The Civic Mission of Schools

Carnegie Corporation of New York

CIRCLE
The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement

THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS

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Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

For more than 250 years, Americans have shared a vision of a democracy in which all citizens understand, appreciate, and engage actively in civic and political life. In recent decades, however, increasing numbers of Americans have disengaged from civic and political institutions such as voluntary associations, religious congregations, community-based organizations, and political and electoral activities such as voting and being informed about public issues. Young people reflect these trends: they are less likely to vote and are less interested in political discussion and public issues than either their older counterparts or young people of past decades. As a result, many young Americans may not be prepared to participate fully in our democracy now and when they become adults.

Recognizing that individuals do not automatically become free and responsible citizens but must be educated for citizenship, scholars; teachers; civic leaders; local, state, and federal policymakers; and federal judges, have with the encouragement of the president of the United States, called for new strategies that can capitalize on young people's idealism and their commitment to service and voluntarism while addressing their disengagement from political and civic institutions. One of the most promising approaches to increase young people's informed engagement is school-based civic education.

In late 2002, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and Carnegie Corporation of New York, in consultation with the Corporation for National and Community Service, convened a series of meetings involving some of the nation's most distinguished and respected scholars and practitioners in this area to determine, based on solid data and evidence, the components of effective and feasible civic education programs. Representing a diversity of political views, a variety of disciplines, and various approaches, these individuals disagree about some aspects of how civic education should be conducted, but nevertheless share a common vision of a richer, more comprehensive approach to civic education in the United States. This report is a powerful statement of their vision.

GOALS OF CIVIC EDUCATION

Civic education should help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives. Competent and responsible citizens:

1. are informed and thoughtful; have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy; have an understanding and awareness of public and community issues; and have the ability to obtain information, think critically, and enter into dialogue among others with different perspectives.

2. participate in their communities through membership in or contributions to organizations working to address an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs.

3. act politically by having the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to accomplish public purposes, such as group problem solving, public speaking, petitioning and protesting, and voting.

4. have moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference.

WHY SCHOOLS ARE IMPORTANT VENUES FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

- It is crucial for the future health of our democracy that all young people, including those who are usually marginalized, be knowledgeable, engaged in their communities and in politics, and committed to the public good.
- Encouraging the development of civic skills and attitudes among young people has been an important goal of education and was the primary impetus for originally establishing public schools.
- Schools are the only institutions with the capacity and mandate to reach virtually every young person in the country. Of all institutions, schools are the most systematically and directly responsible for imparting citizen norms.
- Schools are best equipped to address the cognitive aspects of good citizenship — civic and political knowledge and related skills such as critical thinking and deliberation.
- Schools are communities in which young people learn to interact, argue, and work together with others, an important foundation for future citizenship.
- Many non-school institutions that used to provide venues for young people to participate in civic and political affairs (such as political parties, unions, nonprofit associations, and activist religious denominations) have lost the capacity or will to engage young people. Schools, as major community institutions, can help reverse this trend and have an impact on other institutions (political, economic, religious, and family), by providing quality education that improves young people's civic knowledge, skills, and intentions to vote and volunteer.
- Forty state constitutions mention the importance of civic literacy among citizens, and 13 of them state that a central purpose of their educational system is to promote good citizenship, democracy and free government.

WHY THIS IS AN IMPORTANT TIME FOR SCHOOLS TO FOCUS ON CIVIC EDUCATION

- **Schools can capitalize on several positive trends related to youth civic engagement,** including an increase in the number of young people involved in community service and volunteering and in the percentage of young people who are tolerant and committed to free speech.
- **Schools can help address disturbing trends related to youth civic engagement,** including a decrease in young people's interest in political discussion and public issues; their tendency to be more cynical and alienated from formal politics, more materialistic, and less trusting; and a decline in their voter participation rates.
- **School-based civic education is in decline.** Most formal civic education today comprises only a single semester course on government — compared to as many as three courses in democracy, civics, and government that were common until the 1960s.
- **Numerous factors work against even the best intentions educators may have to promote civic engagement among young people.** These obstacles include fear of criticism and litigation if educators address topics that may be considered controversial or political in nature; pressures to meet the goals of high-stakes testing, which now measures reading and mathematics skills (civic education is rarely included); and budget cutbacks in extracurricular programs that help children gain civic skills and attitudes.

SIX PROMISING APPROACHES TO CIVIC EDUCATION

Research shows that schools can help to develop competent and responsible citizens when they:

1 **Provide instruction in government, history, law, and democracy.** Formal instruction in U.S. government, history, and democracy increases civic knowledge. This is a valuable goal in itself and may also contribute to young people's tendency to engage in civic and political activities over the long term. However, schools should avoid teaching only rote facts about dry procedures, which is unlikely to benefit students and may actually alienate them from politics.

2 **Incorporate discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events into the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives.** When young people have opportunities to discuss current issues in a classroom setting, they tend to have greater interest in politics, improved critical thinking and communications skills, more civic knowledge, and more interest in discussing public affairs out of school. Conversations, however, should be carefully moderated so that students feel welcome to speak from a variety of perspectives. Teachers need support in broaching controversial issues in classrooms since they may risk criticism or sanctions if they do so.

3 **Design and implement programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction.** Service programs are now common in K-12 schools. The ones that best develop engaged citizens are linked to the curriculum; consciously pursue civic outcomes, rather than seek only to improve academic performance or to promote higher self-esteem; allow students to engage in meaningful work on serious public issues; give students a role in choosing and designing their projects; provide students with opportunities to reflect on the service work; allow students — especially older ones — to pursue political responses to problems consistent with laws that require public schools to be nonpartisan; and see service-learning as part of a broader philosophy toward education, not just a program that is adopted for a finite period in a particular course.

4 **Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities.** Long term studies of Americans show that those who participate in extracurricular activities in high school remain more civically engaged than their contemporaries even decades later. Thus, everyone should have opportunities to join high school groups, and such participation should be valued.

5 **Encourage student participation in school governance.** A long tradition of research suggests that giving students more opportunities to participate in the management of their own classrooms and schools builds their civic skills and attitudes. Thus, giving students a voice in school governance is a promising way to encourage even less advantaged young people to engage civically.

6 **Encourage students' participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.** Recent evidence indicates that simulations of voting, trials, legislative deliberation, and diplomacy in schools can lead to heightened political knowledge and interest. The data are not conclusive, but these approaches show promise and should be considered when developing programs and curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report concludes with numerous recommendations for schools and school systems, state and national policymakers, colleges and universities, researchers, and private funders. Following are some major recommendations in brief form:

1 **Schools** should work with state education departments and local school district officials to develop and establish civic education curricula based on combinations of the six promising approaches noted above. These curricula should be parts of every student's school experience at every grade level.

2 **School administrators** should allow and encourage educators to facilitate discussions of complex and/or controversial current events and issues in the classroom.

3 **The federal government** should increase the amount of federal funding available to states for civic education. The government should further consider establishing a new federal entity with responsibility for civic education, perhaps a "National Civic Education Foundation," which would commission research on civic education, encourage the development of model programs, help design and implement curricula, and serve as a national clearinghouse on civic education for teachers and schools across the country.

4 **Standards should be implemented for civic education.** This can be done by 1) more frequently offering the National Assessment of Educational Progress's (NAEP) Civics Assessment, in states as well as nationally, and/or 2) reexamining existing state social studies and civic education standards with a goal of ensuring that the promising approaches and goals of civic education outlined in this report are realized by the establishment of supportive standards and curricular policies.

5 **Schools of education** should strengthen the civic dimensions of pre-service and in-service education for teachers and administrators. Those who are already working in schools should also be offered the opportunity to acquire continuing education credits related to civic education so that they can become more skilled at inculcating the civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes students need to become responsible and engaged citizens.

6 **Researchers** should develop and implement more rigorous studies (including longitudinal research) about effective service-learning and other civic education approaches. Researchers should also develop indicators for civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes at each phase of K-12 schooling.

