

CivXNow

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Educators' Role in Making Civics a National Priority: Doing Civics *for* Civics

February 28, 2024

**Presented by: Ace Parsi, Director of Coalition Engagement, and
Shawn Healy, Senior Director, Policy & Advocacy**

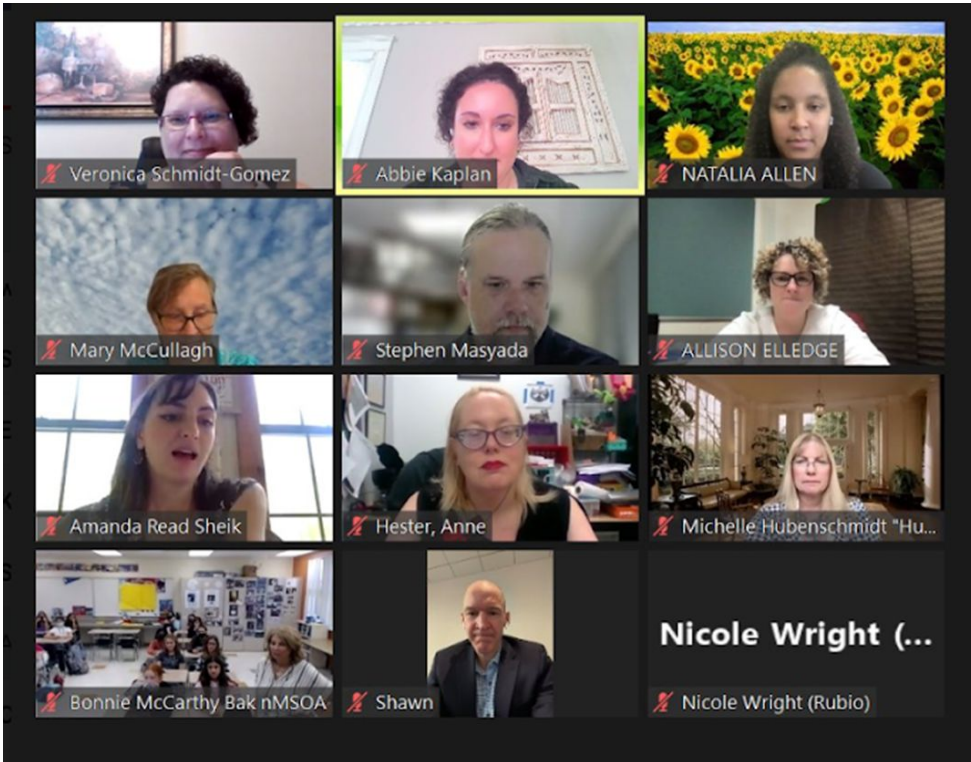


Introducing the Teachers Advancing Civic Learning (TACL)



Our Purpose

We are trying to build a grassroots network of educators who are trained and empowered to advocate for the civic mission of schools at the local, state, and federal levels.



“Schooled by a social studies teacher”

Why do we need you?

Educators are the experts in what is best for students in the classroom; we are experts in advocacy. With your stories, partnership, and voices, we can unite to center the civic mission of K-12 education and strengthen our nation's constitutional democracy for generations to come.



Social Education #896, pp. 171-177
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Promoting Disciplinary Literacy: C3LC Teaching Suggestions

Teachers at the Center: Recent Efforts to Strengthen the Civic Mission of Schools in Illinois

Shawn P. Healy

Teachers in the trenches have led the charge to bring civics back in Illinois.

- They have worked within their buildings to deepen school-wide commitments to civic learning through recognition of their schools as Illinois Democracy Schools.
- Teachers played a leading role in the creation of a state civic education task force, were active participants on it, and ultimately worked with their students to advocate for action on its recommendations.
- Teachers were on the frontlines as we made an ultimately successful legislative push. For a required high school civics course last year, and teachers from across the social studies and K-12 spectrum used the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework to write new standards for the State of Illinois.
- Even now, teachers are at the center of efforts in Illinois to implement the new course requirements and emerging standards, which will allow the graduates of Illinois schools the benefit of being prepared for college, career, and civic life. These efforts are informed by the C3LC model of collaborative professional development.

Building a Statewide Network of Democracy Schools

The Illinois Democracy Schools Initiative¹ was launched in 2005 by the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition to implement the recommendations of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, namely formal instruction in U.S. government, history, law, and democracy; discussion of current and controversial issues; service learning; simulations of democratic processes; civic-oriented extracurricular opportunities; and integrating student voice in school governance.² Schools employing these practices are recognized as Democracy Schools.

As of September 2016, the Illinois Democracy Schools Network was 54 members strong. It's fair to say that teachers both have driven the recognition process at their schools, and used this honor to deepen and sustain high-quality civic learning among their colleagues.

Policy Follows Proven Practices

The power of social studies teachers as advocates for civic education was demonstrated in 2015 through their support of legislation encouraging Illinois to join the ranks of 39 other states that require a civics or government course in order to graduate. This was proposed in House Bill 4025, introduced by State Representative Deb Courtoy (D-Villa Park) in February 2015.

