientation and in new student packets.
- Incorporate voting and civic information into course curriculum or pedagogy incorporating community service-learning experiences.
- Hosting issues or candidate forums and debates.
- Establishing a campus polling location or early voting site.
- Participating in a student poll worker program.
- Establishing a shuttle to the polls.
- Participating in the National Study on Learning, Voting and Engagement, a research initiative of Tufts University's Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life, which provides a tailored report for each institution showing student voter registration and voting participation by age, class level and field of study. This also allows institutions to benchmark against a national database on college student political learning and engagement.
- Engaging with Campus Compact, the only national higher education association dedicated to campus-based civic engagement. More than 450 higher education presidents and chancellors have signed the Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statement committing to enhance student civic engagement efforts. Initiatives include mini-grants, national and regional conferences, resources to develop Campus Civic Action Plans, Newman Civic Fellowships, engaged faculty awards and professional credentialing for community engaged faculty.
- Seeking Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

The South Dakota secretary of state and the Virginia Department of Elections provide examples of specific online resources to help college students understand voting options and processes.

## 4 | COALITION BUILDING AND BASELINE DATA

A frequent starting place for state civic education coalition building efforts is to establish the current status of civic learning requirements and offerings through a state survey and data analysis. First, collecting baseline data helps ensure that an appropriate data collection system is in place to document course offerings in social studies, civics and government. Second, establishing this baseline means coalition stakeholders have a shared understanding of current state civic education policy and practice and helps the coalition to identify civic learning gaps and strategic opportunities. Lastly, the data supports assessment and documentation of civic education improvements by providing a baseline against which future data can be compared. Below are some examples of groups establishing baseline data for the purposes of coalition building.



The Council on Public Legal Education launched an ambitious Civic Learning Initiative to address gaps in civic learning and determine how the state can be more effective in providing meaningful civic learning for all Washington state youth. The Initiative launches a strong public-private partnership between the state Office of Public Instruction, the judicial branch and nonprofit collaborators. In addition to several statewide summits, the initiative includes educational resources and a Washington state specific version of iCivics lesson plans and interactive games.



The Colorado Civic Health Network is a coalition of governmental, educational and nonprofit organizations that coalesced in 2014 to conduct the Colorado Civic Health Index, a benchmark of state civic engagement, and to improve civic learning and engagement statewide.

The Illinois Civic Mission Coalition, or ICMC, was formed in 2004 by the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago. In 2009, the ICMC, along with the Robert R. McCormick Foundation published the Illinois Civic Blueprint. The Illinois Civic Blueprint was created to provide stakeholders with examples of “promising approaches to high school level civic learning,” and recommendations for implementing those approaches. In addition to publishing the Illinois Civic Blueprint, the ICMC lobbied the Illinois General Assembly to create a Task Force on Civic Education (HB 2428), which then submitted a report to the Illinois State Board of Education with specific course recommendations for Illinois schools. A crucial part of the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition’s success has been constructing a course implementation plan alongside the General Assembly. Part of this plan includes a public-private partnership that helps to fund the initiatives.

### Baseline Data Examples

- Inventory of Civic Education in New Jersey Schools, 2004
- Arizona Civics Coalition and The Center for Civic Education and Leadership, Study of Civic Education in Arizona, 2009



## Higher Education Initiatives

Valencia College in Florida is a state college offering two and four-year degrees. Valencia College includes multiculturalism and citizenship as part of its stated values. In an attempt to bolster the college’s mission of preparing its students to be global citizens, Valencia College conducted an internal civic inventory to describe current levels of civic engagement as well as to identify opportunities for improvement.<sup>93</sup>

As part of Macalester College’s liberal arts mission of preparing students for public life as citizens and leaders, an inventory of civic engagement initiatives was conducted in 2003. In addition to compiling an inventory, Macalester College included anonymous stakeholder feedback on the effectiveness of ongoing civic engagement initiatives at the college.<sup>94</sup>

## 5 | CIVIC EDUCATION SUMMIT AND INITIATIVE

In order to reenergize stakeholders at the start of a civic education initiative, many groups will start with a civic education summit. This is an opportunity for educators, legislators and community members to gather and to identify key tasks for their civic education initiative.

Washington states’ Civic Education Initiative kicked off with a January 2017 summit for educators and legislators focusing on identifying civic learning obstacles and solutions. The summit helped Washington stakeholders to identify proven practices for enhancing civics education as well as to produce supplementary civic education material.<sup>95</sup>

The Virginia State Legislature established the Virginia Commission on Civics Education in 2005 to “educate students on the importance of citizen involvement in a constitutional republic, promote the study of state and local government among the commonwealth’s citizenry and to enhance communication and collaboration among organization in the commonwealth that conduct civics education.”<sup>96</sup> Part of the commission’s annual business is to conduct the Virginia Civics Summit. Resources from the 2016 summit are available on the Virginia Department of Education’s website, which can be helpful when establishing a civics summit.<sup>97</sup>

## 6 | CIVIC EDUCATION TASK FORCE OR COMMISSION

Civic education task forces and commissions have been established by all three branches of state governments to bring together experts and stakeholders. This collaborative effort helps civic education reform to be well rounded and well executed. The following are examples of civic education task forces and commissions, as well as relevant example materials.



Florida's African American History Task Force was established by the commissioner of education. The task force includes representation from school boards, school districts, higher education institutions, the Legislature and the executive branch. Goals of the task force include: (1) Promoting awareness, understanding and the infusing of the required instruction legislation that addresses the African and African American experience into the curriculum of Florida's schools; (2) Development of instructional guidelines, standardized framework, and supplemental materials /resources that include the African and African American experience; (3) Provide pre- and in-service training for implementation of the required instruction using various technologies and materials; and (4) Make recommendations to the commissioner of education and the appropriate Florida Department of Education leaders that support the full implementation of the required instruction mandate.

#### Sample Materials

- Task Force Members<sup>98</sup>
- Task Force Meeting Minutes<sup>99</sup>
- Task Force Report 2015–2016<sup>100</sup>



The Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was established by Revised Statute 24:971 to educate students of the importance of citizen involvement in a representative democracy and to promote communication and collaboration among organizations in the state that conduct civic education programs.

Stated Goals of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education:

- 1 Develop and coordinate outreach programs in collaboration with member organizations, agencies and schools to educate citizens on the importance of understanding the following:
  - a That representative democracy is a process dependent on reasoned debate, good faith negotiation and compromise.

- b That individual involvement is a critical factor in community success.
  - c That consideration and respect of others must be shown when deliberating, negotiating and advocating positions on public concerns.
- 2 Identify civic education projects in Louisiana and provide technical assistance as may be needed to such programs.
  - 3 Build a network of civic education professionals to share information and strengthen partnerships.
  - 4 Develop an online clearinghouse which shall include a database of civic education resources, lesson plans, and other programs of best practices in civic education; a discussion board to promote discussion on and exchange of ideas relative to civic education; an events calendar and links to civic education research.
  - 5 Value and support successful civic education programs in the state and encourage expansion of such efforts.
  - 6 Oversee the administrative needs and the implementation of the identified goals and objectives of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council.
  - 7 Prepare and provide an annual report of activities to the governor and to the Legislature.

Membership includes the following individuals or their designees:

Executive: Governor, lieutenant governor, state attorney general, secretary of state, state superintendent of education, and president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Legislative: President of the Senate, speaker of the House of Representatives, chairmen of the Senate and House committees on education, state coordinators of the Louisiana Senate and House Legislators Back to School Programs

Judicial: Chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court, representative of Louisiana District Judges Association.

Nongovernmental: State coordinator of Project Citizen; executive director of the Public Affairs Research Council; executive director of the Council for a Better Louisiana; chairman of Volunteer Louisiana Commission; representatives of the Louisiana Public Broadcasting, League of Women Voters, Louisiana Press Association, Louisiana Association of Broadcasters, Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education, Louisiana Association of Non-Profit Organizations, Louisiana Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and Louisiana District Judges Association.



The Virginia Commission on Civic Education was established to “(1) Educate students on the importance of citizen involvement in a constitutional republic, (2) Promote the study of state and local government among the commonwealth’s citizenry, and (3) Enhance communication and collaboration among organizations in the commonwealth that conduct civic education.”

The 15 member commission, which includes a mix of legislators, nonlegislators and the superintendent of public instruction, is developing an online clearinghouse of civic resources, events and discussion boards. The commission is required to submit an annual report on civic education progress to the General Assembly.

#### Sample Materials

- Establishing legislation: Code of Virginia 30-348
- Oct. 4, 2016 Agenda and Minutes<sup>101</sup>
- *Commission on Civics Education Report, 2015*<sup>102</sup>



Utah Commission on Civic and Character Education, established by the Utah Legislature (67-1a-10) is statutorily tasked with:

- Providing leadership for the state’s commitment to civic and character education in the public schools, institutions of higher education and the larger community;

- Making recommendations to school boards and administrators; and
- Promoting coalitions and collaborative efforts that foster informed and civil public discourse and responsible citizenship.

The commission carries out these tasks by funding and implementing commission-developed initiatives, partnering in selected programs and issuing small grants to encourage civic education programs which benefit students or citizens across the state.

Membership includes:

- Lt. Gov. Spencer J. Cox
- Judge Carolyn McHugh
- Rep. LaVar Christensen
- Sen. Daniel Thatcher
- Joel Coleman (State Board of Education)
- Mark Stoddard (State Board of Regents)
- William O. Perry (Community Representative)

#### Sample Materials

- Utah Commission Goals<sup>103</sup>
- Tools for Educators<sup>104</sup>



The Power of Democracy Steering Committee was established by California Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye to guide and support judicial civic education efforts. In collaboration with the state superintendent of public instruction, they formed the California Task Force on Civic Learning. The task force included leaders from law, education, business and labor groups and met regularly to analyze the state of civic education in California, as well as to provide recommendations on how to improve K-12 civic education. A key accomplishment of the task force was to broaden public participation by holding seven regional public hearings throughout the state and conducting an online survey.

#### Sample Materials

- Task Force Membership<sup>105</sup>
- *Revitalizing K-12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint for Action Report*<sup>106</sup>
- Civic Learning Award for California Public Schools<sup>107</sup>

#### Higher Education

Massachusetts has advanced civic learning across the K-16 continuum through a series of collaborative task forces and working groups initiated by its Legislature, Department of Higher Education and Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. Massachusetts is the first state in the nation to make civic learning a goal for all undergraduates in public higher education and the first state in the nation to establish a shared goal of civic learning for K-12 and public higher education. Civic education goals in Massachusetts include:



**23%** of eighth graders attained proficient status in civics.

**18%** of eighth graders attained proficient status in U.S. history.

**27%** of eighth graders attained proficient status in geography.

NAEP 2014 Civics Assessment

- Massachusetts Department of Higher Education Vision Project<sup>108</sup>
- Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning
  - *Renewing the Social Contract*<sup>109</sup>
- Massachusetts Study Group on Civic Learning and Engagement
  - *Final Report from the Study Group on Civic Learning and Engagement: Preparing Citizens*<sup>110</sup>
- Working Group on Civic Learning and Engagement
  - Board of Higher Education Policy on Civic Learning, April 2014<sup>111</sup>
  - *Preparing Citizens Report on Civic Learning and Engagement, June 2015*<sup>112</sup>
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Working Group on Civic Learning
  - Task Force Members and Affiliations<sup>113</sup>
  - *Civic Learning and Engagement: Department Action Plan*<sup>114</sup>
  - Revised definition of College and Career Readiness, incorporating Civic Learning<sup>115</sup>
- ¿Oíste? The Massachusetts Latino Civic Education Initiative<sup>116</sup>

Education Commission of the States' *Higher Education Civic Learning and Engagement: A Massachusetts case study* provides additional details.<sup>117</sup>

## 7 TEACHER PRESERVICE TRAINING AND LICENSURE

Teacher licensure and certification processes vary by state. The National Council for the Social Studies in 2017 revised the *National Standards for Social Studies Teachers*<sup>118</sup>, which built on the C3 Framework and which “features explicit and implicit declarations about the purposes of social studies education in a democratic society and the kinds of knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for teachers to accomplish these purposes.” The national standards are recommendations, intended to guide teacher preparation programs and state offices that grant licenses or certifications and approve teacher education programs at higher education institutions. Social studies certification concentrates on the five main content areas of social studies: world history, U.S. history, geography, government and civics, and economics.

California administrative code authorizes civics and government as supplementary authorizations to a valid teaching credential and also as specific subject matter authorizations to a valid teaching credential.<sup>119</sup>

Illinois initiated #CivicsIsBack regional teacher workshops to prepare them for the new state civic course requirement.<sup>120</sup> Illinois lacks a specific civic endorsement that would qualify them to teach civic education, so teachers may seek a political science endorsement. Current teachers are qualified to teach a general civics course, but teach-



ers must have a political science endorsement to teach an advanced placement or honors course.

The Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government<sup>121</sup> offers an undergraduate teaching certificate in civics teaching<sup>122</sup> to build the capacity of preservice teachers to deliver instruction linked to the Florida seventh grade civics end-of-course assessment.

### Higher Education

Postsecondary preservice teacher development in the area of civic learning is focused on the use of community-engaged service-learning experiences.

A New Hampshire Research Group on teacher prelicensure program, supported by the state Department of Education and Campus Compact for New Hampshire, identifies service-learning in teacher education as a best practice.<sup>123</sup> The report notes that the integration of service-learning into teacher education programs is relatively new and that the nature and level of integration varies by faculty member. Core principles are identified to guide teacher education programs in integrating service-learning pedagogy. They conclude, “In order for faculty in teacher education programs to feel comfortable integrating service-learning into their curriculum, they must be provided with support and their efforts must be recognized. ... If we ultimately want our preservice teachers to use service-learning in their classrooms, then we must systematically integrate service-learning into teacher education programs, teach preservice teachers and educators the pedagogy of service-learning, and provide the preservice teachers with role models, on the college campus and in our public and private schools, who demonstrate effective service-learning programs.”

## TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Decisions related to professional development in civic education content areas and applied service-learning pedagogies for in-service teachers are typically made at the district level. The judicial branch plays a significant role in providing teacher professional development, curriculum and lesson plans related to law and government, particularly through state and national bar association law-related education programs. Many teacher professional development programs are offered in-person or online by stand-alone civics programs and nonprofit organizations. The role of policymakers has been primarily that of providing funding for teacher education, in some cases specifically directed to civic education training.



Washington's Legislative Scholar Program provides social studies, history, government and civics teachers an opportunity to learn first-hand about state legislative processes and the ways in which the Legislature, agencies and the state Supreme Court interact.



The Center for Civic Education<sup>124</sup> has among the most extensive professional development programs for civics, history and government teachers. State coordinators provide training for teachers to conduct the We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution Program curriculum<sup>125</sup> and simulated congressional hearings. The James

Madison Legacy Project has provided We the People training to over 2,000 teachers from high-need schools.

A popular site for digital teacher support and activities is iCivics<sup>126</sup> and its iCivics Educator Network, which provide civics teachers well-written, inventive and free resources that enhance their practice and inspire their classrooms. iCivics' mission is to ensure every student receives a high-quality civic education, and becomes engaged in—and beyond—the classroom.



Street Law<sup>127</sup> demonstrates law and government teacher professional development opportunities offered by nonprofit organizations, with a focus on interactive strategies that engage students, including:

- Teaching for civic engagement
- High school law course
- Law-based civic learning for community colleges
- Supreme Court Summer Institute for teachers



The American Bar Association spearheads law-related education through their teacher's portal, which offers lesson plans, resources to conduct dialogues on American legal principles, mock trial materials, resources for Law Day and Constitution Day, and in-person professional development opportunities, such as Constitutional Institutes, Federal Trials & Great Debates Summer Institute and the National Law-Related Education Conference. State bar associations are also very active. For example, the State Bar of Texas provides extensive resources "that help teachers inspire and engage their students in the pursuit of civics education."

The Annenberg Classroom: Best Civic Sites for Teachers provides a list of resources and a wide variety of sites that supply lesson plans, links to historical documents and ideas for engaging young people.<sup>128</sup>

### Higher Education

Postsecondary faculty development in the area of civic learning is focused on the use of community-engaged service-learning experiences.

The Service-Learning Center at the University of Idaho representative of postsecondary support for faculty development. They provide professional development workshops for faculty and community partners, course-specific support for faculty who wish to integrate service-learning into course work, and tracking systems to document service and community impact.