7 **Funders** should support efforts to build national and state coalitions of educators, policymakers, parents, young people, and community leaders to advocate for better and more civic education in schools.

This report provides a framework for creating more effective civic education programs in our schools and represents, for the first time, consensus about this issue among the nation's leading scholars and practitioners. We hope that the concrete recommendations provided in this report will help us move from rhetorical expressions of concern about youth civic engagement to implementing richer and more comprehensive civic education programs that will not only help schools fulfill their civic missions, but also ensure that young Americans have the tools they need to participate fully in the political and civic processes that are the hallmark of U.S. democracy.

Introduction

For more than 250 years, Americans have shared a vision of a democracy in which all citizens understand, appreciate, and engage actively in civic and political life — taking responsibility for building communities, contributing their diverse talents and energies to solve local and national problems, deliberating about public issues, influencing public policy, voting, and pursuing the common good. Americans know that it is a rare and precious gift to live in a society that permits and values such participation.

In recent decades, concern has grown about the increasing numbers of Americans who are disengaging from civic and political institutions such as voluntary associations, religious congregations, and community-based organizations. This disengagement extends to political and electoral processes such as voting and being informed about public issues.

In many ways, young people reflect these trends. Americans under the age of 25 are less likely to vote than either their older counterparts or young people of past decades. Surveys have shown that they are not as interested in political discussion and public issues as past generations were at the same point in their lives. In addition, there are gaps in young people's knowledge of fundamental democratic principles and processes. As a result, many young Americans are not prepared to participate fully in our democracy now and when they become adults.

At the same time, young people are volunteering and participating in community activities at high rates. Some experts, in fact, argue that this generation is among the most engaged in history, evidenced by the growing number of young people involved in community-based civic renewal or volunteer projects.

Recognizing that individuals do not automatically become free and responsible citizens but must be educated for citizenship, there has been in recent years a growing call for new strategies that can capitalize on young people's idealism while addressing their disengagement from political and civic institutions so that we can better preserve and enhance America's tradition of citizen involvement. How to achieve this goal, however, has been a matter of considerable debate among experts representing various perspectives and disciplines. Political scientists, for example, focus on the political; educators focus on what happens in or near the classroom; service-learning advocates focus on service and volunteering; and youth development specialists focus on the developmental experience of the young person.

In short, there has been common interest in increasing youth civic engagement but no common ground as to how to do this effectively.

Recently, however, various experts from these disciplines, among them teachers, civic leaders, policymakers, federal judges, and the president of the United States, agree that school-based civic education should be seen as an essential approach to increasing young people's informed engagement with political institutions and issues. It is also a promising way to spur interest in, and commitment to, service and voluntarism.

But what are the components of an effective civic education program? Is there solid research to indicate which aspects or elements are most effective, and why? And what do educators and others in the field, people who work with children on a daily basis, say is most feasible to implement in schools?

In late 2002, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and Carnegie Corporation of New York, in consultation with the Corporation for National and Community Service, convened a series of meetings involving some of the nation's most distinguished and respected scholars and practitioners in this area to attempt to answer these questions. Specifically, the group was charged with trying to find consensus about what is known and not known about civic education — based on rigorous evidence — and providing recommendations to policymakers, educators, and organizations working in this area on how to conduct civic education effectively in our schools.

Representing a diversity of political views; a wide variety of disciplines (education, developmental psychology, political science, history, and others); and various approaches (character education, service-learning, classroom-based social studies, youth organizing, and political involvement), these individuals sometimes disagree about the best ways to design and implement effective civic education programs in the United States. But they are in complete agreement about the importance of school-based civic education, especially now, as our nation faces new and complex challenges including terrorism, war, and the forces of globalization and economic change.

These scholars and practitioners recognize that addressing such challenges will require a citizenry capable of understanding, caring about, and participating in all aspects of civic life and democratic politics. Thus, they came together to deliberate and speak in a collective voice through this report, which is a powerful statement of support for the need for a richer, more comprehensive approach to civic education in the United States.

The Goals of Civic Education

We, the scholars and practitioners who have jointly produced this report, believe that the overall goal of civic education should be to help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives.

Competent and responsible citizens…

- ***are informed and thoughtful.*** *They have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy; an understanding and awareness of public and community issues; an ability to obtain information when needed; a capacity to think critically; and a willingness to enter into dialogue with others about different points of view and to understand diverse perspectives. They are tolerant of ambiguity and resist simplistic answers to complex questions.*

- ***participate in their communities.*** *They belong to and contribute to groups in civil society that offer venues for Americans to participate in public service, work together to overcome problems, and pursue an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs.*

- ***act politically.*** *They have the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to accomplish public purposes—for instance, by organizing people to address social issues, solving problems in groups, speaking in public, petitioning and protesting to influence public policy, and voting.*

- ***have moral and civic virtues.*** *They are concerned for the rights and welfare of others, are socially responsible, willing to listen to alternative perspectives, confident in their capacity to make a difference, and ready to contribute personally to civic and political action. They strike a reasonable balance between their own interests and the common good. They recognize the importance of and practice civic duties such as voting and respecting the rule of law.*

We recognize that being a competent and responsible citizen is not easy. It can take courage, sacrifice, and passion to be civically and politically engaged. Engagement is especially difficult for disadvantaged young people, who lack resources and are often discouraged from participating. Thus, an essential goal of civic education is to provide skills, knowledge, and encouragement for all students, including those who may otherwise be excluded from civic and political life.

Why Schools Are Important Venues for Civic Education

Today, as in the past, the future rests on the shoulders of young people who will protect and develop democratic institutions. It is, therefore, crucial for the future health of our democracy that young people are knowledgeable, engaged in their communities and in politics, and committed to the public good. We also need young people's energies, perspectives, and talents to make our communities and institutions work well today.

Teaching and encouraging the development of civic skills and attitudes among young people have long been recognized as important goals of education. The primary impetus, in fact, for originally establishing public schools was the recognition of literacy and citizenship education as critical to the health of democratic society. In his farewell address as president, George Washington recommended "as an object of primary importance" the creation of "institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge." He gave a democratic argument for investing in education: "In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion," he said, "it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened." The establishment of American public schools during the nineteenth century was the manifestation of this vision, which assumed that all education had civic purposes and every teacher was a civics teacher. That vision is now embedded in 40 state constitutions that mention the importance of civic literacy among citizens; 13 of these constitutions state that the central purpose of their educational system is to promote good citizenship, democracy, and free government.[1]

At the same time, however, we recognize that schools are not the only avenue through which children and adolescents learn about civic and democratic processes. Families, religious organizations, voluntary associations, colleges and universities, the news and entertainment media, political parties, unions, government agencies and leaders, and the military all influence youth civic development.

Parents, for example, can be a good source of civic education. Young people who grew up with political discussions in their homes are more involved in politics than those who did not. According to a 2002 survey, 35 percent of young adults who often heard public affairs discussed at home say they volunteer regularly, compared to 13 percent of those raised in homes where political talk never occurred. Those who say that they discussed politics or accompanied their parents to vote are more likely to vote themselves and are also more likely to say that they can make a difference in their communities.[2]