As chair of the Illinois Task Force on Civic Education, I strongly supported

the bill and was joined by teacher colleagues, including Larry Pahl, an Illinois Council for the Social Studies board member and teacher at Bartlett High School, a Democracy School. We faced an uphill struggle. The political environment was hostile to a new mandate imposed on public schools, particularly given the state's precarious fiscal situation and inability to provide funding for implementation. Thankfully, the state's philanthropic community committed the necessary dollars, and we were able to make the case that this was a "funded" mandate.

We enjoyed strong support from Democrats in the legislature from the outset, but knew that we desperately needed bi-partisan backing in order for the Republican governor to ultimately sign the bill. This meant outreach to individual legislators on both sides of the aisle in both the House and Senate, and our teacher leaders at Democracy Schools were up to the task.

The bill passed out of committee in the House with a handful of Republican votes, but we wanted to do better on the floor. One social studies department chair from the Northwest suburbs of Chicago contacted his local state representative, who had voted "no" in committee. She asked to speak with him at length by phone, and later rose when the bill was called on the floor to say she had changed her mind. The reason: "I was schooled by a social studies teacher."

Together we'll *do civics for civics*

What will you gain from this experience?

1. **Form deeper relationships** with peers, network beyond your school, and hear from those who have been successful in advocating for civics and history education.
2. **Access to specialized toolkits** on how to engage decision-makers at all levels through live and recorded trainings and modules.
3. **Join leading organizations** in the civic learning field.
4. **Step into your power** as an educator to bring about change and be a part of something bigger.
5. **Model civic behavior** for your students and communities.

Breakout Question:

What tangible impact would additional positive policy focus on and investments in civic learning mean to you?

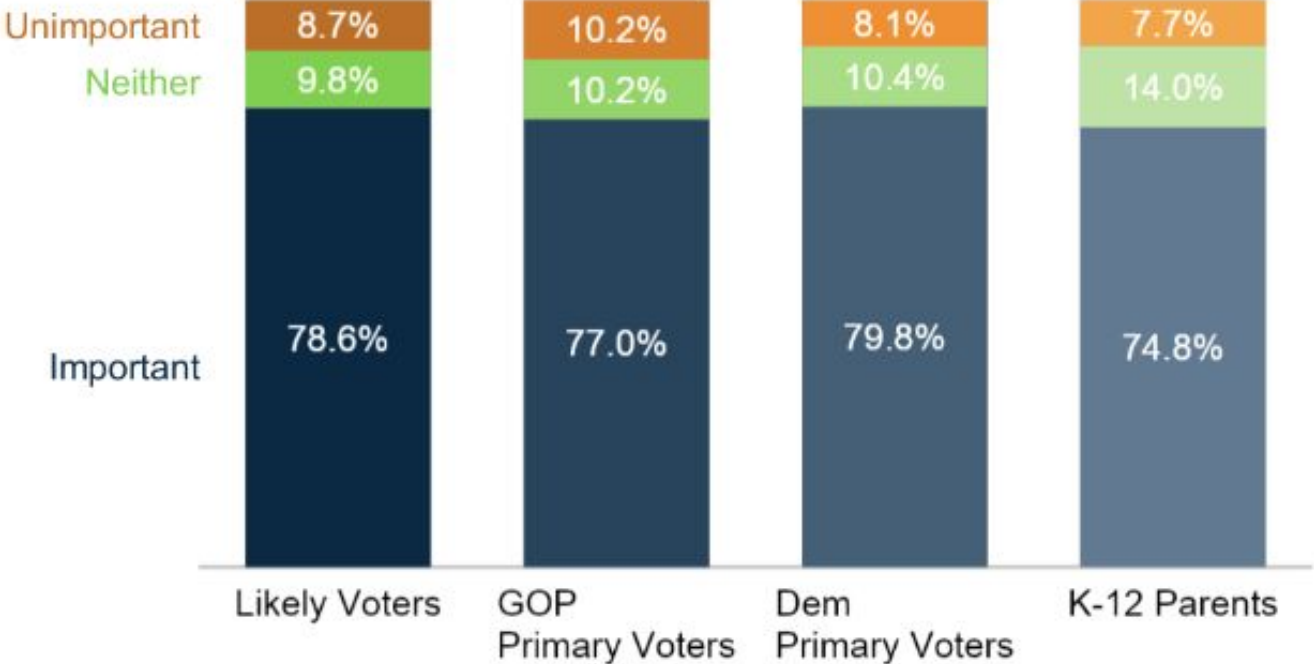
Agenda:

1. Read the Lines (Background): Arguments and background to support your case
 - What parents and the public want from civic education
 - The CivXNow Coalition
 - Current K-12 civic education policy landscape
 - Increasing federal support for K-12 civics
2. Read Between the Lines (Questions): Introducing the Teacher Advancing Civic Learning (TACL) project
3. Read Beyond the Lines (Action): Opportunity to take action