The Service-Learning program at Colorado State University offers extensive faculty development resources to develop service-learning courses, as well as faculty mini-grants to implement and improve community-based research projects.



National and regional Campus Compact organizations provide significant faculty development support. For example, the Indiana Campus Compact Faculty Fellows Program<sup>130</sup> provides a one-year professional development

## New Trends

Funding for teacher professional development in civics content and applied pedagogies may be incorporated into state ESSA Plans. The Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, Title II outlines formula grants to state and local education agencies to attract, prepare, support and retain effective teachers serving low-income and minority students. These funds can be applied to teacher training in the content areas of government, history, civics, economics, and geography, and to training in applied, engaged pedagogies such as service-learning. Title II, Part B, Subpart 3 provides a general authorization for teacher civic education to improve "the quality of American history, civics and government education," and authorizes a National Civic Education Activities competitive grant program to promote evidence-based strategies and innovation in civic learning. ESSA also authorizes the Presidential and Congressional Academies program to "offer workshops for both veteran and new teachers of American history and civics to strengthen their knowledge and preparation for teaching these subjects." For a complete analysis of civics and ESSA, consult Education Commission of the States' *ESSA: Mapping Opportunities for Civic Education*.<sup>129</sup>

program to support the integration of service-learning and community engagement. Campus Compact of the Rocky Mountain West hosts regional Engaged Faculty Institutes.<sup>131</sup>

## 9 CIVICS ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

A majority of states have mandated assessments in social studies, civics or citizenship education. Thirty-seven states assess social studies or civics proficiency as part of state's annual summative assessments. In a smaller number of states, civics assessments are tied to graduation requirements. State content and grade level requirements for civics assessments vary widely.



Kansas KSA § 72-6479 gives the State Board of Education flexibility to identify three grade levels at which statewide assessment in social studies will be administered.

Civic competencies in Mississippi are assessed through the Subject Area Testing Program in the "U.S. history from 1877" end-of-course assessment.<sup>132</sup>



Oklahoma statute 70-1210.508 specifies assessment content through criterion-referenced tests for third through eighth grade. Grade-five content includes, "social studies, which shall consist of the history, Constitution and government of the United States, and geography," and grade eight includes, "social studies, which shall consist of the history, Constitution, and government of the United States."

Oregon ORS 3329.485 requires the Department of Education to develop assessments in history, geography, economics and civics as part of the statewide assessment system.

With the passage of HB 2064 in 2015, Arizona became the first state to adopt a high school graduation requirement that students pass a civics test with questions drawn from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services exam that immigrants must pass to become citizens. Known as the Civics Education Initiative, this advocacy campaign has resulted in the adoption of this test requirement in over a dozen states. For additional details, consult the 2015–16 Education Commission of the States' The Civics Education Initiative.<sup>133</sup>

Florida administers a statewide end-of-course civics test, which counts as 30 percent of the students' final course grade (Fla. Stat. § 1008.22(3)(c)(2)(b)). Successful completion of the civics course is a graduation requirement.

Civic Education Assessments in Tennessee outlines the state requirement for project-based assessments developed by school districts to link civics curriculum with real world issues. A project-based assessment is required at least once in grades four-eight and at least once in grades nine-12 and specifies a "student-influenced inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks." The General Assembly appropriated \$100,000 in implementation funding.

## New Trends

Some states that passed the Civic Education Initiative are now acting to expand civics test questions to include state history and government, expanding on the federal questions drawn from the U.S. citizenship exam.

In 2015, Idaho passed SB 1071, which requires graduating high school seniors to pass a civics test drawn from 100 questions included in the U.S. citizenship exam. HCR 50, passed in 2016, notes that only two of the 100 questions relate to Idaho and requests that the State Board of Education revise at least 20 percent of the questions to relate to Idaho history and government.

### Civics Graduation Requirements

All states require that students satisfactorily complete some U.S. history, government or civics course work in order to graduate from high school. In some states, there is also a graduation requirement for successful passage of a civics assessment.



A student shall not receive a New Mexico diploma of excellence if the student has not met graduation requirements for demonstrated competence in the subject area of social studies, including a section on the Constitution of the United States and the New Mexico Constitution.

All Alabama high school students must earn four credits in social studies for graduation. As part of these requirements, students must complete United States History I, United States History II, United States Government and Economics (Ala. Admin. Code r. 290-3-1-.02, AL ADC 290-3-1-.02). Passing the social studies subject-area test of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam is a requirement for receiving an Alabama high school diploma (Ala. Admin. Code r.290-4-2-.02).



Iowa Code § 256.7 requires that "social studies instruction in Iowa encompass the history of the United States and the history and cultures of other peoples and nations including the analysis of persons, events, issues and historical evidence reflecting time, change, and cause and effect. Instruction in United States government shall include an overview of American government through the study of the United States Constitution, the bill of rights, the federal system of government, and the structure and relationship between the national, state, county, and local governments; and voter education including instruction in statutes and procedures, voter registration requirements, the use of paper ballots and voting machines in the election process, and the method of acquiring and casting an absentee ballot. Students' knowledge of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights shall be assessed. Democratic beliefs and values, problem-solving skills, and social and



political skills shall be incorporated. All students in grades nine through twelve must, as a condition of graduation, complete a minimum of one-half unit of United States government and one unit of United States history and receive instruction in the government of Iowa.”<sup>134</sup>



As with many of the states that have adopted the Civics Education Initiative test bill, Arizona ARS §15-701.01 requires students to correctly answer at least 60 of the 100 questions listed on a test that is identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used for United States citizenship in order to graduate from high school.

## 10 | INCLUSION OF CIVICS IN ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

Of the states that have social studies or civic assessment requirements, approximately half use the results for reporting purposes and 17 states include civics and social studies in their accountability systems. Accountability measures may be fairly weak, such as reporting the percentage of students that successfully complete a core program of social studies, or may include stronger measures such as social studies or civics test passage rates. Social studies and civics results may also be one of multiple measures used in calculating district or school performance scores.



Tennessee requires that districts verify to the Tennessee Department of Education that they have implemented the provisions of the assessment law.

History and social studies assessment results are included in the California School Accountability Report Card (CA Ed. Code 33126). See sample School Accountability Report Cards.<sup>135</sup>

District and school reports cards in Ohio include achievement test passage rates in social studies (Ohio Rev. Code Ann. §3302.03).

Utah’s Commission on Civic and Character Education established requirements that school districts submit annual reports on activities and progress on civic and character education.

### Annual School District Civic Education Reports

- Cache County School District<sup>136</sup>
- Canyons School District<sup>137</sup>
- Juab School District<sup>138</sup>
- Salt Lake School District<sup>139</sup>



Virginia incorporates test scores for history and social studies into school accreditation benchmarks. Fully accredited schools must have over 70 percent of students receive a passing grade on history and social studies exams.<sup>140</sup>

### Civic Education Recognition Programs

Another tactic for civic education accountability is the establishment of award and recognition programs that incentivize students and schools to prioritize civic learning and engagement.



Colorado’s Eliza Pickrell Rountt Award was established by the secretary of state to recognize Colorado schools that pre-register at least 85 percent of eligible seniors to vote.

The Civic Learning Award for California elementary, middle and high schools celebrates “schools’ efforts to engage students in civic learning and identifies effective and replicable civic learning models in California.”

Use of the six proven practices for effective civic learning is the basis for Arizona’s Excellence in Civic Engagement school designation.



The Illinois’ Democracy School recognition, administered by the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, is based on five common elements necessary to sustain a school-wide commitment to civic learning. It requires that schools establish a Democracy School core team, complete a learning experiences inventory, and administer assessments and surveys prior to receiving the designation.



After adoption of the U.S. citizenship test requirement, Tennessee created the United States Civics All-Star School designation to recognize schools in which all seniors pass the new civics test.

Students are eligible to receive the Civic Competency certificate in New Hampshire if they achieve a passing grade on the competency assessment.

The Virginia Department of Education awards the Excellence in Civics Education Seal of Achievement to students who complete 50 hours of civic-focused community service, such as serving as a government intern, participating in a political campaign or participating in a model assembly.

# RESOURCES FOR STATE LEADERS<sup>141</sup>

The following is an annotated appendix of additional resources with a short summary of each item.

## MAJOR REPORTS

### A Crisis in Civic Education

American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2016

[www.goacta.org/images/download/A\\_Crisis\\_in\\_Civic\\_Education.pdf](http://www.goacta.org/images/download/A_Crisis_in_Civic_Education.pdf)

ACTA presents an illustration of how and why civic education is stalling in the U.S. According to this report, too often civic education initiatives present vague goals without clear academic benchmarks and standards. ACTA calls for, in addition to curriculum on civic engagement, an emphasis on the American Constitution and government.

Go directly to these key sections:

- Problem (of civic literacy in higher education)—pp. 2–3
- Why civic knowledge matters—p. 9
- What must be done by colleges and universities—pp. 10–11

### A Crucible Moment: College Learning & Democracy's Future

The National Task Force on Democratic Learning and Civic Engagement

American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2012

[www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/crucible/Crucible\\_508F.pdf](http://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/crucible/Crucible_508F.pdf)

In 2012, the National Task Force on Democratic Learning and Civic Engagement published this report as commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education. It issues a national call to action to institutions of higher education to embrace civic engagement as an educational priority, while also recognizing K-12 education as the foundation for engaged citizenship. As part of the call to action, five essential actions are identified in this report. They include: reinvesting in the fundamental civic mission of schools; promoting the national narrative that civic literacy is an educational priority that contributes to social, intellectual and economic capital; advancing a framework for civic learning that embraces problem solving and diverse perspectives; capitalizing on the relationship between K-12 education and higher education; and expanding the number of civic partnerships at all levels. In

order to achieve these goals, specific recommendations are provided within the report.

Go directly to these key sections:

- Description of 21st Century civic literacy—p. 4
- Outline of “Civic Minded Campus”—p. 15
- Key recommendations for higher education—pp. 31–33
- Key recommendations for policymakers and governments—pp. 34–38
- Higher education policy and program examples—pp. 51–57

### All Together Now: Collaboration and Innovation for Youth Engagement

Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge

Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2013

[civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/CIR-CLE-youthvoting-individualPages.pdf](http://civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/CIR-CLE-youthvoting-individualPages.pdf)

The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, or CIRCLE, provides within this report several concrete recommendations for different stakeholders in the realm of civic education, including national, state, and local policymakers, educators, families, communities, as well as recommendations for collaboration between all of these groups and more. CIRCLE maintains that young people learn effective citizenship through a variety of actors and collaboration is the key to reinvigorating current civic education efforts. The report addresses specific challenges faced in the realm of civic education and offers the perspective that allows stakeholders to see these challenges as opportunities. This report is a good resource to learn about the complex web of factors that influence a young person's path to an engaging and effective citizenship.

Go directly to these key sections:

- Main recommendations for policymakers—p. 8
- Inequality in civic opportunity—p. 15
- Social media and media literacy—p. 18
- Recommended policies—pp. 27–28
- Coalition-Building Planning a discussion on civic education—p. 37
- Coalition-Building Coalition examples—pp. 45–47
- Program examples—pp. 48–52

## Civic Education: A Key to Trust in Government

Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene

The Council of State Governments, 2016

[knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/system/files/civic\\_report.pdf](http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/system/files/civic_report.pdf)

This report prepared for The Council of State Governments provides a deep dive into the current state of civic education in the U.S. It provides insight into why civic education is important, what it should include, as well as multiple examples of bills, organizations and programs that are working to enhance civic education. In addition to a primer on civic education, this report provides a robust list of additional resources and organizations.

Go directly to these key sections:

- Where America's students stand in civic education—pp. 4–5
- The importance of including state and local government—p. 5
- Bright spots—pp. 6–8
- Challenges—pp. 8–10
- Resources—pp. 11–13



## College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

National Council for the Social Studies, 2013

[www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf](http://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf)

The National Council for the Social Studies created a framework that guides states in improving social studies standards. The C3 Framework advocates for college, career and citizenship to rest at the core of social studies courses and curriculum. However, the framework sets aside the selection of curriculum content taught at each grade level as a state choice, instead aiming to provide

strong standards for states to model their curriculum after. The report claims that civic engagement is a key practice that requires children to learn to work together as citizens and cites civic education as a major factor in improving critical thinking, problem solving and collaborative skills in students.

Go directly to these key sections:

- IV.2.iii. Inquiry Arc—p. 12, pp. 16–19
- IV.8. C3 Framework Indicators and Pathways—p. 13
- Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools—CIVICS—pp. 31–34

## Fault Lines in Our Democracy: Civic knowledge, voting behavior and civic engagement in the United States

Richard J. Coley and Andrew Sum

Educational Testing Service, 2012

[www.ets.org/s/research/19386/rsc/pdf/18719\\_fault\\_lines\\_report.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/research/19386/rsc/pdf/18719_fault_lines_report.pdf)

This report uses data-driven research to illustrate the key role civic education plays in protecting the democratic nature of the U.S. government. It provides an in-depth look at the “civic empowerment gap,” or the civic education divide experienced by different populations of Americans. Beyond the other benefits of civic education throughout these resources, this report is a powerful example of how civic education can help to combat other gaps experienced by the U.S. This resource can aid in providing a powerful motive to improve civic education.

Go directly to these key sections:

- Status of civics knowledge and education in our schools—pp. 7–14
- Trends in voting behavior—pp. 14–18
- Civic engagement and income—pp. 23–24
- Summary and conclusion—p. 30





## Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools

Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 2011

[civicmission.s3.amazonaws.com/118/f0/5/171/1/Guardian-of-Democracy-report.pdf](http://civicmission.s3.amazonaws.com/118/f0/5/171/1/Guardian-of-Democracy-report.pdf)

This report was prepared by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, a campaign founded by Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and Congressman Lee Hamilton of the United States House of Representatives. The report was prepared in response to what the campaign saw as a dire lack of focus on civic education in U.S. schools. Highlights of the report include in-depth analysis of the benefits of civic learning, curriculum recommendations based on research from experts in the field, and specific public policy recommendations for policymakers at all levels, educators, parents and researchers.

Go directly to these key sections:

- Status of civic learning—p. 9
- IV.1. Historic mission of schools—pp. 10–12
- Benefits of civic learning—pp. 16–24
- IV. 2. Six proven practices of civic learning—pp. 26–34
- IV. 8. Assessment—pp. 35–36
- Recommendations for state policymakers—p. 42



## K12, Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning

Lisa Guilfoile, Brady Delander and Carol Kreck

Education Commission of the States, National Center for Learning & Civic Engagement, 2016

[www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update\\_r2.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update_r2.pdf)

This guidebook was created as a resource for educators and policymakers as they seek to implement high quality civic education practices. It references the six proven practices for civic education created by the Guardian of Democracy report summarized above. The guidebook introduces each practice, references the research that supports each practice, and provides concrete examples of how to implement each practice. This tool is ideal for policymakers who have been exposed to the research calling for improved civic education and are looking for the next step to take.

### ONLINE RESOURCES

#### K12 50-State Comparison: Civic Education (Companion paper to the database)

Hunter Railey & Jan Brennan

Education Commission of the States, National Center for Learning & Civic Engagement, 2016

[www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Companion\\_Report\\_-\\_50-State\\_Comparison\\_-\\_Civic\\_Education.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Companion_Report_-_50-State_Comparison_-_Civic_Education.pdf)

#### K12 50-State Comparison: Civic Education Policies (Database)

Education Commission of the States, National Center for Learning & Civic Engagement, 2016

[www.ecs.org/citizenship-education-policies/](http://www.ecs.org/citizenship-education-policies/)

#### CIRCLE'S Civic Education Quick Facts

Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement

[civicyouth.org/quick-facts/quick-facts-civic-education/](http://civicyouth.org/quick-facts/quick-facts-civic-education/)

### ISSUE BRIEFS & BLOGS

#### CIRCLE Blog

Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement

[civicyouth.org/ResearchTopics/circle-blog/](http://civicyouth.org/ResearchTopics/circle-blog/)

#### Civic Education and Deeper Learning

Peter Levine & Kei Kawashima Ginsberg

Jobs for the Future, 2015

[www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/Civic-Education-and-Deeper-Learning-012815.pdf](http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/Civic-Education-and-Deeper-Learning-012815.pdf)

#### Ed Note Blog

Education Commission of the States

[www.ecs.org/stay-current/blog/](http://www.ecs.org/stay-current/blog/)

#### ESSA: Mapping Opportunities for Civic Education

Jan Brennan

Education Commission of the States, National Center for Learning & Civic Engagement, 2017

[www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/ESSA-Mapping-opportunities-for-civic-education.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/ESSA-Mapping-opportunities-for-civic-education.pdf)

#### Peter Levine's: A Blog for Civic Renewal

Peter is the Associate Dean for Research and Lincoln Filene Professor of Citizenship & Public Affairs in Tufts University's Jonathan Tisch College of Civic Life.