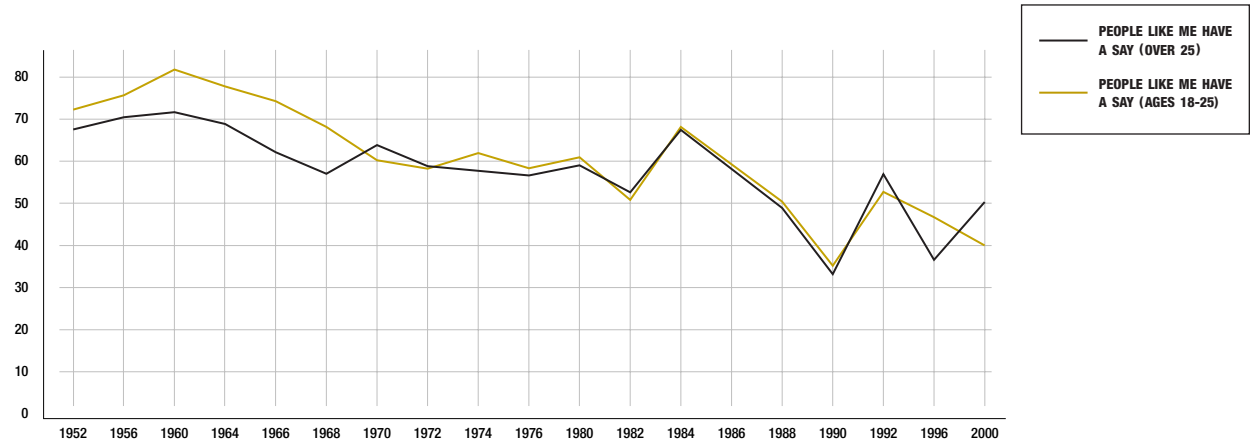
Similarly, young people who say that they attend religious services weekly are much more civically and politically engaged than other youth, especially those who say that they never attend services. They volunteer much more regularly, they are much more confident in their own capacity to "make a difference," they trust other people more, they vote more and consider voting important, and they are much more likely to hold positive views of government. This relationship between religious participation and civic and political engagement holds true even if income, race, and education are controlled.[3]

DESPITE THE MANY FACTORS THAT CAN AND DO INFLUENCE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION, WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT SCHOOLS ARE STILL IMPORTANT INSTITUTIONS FOR DEVELOPING CIVIC KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ATTITUDES AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE. WHY?

- *Schools are the only institutions with the capacity and mandate to reach virtually every young person in the country. Of all institutions, schools are the most systematically and directly responsible for imparting citizen norms. Research suggests that children start to develop social responsibility and interest in politics before the age of 9. The way that they are taught about social issues, ethics, and institutions in elementary school matters a great deal for their civic development.*[4]
- *Schools are best equipped to address the cognitive aspects of good citizenship — civic and political knowledge and related skills such as critical thinking and deliberation.*
- *Schools are communities in which young people learn to interact, argue, and work together with others, an important condition for future citizenship. Schools have the capacity to bring together a heterogeneous population of young people — with different backgrounds, perspectives, and vocational ambitions — to instruct them in common lessons and values. They can also bring young people into significant relationships with adult role models.*
- *Several non-school institutions have lost the capacity or will to engage young people civically. Today, many of the large organizations that used to provide venues for young people to participate in civic and political affairs (such as political parties, unions, nonprofit associations, and activist religious denominations) have grown smaller or are no longer recruiting as many youth to their ranks.*

Modern political campaigns, for example, increasingly do not interest or engage young people in government and voting.[5] Political messages are efficiently targeted at likely voters, a group that does not include young adults. Campaigns often dispense with volunteers, many of whom had been young people. Moreover, the general tone of political rhetoric is particularly distasteful to youth, who see political campaigns and elections dominated by big money, media spin, and candidates who run against politics and government. Confidence that government officials listen to "people like me" has eroded over the past half-century, especially among young people (ages 18 to 25), who used to be more confident in the government than their elders.

BELIEF IN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIVENESS



Popular culture, a powerful influence on the attitudes and behaviors of young people, may have exacerbated disinterest in and cynicism about civic engagement through anti-civic messages that celebrate materialism, selfishness, and even violence and lawlessness. While there are many excellent examples of pro-civic messages created by or for youth, most scholars think that anti-civic entertainment is more common and more caustic than it was in earlier times.

Even religious institutions have been unable to sustain young people's interest in civic engagement. Although it is true that young people who regularly attend churches or other religious congregations remain more civically engaged than those who do not, recent surveys have found that regular religious attendance among high school seniors has declined from 41 percent in 1976 to 33 percent in 2000.[6] During this period, high school seniors did not lose their belief in the importance of religion, but they became considerably less likely to participate in organized religious groups.

Finally, families may not be doing as much to encourage their children's civic involvement as in the past — partly because parents are themselves the products of recent trends in civic and political disengagement. In 2002, only half of young people surveyed said that they discussed politics, government, or current events with their parents (down from 57 percent in 1998).[7] And between 1988 and 1998, there was a substantial drop in the percentage of students who said that their families received a newspaper.[8]

WE BELIEVE—AND RESEARCH SHOWS—THAT SCHOOLS CAN HELP REVERSE THESE TRENDS IN SEVERAL WAYS:

Schools help by providing quality education. People with more education are more likely to vote, to follow and understand current events, and to join voluntary associations than those in the same generation with less education.[9] Although this may be in part because educated people tend to have more money, social status, and discretionary time, it is also likely that education itself facilitates participation because being an engaged and effective citizen today requires reading, writing, and mathematics skills; the ability to understand complex issues (which sometimes have scientific or economic dimensions); knowledge of computers and the Internet; and the ability to talk with people from different backgrounds.

More than ever, the same skills that people need to be effective, responsible citizens who participate in civil society and politics are also essential in the workplace. According to a 1999 federal report,

> *New systems of management and organization, as well as employee-customer interactions, require a portfolio of skills in addition to academic and technical skills. These include communication skills, analytical skills, problem-solving, creative-thinking, interpersonal skills, the ability to negotiate and influence, and self-manage. More than half of non-managerial employees participate in regularly scheduled meetings to discuss workplace-related problems, indicating the need for these skills.*[10]

Meanwhile, it is clear that sustaining a robust local economy requires diverse, competent, and responsible public leadership. It also demands broad citizen participation in government and "social capital"— multiple networks of people who are accustomed to working together.[11] Highly civic communities prosper while those around them remain poor.[12] Thus, giving young people the education they need to become civic leaders and active, engaged citizens is a way to achieve larger social and economic goals.

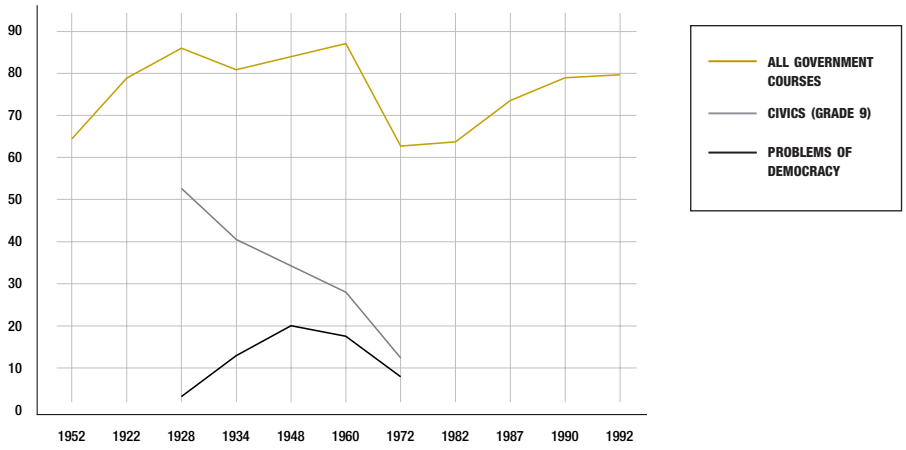
Schools can also help by providing quality *civic* education. In the past, many scholars doubted that civic education classes and programs were effective. However, impressive statistical evidence drawn from recent rigorous national surveys of youth and massive, testlike assessments indicates that classroom discussions of issues, courses on history and government that engage students in active learning, and other forms of civic education in schools can improve students' civic knowledge, skills, and intentions to vote and volunteer.[13]

Schools can address troubling *inequalities* in civic and political engagement. On average, American youth perform fairly well in international comparisons of civic and political knowledge.[14] The range between the best- and the worst-prepared students, however, is exceptionally large in the United States, and this gap may foreshadow continued or worsening political inequality in decades to come.[15] By providing effective civic education opportunities for all students, schools can help to address these inequalities.