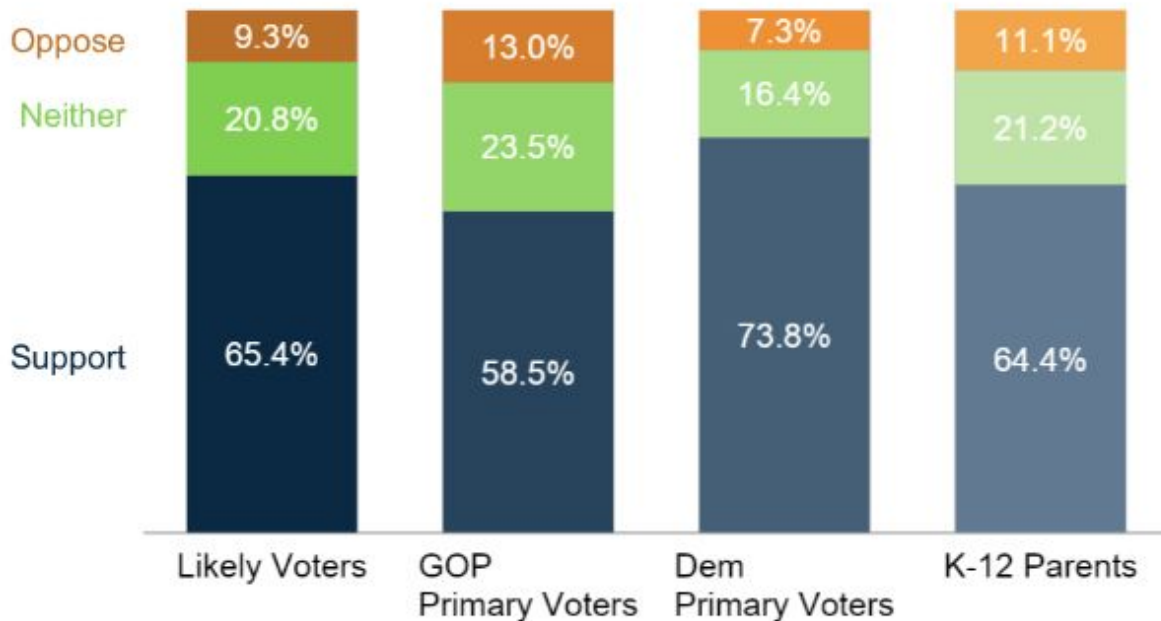
What Parents and the Public Want from Civic Education



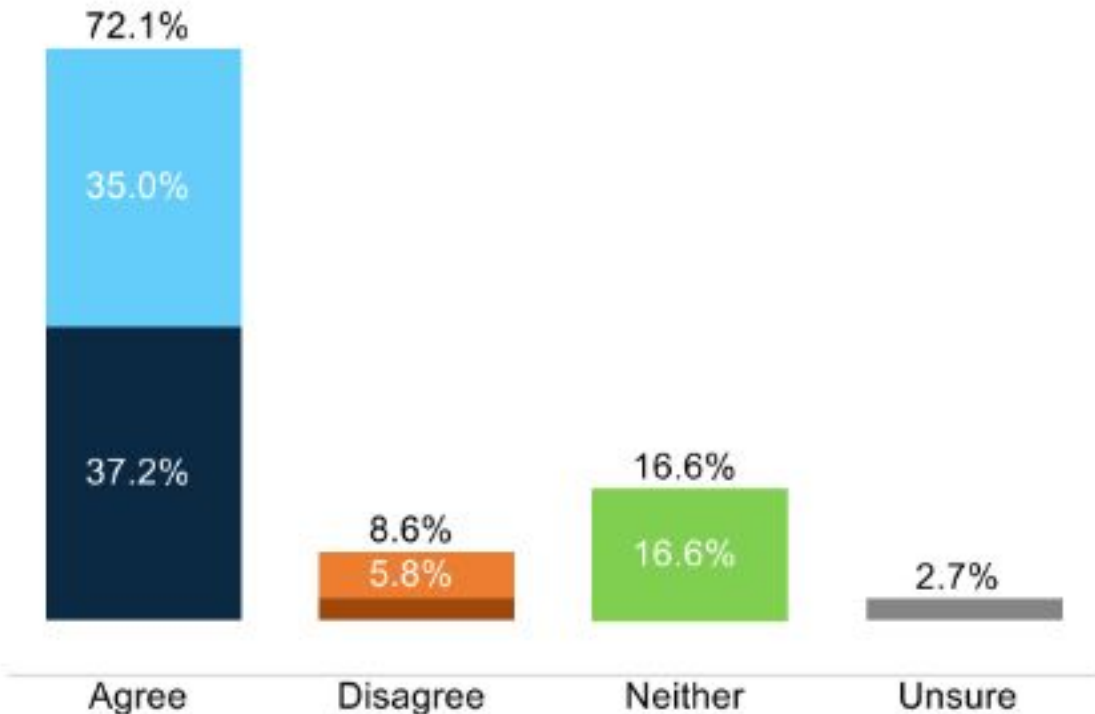
A Fall 2022 poll of 3K likely voters by Cygnal found it's very important for schools to teach more about civics