[www.peterlevine.ws](http://www.peterlevine.ws)

#### Resources from the Education Commission of the States, National Center for Learning & Civic Engagement

- The Education Commission of the States National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, Mandated Task Forces.

[www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/12/46/11246.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/12/46/11246.pdf)

- The Education Commission of the States National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, Accountability Structures and Mandated Assessments for Civics.

[www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/11/96/11196.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/11/96/11196.pdf)



- The Education Commission of the States National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, Statewide Initiatives.

[www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/12/60/11260.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/12/60/11260.pdf)

- The Education Commission of the States National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, Civic Education Administrative Directives.

[www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/12/83/11283.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/12/83/11283.pdf)

- The Education Commission of the States National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, Civic Education Initiatives of Secretaries of State.

[www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/12/91/11291.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/12/91/11291.pdf)

- The Civics Education Initiative 2015–2016

Hunter Railey & Jan Brennan

Education Commission of the States, National Center for Learning & Civic Engagement, 2016

[www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/The\\_Civics\\_Education\\_Initiative\\_2015-2016.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/The_Civics_Education_Initiative_2015-2016.pdf)

- A Guide to Organizing A Regional Summit on Civic Education

DuPage Regional Office of Education

[www.citizenadvocacycenter.org/uploads/8/8/4/0/8840743/civic\\_education\\_summit.pdf](http://www.citizenadvocacycenter.org/uploads/8/8/4/0/8840743/civic_education_summit.pdf)

- Illinois Democracy Schools

Robert R. McCormick Foundation

[www.mccormickfoundation.org/democracy/democracy-schools](http://www.mccormickfoundation.org/democracy/democracy-schools)

### Supplemental Civic Education Programs and Resources

Ashbrook Center at Ashland University is dedicated to restoring capabilities for constitutional self-government, with programs for teachers, students and citizens that emphasize original historical documents.

The American Bar Association Division for Public Education provides balanced and reliable information about and insights into the law and current legal issues. They offer law-related resources and professional development programs to educators, students and the public to promote understanding of the law and its vital role in our society.

Americorps provides opportunities for Americans to make an intensive commitment to service, engaging more than 80,000 Americans in projects around the nation each year.

Annenberg Classroom (The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics) serves as a repository for the Civics Renewal Network extensive standards-based teaching resources, videos and interactive games for teaching the constitution, judicial branch and civics.

Bill of Rights Institute maintains the Think the Vote website and provides professional development and resources focusing on nine key issues, from education and criminal justice reform to immigration and the environment.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America:

- Torch Clubs (Character Education) are small-group character and leadership clubs for boys and girls age 11 to 13 through which young people strengthen their 21st century skills and work together to implement service projects.
- Keystone Clubs (leadership development) provides leadership development opportunities for young people ages 14 to 18, focused on academic success, career preparation and community service.

The American Legion's program, Boys State, is a participatory program in which students become part of the operation of local, county and state governments and learn the rights, privileges and responsibilities of citizens. Girls State, an American Legion Auxiliary program, develops leadership skills, confidence and action-based understanding of the government processes and guides young women to become knowledgeable stewards of freedom, democracy and patriotic citizens.

The Junior Achievement program, BizTown combines in-class learning on government and economics with a day-long visit to a simulated town that helps students connect what they learn in school to the real world.

Center for Civic Education administers the We the People program, which promotes civic competence and responsibility for K-12 students with interactive strategies, relevant content and simulated congressional hearings, and the Project Citizen program, which provides interdisciplinary curriculum for K-12 and higher education students to promote competent and responsible participation in local and state government.

The civic education and engagement section of the American Political Science Association includes resources for teaching civic education and references the work of the association's Committee on Civic Engagement and Education in enhancing civic education and engagement through contributions made by political science in higher education institutions.

Constitutional Rights Foundation administers the Civic Action Project and a variety of history, law and civic participation programs that seek to instill in youth a deeper understanding of citizenship through values expressed in the Constitution and Bill of Rights and to educate young people to become active and responsible participants in our society.

The Discovering Justice Court Education project connects classrooms and courtrooms to prepare young people to value the justice system, realize the power of their own voices and embrace civic responsibility.





*DoSomething.org* helps young people to get involved in national campaigns “without needing money, an adult or a car.” A number of potential causes are highlighted, including bullying, discrimination and animal cruelty.

Earth Force engages young people as active citizens who improve the environment and their communities as they undertake projects in water, sustainability and health.

Facing History and Ourselves engages students of diverse backgrounds in examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism through curriculum studying historical events.

The Federal Judicial Center provides information and resources focused on federal judicial history, as well as famous federal trials.

Generation Citizen empowers young people to become engaged and effective citizens through action civics curriculum which provides the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in our democracy.

Contact: Scott Warren, CEO  
[swarren@generationcitizen.org](mailto:swarren@generationcitizen.org)

Promoting love of history is the focus of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, with over 65,000 primary source historical documents, as well as professional development and traveling exhibitions.

Global Classrooms engages middle and high schools students in an exploration of current world issues through interactive simulations and curricular materials and cultivates literacy, life skills and the attitudes necessary for active citizenship, including Model United Nations.

iCivics learning games allow students to step into public roles, from acting as a judge to a member of Congress, as they become more knowledgeable and capable of civic discourse and participation.

Contacts: Louise Dube, executive director  
[louise.dube@icivics.org](mailto:louise.dube@icivics.org)

Emma Humphries, chief engagement officer,  
[emma.humphries@icivics.org](mailto:emma.humphries@icivics.org)

Innovations in Civic Participation's SummerTrek program is a four to six week summer learning program to engage middle school students as community problem-solvers through a series of project-based activities that curb summer learning loss.

Inspire U.S. works in multiple states to support nonpartisan peer-to-peer voter registration activities for students. In several states, Inspire works with the secretary of state to recognize high schools achieving high registration levels.

In Junior State of America, high school students debate and discuss pressing political and social issues at state conventions.

KidsVoting USA provides curriculum and support for mock election processes focused on creating voting habits and values. Local affiliates conduct much of the programming.

Mikva Challenge runs Issues to Action programs in youth policymaking, electoral engagement and community problem-solving that engage young people through hands-on, project-based learning that transforms students' civic attitudes, skills and sense of agency.

The National Center for State Courts Civic Education section provides a resource guide on programs around the country that focus on civic education related to the court system, as well as a series of graphic novels to explain how judges make decisions, how courts function and why they are important in a democratic society.

*ProCon.org* provides research to aid in discussions of controversial issues, helping students to evaluate opposing views.

National Youth Leadership Council promotes and supports high-quality service-learning experiences, maintains the Generator School Network and Lift professional development sites and develops youth leaders to strengthen academic, civic and character outcomes for students.

Street Law provides professional development, lesson plans and interactive learning activities to help social studies teachers improve their success teaching about law and government.

The Learning Law and Democracy Foundation's Teaching Civics program provides professional development, maintains [teachingcivics.org](http://teachingcivics.org) with resources for civics teachers, and contributes to strong communities of engaged citizens.



United States Courts' educational resources helps teachers find realistic simulations and interactive approaches to court basics.

The YMCA's Youth and Government is an experiential model government program in which students practice democracy as they discuss and debate issues that affect citizens of their state and propose legislation.

Youth Participatory Politics Research Network, supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, utilizes best practices to engage young people in participatory politics.

### Civic Education Organizations



National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement at Education Commission of the States supports state education leaders' efforts to foster civic learning and engagement opportunities for all students, through research, reports, convenings and counsel.

Contact: Paul Baumann, [pbaumann@ecs.org](mailto:pbaumann@ecs.org)) or Jan Brennan, [jbrennan@ecs.org](mailto:jbrennan@ecs.org)



Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools is a coalition of organizations committed to improving the quality and quantity of civic learning in American schools.

Contact: Ted McConnell, [ted@ncss.org](mailto:ted@ncss.org)



Campus Compact is a coalition of more than 1,100 college and university presidents that represents 6 million students who are committed to fulfilling the civic purposes of higher education through service-learning and community service.

Contact: Andrew Seligsohn, president, [ajs@compact.org](mailto:ajs@compact.org)



Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, or CIRCLE, based at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University, conducts research on civic education in K-12 and higher education, as well as youth voting, service and political participation.

Contact: Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, director, [Kei.Kawashima\\_Ginsberg@tufts.edu](mailto:Kei.Kawashima_Ginsberg@tufts.edu)



Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Action Network of nonprofit organizations, higher education institutions, scholars, practitioners and philanthropists advances civic learning and democratic engagement as a cornerstone for every student.

Contact: Caryn McTighe Musil, director of civic learning and democracy at the Association of American Colleges and Universities, [musil@aacu.org](mailto:musil@aacu.org)

Civic Nation uses organizing, engagement and public awareness to address pressing challenges with the belief that engaged individuals and communities can change the world.

Contact: Edna Ishayik, [edna@civicionation.org](mailto:edna@civicionation.org)



The Civic Renewal Network consortium strengthens the quality of civic life in the U.S. and links to civic education resources from over 30 organizations.

Contact: [info@civicsrenewalnetwork.org](mailto:info@civicsrenewalnetwork.org)

International Association for Research on Service-learning and Community Engagement promotes the development and dissemination of research on service-learning and civic engagement.

Contact: Tara Luparello, administrative director, [tluparel@tulane.edu](mailto:tluparel@tulane.edu)

Joe Foss Institute promotes the idea that in order to graduate from high school, students should be able to pass the U.S. citizenship test.

National Conference on Citizenship supports state civic health initiatives, including conducting indexed civic health surveys to assess civic health, generate dialogue and catalyze sustainable civic strategies.

Contact: Sally Prouty, interim CEO, [SProuty@ncoc.org](mailto:SProuty@ncoc.org)



National Council for the Social Studies led development of the College, Career and Civic Life C3 Framework guiding state social studies curriculum and standards.

Contact: Susan Griffin, executive director, [sgriffin@ncss.org](mailto:sgriffin@ncss.org)

National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement offers colleges and universities an opportunity to learn their student registration and voting rates, providing insights into the campus climate for political learning and engagement.

Contact: Nancy Thomas, director, [nslve@tufts.edu](mailto:nslve@tufts.edu)

National Youth Leadership Council promotes and supports high-quality service-learning experiences.

Contact: Amy Meuers, interim CEO, [ameuers@nylc.org](mailto:ameuers@nylc.org)

Teaching for Democracy Alliance provides teachers with resources and information to help inform students about elections and informed voting.

# APPENDIX

ENDNOTES.....	44
CIVICS SUPPORTS WORKSHEETS .....	49
State ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) Plans .....	49
School Climate.....	51
Information and Media Literacy.....	53
Civic Engagement and Participation .....	55
Attendance and Graduation.....	57
Student Academic Achievement.....	59
Equity and Reduction in Achievement Gaps.....	61
21st Century College and Workforce Skills.....	63



# Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> "Trust in Government: 1958–2015," Pew Research Center, 2015, [www.people-press.org/2015/11/23/1-trust-in-government-1958-2015](http://www.people-press.org/2015/11/23/1-trust-in-government-1958-2015) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>2</sup> Drew DeSilver, "U.S. trails most developed countries in voter turnout," *FactTank: News in the Numbers*, 2017, [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/15/u-s-voter-turnout-trails-most-developed-countries/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/15/u-s-voter-turnout-trails-most-developed-countries/) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>3</sup> "The Nation's Report Card: 2014 U.S. History, Geography, and Civics at Grade 8," U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015, [nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015112](http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015112) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>4</sup> Meira Levinson, "The Civic Empowerment Gap: Defining the Problem and Locating Solutions," in *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement*, ed. Lonnie Sherrod, Judith Torney-Purta & Constance A. Flanagan, 331–361 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2010) [dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/8454069/Levinson%20The%20Civic%20Empowerment%20Gap.pdf?sequence=1](http://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/8454069/Levinson%20The%20Civic%20Empowerment%20Gap.pdf?sequence=1) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>5</sup> Surbhi Godsay, Whitney Henderson, Peter Levine & Josh Littenberg-Tobias, *State Civic Education Requirements*, The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2012, [files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536256.pdf](http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536256.pdf) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>6</sup> Katherine Barrett & Richard Greene, *Civic Education: A key to trust in Government*, The Council of State Governments, 2016, [knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/system/files/civic\\_report.pdf](http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/system/files/civic_report.pdf) (accessed July 27, 2017).
- <sup>7</sup> "Civic Learning Fact Sheet," Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, n.d. [www.civicmissionofschools.org/the-campaign/civic-learning-fact-sheet](http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/the-campaign/civic-learning-fact-sheet) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>8</sup> *The Nation's Report Card: 2014 U.S. History, Geography, and Civics at Grade 8*, U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015, [nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015112](http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015112) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>9</sup> "Reversing the Decline in Historical and Civic Literacy," American Heritage Society, 2013, [ahsociety.org/content/reversing-decline-historical-and-civic-literacy](http://ahsociety.org/content/reversing-decline-historical-and-civic-literacy) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>10</sup> Jan Brennan, "Incentivizing Civic Learning and Engagement," *EdNote Blog*, Education Commission of the States, 2016, [www.ecs.org/incentivizing-civic-learning-and-engagement/](http://www.ecs.org/incentivizing-civic-learning-and-engagement/) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>11</sup> Iowa Code §216A.140 (accessed September 2017).
- <sup>12</sup> Ruby Thomas, "Students' bill aims to curb punishments," *The Record*, March 8, 2017, [therecordnewspaper.org/students-bill-aims-curb-punishments/](http://therecordnewspaper.org/students-bill-aims-curb-punishments/) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>13</sup> Washington State Legislature. "Civic Education Programs at the Legislature," [leg.wa.gov/CivicEd/Pages/default.aspx](http://leg.wa.gov/CivicEd/Pages/default.aspx) (accessed October 15, 2017).
- <sup>14</sup> The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*, 2011, [civicmission.s3.amazonaws.com/118/f0/5/171/1/Guardianof-Democracy-report.pdf](http://civicmission.s3.amazonaws.com/118/f0/5/171/1/Guardianof-Democracy-report.pdf) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>15</sup> Power of Democracy. [www.powerofdemocracy.org/about-us/](http://www.powerofdemocracy.org/about-us/) (accessed October 15, 2017).
- <sup>16</sup> California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning. *Revitalizing K-12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint for Action*, August 2014. [www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/cltffinalreport.pdf](http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/cltffinalreport.pdf)
- <sup>17</sup> California Courts. 2017 Civic Learning Award Winners, [newsroom.courts.ca.gov/news/2017-civic-learning-award-winners](http://newsroom.courts.ca.gov/news/2017-civic-learning-award-winners), February 16, 2017.
- <sup>18</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, The College, Career & Civic Life (C3) *Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History*, 2013, [www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf](http://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>19</sup> Adapted and excerpted from: The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*, 2011, [civicmission.s3.amazonaws.com/118/f0/5/171/1/Guardianof-Democracy-report.pdf](http://civicmission.s3.amazonaws.com/118/f0/5/171/1/Guardianof-Democracy-report.pdf), (accessed August 17, 2017) and National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, *A Crucible Moment: College Learning & Democracy's Future*, Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2012, [www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/crucible/Crucible\\_508F.pdf](http://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/crucible/Crucible_508F.pdf) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>20</sup> James Madison. *Letter to W.T. Barry*, 1822, [press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch18s35.html](http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch18s35.html)
- <sup>21</sup> Horace Mann, *Thoughts Selected from the Writings of Horace Mann*, 220, Boston: H.B. Fuller and Company, 1867, [archive.org/stream/thoughtsselected00mann#page/n3/mode/2up/search/safety](http://archive.org/stream/thoughtsselected00mann#page/n3/mode/2up/search/safety) (accessed August 16, 2017).
- <sup>22</sup> Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, iCivics, "Our Story," [www.icivics.org/our-story](http://www.icivics.org/our-story) (accessed October 15, 2017).
- <sup>23</sup> "Civic Learning Fact Sheet," Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, n.d. [www.civicmissionofschools.org/the-campaign/civic-learning-fact-sheet](http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/the-campaign/civic-learning-fact-sheet) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>24</sup> The 37th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Publics Attitudes toward the Public Schools. Lowell C. Rose, Alec M. Gallup, 2016. (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>25</sup> The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*, 2011, [civicmission.s3.amazonaws.com/118/f0/5/171/1/Guardianof-Democracy-report.pdf](http://civicmission.s3.amazonaws.com/118/f0/5/171/1/Guardianof-Democracy-report.pdf) (accessed August 17, 2017). See also, Brady Delander, Lisa Guilfoile & Carol Kreck, *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*, Education Commission of the States, 2016, [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update\\_r2.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update_r2.pdf) (accessed August 17, 2017)
- <sup>26</sup> Excerpted and adapted from: *Six Proven Practices*, Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, n.d., [www.civicmissionofschools.org/educators/six-proven-practices](http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/educators/six-proven-practices) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>27</sup> Center on Education Policy. 2007, *Choices, Changes, and Challenges. Curriculum and Instruction in the NCLB Era*. [www.cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=312](http://www.cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=312); T.L. Heafner and P.G. Fitchett, "Tipping the Scales: National Trends of Declining Social Studies Instructional Time in Elementary Schools," *Journal of Social Studies Research* 36, no. 2 (2012): 190–215 (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>28</sup> Albert Shanker Institute. *Education for Democracy*. Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute (2003). [www.shankerinstitute.org/sites/shanker/files/efd-final.pdf](http://www.shankerinstitute.org/sites/shanker/files/efd-final.pdf) (accessed October 2017)
- <sup>29</sup> The Nation's Report Card, "U.S. History. Overview" [www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc\\_2014/#history](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/#history) (accessed August 2017).
- <sup>30</sup> The Nation's Report Card, "Civics. Overview" [www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc\\_2014/#civics](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/#civics) (accessed August 2017).