Why This Is an Important Time for Schools to Focus on Civic Education

School-based civic education is in decline. Although the percentage of students enrolled in at least one high school government course has remained fairly constant since the late 1920s, most formal civic education today comprises only a single course on government — compared to as many as three courses in civics, democracy, and government that were common until the 1960s. The traditional "civics" course used to emphasize the rights and responsibilities of citizens and ways that they could work together and relate to government. "Problems of democracy" involved discussions of public policy issues. The "government" class (which remains common today) describes and analyzes government in a more distant way, often with little explicit discussion of a citizen's role.[16]

FREQUENCY AND TYPE OF HIGH SCHOOL CIVICS COURSES



SOURCE: *High school transcripts, adapted from Richard G. Niemi and Julia Smith, "Enrollments in High School Government Classes: Are We Short-Changing Both Citizenship and Political Science Teaching?"* PS: Political Science & Politics *vol. 34, no. 2 (2001), pp 281-287.*

Between 1988 and 1998, the proportion of fourth-graders who reported taking social studies daily fell from 49 percent to 39 percent, a steep decline that reflects a general trend away from civics and social studies in elementary grades.[17] Partly because of this changing mix of courses, schools are less likely than in the past to offer opportunities for students to discuss current issues in class, which research shows is effective in developing civic knowledge and skills.

Although it may seem that schools have become more active in civic education by promoting community service, service experiences tend to be separate from the rest of the curriculum and/or "one time only" activities that do not promote deep civic engagement. Research is beginning to show that curriculum-linked service that gives young people the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and put them in a broader social, economic, and/or political context is more effective in improving civic knowledge skills and virtues compared to stand-alone volunteering opportunities.

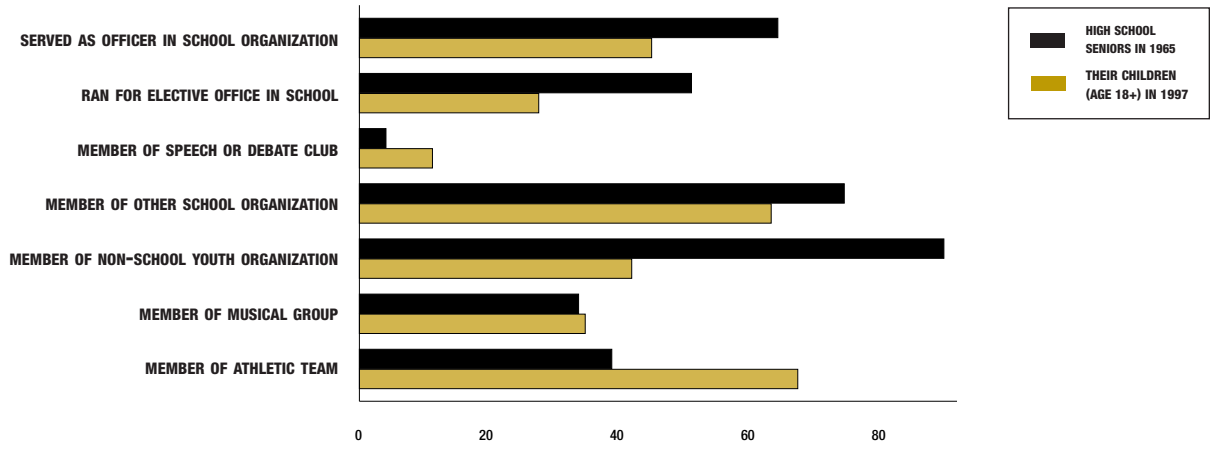
Numerous factors work against even the best intentions educators may have to promote civic engagement among young people. Educators who care about civic education face considerable obstacles when they try to implement these programs.

- ***Many teachers fear criticism or even litigation if they address topics that may be considered controversial or political in nature****, although research shows that such discussions can have a positive impact on students' interest in politics and social issues.[18] Many teachers report that the risks of encouraging in-class political discussions began to rise during the late 1960s and 1970s, when courses on current issues or "problems of democracy" began to decline.[19]*

- ***The movement for high-stakes testing has had a huge impact on education nationally:*** *schools are under unprecedented pressure to raise student achievement, which is now measured by standardized examinations of reading and mathematics. There is no necessary contradiction between high-stakes tests in these subject areas and excellent civic education in schools. Indeed, reading, writing, and mathematics can be taught through civic education at all levels from kindergarten through twelfth grade.[20] But a major focus on testing can be damaging if the exams are flawed or if civic skills and knowledge are not assessed (either on separate exams or as part of English tests). In a context of high-stakes testing, educators interested in designing and implementing civic education programs or courses may not have the time, money, staff, or incentive to do so. Some of the most important outcomes of civic education are attitudes and skills, results that are not measured well by standardized tests. Consequently, the focus of civic education is often solely on knowledge, which is important and necessary but not sufficient. Even the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in civics, sometimes called the "nation's report card," is offered only about once every ten years. The NAEP is not an exam with any consequences for individual children or schools, but it does draw attention to the subjects it covers. Since civics is assessed less frequently than many other subjects, students and others may receive an implicit message that it is not especially important.*

- ***School-based extracurricular programs are often the first targets of budget cutbacks*** *despite research that shows they can be fruitful opportunities for children to gain civic skills and attitudes and to participate in activities that have a civic element such as student government, school newspapers, and volunteering. The decades since the 1960s have seen steep declines in student extracurricular participation.[21]*

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



M. Kent Jennings and Laura Stocker, Generations and Civic Engagement: A Longititudinal Multiple-Generation Analysis (2001)

- ***Schools that want to experiment with alternative approaches to civic education are sometimes prevented from doing so.*** *Several endorsers of this report feel strongly that civic education works best when schools are structured as communities that value student participation and grant appropriate rights to them. In their view, increasing student voice in school governance is a promising approach to civic education and, in some cases, may be the best approach, because they believe it is difficult to impart democratic skills or attitudes to young people in schools where students have no voice in the administration; disciplinary decisions are made in arbitrary ways; or publications are subject to prior censorship. These proponents of increased student voice believe that, rather than encouraging democratic participation, schools may be discouraging it and, as evidence, point to an increase in "zero tolerance" policies;[22] the standardization of school structure and discipline plans; state and union requirements governing the allocation of student and teacher time; and fear of litigation—all of which makes it hard to promote democratic practices in school governance.[23] However, some endorsers of this report disagree with the extent of these criticisms of prevailing practices and doubt that there is a need for fundamental changes to increase the amount of student voice in schools. While these individuals do not oppose student involvement in school management and discussion of school issues, they argue that there is little concrete evidence of the value of fundamental reforms that would increase student influence.*

Policymakers are increasingly interested in civic education. The Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the State Education Agency K-12 Service-Learning Network (SEANet) have become leaders in the field of civic education and civic engagement, with encouragement from their members. The federal judiciary recently created a Subcommittee on Civic Education, which issued a resolution stating that "a high level of civic disengagement, especially among the young, demands a re-commitment to education for active and effective citizenship." And the president of the United States has called two White House meetings on the topic of civic education. Similar events have begun to happen at the state level. This interest represents a clear opportunity for educators in the field.

Schools are educating the largest number of immigrant students in the nation's history. Currently, one-fifth of U.S. children are children of immigrants,[24] and, in some cities, the majority of students come from immigrant families.