More funding for civic education is also widely supported



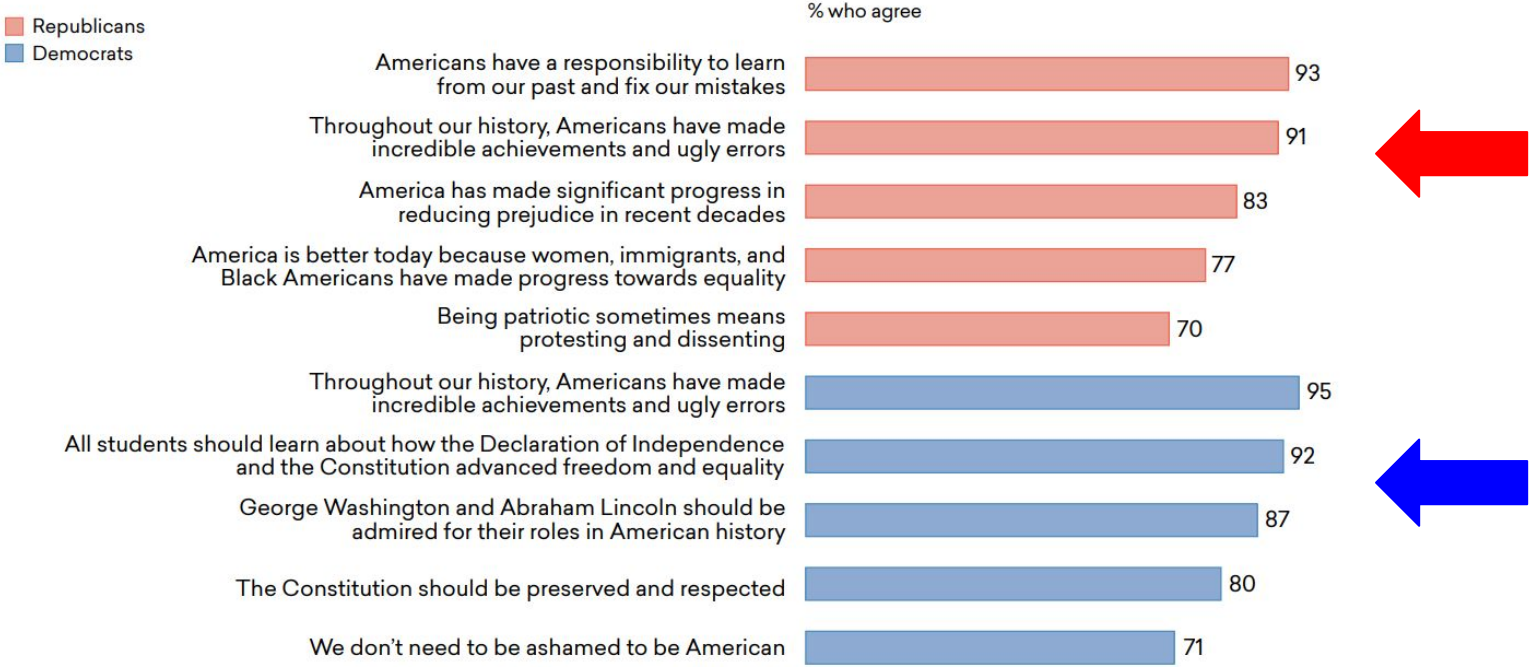
A strong majority agrees that “education should encourage vigorous debate about different points of view, even about controversial issues”



More in Common found similar support across parties for a balanced approach to teaching history despite polarized perceptions of the opposite party

Figure 0.5

Strong Support among both Parties for Balanced Approaches to Teaching American History



Universal civic learning is widely seen as a means of improving our democracy

There is a high level of optimism that policies to advance More Perfect's five democracy goals will have a positive impact

Please indicate how much you think each one would help to strengthen and improve our democracy.

Would help a lot Would help some

Trusted Elections and More Representative and Responsive Governance:

Build confidence in our elections by having clear rules that protect the ability of all eligible voters to cast ballots, prevent fraud, and ensure that all votes are counted fairly and accurately.



Universal Civic Learning: Increase civic education in our schools, including educating students on American history, the Constitution, and how our democratic system works.



Access to Trusted News and Information: Increase access to news and information, including local news, that is objective and verifiable.



Bridge divides: Bridge differences and divisions in our society by creating more opportunities for Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs to understand each other better, discover common interests, and solve problems together.



National service and volunteering: Provide more opportunities for young people to participate in voluntary civilian service to our country, with a living stipend and scholarships for those who commit to a year of service.