- <sup>31</sup> The Nation's Report Card, "Geography. Overview" [www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc\\_2014/#geography](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/#geography) (accessed August 2017).
- <sup>32</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, "The Nation's Report Card: Civics" 2010, [nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/main2010/2011466.aspx](http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/main2010/2011466.aspx) (accessed August 2017).
- <sup>33</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, *The Nation's Report Card: U.S. History, Geography, and Civics*, 2014, "Summary of the Assessment Results". [www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc\\_2014/#summary](http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/hgc_2014/#summary) (accessed August 2017).
- <sup>34</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, *The Nation's Report Card: Civics 2010*, [nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/main2010/2011466.aspx](http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/main2010/2011466.aspx) (accessed August 2017).
- <sup>35</sup> Richard J. Coley and Andrew Sum, *Fault Lines in Our Democracy, Civic Knowledge, Voting Behavior, and Civic Engagement in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 2012). [www.ets.org/s/research/19386/rsc/pdf/18719\\_fault\\_lines\\_report.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/research/19386/rsc/pdf/18719_fault_lines_report.pdf)
- <sup>36</sup> Generation Citizen, "The Problem, A Civic Engagement Gap Exists" [generationcitizen.org/about-us/the-problem/](http://generationcitizen.org/about-us/the-problem/) (accessed August 23, 2017).
- <sup>37</sup> *Revitalizing K-12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint for Action*. (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>38</sup> Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, "Youth Voting. The 2016 Youth Vote" [civicyouth.org/quick-facts/youth-voting/](http://civicyouth.org/quick-facts/youth-voting/) (accessed August 23, 2017).
- <sup>39</sup> Asma Khalid. "Millennials Now Rival Boomers As A Political Force, But Will They Actually Vote?" (National Public Radio, May 16, 2016). [www.npr.org/2016/05/16/478237882/millennials-now-rival-boomers-as-a-political-force-but-will-they-actually-vote](http://www.npr.org/2016/05/16/478237882/millennials-now-rival-boomers-as-a-political-force-but-will-they-actually-vote). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>40</sup> Drew Desilver. "U.S. trails most developed countries in voter turnout" (Pew Research Center, May 15, 2017). [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/15/u-s-voter-turnout-trails-most-developed-countries/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/15/u-s-voter-turnout-trails-most-developed-countries/). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>41</sup> American Council of Trustees and Alumni, *A Crisis in Civic Education*. Washington, D.C.: American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2016. [www.goacta.org/images/download/A\\_Crisis\\_in\\_Civic\\_Education.pdf](http://www.goacta.org/images/download/A_Crisis_in_Civic_Education.pdf). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>42</sup> American Council of Trustees and Alumni, *No U.S. History? How College History Departments Leave the United States out of the Major*, Washington, D.C.: American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2016, [www.goacta.org/images/download/no\\_u\\_s\\_history.pdf](http://www.goacta.org/images/download/no_u_s_history.pdf). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>43</sup> Larry Braskamp, *Higher Education for Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement: Reinvesting in Longstanding Commitments*, Association of American Colleges & Universities, (accessed August 23, 2017).
- <sup>44</sup> Florida Statute 1007.25 (4).
- <sup>45</sup> American Council of Trustees and Alumni. *A Crisis in Civic Education* Washington, D.C.: American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2016, 2. [www.goacta.org/images/download/A\\_Crisis\\_in\\_Civic\\_Education.pdf](http://www.goacta.org/images/download/A_Crisis_in_Civic_Education.pdf) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 4–5
- <sup>47</sup> Intercollegiate Studies Institute. *Our Fading Heritage. Summary*. 2007. [www.americancivilliteracy.org/2008/summary\\_summary.html](http://www.americancivilliteracy.org/2008/summary_summary.html) (accessed August 23, 2017).
- <sup>48</sup> Intercollegiate Studies Institute. *How Civic Knowledge Trumps a College Degree in Promoting Active Civic Engagement*. 2011. [www.americancivilliteracy.org/2011/summary\\_summary.html](http://www.americancivilliteracy.org/2011/summary_summary.html) (accessed August 23, 2017).
- <sup>49</sup> "American's knowledge of the branches of government is declining," Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2016, [www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/americans-knowledge-of-the-branches-of-government-is-declining/](http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/americans-knowledge-of-the-branches-of-government-is-declining/) (accessed August 23, 2017).
- <sup>50</sup> Andrew Romano. "How Ignorant are Americans?" *Newsweek*, March 20, 2011. [www.newsweek.com/how-ignorant-are-americans-66053](http://www.newsweek.com/how-ignorant-are-americans-66053) (accessed August 23, 2017); Matthew Shaw, "Civic Illiteracy in America" (*Harvard Political Review*, May 25, 2017) [harvardpolitics.com/culture/civic-illiteracy-in-america/](http://harvardpolitics.com/culture/civic-illiteracy-in-america/) (August 23, 2017).
- <sup>51</sup> Annenberg Public Policy Center. "Is there a Constitutional Right to Own a Home or a Pet?" (Annenberg Public Policy Center, September 16, 2015) [www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/is-there-a-constitutional-right-to-own-a-home-or-a-pet/](http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/is-there-a-constitutional-right-to-own-a-home-or-a-pet/) (August 23, 2017).
- <sup>52</sup> "American's knowledge of the branches of government is declining," Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2016, [www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/americans-knowledge-of-the-branches-of-government-is-declining/](http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/americans-knowledge-of-the-branches-of-government-is-declining/) (accessed August 23, 2017).
- <sup>53</sup> Education Commission of the States. *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*, 2016 [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update\\_r2.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update_r2.pdf).
- <sup>54</sup> J. Gould, K.H. Jameison, P. Levine, T. McConnell & D. B. Smith (Eds.). *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*. The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. 2011. Accessed at [civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/GuardianofDemocracy.pdf](http://civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/GuardianofDemocracy.pdf); Diana E. Hess and Paula McAvoy. *The Political Classroom. Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education*, New York/London: Routledge, 2015. Infographic accessed at [thepoliticalclassroom.com/infographic.php](http://thepoliticalclassroom.com/infographic.php); Diana Owen. *High School Students' Acquisition of Civic Dispositions: The Impact of We the People*. Georgetown University. 2015. Accessed at [www.academia.edu/14042402/High\\_School\\_Students\\_Acquisition\\_of\\_Civic\\_Knowledge\\_The\\_Impact\\_of\\_We\\_the\\_People](http://www.academia.edu/14042402/High_School_Students_Acquisition_of_Civic_Knowledge_The_Impact_of_We_the_People).
- <sup>55</sup> Partnership for 21st Century Skills. *Reimagining Citizenship for the 21st Century*, 2015, 15. Accessed at [www.p21.org/storage/documents/Reimagining\\_Citizenship\\_for\\_21st\\_Century\\_webversion.pdf](http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/Reimagining_Citizenship_for_21st_Century_webversion.pdf); P. Matthews, J. Dorfman & X/ Wu. (2015). "The Impacts of Undergraduate Service-Learning on Post-Graduation Employment Outcomes." *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*. 2015 3(1), 1; Sarah Sparks. "Children Must Be Taught to Collaborate, Studies Say." *Education Week*. May 16, 2017. Accessed at [www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/05/17/children-must-be-taught-to-collaborate-studies.html](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/05/17/children-must-be-taught-to-collaborate-studies.html)
- <sup>56</sup> Alberto Davila and Marie T. Mora. *Civic Engagement and High School Academic Progress: An analysis using NELS data*. Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. 2007. Accessed at [civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP52Mora.pdf](http://civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP52Mora.pdf); Andrew Furco. The Role of Service-Learning in Enhancing Student Achievement. Presentation given at the National Center for Learning and Citizenship Board Meeting, Santa Barbara, CA. January, 2007. Accessed via National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, Impacts of Service-Learning on Participating K-12 Students. [leduccenter.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/sl\\_impacts-on-k12\\_students.pdf](http://leduccenter.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/sl_impacts-on-k12_students.pdf); N. Duke, A. Halvorsen, S. Strachan, S. Konstantopoulous and J. Kim. *Putting PBL to the Test: The Impact of Project-based Learning on Second-grade Students' Social Studies and Literacy Learning and Motivation*. University of Michigan, School of Education. 2017. Accessed at [sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/nkduke/publications/project-place-papers](http://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/nkduke/publications/project-place-papers); P. Matthews, J. Dorfman, & X. Wu. *The Impacts of Undergraduate Service-Learning on Post-Graduation Employment Outcomes*. 2015. *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement* 3(1).
- <sup>57</sup> Gallup Inc. *State of American Schools: The Path to Winning Again in Education*. 2015. Accessed via [www.gallup.com/services/178709/state-america-schools-report.aspx](http://www.gallup.com/services/178709/state-america-schools-report.aspx); Shelley Billig, Sue Root, and Dan Jesse. *The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning on High School Students' Civic Engagement*. RMC Research Corporation, Denver, CO. 2015. Accessed at [www.servicelearningnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/WP33Billig.pdf](http://www.servicelearningnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/WP33Billig.pdf)
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

- <sup>59</sup> Lisa Guilfoile, Brady Delander and Carol Kreck. *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. January 2016. Accessed at [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update\\_r2.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update_r2.pdf); National Council for the Social Studies. *Rivitalizing Civic Learning in Our Schools*, A position statement. 2013. Accessed at [www.socialstudies.org/positions/revitalizing\\_civic\\_learning](http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/revitalizing_civic_learning); Robert D. Reason and Kevin Hemer. *Civic Learning and Engagement: A review of the Literature of Civci Learning, Assessment, and Instruments*. American Association of Colleges and Universities. January 26, 2015. Accessed at [www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/qc/CivicLearningLiteratureReviewRev1-26-15.pdf](http://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/qc/CivicLearningLiteratureReviewRev1-26-15.pdf).
- <sup>60</sup> J. Gould, K.H. Jameison, P. Levine, T. McConnell & D. B. Smith (Eds.). *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*. The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. 2011. Accessed at [civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/GuardianofDemocracy.pdf](http://civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/GuardianofDemocracy.pdf); S. Martin, M. Neal, J. Kielsmeier & A. Crossley. *The Impact of Service-Learning on Transitions to Adulthood*. In J. Kielsmeier, M. Neal, and A. Crossley (Eds.), *Growing to Greatness 2006: The State of Service-Learning Project*. Saint Paul, MN: National Youth Leadership Council. 2006; National Service-Learning Clearinghouse. 2007. *Impacts of Service-Learning on Participating K-12 Students*. 2006. Accessed at [leducation.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/sl\\_impacts-on-k12\\_students.pdf](http://leducation.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/sl_impacts-on-k12_students.pdf).
- <sup>61</sup> Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene. *Civic Education: A Key to Trust in Government*. Lexington, KY: The Council of State Governments. December 8, 2016. Accessed at [knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/content/civic-education-key-trust-government](http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/content/civic-education-key-trust-government); Brendan Nyhan & Jason Reifler. "When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions," *Political Behavior*. 2010. 32. [link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11109-010-9112-2](http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11109-010-9112-2); Joseph E. Kahne and Susan E. Sporte, "Developing Citizens: The Impact of Civic Learning Opportunities on Students' Commitment to Civic Participation," *American Educational Research Journal*. 2008. 45(3).
- <sup>62</sup> P. Scales, E. Roehlkepartain, M. Neal, J. Kielsmeier & P. Benson. "Reducing Academic Achievement Gaps: The Role of Community Service and Service-Learning." *Journal of Experiential Education*, 29(1), 51.
- <sup>63</sup> Alberto Davila and Marie T. Mora. *Civic Engagement and High School Academic Progress: An analysis using NELS data*. Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. 2007. Accessed at [civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP52Mora.pdf](http://civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP52Mora.pdf); ISTE Connects. "The case for project-based learning." International Society for Technology in Education. April 29, 2015. Accessed at [www.iste.org/explore/articleDetail?articleid=386](http://www.iste.org/explore/articleDetail?articleid=386).
- <sup>64</sup> National Youth Leadership Council. (2005). *Can Service-Learning Help Reduce the Achievement Gap?* NYLC Resource Center. 2015. 16. Accessed at [www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Service-Learning/SL\\_HRAG.pdf](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Service-Learning/SL_HRAG.pdf); P. Scales, E. Roehlkepartain, M. Neal, J. Kielsmeier & P. Benson. "Reducing Academic Achievement Gaps: The role of community service and service-learning." *Journal of Experiential Education*. 2006. 29(1), 38; Sarah Sparks, *Education Week*, "Children Must Be Taught to Collaborate, Studies Say," May 16, 2017. Accessed at [www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/05/17/children-must-be-taught-to-collaborate-studies.html](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/05/17/children-must-be-taught-to-collaborate-studies.html); N. Kraft & j. Wheeler. "Service-Learning and Resilience in Disaffected Youth: A Research Study." In S. H. Billig & J. Eyster (Eds.), *Advances in Service-Learning Research: Vol. 3. Deconstructing Service-Learning: Research exploring context, participation, and impacts*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age. 2003, 213–238.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid., 50.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid., 58.
- <sup>67</sup> TransitCenter. *A People's History of Recent Urban Transportation Innovation*. New York, NY: TransitCenter. 2015. Accessed at [transitcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/A-Peoples-History-of-Recent-Urban-Transportation-Innovation-Report-Pages.pdf](http://transitcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/A-Peoples-History-of-Recent-Urban-Transportation-Innovation-Report-Pages.pdf)
- <sup>68</sup> Paul Baumann, Maria Millard and Leslie Hamdorf. *State Civic Education Policy Framework*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. November 2014. Accessed at [www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/16/12/11612.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/16/12/11612.pdf); Henry Milner. *Civic Literacy: How Informed Citizens Make Democracy Work*. Hanover, MN: University Press of New England. 2002.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid. 60; Amy Linimon and Mark R. Joslyn. "Trickle Up Political Socialization: The Impact of Kids Voting USA on Voter Turnout in Kansas." *State Political and Policy Quarterly*. March 1, 2002. (2)1.
- <sup>70</sup> Jan Brennan. *Higher Education Civic Learning and Engagement: A Massachusetts case study*. Education Commission of the states, 2017, [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Higher\\_Education\\_Civic\\_Learning\\_and\\_Engagement.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Higher_Education_Civic_Learning_and_Engagement.pdf) (accessed August 17, 2017).
- <sup>71</sup> Paul Baumann, Maria Millard, and Leslie Hamdorf. *State Civic Education Policy Framework*. Education Commission of the States. November 2014. [www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/16/12/11612.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/16/12/11612.pdf) (accessed August 2017).
- <sup>72</sup> Jan Brennan. *State Civic Education Gap Analysis Tool*. Education Commission of the States, January 2016. [www.ecs.org/state-civic-education-policy-gap-analysis-tool/](http://www.ecs.org/state-civic-education-policy-gap-analysis-tool/). (accessed August 2017).
- <sup>73</sup> Alyssa Rafa, Dave Rogowski, Hunter Railey, Jan Brennan, Paul Baumann, and Stephanie Aragon. *50 State Comparison: Civic Education Policies*. Education Commission of the States, December 2016. [www.ecs.org/citizenship-education-policies/](http://www.ecs.org/citizenship-education-policies/). (accessed October 2017)
- <sup>74</sup> Hunter Railey and Jan Brennan. *50 State Comparison: Civic Education*. Education Commission of the States, December 2016. [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Companion\\_Report\\_-\\_50-State\\_Comparison\\_-\\_Civic\\_Education.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Companion_Report_-_50-State_Comparison_-_Civic_Education.pdf). (accessed October 2017)
- <sup>75</sup> Tennessee Code Ann. § 49-6-1028
- <sup>76</sup> Indiana Code 20-30-5-2
- <sup>77</sup> Indiana Code 20-30-5-4
- <sup>78</sup> Pennsylvania Statutes Title 24 P.S. Education § 16-1605 § 16-1605
- <sup>79</sup> South Carolina Social Studies Academic Standards (2011)
- <sup>80</sup> Mississippi Administrative Code CMSR 36-000-001.2903-II
- <sup>81</sup> Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. The Vision Project. [www.mass.edu/visionproject/vision.asp](http://www.mass.edu/visionproject/vision.asp) (accessed June 19, 2017).
- <sup>82</sup> Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-724(5)(c)
- <sup>83</sup> History and Social Science Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools (2015)
- <sup>84</sup> Tennessee Academic Standards for Social Studies (2013)
- <sup>85</sup> Diana Hess and Paula McAvoy. *The Political Classroom: Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education*. 2016.
- <sup>86</sup> Fla. Stat. ch. 1003.497
- <sup>87</sup> Missouri Revise Statute 170.037
- <sup>88</sup> Hawaii Commission on Performance Standards. The Hawaii Content and Performance Standards III (2005)
- <sup>89</sup> Vermont State Board of Education. The Grade Expectations for Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities—History and Social Sciences (2004)
- <sup>90</sup> Rhode Island S.B. 954
- <sup>91</sup> Texas S.B. 503
- <sup>92</sup> Arizona's Academic Content Standards - Social Studies (2005)