These trends pose both opportunities and challenges for proponents of school-based civic education. Immigrant families are often more motivated to learn about American politics and civil society because they are eager to learn about American culture and face demanding citizenship tests. Moreover, they bring diverse perspectives, cultures, and beliefs into the classroom, enriching the learning environments of native-born children. Young people who are children of immigrants are more likely to volunteer, compared to their counterparts whose parents were born in the United States.[25] Other data indicate that immigrant students have more positive attitudes toward immigrants and are more likely than native-born students to discuss international politics with teachers, family members, and peers and to pay attention to international news.[26]

At the same time, foreign-born students are less likely to vote compared to native-born individuals — a finding that holds up in comparison with people of the same income and education levels. The prevalence of immigrants in the Latino population helps explain why only 17 percent of young Hispanic residents said they voted in 2000 — half the rate of the youth population as a whole.[27]

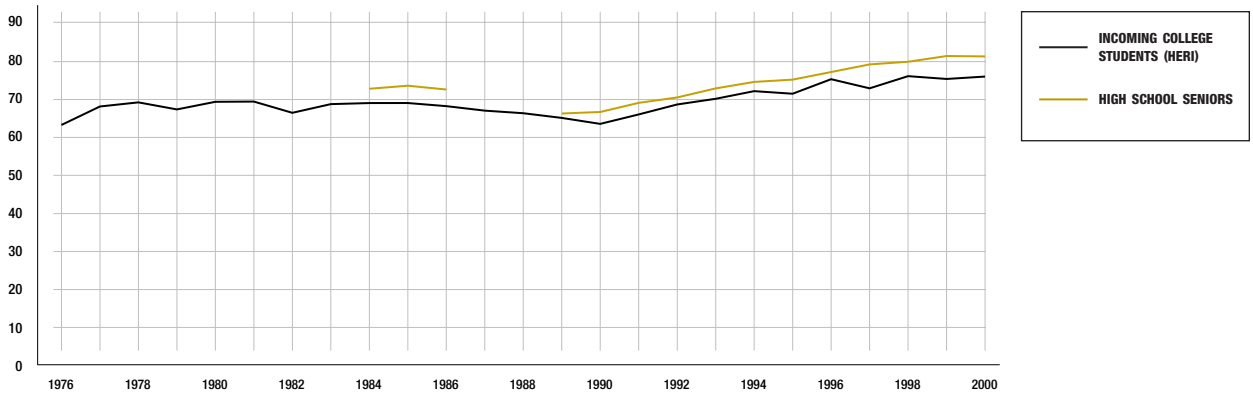
Schools can capitalize on several positive trends related to youth civic engagement. Recent data, based on studies of young Americans between the ages of 15 and 25 (most of whom recently passed through K-12 education), show that:

- ***Young people are becoming more involved in community service and volunteering.*** *Annual surveys of incoming college freshmen find that the proportion who have volunteered has risen steadily from two-thirds in 1989 to 81 percent in 2000. According to an assessment of 90,000 14-year-olds conducted by the International Association for Evaluation of Education (IEA), students in the United States are more likely to say that they have volunteered than are students in any of the 27 other countries examined.*[28]

  Young Americans between the ages of 15 and 25 are more likely than any other age group to report participation; nearly 40 percent say that they have volunteered at some point in their lives. However, young Americans are less likely to report regular volunteering than those between the ages of 26 and 56. Young people who are not currently enrolled in either school or college are not likely to volunteer.[29]

  Although some have speculated that young people are volunteering at high and increasing rates because of community-service requirements or because students believe that volunteering will help them to gain college admission, these reasons

VOLUNTEERING AMONG HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS, 1976-2000



SOURCES: *Higher Education Research Institute (HERI); Monitoring the Future*

were cited by only a few young people surveyed in 2002. Many more claimed that they volunteered because it makes a difference or it makes them feel good—or because someone (most commonly a religious leader) had asked them to help.[30]

- ***Young people are tolerant and committed to free speech.*** *Merely being tolerant of others may not reflect what is most important: sincere interest in others' opinions, concern for their rights and welfare, and the ability to choose critically among the positions in a debate. Nevertheless, no portrait of young Americans as citizens would be complete without an acknowledgment of their tolerance. Almost all available measures show that Americans under the age of 25 are more tolerant than older people, and each cohort of young Americans is more tolerant than the previous one. For example, people between the ages of 18 and 25 are more positive about racial minorities than their elders and are more likely to favor socializing across racial lines. At the same time, they support free speech for diverse groups. They are more likely than older Americans to say that the First Amendment protects speech that is offensive to minorities. Young people are also more likely to say that gay people should be permitted to speak in their communities*[31] *and that immigrants generally strengthen America.*[32] *According to IEA data, young Americans' attitudes toward immigration are strikingly positive compared to those of youth in many other countries.*[33]

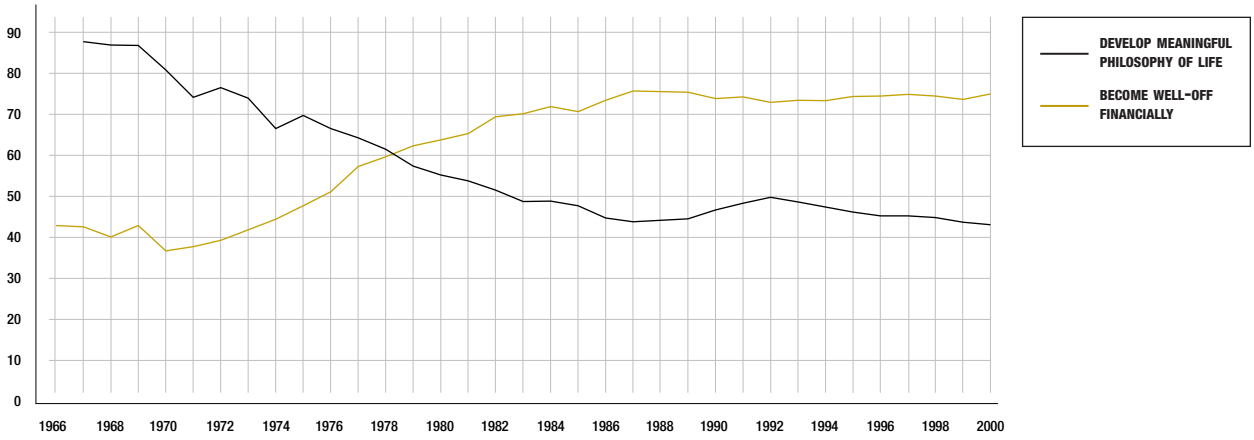
Schools can help address disturbing trends related to youth civic engagement:

- ***Many measures of youth civic attitudes show disturbing declines.*** *Surveys show that, compared to earlier generations of Americans, today's young people are less interested in political discussion and public issues, more cynical and alienated from formal politics, more materialistic, and less trusting.*

  In 1968, for example, 86 percent of incoming college freshmen claimed that "developing a meaningful philosophy of life" was a high personal priority. By 2000, this proportion had been cut in half. In 1968, 42 percent of incoming freshmen said that becoming "well-off financially" was a high priority. By 2000, this proportion had risen to 73 percent.[34]

  In addition, various measures of high school seniors' trust for other people, which is important when working in groups focused on community issues and problems, fell by an average of ten percentage points between 1976 and the 1990s.[35] *Those between the ages of 15 and 25 are almost twice as likely to say that "most people would take advantage of you" than are people born before 1946.*[36]

CHANGING PRIORITIES: MONEY COUNTS



SOURCE: *College freshmen surveyed by Higher Education Research Institute (HERI)*

- ***Young people's voter participation rates have declined substantially.*** *Today, young people are distinctly less likely to vote than older generations were at the same point in their lives. Since 1972 (when the voting age was lowered to 18), turnout among young people under 25 years of age has slipped by about 15 percentage points, whereas there has been no decline among people 25 and older. In 1998 and 2000, young people (ages 18 to 24) constituted only 5 and 8 percent, respectively, of all voters.*[37]