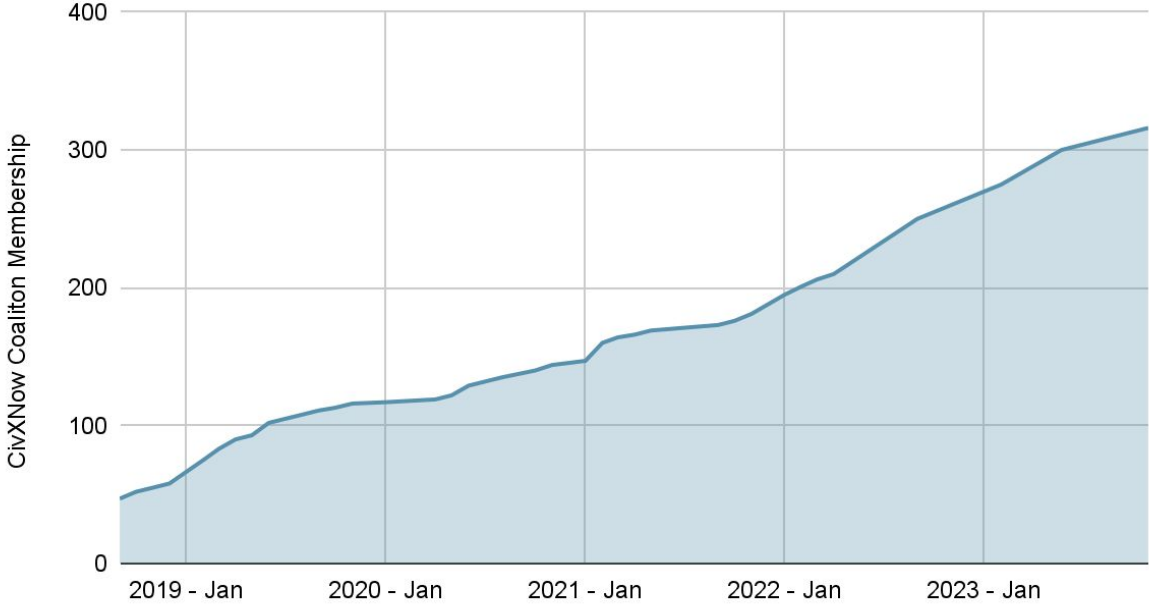


The CivXNow Coalition



iCivics launched the CivXNow Coalition in 2018 with 47 charter members; it now contains 325+ cross-ideological partners spanning the country, united efforts to elevate civic education as a national priority

CivXNow Coaliton Membership (2018-2023)



CivXNow members self-select into four affinity groups where we engage in collective impact endeavors that currently include teachers as advocates, Civic Learning Week, and AI and civic learning



Federal Policy and Advocacy

Policy-oriented members join forces to advance federal policy goals



State Policy Task Force

State affiliates and members implement State Policy Menu recommendations



Awareness

Communications and program-oriented members build an air game to create demand for stronger civic learning policies



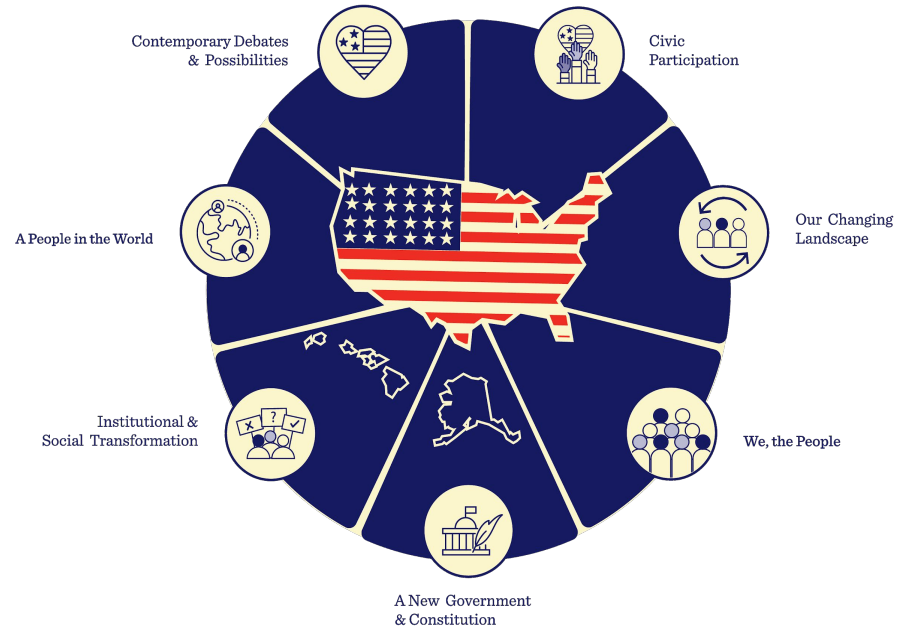
Research and Measurement

Research-oriented members aggregate existing knowledge on civic learning and identify future research goals

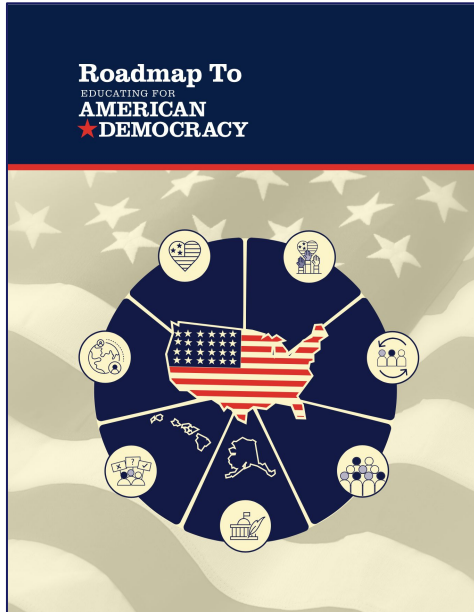
Current K-12 Civic Education Landscape



Released in 2021, Educating for American Democracy (EAD) explores what and how to teach civics and history, building students' knowledge and capacities to sustain America's constitutional democracy



EAD offers guidance for the content and instructional strategies of K–12 history and civic education across the United States



- Inquiry framework and design principles that states and districts may use to develop and deliver excellent history and civic learning.
- Not a series of facts but questions that promote depth over breadth
- Not a national curriculum nor a mandate



60

Million Students

will have access to high-quality civic learning opportunities, where high-quality is defined as excellence in teaching of civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic dispositions; also, a diverse supermajority will be actively engaged in earning civic learning credentials

100,000

Schools

will be “civic ready” (have a civic learning plan and resources to support it in place), prioritizing excellence in teaching of civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic dispositions



1

Million Teachers

will be EAD-ready (having received excellent and pre-and in-service professional development)

The CivXNow State Policy Menu operationalizes EAD's recommendations, adaptable to local context

State Policy Menu



Universal
Access



Implementation



Educator
Professional
Development



Equity in
Civics



Commitments
to Civic
Learning



State
Standards



Pre-Service
Teaching
Requirements



Assessment
& Accountability

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Current state K-12 civic education policies are articulated on the CivXNow site

CURRENT STATE POLICIES



Click on your state to learn about the civic education policies currently in place.