- <sup>93</sup> Scott F. Creamer. *Civic Inventory for the Democracy Commitment*. Valencia College. [site.valenciacollege.edu/inz/library/Civic%20Engagement/Civic-Inventory-for-the-Democratic-Commitment.pdf](http://site.valenciacollege.edu/inz/library/Civic%20Engagement/Civic-Inventory-for-the-Democratic-Commitment.pdf) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>94</sup> Macalester College. Civic Engagement Inventory. 2003. [www.macal-ester.edu/planning/inventory.html](http://www.macal-ester.edu/planning/inventory.html) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>95</sup> Washington State, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Social Studies Education Civic Education Poster. [www.k12.wa.us/SocialStudies/pubdocs/CivicsPoster.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/SocialStudies/pubdocs/CivicsPoster.pdf). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>96</sup> Code of Virginia. Title 30 Chapter 55: Commission on Civic Education. (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>97</sup> Virginia Department of Education. Everyday Civics. [www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/history/everyday-civics/civics-commission/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/history/everyday-civics/civics-commission/index.shtml). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>98</sup> Florida African American History Task Force Members. [afroamfl.org/task-force-members/](http://afroamfl.org/task-force-members/)
- <sup>99</sup> Florida African American History Task Force Minutes. [afroamfl.org/minutesreports/](http://afroamfl.org/minutesreports/)
- <sup>100</sup> Florida African American History Task Force 2015–2016 1st Quarter Report. [afroamfl.org/1st-quarter-report-2015-2016/](http://afroamfl.org/1st-quarter-report-2015-2016/)
- <sup>101</sup> VA Commission on Civics Education October 4, 2016 Agenda. [www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/history/everyday-civics/civics-commission/agendas/agenda\\_10\\_04\\_2016.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/history/everyday-civics/civics-commission/agendas/agenda_10_04_2016.pdf) and VA Commission on civics Education October 4, 2016 Meeting Minutes. [www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/history/everyday-civics/civics-commission/minutes/minutes\\_10\\_04\\_2016.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/history/everyday-civics/civics-commission/minutes/minutes_10_04_2016.pdf).
- <sup>102</sup> VA Commission on Civics Education Report. [www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/history/everyday-civics/civics-commission/reports/executive\\_summary\\_2015.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/history/everyday-civics/civics-commission/reports/executive_summary_2015.pdf). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>103</sup> Utah Commission on Civic & Character Education. [civics.utah.gov/aboutus/index.html](http://civics.utah.gov/aboutus/index.html) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>104</sup> Utah Commission on Civic & Character Education, Tools for Educators. [civics.utah.gov/educators/index.html](http://civics.utah.gov/educators/index.html) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>105</sup> Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning. California Department of Education. [www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/tfclroster.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/tfclroster.asp) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>106</sup> *Revitalizing K-12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint for Action Report*. California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning. August 2014. [www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/cltfinalreport.pdf](http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/cltfinalreport.pdf) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>107</sup> California Department of Education Civic Learning Award for CA Public Schools. [www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/civiclearningaward.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/civiclearningaward.asp) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>108</sup> Massachusetts Department of Higher Education Vision Project. [www.mass.edu/visionproject/vision.asp](http://www.mass.edu/visionproject/vision.asp) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>109</sup> Massachusetts Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning. *Renewing the Social Contract*. [www.masscouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Civic-Ed-Commission-Report-complete.pdf](http://www.masscouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Civic-Ed-Commission-Report-complete.pdf). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>110</sup> *Final Report from the Study Group on Civic Learning and Engagement: Preparing Citizens*. October 2013. [www.capecod.edu/files/service/vision-project.pdf](http://www.capecod.edu/files/service/vision-project.pdf) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>111</sup> Massachusetts Board of Education Policy on Civic Learning. Massachusetts Working Group on Civic Learning and Engagement. April 2014. [www.mass.edu/bhe/lib/documents/AAC/AAC14-48CivicLearningwithPolicy-RevisedFinalforBHE.pdf](http://www.mass.edu/bhe/lib/documents/AAC/AAC14-48CivicLearningwithPolicy-RevisedFinalforBHE.pdf). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>112</sup> Massachusetts Working Group on Civic Learning and Engagement. *Preparing Citizens Report on Civic Learning and Engagement*. June 2015. [www.doe.mass.edu/candi/StandardsReview/CivicReport.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/StandardsReview/CivicReport.pdf). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>113</sup> Massachusetts Civic Learning and Engagement Task Force Members and Affiliations. November 2016. [www.doe.mass.edu/candi/standardsreview/civictaskforce-members.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/standardsreview/civictaskforce-members.html). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>114</sup> Civic Learning and Engagement: Department Action Plan. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. [www.doe.mass.edu/candi/StandardsReview/CivicActionPlan.pdf#search=%22civic%20learning%20working%20group%22](http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/StandardsReview/CivicActionPlan.pdf#search=%22civic%20learning%20working%20group%22) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>115</sup> The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Revised Definition of College and Career Readiness, Incorporating Civic Learning. January 2016. [www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2016/2016-01/joint-item1.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/fy2016/2016-01/joint-item1.html) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>116</sup> ¿Oíste? The Massachusetts Latino Civic Education Initiative. [www.idealist.org/en/nonprofit/88e70050df9241ac945c5e2e171e28a5-oiste-the-massachusetts-latino-civic-education-initiative-boston?](http://www.idealist.org/en/nonprofit/88e70050df9241ac945c5e2e171e28a5-oiste-the-massachusetts-latino-civic-education-initiative-boston?) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>117</sup> Jan Brennan. *Higher Education Civic Learning and Engagement: A Massachusetts case study*. June 2017. [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Higher\\_Education\\_Civic\\_Learning\\_and\\_Engagement.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Higher_Education_Civic_Learning_and_Engagement.pdf).
- <sup>118</sup> The National Council for the Social Studies. National Standards for Social Studies Teacher. [www.socialstudies.org/standards/teacherstandards](http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/teacherstandards) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>119</sup> California Administrative Code 5 CA ADC § 80089.4
- <sup>120</sup> Illinois Public Act 099-0434
- <sup>121</sup> Lou Frey Institute, [loufreyinstitute.org](http://loufreyinstitute.org) (accessed November 2017).
- <sup>122</sup> Lou Frey Institute, Undergraduate Certificate in Civics Teaching, [loufreyinstitute.org/pages/certificate](http://loufreyinstitute.org/pages/certificate) (accessed November 2017).
- <sup>123</sup> Debra Nitschke-Shaw, Dottie Bauer, Meeta Brown, Laurie Bryant, Amy Gibans-McGlashan, Kyra Taylor, Howard Muscott, William Preble, Angie Raymond, Deborah Scire, Debbie Shumway, and Warren Tilea. *Best Practices: Service-learning in Teacher Education in New Hampshire*. (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>124</sup> The Center for Civic Education: [www.civiced.org](http://www.civiced.org). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>125</sup> We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution. [www.civiced.org/pdfs/WethePeopleOverview.pdf](http://www.civiced.org/pdfs/WethePeopleOverview.pdf). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>126</sup> iCivics: [www.icivics.org](http://www.icivics.org). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>127</sup> Street Law: [streetlaw.org/en/home](http://streetlaw.org/en/home). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>128</sup> Annenberg Classroom Resources for Excellent Civics Education, The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics, Best Civics Sites for Teachers, [www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/best-civics-sites-for-teachers](http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/page/best-civics-sites-for-teachers) (accessed November 2017).
- <sup>129</sup> Jan Brennan. *ESSA: Mapping Opportunities for Civic Education. Education Commission of the States*. April 2017. [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/ESSA-Mapping-opportunities-for-civic-education.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/ESSA-Mapping-opportunities-for-civic-education.pdf) (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>130</sup> Indiana Campus Compact Faculty Fellows Program: [indianacampuscompact.org/faculty-fellows-program/](http://indianacampuscompact.org/faculty-fellows-program/). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>131</sup> Engaged Faculty Institutes, Campus Compact of the Rocky Mountain West: [www.ccmountainwest.org/engaged-faculty-institute](http://www.ccmountainwest.org/engaged-faculty-institute). (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>132</sup> Miss. Admin. Code 7-109
- <sup>133</sup> Hunter Railey and Jan Brennan. *The Civics Education Initiative 2015–2016*. Education Commission of the States. September 2016. [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/The\\_Civics\\_Education\\_Initiative\\_2015-2016.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/The_Civics_Education_Initiative_2015-2016.pdf) (accessed October 2017)
- <sup>134</sup> Iowa Code 256.7 (2016)

- <sup>135</sup> California Department of Education School Accountability Report Code. *saronline.org* (accessed October 2017).
- <sup>136</sup> *Utah Annual Civic Education Reports: Cache County. civics.utah.gov/homepage/Cache.pdf*
- <sup>137</sup> *Utah Annual Civic Education Reports: Canyons School District. civics.utah.gov/homepage/Cache.pdf*<http://civics.utah.gov/homepage/Canyons.pdf>
- <sup>138</sup> *Utah Annual Civic Education Reports: Juab School District. civics.utah.gov/homepage/Cache.pdf*<http://civics.utah.gov/homepage/Juab.pdf>
- <sup>139</sup> *Utah Annual Civic Education Reports: Salt Lake School District. civics.utah.gov/homepage/Cache.pdf*<http://civics.utah.gov/homepage/Salt%20Lake.pdf>
- <sup>140</sup> Virginia Code 8VAC20-131-300
- <sup>141</sup> Civics Education Resources for State Leaders, Education Commission of the States, National Center for Learning & Civic Engagement, 2017. (accessed May 2017).



# CIVICS SUPPORTS

## State ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) Plans

Passed in December 2015, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, replaced No Child Left Behind as the primary federal legislation that guides K-12 education. Consult *ESSA: Mapping Opportunities for Civic Education* for more detailed analysis of ESSA and civics.<sup>1</sup>

There are connections to civic education in every title of the legislation, including:

### A Well-Rounded Education (Title I, Part A)

ESSA requires a “well-rounded” education that includes civics and government, history, geography and economics.

State ESSA plans are guided by the state’s educational mission and vision, so the inclusion of preparation for civic life as a co-equal purpose of education, along with preparation for college and careers, underpins the inclusion of civic learning and engagement in state ESSA plans.

States may need to review standards, curriculum and course requirements to strengthen civic elements of a well-rounded education.

State policies can support engaged learning approaches and pedagogies, such as courses incorporating inquiry, informed action and service learning.

### Academic Accountability Across Student Sub-groups (Title I, Part A)

Participation in engaged civic learning experiences increases overall academic performance. Active civic learning is particularly effective for at-risk student sub-groups, the primary focus of ESSA funding.

- See *Civics Supports... Student Academic Achievement* for research and policy examples.
- See *Civics Supports... Equity and Reduction in Achievement Gaps* for research and policy examples.

### School Quality and Student Success (Title I, Part A)

In addition to academic indicators, states must include a noncognitive measure of school quality or student success. Indicators in state ESSA plans, ranging from absenteeism to school climate and student engagement, are effectively supported by civic education.

- See *Civics Supports... 21st Century Workforce Skills* for research and policy examples.
- See *Civics Supports... School Climate* for research and policy examples.
- See *Civics Supports... Attendance and Graduation* for research and policy examples.
- See *Civics Supports... Student Engagement and Civic Participation* for research and policy examples.
- See *Civics Supports... Information and Media Literacy* for research and policy examples.

### State Assessments (Title I, Part B)

While ESSA mandates assessments only in math, science and English language arts, states may include assessments in social studies, civics or government, and may use Title I ESSA funds to develop assessments in any discipline.

### Teacher Preparation and Development (Title II)

ESSA provides formula grants to states to attract, prepare, support and retain effective teachers serving low-income and minority students, including social studies and civics teachers. Civic education is a specific target of ESSA teacher preparation and development, which authorizes funding for: (1) improving “quality of American history, civic and government education,”; (2) a Presidential and Congressional Academies program to offer teacher and student

workshops to strengthen American history and civics; and (3) National Civic Education Activities competitive grants to promote evidence-based strategies and innovation in civic learning. Title II also requires states to report on teacher qualifications and state certifications or licensure.

Since decisions about teacher professional development are typically made at the local level, the role of policy-makers has been primarily that of providing funding for teacher education, in some cases, specifically directed to civic education training. Given the strong evidence of improved student outcomes from service-learning, states may prioritize professional development in engaged pedagogies for teachers across the curriculum.

The percentage of out-of-subject teachers are generally higher in social studies, civics and government, so states may consider strengthening pre-service licensure requirements, particularly given heightened ESSA reporting requirement on teacher qualifications.

### Student Support and Academic Enrichment (Title IV)

Civic education is a prime candidate for these funds, which support well-rounded educational opportunities, safe and healthy students and effective use of technology. The demonstrated ability of effective civic learning to

support a wide range of academic and developmental outcomes for students and opportunities to integrate civic learning and engaged pedagogies across the curriculum supports consideration of civics in student support and academic enrichment.

- See *Civics Supports... Student Academic Achievement* for research and policy examples.
- See *Civics Supports... Equity and Reduction in Achievement Gaps* for research and policy examples.
- See *Civics Supports... 21st Century Workforce Skills* for research and policy examples.
- See *Civics Supports... Student Engagement and Civic Participation* for research and policy examples.
- See *Civics Supports... Information and Media Literacy* for research and policy examples.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jan Brennan. *ESSA: Mapping opportunities for civic education*. Education Commission of the States. April, 2017. [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/ESSA-Mapping-opportunities-for-civic-education.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/ESSA-Mapping-opportunities-for-civic-education.pdf)



## CIVICS SUPPORTS

### School Climate

Participation in engaging civic learning experiences improves school climate and student success.