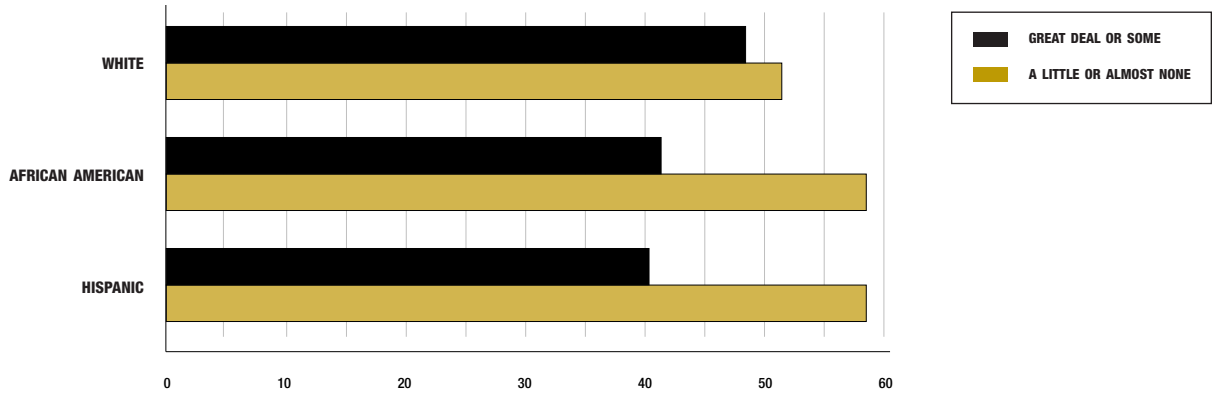
- ***Young people are less interested in public affairs than they once were.*** *From 1960 through 1976, the proportion of young people (ages 18 to 25) who claimed they followed public affairs most of the time was about one-quarter. Interest fell off in the next decades, and by 2000, just 5 percent said that they regularly followed public affairs.*[38] *Similarly, the percentage of incoming college freshmen who say that they discuss politics declined from over 30 percent in 1968 to 1970 to 16 percent in the late 1990s and 2000.*[39]

- ***Young people's political and civic knowledge is inadequate.*** *Because of a lack of comparable data, we do not know whether American students have become more or less knowledgeable about politics, government, history, or civics over the decades. However, according to the 1998 NAEP Civics Assessment, nearly one-third of high school seniors lack a basic understanding of how American government operates. On the NAEP Civics Assessment, 75 percent of students scored at "basic" or "below basic" levels. While the IEA Civic Education Study found that U.S. ninth-graders scored significantly higher than the international mean in civic knowledge and skills, it also found wider gaps in civic knowledge and skills among students in the United States than in comparable countries. Furthermore, American students were not especially knowledgeable in certain areas—for example, principles of democracy (on which they ranked tenth out of 28 countries).*[40]

- ***The level of civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes differs, depending on demographic background.*** *It is important to note that most data describe young Americans as a cohort, rather than as individuals, yet there are significant differences depending on young people's backgrounds. In particular, race and family income can predict political and civic knowledge, and family income, education, and gender can predict voting patterns.*

  Race and Ethnicity. *There are salient differences in attitudes among certain groups of young Americans. Young non-Hispanic whites, for example, tend to feel they can make a difference more than do young people of color overall. African Americans and Latinos have considerably less trust in government than non-Hispanic whites do.*[41]

CONFIDENCE THAT I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF MY COMMUNITY



AMERICANS, AGES 15-25. SOURCE: *CIRCLE/Council for Excellence in Government National Youth Survey, 2002*

Actual rates of voting, volunteering, and philanthropy are roughly equal between non-Hispanic whites and African Americans, which suggests that African American communities and institutions have found ways to compensate for lower levels of average wealth and education that would otherwise predict lower rates of participation.[42]

Gender. *On the 1998 NAEP and 1999 IEA assessments of knowledge, there were no significant gender differences for U.S. students. However, substantial differences in attitudes were found. On the IEA assessment, American females were more likely than males to support immigrants' rights, say they are likely to vote, say they are likely to collect money for charity or other social causes, say they are likely to collect signatures for petitions, trust the government, and feel confident about the value of participation at their schools. Females also have higher scores on civic skills as measured by the test. Females are much more likely than males to support women's political rights, and other research shows that females between the ages of 18 and 25 vote at higher rates than males.*[43]

Education/Economic Status. *According to the IEA assessment, there is a substantial minority of 14-year-olds in the United States who have a poor understanding of the principles of democracy and underdeveloped skills in comprehending political communication.*[44] *These students are especially likely to come from homes with low levels of literacy resources; have no plans to attend higher education; and be concentrated in schools with high levels of poverty, increasing the likelihood that they will be unable to participate in important civic and political institutions.*[45]

What Schools Can Do

We believe that there are several ways in which schools can encourage and increase young people's civic engagement. Before turning to those approaches, it is important to keep several points in mind.

We do not recommend renewing stereotypical civics classes. For some people, "civics class" conjures up an image of a teacher instructing students on the minutiae of federal legislative procedures or election law, without encouraging them to wrestle with larger public issues, underlying principles, and ways for them to participate in local government and civil society. While there is no evidence that this is the standard approach in today's schools, it is important to underscore that teaching only rote facts about dry procedures is unlikely to benefit students and may actually alienate them from political participation, including voting.

Although there are promising approaches to civic education, none should be viewed as a magic formula. The choice of a program or approach is only one factor that influences the probability of success. Much depends on the preparation and enthusiasm of teachers, the availability of resources (especially classroom time and money), the appropriateness of a curriculum and pedagogy for particular groups of students, the level of support in the community, the interplay with the rest of the curriculum, and other such factors.

SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES SHOULD GUIDE CIVIC EDUCATION REGARDLESS OF THE APPROACH CHOSEN.

Effective approaches to civic education are diverse, but all have the following characteristics:

- *A deliberate, intentional focus on civic outcomes such as students' propensity to vote, to work on local problems, to join voluntary associations, and to follow the news.*
- *Explicit advocacy of civic and political engagement. In the process of teaching civic education, educators should encourage their students to participate personally in politics and civil society, including at the local level, although without advocating a particular position or party.*
- *Active learning opportunities that offer students the chance to engage in discussions of issues and take part in activities that can help put a "real life" perspective on what is learned in class. These activities can range from collaborative or independent research projects and presentations to simulations, mock trials and elections, service-learning projects, and participation in the student government.*
- *An emphasis on the ideas and principles that are essential to constitutional democracy, such as those found in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, and how they influence our schools, religious congregations, the workplace, and local, state, and national governments. Students should grasp the relationship between these documents and the problems, opportunities, controversies, rights, and responsibilities that matter to them in the present.*

IN ADDITION TO CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS, SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS AND CULTURE ARE CRITICAL TO WHETHER AND TO WHAT EXTENT YOUNG PEOPLE GAIN CIVIC SKILLS AND ATTITUDES.

The most effective programs occur in schools that:

- *consciously promote civic engagement by all students, with special attention to those who might otherwise be disengaged.*
- *give students opportunities to contribute opinions about the governance of the school—not just through student governments, but in forums that engage the entire student body or in smaller groups addressing significant problems in the school.*
- *help students to understand how their own schools and school systems are run, who makes the policies that affect them, and what issues are being debated by local educational leaders and the community.*
- *collaborate with the community and local institutions to provide civic learning opportunities.*
- *provide teachers with access to professional development in civic education, foster collaboration and networking, and recognize teachers who are doing good work in this area.*
- *infuse a civic mission throughout the curriculum; offer an array of extracurricular activities; and structure the school environment and climate so that students are able to "live what they learn" about civic engagement and democracy.*

SPECIFIC AND PROMISING APPROACHES

Today we know more than ever about the most effective school-based civic education practices and programs. This is partly because of new data from national and international assessments, and partly because we have been able to observe and evaluate many creative experiments implemented in schools and school districts.