Tennessee

Insights

Required middle school civics course?

✗ No, inquiry focused standards in middle school, with instruction built into standards and other coursework

Required high school civics course?

✔ Yes

Does the state include media literacy in learning standards?

✗ No

Does the state require a type of civics assessment?

✔ Yes, students need to pass a civics exam based on the Naturalization test to graduate and complete a project-based civics assessment in middle and high school

Does the state have a civics seal or school recognition program for excellence in civics?

✔ Yes, the Governor's Civics Seal

Use the [State Policy Menu](#) to advocate for comprehensive, research-based civic learning in your state!

State Policy Scan by the numbers...



High School

37
DC



Service Learning

38

DC



Media Literacy

37



Middle School

10



Assessment

29



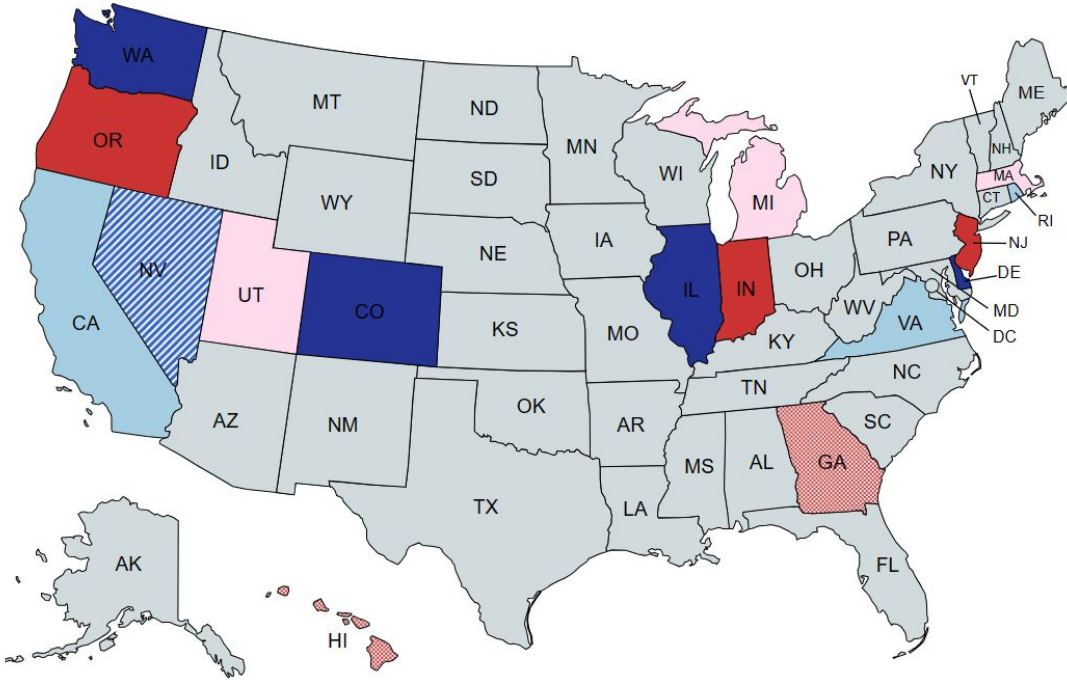
Civic Seal

10

How does your state measure up when it comes to civics?



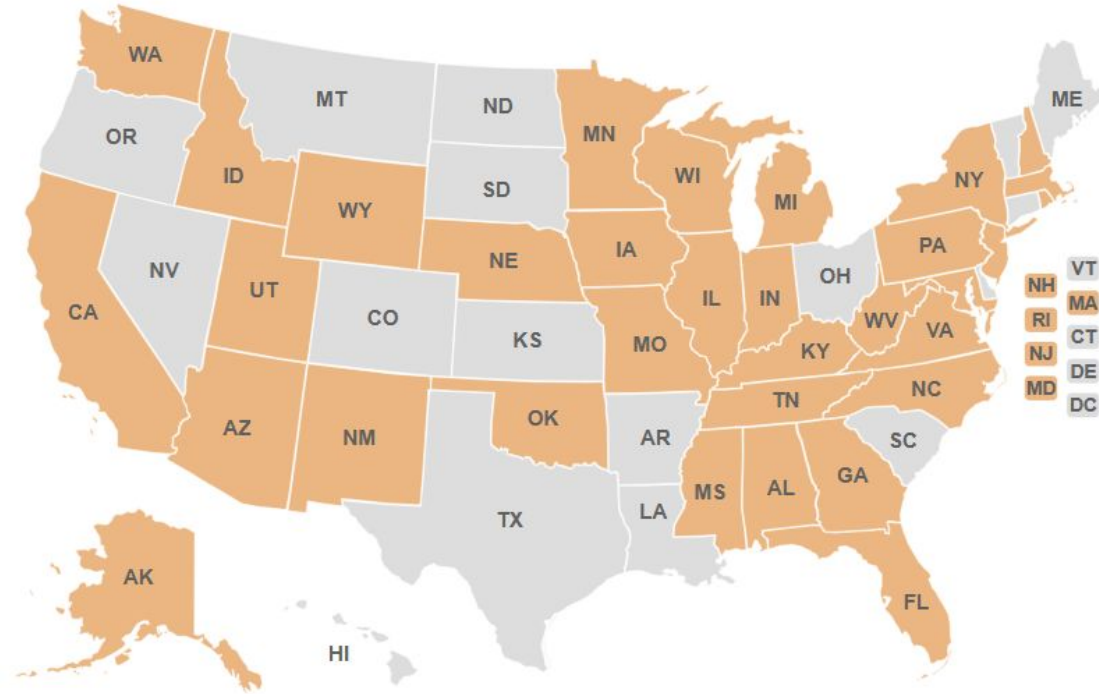
In the last biennium ('21-'22), 16 states adopted measures to strengthen K-12 civic education