Civic learning and engagement creates positive connections to school, stronger relationships with peers and teachers, and supports an environment of safety and inclusion. School climate appears in numerous state ESSA plans as a non-cognitive indicator of school quality and student success.

- High-quality civics education teaches the importance of community, promoting a positive school climate. (Gould et al, 2011<sup>1</sup>)
- Service learning appears to have a strong impact on school culture, particularly as it relates to low-income students. According to Urban Matters, students “bonding to school” increased from 48 percent to 63 percent, a 15 percent increase for low-income students and from 53 percent to 71 percent for high income students, a 18 percent increase (Berkowitz et al, 2016<sup>2</sup>).
- Results of an analysis of classroom teaching and learning styles showed that experience of an interactive classroom environment in which respectful discussion is encouraged was associated with higher levels of achievement in knowledge of basic economic and democratic principles, media literacy, attitudes toward ethnic minority groups, and respect for the rule of law. (Gould et al., 2011<sup>3</sup>)
- An analysis of more than 15 years’ worth of research shows that schools do matter and can improve academic outcomes. “Our findings suggest that by promoting a positive climate, schools can allow greater equality in educational opportunities, decrease socio-economic inequalities, and enable more social mobility.” (Blad, 2017<sup>4</sup>)

Civic learning and engagement that contributes to improved school climate includes:

### Dialogue and Understanding

As students conduct civic learning projects and engage in discussion of issues and events, they gain experience in respectful dialogue and build competencies related to communication and teamwork.

- Students who took part in service learning reported positive effects on their ability to help others, work well with other people, respect others, and see the world from other perspectives. Service-learning participants noted increased skills in communication, a heightened sense of self-confidence, and more sensitivity to differences in age, race, and economic status. (Martin, Neal, Kielsmeier, & Crossley, 2006<sup>5</sup>)
- Studies provide strong evidence that service learning produces an array of positive impacts in the areas of prosocial behaviors, acceptance of diversity, connection to cultural heritage, development of ethics, and strengthening of protective factors related to resilience. Service learning clearly helps students to develop caring, altruism and other social emotional learning. (National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2007<sup>6</sup>)

### Policy Opportunities

Policymakers can support the school climate impacts of civic learning and engagement through policies facilitating, recommending or requiring use of six research-based practices for effective civic learning. Successful civic education builds on strong classroom instruction to provide engaged and applied learning experiences that develop student civic knowledge, skills and dispositions. Find detailed information at Education Commission of the States’ *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*.

Student engagement, collaborative team learning experiences and school governance opportunities are key to strengthening relationships and positive school climate,

so policymakers may focus on policy supports for classroom discussions, student inquiry, service learning and student participation in school governance.



Nebraska expanded the topics required in the high school civic curriculum to include “active participation in the improvement of a citizen’s community, state, country, and world, and the value and practice of civil discourse between opposing interests.” Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-724(5)(c)

Missouri specifies, “the state board of education shall encourage the adoption of service-learning programs and projects among school districts. As used in this section, the term ‘service-learning program and projects’ means a student-centered, research-based method of teaching and learning which engages students of all ages in addressing issues in their school or greater community as part of the academic curriculum. As a result, service-learning fosters academic achievement, civic engagement, and character development.” Mo. Rev. Stat. § 170.037.1



Arizona civic standards benchmarks include: practicing examples of democracy in action e.g. voting, making classroom rules (grade 1), describing the importance of citizens being actively involved in the democratic process (grade 4), demonstrating the skills and knowledge needed to accomplish public purposes (high school). Arizona’s Academic Content Standards—Social Studies (2005)

Massachusetts State Student Advisory Council, or SAC, helps make decisions about state educational policy and student rights. Every secondary school elects two delegates to one of five regional SACs, and each regional council then elects representatives to the State SAC. The chairperson of the state SAC is a full-voting member of the Massachusetts Board of Education.

<sup>1</sup> Gould, J., Jameison, K.H., Levine, P., McConnell, T. & Smith, D.B. (Eds.) 2011. *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*. The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. Accessed at [civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/GuardianofDemocracy.pdf](http://civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/GuardianofDemocracy.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Berkowitz, Hadass Moore, Ron Avi Astor and Rami Benbenishty. 2016. “A Research Synthesis of the Associations Between Socioeconomic Background, Inequity, School Climate, and Academic Achievement.” *Review of Educational Research*. Accessed at [www.aera.net/Newsroom/Recent-AERA-Research/A-Research-Synthesis-of-the-Associations-Between-Socioeconomic-Background-Inequality-School-Climate-and-Academic-Achievement](http://www.aera.net/Newsroom/Recent-AERA-Research/A-Research-Synthesis-of-the-Associations-Between-Socioeconomic-Background-Inequality-School-Climate-and-Academic-Achievement).

<sup>3</sup> Gould, J., Jameison, K.H., Levine, P., McConnell, T. & Smith, D.B. (Eds.) 2011. *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*. The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 21 [civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/GuardianofDemocracy.pdf](http://civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/GuardianofDemocracy.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Evie Blad. Nov 1, 2016. “Education Week Positive School Climates May Help Narrow Achievement Gaps, Analysis Finds. Education Week. Accessed at [blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rulesforengagement/2016/11/positive\\_school\\_climates\\_may\\_help\\_narrow\\_achievement\\_gaps\\_analysis\\_finds\\_1.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rulesforengagement/2016/11/positive_school_climates_may_help_narrow_achievement_gaps_analysis_finds_1.html)

<sup>5</sup> Martin, S., Neal, M., Kielsmeier, J., & Crossley, A. (2006). “The Impact of Service-Learning on Transitions to Adulthood.” In J. Kielsmeier, M. Neal, and A. Crossley (Eds.), *Growing to Greatness 2006: The State of Service-Learning Project*. Saint Paul, MN: National Youth Leadership Council.

<sup>6</sup> National Service-Learning Clearinghouse. (2007). *Impacts of Service-Learning on Participating K-12 Students*. Accessed at [leduccenter.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/sl\\_impacts-on-k12\\_students.pdf](http://leduccenter.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/sl_impacts-on-k12_students.pdf)



# CIVICS SUPPORTS

## Information and Media Literacy

Proven practices for effective civic learning, including research and investigation of issues and discussion of current events, support information and media literacy.

Concerns over a lack of civility in political discussion and new challenges associated with online media and fake news are driving interest in strengthening information and media literacy as part of civic education.

- According to a Pew Research study, 71 percent of teachers who responded rated their academically advanced students as fair or poor in their ability to recognize bias in online content, 61 percent of teachers rated their academically advanced students' ability to assess the quality and accuracy of information online as fair or poor, and 59 percent rated their students' ability to use multiple sources to effectively support an argument as fair to poor. 91% of teachers agree or somewhat agree that courses and content focusing on digital literacy should be incorporated into every school's curriculum. (Purcell et al., 2012<sup>1</sup>)
- 90 percent of teachers reported that applied learning resulted in significant student improvement in media literacy, problem solving, critical thinking, communication, and 80 percent reported that applied learning resulted in significant student improvement in information literacy, self-direction and global awareness. (Partnership for 21st Century Skills.<sup>2</sup>)

### Policy Opportunities

Policymakers can support the information and media literacy impacts of civic learning and engagement through policies facilitating, recommending or requiring use of six research-based practices for effective civic learning. Successful civic education builds on strong classroom instruction to provide engaged and applied learning experiences that develop student civic knowledge, skills and dispositions. Find detailed information at Education Commission of the States' *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*.

Respectful classroom discussion and research learning experiences are key to the development of information and media literacy. Policymakers may focus on policy supports for classroom discussions, student inquiry, service-learning and participation in democratic experiences and simulations.



The College, Career, and Civic Life, or C3, *Framework for Social Studies State Standards*, released in 2013 by the National Council for the Social Studies to guide state social studies and civics standards, describes an inquiry arc in which students develop questions, apply disciplinary concepts, evaluate sources and evidence, communicate conclusions and take informed action.



Nebraska expanded the requirements in the high school civic curriculum to include "active participation in the improvement of a citizen's community, state, country, and world, and the value and practice of civil discourse between opposing interests." Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-724(5)(c)



Connecticut S.B. 949, passed June 2017, creates an advisory council within the Department of Education relating to digital citizenship, internet safety and media literacy.



Washington's S.B. 5449, signed by the governor in April, 2017, requires the office of the superintendent of public instruction to: (1) Survey teacher-librarians, principals, and technology directors to understand how they are currently integrating digital citizenship and media literacy education in their curriculum; and (2) Create a web-based location with links to recommended successful practices and resources to support digital citizenship, media literacy, and internet safety.

---

<sup>1</sup> K. Purcell, L. Rainie, A. Heaps, J. Buchanan, L. Friedrich, A. Jacklin, C. Chen, & K. Zickuhr. 2012. *How Teens Do Research in the Digital World*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project. Accessed at [www.pewinternet.org/2012/11/01/how-teens-do-research-in-the-digital-world/](http://www.pewinternet.org/2012/11/01/how-teens-do-research-in-the-digital-world/)

<sup>2</sup> Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (nd). *Reimagining Citizenship for the 21st Century*, 15. Accessed at [www.p21.org/storage/documents/Reimagining\\_Citizenship\\_for\\_21st\\_Century\\_webversion.pdf](http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/Reimagining_Citizenship_for_21st_Century_webversion.pdf)



# CIVICS SUPPORTS

## Civic Engagement and Participation

---

Participation in engaged civic learning experiences supports lifetime civic engagement. Effective civic education develops in students the civic knowledge, skills and values that allow them to participate in civic life. High engagement and applied civics opportunities, such as service-learning, further strengthen student commitment to informed and active civic participation, including voting.

- Studying civics boosts civic knowledge and skills, which in turn encourages and facilitates civic action, including voting and participating in civic activities. (Gould et al, 2011<sup>1</sup>)
- Findings from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, show that compared with students in classrooms with traditional lectures, students that engaged in political discussions had greater interest in politics, better knowledge of current events, intended to vote at higher rates and were more interested in listening to those with whom they disagree. (Hess and McAvoy, 2015<sup>2</sup>)
- Students whose teacher had received professional development in the We the People civics program became more inclined to participate in politics, increased their level of respect for the rule of law and their level of attentiveness to government and politics and their ability to critically consume political news. These students were also significantly more committed to vote in presidential and local elections and to serve on a jury than students in the comparison group. (Owen, 2015<sup>3</sup>)

### The Civic Opportunity Gap

The well documented academic achievement gap is masking an equally important civic opportunity gap that impacts access to high-quality civic learning and long-term civic participation for low-income students.

- Just as a student's socioeconomic status is a significant determinant of educational opportunities and success,

it also predicts a student's opportunity for high-quality civic learning and future likelihood of voting and civic participation. (Levinson, 2012<sup>4</sup>)

- Low-income children are often denied high-quality inquiry-based civic learning as their schools focus on "the basics" and raising test scores. Research shows urban schools with low-income, diverse students "provide fewer and lower-quality civic opportunities." (Coley and Sum, 2012<sup>5</sup>)
- Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students scored significantly lower than white students in national civics assessments. The 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, results showed significant achievement gaps as compared to white students for each of these groups at the 4th, 8th and 12th grades. (NAEP, 2010<sup>6</sup>)
- Civics training in schools compensates for inequalities in family socialization with respect to political engagement. (Neundorft, Niemi and Smets, 2015<sup>7</sup>)

### Challenges

It is important to address concerns that civic education provide nonpartisan learning that does not influence the political views of students.

- Carnegie Foundation researchers conducted an extensive, multi-year study of 1,000 undergraduates in 21 political courses and concluded that the courses produced significant gains in knowledge, skills and sense of political efficacy. Equally important, they produced no change in party identity and ideology among the several thousand students taking these courses. In short, the researchers found that these were truly courses in political engagement, not political indoctrination. (Simpson, 2013<sup>8</sup>)
- *The Political Classroom: Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education*, presents a coherent plan for providing

students with a nonpartisan political education and for improving the quality of classroom deliberations. This includes criteria and ethical guidance for identifying legitimate controversies with multiple and competing views and for conducting nonpartisan classroom discussions to benefit learning. (Hess and McAvoy, 2015<sup>9</sup>)



The California Secretary of State conducts two designated high school voter education weeks biannually in April and September.

S.B. 1134 made Texas one of many states that allow students to serve as poll workers or election clerks.

## Policy Opportunities

Policymakers can support the civic engagement and participation impacts of civic learning and engagement through policies facilitating, recommending or requiring use of six research-based practices for effective civic learning. Successful civic education builds on strong classroom instruction to provide engaged and applied learning experiences that develop student civic-mindedness, knowledge and skills. Find detailed information at Education Commission of the States' *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*.

Civic experiences and applied learning are key to the development of civic engagement and participation, so policymakers may focus on policy supports for classroom discussions, student inquiry, service-learning and participation in democratic experiences and simulations.



The College, Career and Civic Life (C3) *Framework for Social Studies State Standards*, released in 2013 by the National Council for the Social Studies to guide state social studies and civics standards, describes an inquiry arc in which students develop questions, apply disciplinary concepts, evaluate sources and evidence, communicate conclusions and take informed action.



Nebraska expanded the topics required to be covered in the high school civic curriculum to include "active participation in the improvement of a citizen's community, state, country, and world, and the value and practice of civil discourse between opposing interests." Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-724(5)(c)

Missouri specified, "the state board of education shall encourage the adoption of service-learning programs and projects among school districts. As used in this section, the term 'service-learning program and projects' means a student-centered, research-based method of teaching and learning which engages students of all ages in addressing issues in their school or greater community as part of the academic curriculum. As a result, service-learning fosters academic achievement, civic engagement, and character development." Mo. Rev. Stat. § 170.037.1



Arizona civic standards benchmarks include: practicing examples of democracy in action e.g. voting, making classroom rules (grade 1), describing the importance of citizens being actively involved in the democratic process e.g. voting, student government, etc. (grade 4), demonstrating the skills and knowledge needed to accomplish public purposes (high school).

<sup>1</sup> Gould, J., Jameison, K.H., Levine, P., McConnell, T. & Smith, D.B. (Eds.) 2011. *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*. The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. Accessed at [civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/GuardianofDemocracy.pdf](http://civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/GuardianofDemocracy.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Diana E. Hess and Paula McAvoy. (2015). *The Political Classroom. Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education*. New York/London: Routledge. Infographic accessed at [thepoliticalclassroom.com/infographic.php](http://thepoliticalclassroom.com/infographic.php).

<sup>3</sup> Diana Owen. 2015. *High School Students' Acquisition of Civic Dispositions: The Impact of We the People*. Georgetown University. Accessed at [www.academia.edu/14042402/High\\_School\\_Students\\_Acquisition\\_of\\_Civic\\_Knowledge\\_The\\_Impact\\_of\\_We\\_the\\_People](http://www.academia.edu/14042402/High_School_Students_Acquisition_of_Civic_Knowledge_The_Impact_of_We_the_People).

<sup>4</sup> Meira Levinson. 2012. *No Citizen Left Behind*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. Accessed at [books.google.com/books?id=LztBPNsDLBYC&pg=PP8&ots=xAvU3zrZCe&dq=meira%20levinson%20no%20citizen%20left%20behind&lr&pg=PP8#v=onepage&q=meira%20levinson%20no%20citizen%20left%20behind&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=LztBPNsDLBYC&pg=PP8&ots=xAvU3zrZCe&dq=meira%20levinson%20no%20citizen%20left%20behind&lr&pg=PP8#v=onepage&q=meira%20levinson%20no%20citizen%20left%20behind&f=false).