The following approaches (and sometimes combinations of them) have been adopted in many schools across the country, and research clearly demonstrates their benefits. Nevertheless, two caveats apply:

- *First, they produce different types of benefit, ranging from knowledge of politics, to civic skills, to willingness to volunteer.*

MOST SUBSTANTIAL AND DIRECT BENEFITS FROM EACH PROMISING APPROACH

APPROACH	CIVIC AND POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE	CIVIC AND POLITICAL SKILLS	CIVIC ATTITUDES	POLITICAL PARTICIPATION	COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION IN SOCIAL STUDIES	■	■		■	
DISCUSSION OF CURRENT ISSUES	■	■	■	■	
SERVICE-LEARNING		■	■		■
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES		■		■	■
STUDENT VOICE IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE		■	■		
SIMULATIONS	■	■	■		

Given these diverse outcomes, educators, policymakers, and communities must determine their priorities when they choose an approach to civic education and/or integrate more than one approach into a curriculum that develops several dimensions of civic and political engagement at the same time. Although such combinations have been rare, some data show that a coordinated emphasis on civic education in the curriculum, a favorable climate for discussions of issues in class, a school culture that encourages participation, and opportunities to participate in organizations can help to raise students' intention to volunteer and vote in the future more than any of these factors in isolation.[46]

- *Second, specific programs or approaches may not always be what cause students to show higher levels of civic knowledge or engagement. Instead, students may have personal characteristics that lead them to choose a civic program, and the same characteristics may also make them active citizens — a "self-selection bias" that relatively little research has been able to measure. It is not necessary to show that a program would work for every student (including the most unwilling ones) in order to declare it successful. Some excellent educational activities are elective, because they work only for those who choose them. However, we need to distinguish between the effects of a program and the preexisting characteristics of the students who participate in it.*

We recommend that schools work with policymakers at the local, district, and state levels to develop programs, curricula, and materials that:

Provide instruction in government, history, law, and democracy. The NAEP results indicate that students perform better on tests of civic knowledge and skills if they have studied a range of relevant subjects, such as the Constitution, U.S. history, the structure and processes of government and elections, and the legal system. In particular, the breadth and amount of such instruction correlates with improved knowledge of citizens' rights, of state and local government and of the structures and functions of government.[47] Similarly, evaluations of specific programs (such as the "We the People" curriculum of the Center for Civic Education) clearly show that such approaches can have a positive impact on students' tolerance, civic knowledge, and skills.[48] "If you teach them, they will learn" seems to be the lesson of modern research on civic education.

Formal instruction in U.S. government, history, or democracy is most promising as a way to increase civic knowledge. Knowledge is a valuable civic outcome, quite apart from any relationships it may have with other forms of engagement. Americans should grasp a body of facts and concepts such as the fundamental principles of our democracy and Constitution; the tensions among fundamental goods and rights; the major themes in the history of the United States; the structure of our government, the powers and limitations of its various branches and levels; the diverse values, opinions, and interests of Americans and the ways in which they are represented by elected officials, interest groups, and political parties; and the relationship between government and the other sectors of society. Studying these concepts should be seen not as "rote education" but as intellectually challenging and beneficial. Many of us recall being profoundly moved and motivated as children when we read biographies of political and civic heroes and narrative histories of dramatic events.

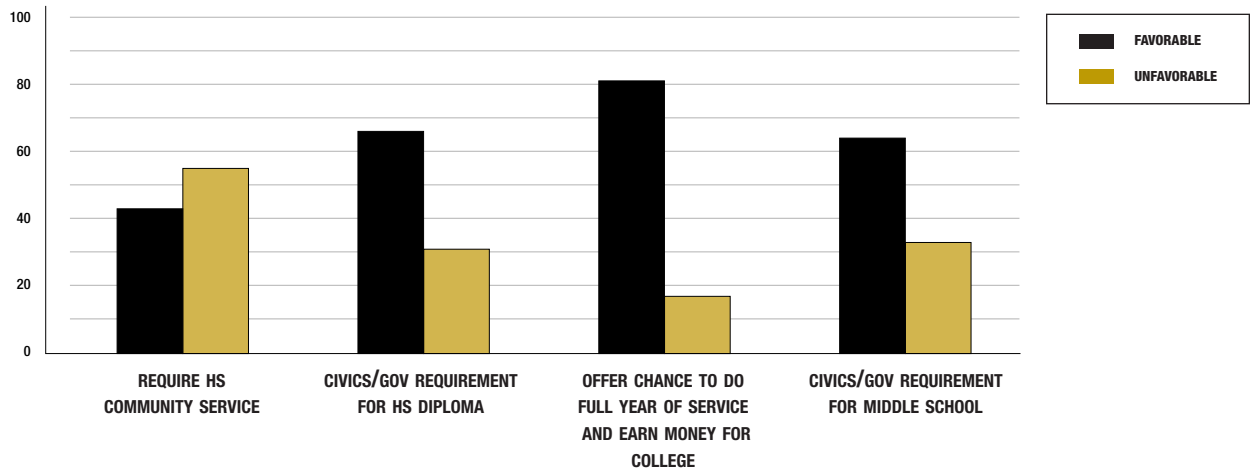
Knowledge also helps people to engage politically.[49] If knowledge obtained in the classroom is retained into adulthood, then formal instruction may lead to more political involvement (such as voting) later in life. More knowledgeable adults are more likely to vote on the basis of issues than on perceived personalities; they vote more consistently; and they distinguish better between substantive debates and personal attacks.[50] There is little evidence, however, that political knowledge correlates with volunteering or group membership.

The effects of formal instruction on behavior appear to be greater when teachers make explicit connections between academic material and concrete actions. IEA data, for example, suggest that it is not enough to point out that the right to vote was won after long struggles in the past. Only when teachers explicitly teach about the importance of voting in the present, and convey that voting is a citizen's duty, are students likely to say that they will vote. Likewise, when teachers explicitly discuss ways of addressing community problems, more students say that they expect to volunteer.[51]

Civic education courses are also opportunities to demystify the naturalization process for legal immigrants. In-class sessions on filling out the naturalization forms, as well as highlighting the typical questions asked in a naturalization exam and explaining the swearing-in ceremony for U.S. citizenship and its significance, are natural study topics for school districts with large numbers of immigrant students.

As is the case with social studies education in general, civic education instruction works better when it involves active discussion and debate and makes connections to current issues that affect students' lives in their communities and at all levels of government, rather than rote study of abstract principles or dry procedures.[52]

ATTITUDES TOWARD CIVIC EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENTS



AMERICANS, AGES 15-25. SOURCE: *CIRCLE/Council for Excellence in Government National Youth Survey, 2002*

In a 2002 survey, young people supported mandatory civics classes in high school and in middle school by very large margins. This result suggests that students and recent graduates do not view their own civics classes as boring or alienating.[53] Furthermore, a wider variety of teaching methods and resources is being used in civics classes today than ten years ago.[54]

According to the 1998 NAEP, most students in fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades had been asked to memorize material from their social studies textbooks. Memorization can be worthwhile if the material is important and students learn how to interpret and apply what they learn. However, in all grades, more students said they had memorized than had 1) read material not contained in a textbook; 2) taken part in role-playing exercises, mock trials, or dramas; 3) experienced visits from people in the community to learn about important events and ideas; or 4) written letters to give opinions or to help solve community problems. Students of color and students from low-education families were the least likely to experience such enrichment activities.[55]

In almost all schools, textbooks are crucial in social studies education. Some scholars criticize the leading high school government textbooks for saying too little about the diverse values, opinions, and interests of citizens and for presenting inadequate or inaccurate information about state and local governments, although these texts do provide detailed information about the structure of the federal government.[56]

There is a need for more data and analysis of social studies pedagogy, curricula, and texts from kindergarten to high school. Furthermore, additional research is needed about what specific subject areas (e.g., law, history, or governmental processes) are most beneficial.

Incorporate discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events in the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives. Studies that ask young people whether they had opportunities to discuss current issues in a classroom setting have consistently found that those who did participate in such discussions have a greater interest in politics, improved critical thinking and communications skills, more civic knowledge, and more interest in discussing public affairs out of school.[57] Compared to other students, they also are more likely to say that they will vote and volunteer as adults.