New state policies adopted

-  Civics course requirements
-  Civics content requirements
-  Experiential civic learning opportunities / requirements
-  Civic seals
-  State civics commission
-  State civics appropriations

This spring (2024), we're tracking 123 bills impacting K-12 civic education in 33 states



■ Legislation is listed

Increasing Federal Support for K-12 Civics



The 117th Congress made a substantial downpayment on civics in the year-end omnibus appropriations bill

RealClear PublicAffairs ▾

NOW READING: **SMALL BUDGETARY STEP FROM CONGRESS IS HUGE GAIN FOR CIVICS**

UP NEXT: GREAT AMERICAN STORIES: STANDING UP FOR FREE SPEECH



Small Budgetary Step From Congress Is Huge Gain for Civics



Issue: [American Civics](#)



EducationWeek®

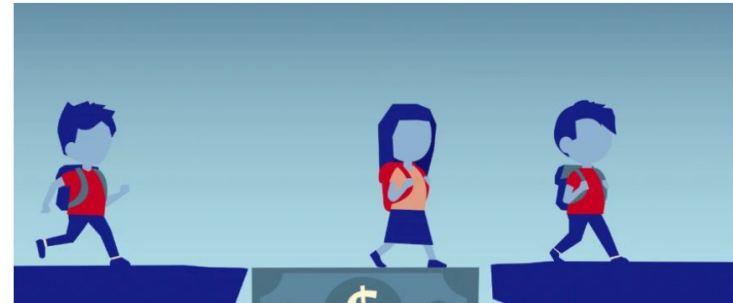
LEADERSHIP POLICY & POLITICS TEACHING & LEARNING TECHNOLOGY OPINION

EDUCATION FUNDING

Special Ed., Civics, and High-Need Schools Get a Boost in New Federal Spending Package

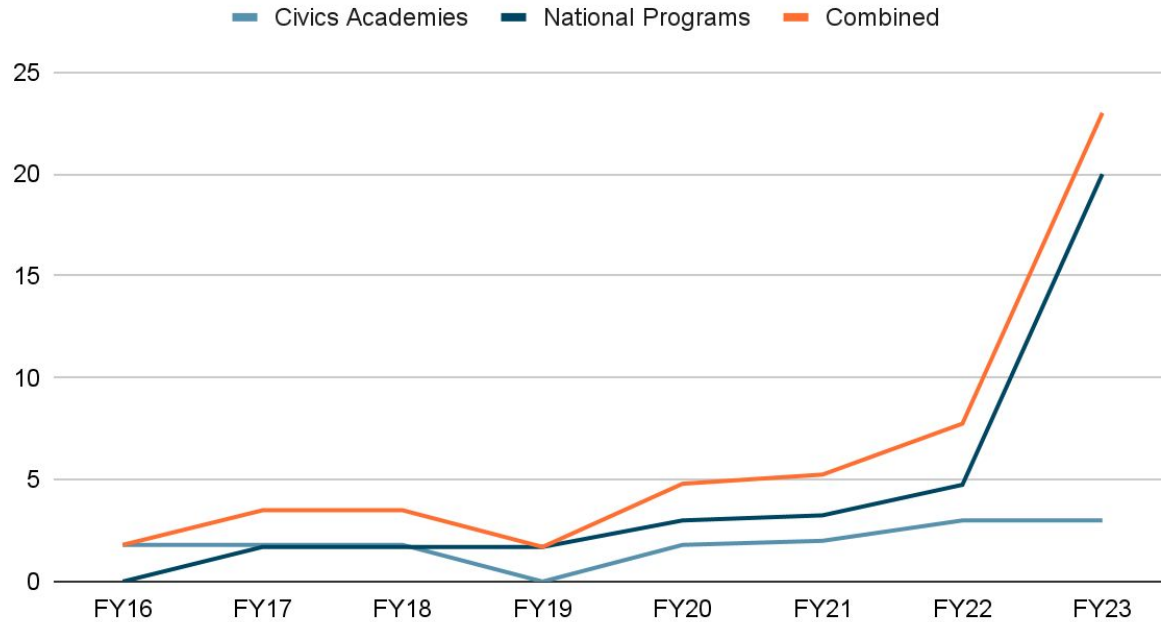


By [Mark Lieberman](#) — December 23, 2022 ⌚ 5 min read



Federal funding for K-12 civics tripled in FY23

Federal funding for K-12 civics



National Activities Grant recipients have broad national reach

4K

Teachers

400K

Students

FY24 funding is in limbo with differing House & Senate appropriations levels amid larger turmoil