<sup>5</sup> Richard J. Coley and Andrew Sum. 2012. *Fault Lines in Our Democracy. Civic Knowledge, Voting Behavior, and Civic Engagement in the United States*. Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ: ETS Center for Research on Human Capital and Education Research and Development. Accessed at [www.ets.org/s/research/19386/rsc/pdf/18719\\_fault\\_lines\\_report.pdf](http://www.ets.org/s/research/19386/rsc/pdf/18719_fault_lines_report.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. 2010. Civics 2010. National Assessment of Educational Progress at Grades 4, 8, and 12. U.S. Department of Education. Accessed at [nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2010/2011466.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2010/2011466.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Anja Neundorff, Richard G. Niemi, & Kaat Smets. 2015. *The Compensation Effect of Civic Education on Political Engagement: How Civics Classes Make Up for Missing Parental Socialization*. Nuffield College, Working Paper Series in Politics. Accessed at [www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/Research/Politics%20Group/Working%20papers/Documents/Neundorff%20et%20al%202015%20Civic%20Education.pdf](http://www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/Research/Politics%20Group/Working%20papers/Documents/Neundorff%20et%20al%202015%20Civic%20Education.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Dick Simpson. 2013. "Toward Civic and Political Engagement." A. Rios Millett McCartney, E. Bennion, & D. Simpson, (Eds.). *Teaching Civic Engagement: From Student to Active Citizen*. American Political Science Association State of the Profession Series, 450. Accessed at [web.apsanet.org/teachingcivicengagement/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2016/10/TeachingCivicEngagementBW.pdf](http://web.apsanet.org/teachingcivicengagement/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2016/10/TeachingCivicEngagementBW.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Diana E. Hess and Paula McAvoy. 2015. *The Political Classroom. Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education*, New York/London: Routledge.

<sup>10</sup> Brady Delander, Lisa Guilfoile & Carol Kreck, *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*, Education Commission of the States. 2016. [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update\\_r2.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update_r2.pdf) (accessed August 17, 2017)



## CIVICS SUPPORTS

### Attendance and Graduation

---

Many states seek to promote effective civic education through community service engagement and service-learning opportunities for students. Participation in engaged civic learning experiences improves student attendance and graduation and post-secondary pursuits. Effective civic learning through service and small group learning engages students and infuses relevance into their coursework. Together with stronger peer relationships and improved skills developed through group interactions, this engagement increases student commitment to attending and graduating from school. Absenteeism, graduation rates and post-secondary attainment appear in numerous state Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, plan assessment systems and as noncognitive indicators of school quality and student success.

- Students who participated in community service and service-learning report significantly fewer missed school days and significantly higher grades than similar students who did not participate in service. Service participation was associated with smaller gaps between high-income and low-income students for attendance, achievement motivation, school engagement, reading for pleasure, and especially for bonding to school. (Scales, 2006<sup>1</sup>)
- Student absences have been shown to reduce in classrooms where service-learning is utilized.<sup>2</sup>
- Compared to traditional instructional methods, students engaged in small-group learning achieve higher grades, retain information longer, and have reduced dropout rates, improved communication and collaboration skills, and a better understanding of professional environments.<sup>3</sup>
- Students who participated in service-learning activities in high school were 22 percentage points more likely to graduate from college than those who did not participate. Civic engagement activities raised the odds of graduation and improved high school students' progress in reading, math, science and history. (Davila and Mora, 2007<sup>4</sup>)

Two key aspects of civic learning and engagement that contribute to improved attendance and high school graduation include:

#### Improved student behavior and discipline

Behavior and discipline issues are harbingers of educational failure and drop-outs. As students become more engaged and committed to their learning, behavior improves and discipline issues decline.

- Students involved in service have lower incidences of negative social behaviors, like drug use and teen pregnancy, and report stronger belief in themselves and their ability to effect positive change in their communities. (Culbertson, 2012<sup>5</sup>)
- Engaged for Success reports that “service activities lowers behavior problems by 15 percent” and service-learning has a significant impact on the lowering of bad behavior of boys. (Accessed via Bridgeland, Dilulio and Wulsin, 2008<sup>6</sup>)

#### Positive connection to learning and school

As student teams conduct real-world civic learning projects, the connection to peers, teachers, the school, learning and community are all strengthened.

- Civics education serves as “an important antidote” to factors cited by students who drop out of school, such as disengagement in “boring and irrelevant” classroom learning, a lack of experiential learning, and limited connections between academic learning and life outside of school. (Gould et al, 2011, accessed via Partnership for 21st Century Skills<sup>7</sup>)
- In the report Engaged for Success, 82 percent of students who participated in service-learning projects said that their feelings about attending high school became more positive, and more than half of at-risk students believed

that service-learning could have a big effect on keeping potential dropouts in school. (Accessed via Bridgeland, Dilulio and Wulsin, 2008<sup>8</sup>)

## Policy Opportunities

Policy makers can support the attendance and graduation impacts of civic learning and engagement through policies facilitating, recommending or requiring use of six research-based practices for effective civic learning. Successful civic education builds on strong classroom instruction to provide engaged and applied learning experiences that develop student civic-mindedness, knowledge and skills. Find detailed information at Education Commission of the States' *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*.<sup>9</sup>

Collaborative team learning experiences are key to strengthening school connections and the improvement of attendance and graduation rates, so policymakers may focus on policy supports for classroom discussions, student inquiry, service-learning and participation in democratic experiences and simulations.



The College, Career and Civic Life (C3) *Framework for Social Studies State Standards*, released in 2013 by the National Council for the Social Studies to guide state social studies and civics standards, describes an inquiry arc in which students develop questions, apply disciplinary concepts, evaluate sources and evidence, communicate conclusions and take informed action.



Nebraska expanded the topics required to be covered in the high school civic curriculum to include "active participation in the improvement of a citizen's community, state, country, and world, and the value and practice of civil discourse between opposing interests." Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-724(5)(c)

Missouri specified, "the state board of education shall encourage the adoption of service-learning programs and projects among school districts. As used in this section, the term 'service-learning program and projects' means a student-centered, research-based method of teaching and learning which engages students of all ages in addressing issues in their school or greater community as part of the academic curriculum. As a result, service-learning fosters academic achievement, civic engagement, and character development." Mo. Rev. Stat. § 170.037.1



Arizona civic standards benchmarks include: practicing examples of democracy in action e.g. voting, making classroom rules (grade 1), describing the importance

of citizens being actively involved in the democratic process e.g. voting, student government, etc. (grade 4), demonstrating the skills and knowledge needed to accomplish public purposes (high school).



The California Secretary of State conducts two designated high school voter education weeks biannually in April and September.



S.B. 1134 made Texas one of many states that allow students to serve as poll workers or election clerks.

- <sup>1</sup> P. Scales, E. Roehlkepartain, M. Neal, J. Kielsmeier, & P. Benson. 2006. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 29(1), 51.
- <sup>2</sup> W. Weah, P. Scales, E. Roehlkepartain, V. C. Simmons, & M. Hall. 2009. *Urban Matters: Improving City Schools and Bridging the Achievement Gap Through Service-Learning*. National Youth Leadership Council.
- <sup>3</sup> The Case for Project Based Learning. ISTE. April, 2015. Accessed at [www.iste.org/explore/articleDetail?articleid=386](http://www.iste.org/explore/articleDetail?articleid=386).
- <sup>4</sup> Alberto Davila and Marie T. Mora. 2007. *Civic Engagement and High School Academic Progress: An Analysis Using NELS Data*. Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement. Accessed at [civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP52Mora.pdf](http://civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP52Mora.pdf).
- <sup>5</sup> Steven Culbertson. 2012. To Improve Student Achievement, Start with Service. HuffPost. Accessed at [www.huffingtonpost.com/steven-culbertson/to-improve-student-achiev\\_b\\_1833342.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steven-culbertson/to-improve-student-achiev_b_1833342.html).
- <sup>6</sup> John M. Bridgeland, John J. Dilulio, Jr. and Stuart C. Wulsin. 2008. *Engaged for Success: Service-Learning as a Tool for High School Dropout Prevention*. Civic Enterprises. Accessed at [files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED503357.pdf](http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED503357.pdf).
- <sup>7</sup> Gould, J., Jameison, K.H., Levine, P., McConnell, T. & Smith, D.B. (Eds.) 2011. *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*. The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. Accessed via Partnership for 21st Century Skills at [www.p21.org/storage/documents/Reimagining\\_Citizenship\\_for\\_21st\\_Century\\_webversion.pdf](http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/Reimagining_Citizenship_for_21st_Century_webversion.pdf).
- <sup>8</sup> John M. Bridgeland, John J. Dilulio, Jr. and Stuart C. Wulsin. 2008. *Engaged for Success: Service-Learning as a Tool for High School Dropout Prevention*. Civic Enterprises. Accessed at [files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED503357.pdf](http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED503357.pdf).
- <sup>9</sup> Brady Delander, Lisa Guilfoile & Carol Kreck, *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*. Education Commission of the States, 2016, [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update\\_r2.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update_r2.pdf).



# CIVICS SUPPORTS

## Student Academic Achievement

---

Participation in engaged civic learning experiences such as project-based learning increases overall student academic performance. Active learning and civic service projects that allow students to apply skills give relevance to standards-based academic content, resulting in improved learning, test results and grades.

- A review of research indicates that high-quality service-learning, because of its utilization of effective, experiential learning strategies, can enhance academic outcomes in reading, writing, mathematics and science. A variety of studies have shown evidence of a range of achievement-related benefits from service-learning, including improved attendance, higher grade point averages, enhanced preparation for the workforce, enhanced awareness and understanding of social issues, greater motivation for learning, and heightened engagement in prosocial behaviors. (Furco, 2007<sup>1</sup>)
- Second graders in high-poverty, low-performing school districts had statistically significant gains using applied learning strategies compared to a control group of students who experienced traditional classroom instruction. (University of Michigan, 2017<sup>2</sup>) Students who participated in service-learning scored 6.7 percent higher in reading achievement and 5.9 percent higher in science achievement than those who did not participate in service-learning. (Davila and Mora, 2007<sup>3</sup>)
- A meta-analysis of 164 studies on cooperative learning, a key aspect of project-based learning, demonstrated that cooperation among learners had a significant positive impact on achievement. Students retain content longer and have a deeper understanding of what they are learning (ISTE, 2015<sup>4</sup>).
- Use of engaged service-learning in higher education is based on “robust findings of academic benefits that include greater likelihood of degree completion and better mastery of academic content.” (Matthews, Dorfman and Wu, 2015<sup>5</sup>)

Three key aspects of civic learning and engagement contribute to improved overall academic outcomes:

### Real world application

When students can apply content to real issues and understand the practical value of learning, they demonstrate improved academic mastery of the content.

- A meta-analysis of applied service-learning impacts shows students demonstrate significant positive gains in attitudes toward school and learning and academic performance. (Celio, Durlak and Dymnicki, 2011<sup>6</sup>)

### Cognitive and analytical skills

Civic learning supports higher order thinking that has broad academic benefits, such as the ability to interpret evidence, to understand what leads people to make choices, analyze cause and effect and problem-solve.

- Ninety percent of teachers in a Pew Research Center study reported applied learning resulted in significant student improvement in 12 key skill areas: leadership, media literacy, collaboration, flexibility, adaptability, responsibility, creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, communication, innovation and initiative. Eighty percent of teachers reported that six additional skill areas improved as well: productivity, accountability, information literacy, social skills, self-direction and global awareness. (Partnership for 21st Century Skills<sup>7</sup>)
- Higher education research on coursework that includes service shows there is a growth in critical thinking skills and that when service is connected to academic content, it does increase the development of cognitive skills. (Vogelgesang and Astin, 2000<sup>8</sup>)

### Student engagement in learning

Studies find that traditional instruction from textbooks leaves students disconnected from knowledge and lacking excitement about learning. (Torney-Purta, 2002<sup>9</sup>). Active, participatory learning used in effective civic education increases student engagement and success.

- Student engagement in learning is the number one predictor of academic success. (Gallup, 2015<sup>10</sup>)

- An in-depth study of more than 78,000 students in 160 schools across eight states found that a one-percentage-point increase in a school's average student engagement score was associated with a six-point increase in reading achievement and an eight-point increase in math achievement. (Gallup, 2015<sup>11</sup>)
- The more engaged students were in the service-learning activity, the higher the outcomes on all academic and civic measures, with the strongest effects in the areas of academic engagement, school attachment and efficacy. (RMC Research Corporation, 2005<sup>12</sup>)



Arizona civic standards benchmarks include: practicing examples of democracy in action e.g. voting, making classroom rules (grade 1), describing the importance of citizens being actively involved in the democratic process e.g. voting, student government, etc. (grade 4), demonstrating the skills and knowledge needed to accomplish public purposes (high school).

The California Secretary of State conducts two designated high school voter education weeks biannually in April and September.



S.B. 1134 made Texas one of many states that allow students to serve as poll workers or election clerks.

## Policy Opportunities

Policymakers can support the academic achievement impacts of civic learning and engagement through policies facilitating, recommending or requiring use of six research-based practices for effective civic learning. Successful civic education builds on strong classroom instruction to provide engaged and applied learning experiences that develop student civic-mindedness, knowledge and skills. Find detailed information at Education Commission of the States' *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*.<sup>13</sup>

Student engagement and collaborative and applied learning experiences are key to academic achievement, so policymakers may focus on policy supports for high-quality classroom instruction, student inquiry, service-learning and participation in democratic experiences and simulations.



The Alabama Social Studies Course of Study (grade-level standards) include a strand of standards for civics and government to "enable students to become informed, responsible participants in political life and to function as competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of the constitutional democracy that established the republic of the United States of America."



The College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, released in 2013 by the National Council for the Social Studies to guide state social studies and civics standards, describes an inquiry arc in which students develop questions, apply disciplinary concepts, evaluate sources and evidence, communicate conclusions and take informed action.



Nebraska expanded the topics required to be covered in the high school civic curriculum to include "active participation in the improvement of a citizen's community, state, country, and world, and the value and practice of civil discourse between opposing interests." Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-724(5)(c)

Missouri specified, "the state board of education shall encourage the adoption of service-learning programs and projects among school districts. As used in this section, the term 'service-learning program and projects' means a student-centered, research-based method of teaching and learning which engages students of all ages in addressing issues in their school or greater community as part of the academic curriculum. As a result, service-learning fosters academic achievement, civic engagement, and character development." Mo. Rev. Stat. § 170.037.1

- 1 A. Furco. January 2007. The Role of Service-Learning in Enhancing Student Achievement. Presentation given at the National Center for Learning and Citizenship Board Meeting, Santa Barbara, CA. Accessed via National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, *Impacts of Service-Learning on Participating K-12 Students*. [leduccenter.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/sl\\_impacts-on-k12\\_students.pdf](http://leduccenter.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/sl_impacts-on-k12_students.pdf).
- 2 N. Duke, A. Halvorsen, S. Strachan, S. Konstantopoulous, and J. Kim. 2017. *Putting PBL to the Test: The Impact of Project-Based Learning on Second-Grader Students' Social Studies and Literacy Learning and Motivation*. University of Michigan, School of Education. Accessed at [sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/nkduke/publications/project-place-papers](http://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/nkduke/publications/project-place-papers).
- 3 Alberto Davila and Marie T. Mora. (2007). Civic Engagement and High School Academic Progress: An analysis using NELS data. Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. Accessed at [civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP52Mora.pdf](http://civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP52Mora.pdf).
- 4 International Society for Technology in Education. 2015. The Case for Project-Based Learning. Accessed at [www.iste.org/explore/articleDetail?articleId=386](http://www.iste.org/explore/articleDetail?articleId=386).
- 5 P. Matthews, J. Dorfman & X. Wu. 2015. "The Impacts of Undergraduate Service-Learning on Post-Graduation Employment Outcomes." *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement* 3(1).
- 6 Christine Celio, Joseph Durlak and Allison Dymnicki. 2011. A Meta-analysis of the Impact of Service-Learning on Students. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 34(2), 164-181.
- 7 Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (nd). *Reimagining Citizenship for the 21st Century*, 15. Accessed at [www.p21.org/storage/documents/Reimagining\\_Citizenship\\_for\\_21st\\_Century\\_webversion.pdf](http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/Reimagining_Citizenship_for_21st_Century_webversion.pdf).
- 8 L. J. Vogelgesang, & A. W. Astin. Fall, 2000. "Comparing the Effects of Community Service and Service-Learning." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*. Accessed at [quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs/3239521.0007.103?rgn=main;view](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mjcs/3239521.0007.103?rgn=main;view).
- 9 Judith Torney-Purta. 2002. "The School's Role in Developing Civic Engagement: A Study of Adolescents in Twenty-Eight Countries." *Applied Developmental Science*, 6:4, 210.
- 10 Gallup Inc. 2015. *State of American Schools: The Path to Winning Again in Education*. Accessed via [www.gallup.com/services/178709/state-america-schools-report.aspx](http://www.gallup.com/services/178709/state-america-schools-report.aspx).
- 11 Gallup Inc. 2015. *State of American Schools: The Path to Winning Again in Education*. Accessed at [www.gallup.com/services/178709/state-america-schools-report.aspx](http://www.gallup.com/services/178709/state-america-schools-report.aspx).
- 12 Shelley Billig, Sue Root, and Dan Jesse. 2005. *The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning on High School Students' Civic Engagement*. RMC Research Corporation, Denver, CO. Accessed at [www.servicelearningnet-work.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/WP33Billig.pdf](http://www.servicelearningnet-work.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/WP33Billig.pdf).
- 13 [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update\\_r2.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update_r2.pdf)



# CIVICS SUPPORTS

## Equity and Reduction in Achievement Gaps

---

Participation in engaging civic learning experiences reduces academic achievement gaps on the basis of income, racial and ethnic status, and parental education level.