There are five days until a partial government shutdown, and lawmakers have yet to reach a deal to avert it



By Clare Foran, Melanie Zanona, Lauren Fox and Morgan Rimmer, CNN

4 minute read · Published 7:00 AM EST, Mon February 26, 2024

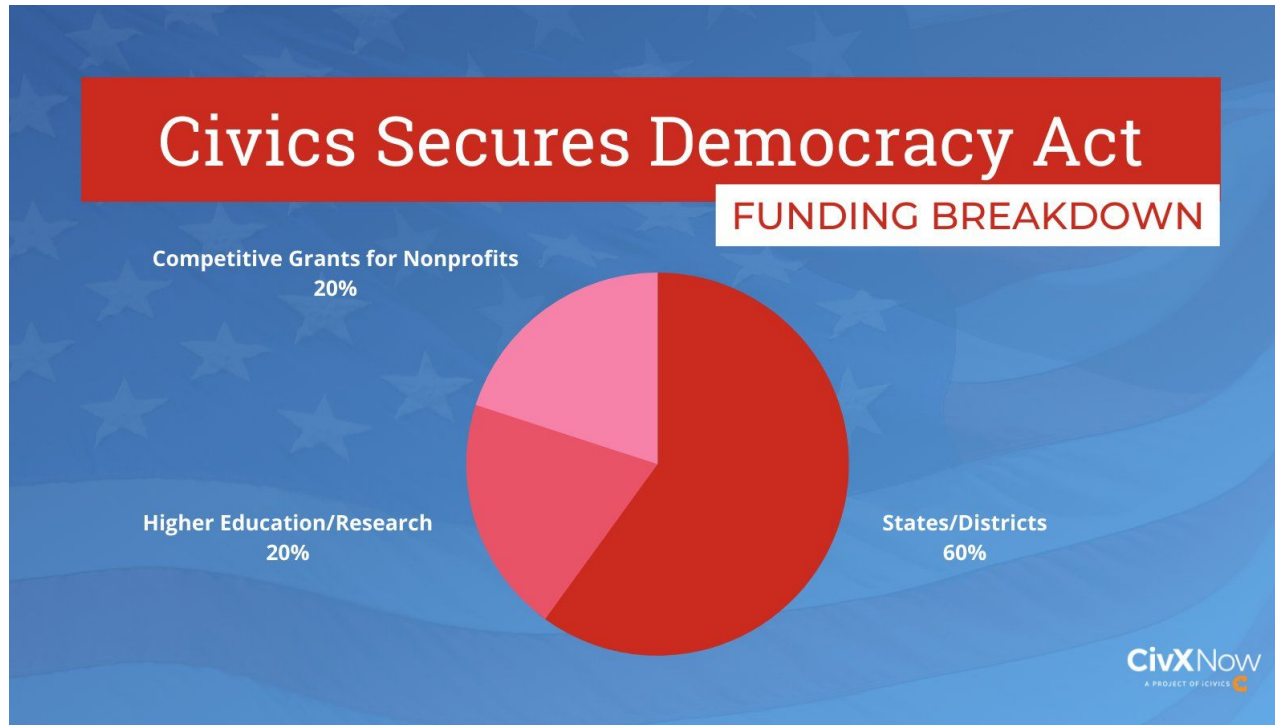


House Speaker Mike Johnson, left, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer. Getty Images/Reuters

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The Civics Secures Democracy Act represents the field's federal funding priorities



There's clear interest in civic learning and engagement given the volume of pertinent legislation



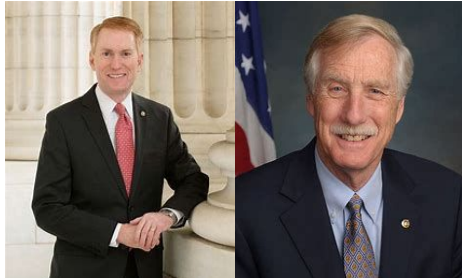
Presidential Seal of Civic Engagement



PREP Civics in Government Act



Digital Citizenship and Media Literacy Act



CIVICS Act



AI Literacy Act



Civics Corps Act

**Now Your Turn:
Take Action Now**



Constitutional democracy is a team sport

Learn to Use our Website to Support
the Civics Secures Democracy Act

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What Could You do to Get Your Peers Engaged?



Constitutional democracy is a team sport

Why join Teachers Advancing Civic Learning?

- **Form deeper relationships** with peers, network with those at other schools, and hear from those who have been successful in advocating for civic and history learning.
- **Build skills and leverage resources** for engaging decisionmakers at the national, state, and local levels through synchronized and asynchronous trainings, seminars, and modules.
- **Work directly with leading organizations** in the civic learning field.
- **Be part of the larger movement** to advance civic education.
- **Model civic behavior for your students.**

Constitutional democracy is a team sport

How will we support you?

We commit to:

1. **Providing** access to free coalition tools and resources.
2. **Offering** a set of trainings to help you feel confident in being an advocate for civic and history learning.
3. **Helping** you connect to issues as they happen by including you on an Action Alert list for emerging advocacy opportunities.
4. **Connecting** you with other civic-minded peers and organizations engaging in this experience together.

Become a TACL member today!

Teachers Advancing Civic Learning (TACL)



Scan this QR Code
to join now!



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