- Community service and service-learning experiences contribute to reductions in the academic achievement gap, particularly for low-income students, who have better academic success than peers who did not participate in service. Research finds “service of only one hour per week among lower-income students was related to significant reduction of the gap in achievement-related assets between higher and lower-income students.” (NYLC, 2005<sup>1</sup>)
- Students who participated in service had higher attendance and better grades, as well as significantly higher achievement motivation, school engagement and bonding to school compared with students who did not participate in service. (Scales et al, 2006<sup>2</sup>)

Two key aspects of civic learning and engagement contribute to improved overall academic outcomes:

### Engaged Pedagogies

The use of student-directed and applied teaching and learning strategies is an effective means of raising both civic learning and the academic achievement of at-risk groups.

- Collaborative learning in student groups reduces the achievement gap between low-income and high-income students. Even in mixed-ability groups, the more high school students participated in engaged group learning, the more the knowledge of the subject improved for all students (Sparks, 2017<sup>3</sup>). Struggling students from alternative schools who participated in service learning also showed gains in attitudes toward school, writing scores and grade point averages. (Kraft and Wheeler, 2003<sup>4</sup>)

### School Climate

Strong relationships and a sense of belonging are at the heart of school climate. Civic learning improves school climate through interactions between diverse students, teachers and the community.

- A positive school climate can reduce the effects of low family income on academic achievement. (Blad, 2016<sup>5</sup>)
- Principals of urban, high-poverty and majority nonwhite schools report “very positive” impacts on attendance, school engagement and academic achievement at significantly higher rates than principals of schools with higher socio-economic demographics. (Scales et al, 2006<sup>6</sup>)

### Policy Opportunities

Polymakers can support equity and achievement gap reduction impacts of civic learning and engagement through policies facilitating, recommending or requiring use of six research-based practices for effective civic learning. Successful civic education builds on strong classroom instruction to provide engaged and applied learning experiences that develop student civic knowledge, skills and dispositions. Find detailed information at Education Commission of the States’ *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*.<sup>7</sup>

High-quality, engaged learning experiences are key to the development of equity and achievement gap reduction, so policymakers may focus on policy supports that encourage classroom discussions, student inquiry, service learning and participation in democratic experiences and simulations.



The College, Career, and Civic Life, or C3, *Framework for Social Studies State Standards*, released in 2013 by the National Council for the Social Studies to guide state social studies and civics standards, describes an inquiry arc

in which students develop questions, apply disciplinary concepts, evaluate sources and evidence, communicate conclusions and take informed action.



Nebraska increased the requirements in the high school civic curriculum to include “active participation in the improvement of a citizen’s community, state, country, and world, and the value and practice of civil discourse between opposing interests.” Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-724(5)(c)

Missouri specifies, “the state board of education shall encourage the adoption of service-learning programs and projects among school districts. As used in this section, the term ‘service-learning program and projects means a student-centered, research-based method of teaching and learning which engages students of all ages in addressing issues in their school or greater community as part of the academic curriculum. As a result, service-learning fosters academic achievement, civic engagement, and character development.” Mo. Rev. Stat. § 170.037.1



Arizona civic standards benchmarks include: practicing examples of democracy in action e.g. voting, making classroom rules (grade 1), describing the importance of citizens being actively involved in the democratic process (grade 4), demonstrating the skills and knowledge needed to accomplish public purposes (high school). Arizona’s Academic Content Standards - Social Studies (2005)

The California Secretary of State conducts two designated high school voter registration weeks annually in April and September.



S.B. 1134 makes Texas one of many states that allow students to serve as poll workers or election clerks.

- <sup>1</sup> National Youth Leadership Council. 2005. *Can Service-Learning Help Reduce the Achievement Gap?* NYLC Resource Center, 16. Accessed at [www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Service-Learning/SL\\_HRAG.pdf](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Service-Learning/SL_HRAG.pdf).
- <sup>2</sup> P. Scales, E. Roehlkepartain, M. Neal, J. Kielsmeier & P. Benson. 2006. “Reducing Academic Achievement Gaps: The role of community service and service-learning.” *Journal of Experiential Education*, 29(1), 38.
- <sup>3</sup> Sarah Sparks. Education Week. “Children Must Be Taught to Collaborate, Studies Say.” May 16, 2017. Accessed at [www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/05/17/children-must-be-taught-to-collaborate-studies.html](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/05/17/children-must-be-taught-to-collaborate-studies.html).
- <sup>4</sup> N. Kraft, & J. Wheeler. 2003. “Service-learning and Resilience in Disaffected Youth: A Research Study.” In S. H. Billig & J. Eyler (Eds.), *Advances in service-learning research: Vol. 3. Deconstructing Service-Learning: Research Exploring Context, Participation, and Impacts*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age, 213–238.
- <sup>5</sup> Evie Blad. Nov 1, 2016. “Positive School Climates May Help Narrow Achievement Gaps, Analysis Finds.” Education Week. Accessed at [blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rulesforengagement/2016/11/positive\\_school\\_climates\\_may\\_help\\_narrow\\_achievement\\_gaps\\_analysis\\_finds\\_1.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rulesforengagement/2016/11/positive_school_climates_may_help_narrow_achievement_gaps_analysis_finds_1.html).
- <sup>6</sup> P. Scales, E. Roehlkepartain, M. Neal, J. Kielsmeier & P. Benson. 2006. “Reducing Academic Achievement Gaps: The role of community service and service-learning.” *Journal of Experiential Education*, 29(1), 38.
- <sup>7</sup> Brady Delander, Lisa Guilfoile & Carol Kreck. *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*. Education Commission of the States, 2016, [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update\\_r2.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update_r2.pdf).



## CIVICS SUPPORTS

### 21st Century College and Workforce Skills

---

Participation in engaged civic-learning experiences develops 21st century skills critical for college and careers. Civic learning amplifies 21st century competencies such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity, as well as career exploration supported by service learning. Civic learning is often practiced through applied- and service-learning experiences, such as in-school and extracurricular programming that challenges students to directly engage with their community and the political process. Providing students with hands-on civic experience helps them to develop real-world problem solving skills.

- Students who participated in applied learning experiences had “significant student improvement in 12 key skill areas: leadership, media literacy, collaboration, flexibility, adaptability, responsibility, creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, communication, innovation and initiative,” according to 90 percent of teachers responding to a Pew Research Center study, with additional gains in productivity, accountability, information literacy, social skills, self-direction and global awareness reported by 80 percent of the teachers. (Partnership for 21st Century Skills).<sup>1</sup>
- Research summaries indicate that service-learning has a positive effect on teamwork, leadership and communication skills. These skills in turn help to foster “applied knowledge in real-world settings,” critical thinking, communication, problem-solving and intercultural skills that are the top competencies being sought by business and nonprofit sector employers. (Matthews, Dorfman and Wu, 2015<sup>2</sup>).
- Higher work-quality and being valued in the work place are documented benefits of real-world problem solving for Americans aged 18–35. (Gallup, 2015<sup>3</sup>).

Many states explicitly recognize the contribution of applied, real-world learning experiences to college and

career readiness. Service learning, in which students apply standards-based academic content and civic skills to community issues, is a proven educational practice for effective civic learning.

Two key aspects of civic learning and engagement contribute to development of 21st century skills:

#### Collaborative learning Experiences

Effective civic learning emphasizes collaborative, team approaches that build 21st century competencies.

- Having students work on group projects has been found effective in developing skills including collaboration, critical thinking and communication (Friedlaender, Burns, Lewis-Charp, Cook-Harvey and Darling-Hammond, 2014<sup>4</sup>). Research shows applied learning approaches teach students collaborative skills, including communicating with others, resolving conflicts and managing tasks (Sparks, 2017<sup>5</sup>).

#### Applied Learning Pedagogies

Application of standards-based content knowledge to real-world issues and engaged, student-led learning are hallmarks of effective civic education—and of development of 21st century workforce skills.

- A significant majority of students reported that they gained job skills and work experience through their participation in service learning. Top benefits identified were learning about careers, reading, writing and computer skills (RMC Research Corporation, 2005<sup>6</sup>). U.S. residents age 18 to 35 who had opportunities in their last year of school to develop higher-order skills—and specifically, real-world problem-solving—were twice as likely to report higher-quality work lives than those who did not experience applied-learning opportunities (Gallup, 2015<sup>7</sup>).

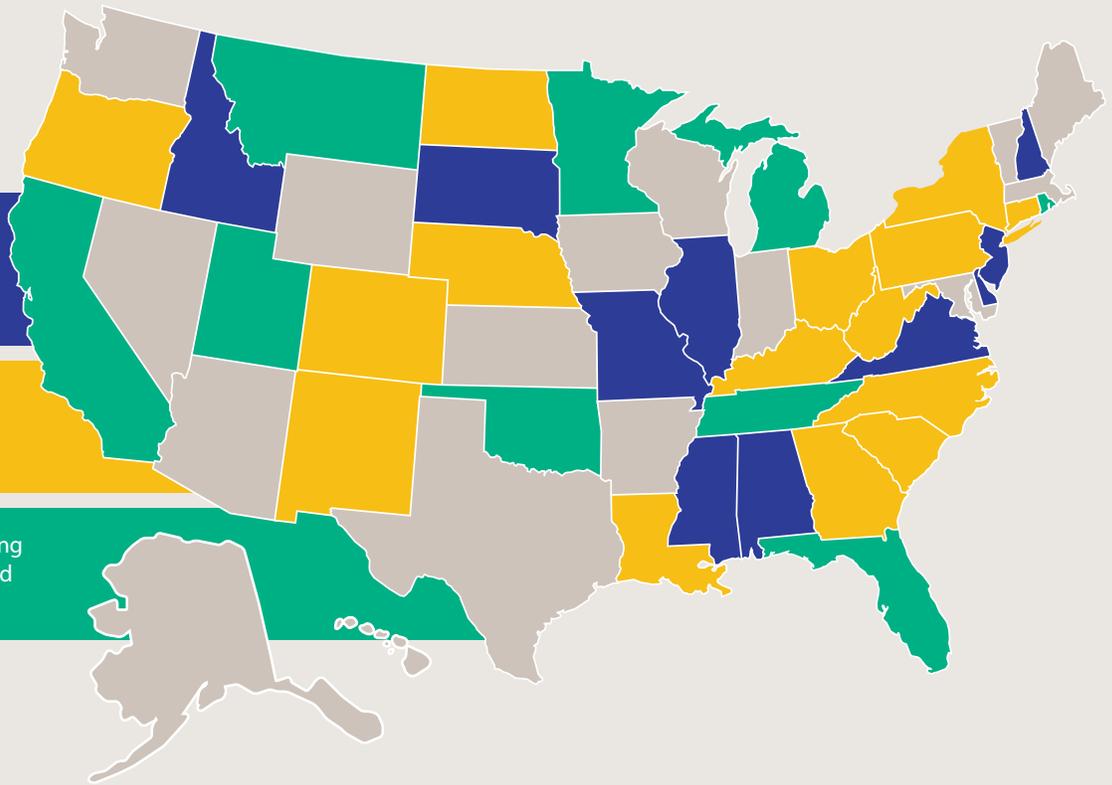
# STATE POLICIES FOR SERVICE LEARNING

From the Education Commission of the States' *50-State Comparison: State Policies for Service-Learning*

19 states and the District of Columbia identify service-learning as a strategy for civics

24 states identify service-learning as a strategy for workforce readiness

9 states identify service-learning as a strategy for both civics and workforce readiness



## Policy Opportunities

Policymakers can support the 21st century skills impacts of civic learning and engagement through policies facilitating, recommending or requiring use of six research-based practices for effective civic learning. Successful civic education builds on strong classroom instruction to provide engaged- and applied-learning experiences that develop students' civic-mindedness, knowledge and skills. Find detailed information at Education Commission of the States' *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*.<sup>8</sup>

Collaborative- and applied-learning experiences are key to the development of 21st century skills, so policymakers may focus on policy supports for classroom discussions, student inquiry, service-learning and participation in democratic experiences and simulations.



The College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, released in 2013 by the National Council for the Social Studies to guide state social studies and civics standards, describes an inquiry arc in which students develop questions, apply disciplinary concepts, evaluate sources and evidence, communicate conclusions and take informed action.



Nebraska expanded the topics required to be covered in the high school civic curriculum to include "active participation in the improvement of a citizen's community, state, country, and world, and the value and practice

of civil discourse between opposing interests." Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-724(5)(c)



Missouri specified, "the state board of education shall encourage the adoption of service-learning programs and projects among school districts. As used in this section, the term 'service-learning program and projects' means a student-centered, research-based method of teaching and learning which engages students of all ages in addressing issues in their school or greater community as part of the academic curriculum. As a result, service-learning fosters academic achievement, civic engagement, and character development." Mo. Rev. Stat. § 170.037.1



Arizona civic standards benchmarks include: practicing examples of democracy in action e.g. voting, making classroom rules (grade 1), describing the importance of citizens being actively involved in the democratic process e.g. voting, student government, etc. (grade 4), demonstrating the skills and knowledge needed to accomplish public purposes (high school). Arizona's Academic Content Standards - Social Studies (2005)

The California Secretary of State conducts two designated high school voter education weeks biannually in April and September.



S.B. 1134 made Texas one of many states that allow students to serve as poll workers or election clerks.



- 
- <sup>1</sup> Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (nd). *Reimagining Citizenship for the 21st Century*, 15. Accessed at [www.p21.org/storage/documents/Reimagining\\_Citizenship\\_for\\_21st\\_Century\\_webversion.pdf](http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/Reimagining_Citizenship_for_21st_Century_webversion.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup> Matthews, P, Dorfman, J. & Wu, X. 2015. "The Impacts of Undergraduate Service-Learning on Post-Graduation Employment Outcomes." *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement* 3(1).
- <sup>3</sup> Gallup Inc. (2015). *State of American Schools: The Path to Winning Again in Education*, 39. Accessed at [www.gallup.com/services/178709/state-america-schools-report.aspx](http://www.gallup.com/services/178709/state-america-schools-report.aspx)
- <sup>4</sup> Diane Friedlaender, Dion Burns, Heather Lewis-Charp, Channa Mae Cook-Harvey, and Linda Darling-Hammond. (21014). *Student-Centered Schools: Closing the Opportunity Gap*. Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education
- <sup>5</sup> Sarah Sparks. May 16, 2017. "Children Must Be Taught to Collaborate, Studies Say." Education Week. Accessed at [www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/05/17/children-must-be-taught-to-collaborate-studies.html](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/05/17/children-must-be-taught-to-collaborate-studies.html)
- <sup>6</sup> Shelley Billig, Sue Root, and Dan Jesse. 2005. *The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning on High School Students' Civic Engagement*. RMC Research Corporation, Denver, CO. Accessed at [www.servicelarningnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/WP33Billig.pdf](http://www.servicelarningnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/WP33Billig.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> Gallup Inc. (2015). *State of American Schools: The Path to Winning Again in Education*, 39. Accessed at [www.gallup.com/services/178709/state-america-schools-report.aspx](http://www.gallup.com/services/178709/state-america-schools-report.aspx)
- <sup>8</sup> Brady Delander, Lisa Guilfoile & Carol Kreck, *Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning*, Education Commission of the States, 2016, [www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update\\_r2.pdf](http://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update_r2.pdf).



**The Council  
of State  
Governments**

1776 Avenue of the States | Lexington, KY 40511  
859.244.8000 | [www.csg.org](http://www.csg.org)

---



**EDUCATION COMMISSION  
OF THE STATES**

700 Broadway, Suite 810 | Denver, CO 80203  
303.299.3600 | [www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org)