These findings stand to reason, since one must have at least a basic awareness of important current issues in order to want to become involved with them. Furthermore, discussion is an active learning method that produces good results for many students. Students also say that they appreciate being exposed to a variety of views because it helps them to clarify their own thinking.[58]

Discussion of current events appears to be reasonably common in schools today, although teachers may be steering clear of more controversial issues. On the 1998 NAEP Civics Assessment, 68 percent of fourth-grade social studies teachers reported that they held discussions at least weekly (although just 56 percent of fourth-grade students remembered ever having experienced such conversations). Eighty-eight percent of high school seniors said that they discussed current issues in class. Discussion of current events became more common between 1988 and 1998 at the fourth- and twelfth-grade levels.[59]

Much depends on the quality of discussion. Just as we oppose rote instruction on the minutiae of legislative procedure, so we object to unstructured, uninformed, or uncivil discussions of current issues. Conversations should be carefully moderated so that students feel welcome to speak from a variety of perspectives, with mutual respect and civility. Teachers should also use discussions as an opportunity to stimulate students to read and to address distinctions among facts, opinions, and values, while taking care not to indoctrinate students into particular ideologies. Teachers, however, need support in broaching controversial issues in classrooms, since they may risk criticism or even sanctions if they do so.

Although there have been few rigorous studies of the use of newspapers and other high-quality news media in connection with classes on current issues, small-scale evaluations, as well as an analysis of the IEA data for upper secondary students, show good results.[60] Surveys of adults have long shown a powerful correlation between newspaper readership and most measures of civic and political participation. This correlation does not prove that newspapers (and other news sources) cause civic engagement, but they may contribute to it, especially if used in connection with class discussions.

Provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction. Service-learning is an approach to education that uses community service to advance curricular objectives through written assignments and/or discussions that promote reflection on the service experience and connect it to classroom studies. Initial research shows that service-learning may be more effective at instilling civic skills and values among young people than community service or volunteering that is unconnected to the curriculum. Nevertheless, the majority of schools continue to offer community service as a "stand-alone" program rather than linking it to curriculum. In 1999, for example, while 64 percent of schools offered community services, only 32 percent provided service-learning opportunities. (Among high schools, 83 percent offered service and 46 percent offered service-learning.)[61]

The service-learning programs that are most effective for civic education are known to be ones that:

- *encourage teachers and administrators to use them as a way to consciously pursue civic outcomes and not merely to seek improved academic performance or higher self-esteem.*
- *allow students to engage in meaningful work on serious public issues, with a chance of seeing positive results within a reasonable time.*
- *give students a role in choosing and designing their projects and strategies.*
- *provide students with opportunities to reflect on the service work.*

- *link service with academic lessons and the broader curriculum.*
- *allow students — especially older students — to pursue political responses to problems (e.g., contacting local officials), consistent with laws that require public schools to be nonpartisan.*
- *help teachers to address potentially negative attitudes that can arise in service projects, such as a sense of superiority over those served.*
- *see this approach as part of a broader philosophy toward education, not just a program that is adopted for a finite period in a particular course.*

Most research on service-learning has been short-term, focused on non-civic outcomes (such as academic performance), and produced ambiguous results because of the possibility of self-selection bias. That is, students enrolled in service-learning courses may show high levels of civic interest and involvement because energetic and talented teachers and students tend to choose these courses. What role personality and self-selection plays in service-learning is not yet determined because few studies using random assignment that would help to measure such selection effects have been conducted.

Despite these methodological limitations, there is no doubt that students in excellent service-learning programs become more civically engaged during the experience.[62] In general, the research suggests that students who participate in quality service-learning programs tend to exhibit improved civic skills and attitudes, especially responsibility for helping others, tolerance, acceptance of diversity, and a lasting commitment to volunteering and other forms of community participation. Benefits for political participation are less well substantiated. However, one study found that students who were involved in service projects in high school remained more likely to vote and to participate in community organizations 15 years later.[63]

At its best, service-learning can be a transformative experience for educators and students alike. However, existing research has not settled several other questions. First, how does service-learning compare to other approaches in terms of the outcomes achieved, the costs, and the risks? Second, how common are the best service-learning programs, and how many are unsatisfactory? And third, could policies (such as mandates or financial incentives) increase the amount of high-quality service-learning at a reasonable cost? We do not yet know the answers to these questions, but we could learn a great deal from research that:

- *compares service-learning to other forms of civic education (including combinations of approaches).*
- *randomly assigns students to these alternative approaches, or at least compares statistically similar groups of students in various programs.*
- *follows the students involved in these programs for years after graduation to assess whether any observed changes last.*
- *asks questions both before and after the program about a wide range of specifically civic and political skills, attitudes, and behaviors.*

One criticism of service-learning programs is that they can be decidedly nonpolitical, to the extent that some scholars fear they may send an antipolitical message, encouraging students to volunteer in place of political participation.

A number of programs (such as Public Achievement and Student Voices) do encourage students to address local problems in an explicitly political way, and some research suggests that these programs tend to produce different outcomes from typical service-learning. Because of the rules and norms that discourage political activities in education connected to the public schools, instituting such programs is difficult. But they should be assessed further and encouraged if they lead to desired outcomes, especially if there are ways to address the constraints on such programs through public education and changes in policy.

Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities. Long-term studies of Americans show that those who participate in extracurricular activities in high school remain more civically engaged than their contemporaries even decades later. Several studies have found that extracurricular participation is a better predictor of adult community engagement than education or income.[64]

Again, self-selection may play a role in this process: some people may simply be prone to participate both in high school and in adulthood.[65] However, given the strong correlation between adolescent and adult participation, it is likely that membership in school groups at least reinforces tendencies to participate in civil society and also teaches participation skills. Thus, opportunities to join high school groups should be made available to everyone, and such participation should be valued.

One point of controversy and uncertainty is the degree to which the type of extracurricular group matters. The positive correlation between high school group membership and later civic engagement could arise because a few valuable groups produce major benefits while other groups have no civic effects at all, or are even harmful. Some research finds a strong correlation between participation in student government and journalism (on the one hand) and positive attitudes toward voting and other forms of political engagement (on the other). But the same research finds only a small positive correlation for vocational clubs and a negative relationship for sports.[66]

Indeed, many doubts have been raised about the civic effects of athletic participation (which is one of the few extracurricular activities that have become more common since 1965). But "sports" may be too broad a category. Depending on how athletics is handled, it may either promote confidence, fair play, and teamwork, or else suggest that athletes are above the rules and that competition is more important than cooperation. Further research is needed to examine the types and styles of extracurricular activity that produce the most benefits.

Encourage student participation in school governance. Students have good ideas about how to improve their schools and communities as places for civic life and learning, and their input needs to be considered as a way of modeling democratic practice and improving school management, according to some endorsers of this report. They point to a tradition of research (some dating to the early 1900s) that suggests that giving students a voice in the management of their own classrooms and schools also helps to build their civic skills and attitudes. Recently, for example, the IEA study found that 14-year-olds who believe they can make a difference in the way their own school is run — and those who believe their student council has an impact on school policies — are more knowledgeable about politics and interested in current events than other youth. This finding holds true for adolescents who attend schools where most students are not college-bound. Thus, giving students a voice in school governance can be a promising way to encourage even less advantaged young people to engage civically.

According to some research findings, when all students are seen to be treated equally in school, and adults make sure that all views are respected, students show more commitment to serving the public good, more willingness to work for equality in society, more tolerance, and more ability to think about social issues critically.[67] Opportunities to discuss school policies, to be heard respectfully, and to work with others to address school problems may also enhance civic skills, such as public speaking and leadership.

It is important to note, however, that not all of the endorsers of this report support this recommendation. We all favor student voice and participation in schools, and we all recognize that ultimate educational authority must rest with teachers, school boards, and administrators. But some experts and practitioners, while believing that students, faculty, and parents should exercise more voice and responsibility in education, disagree in principle with the democratization in schools argument. Others believe that, given little systemic evidence of the effectiveness of democratizing schools, it may be undesirable — and will certainly be difficult — to implement such reforms in today's schools.

Despite this important and ongoing debate, we all agree that building a more civil and democratic climate in schools would not imply a laissez-faire attitude or the need to relax discipline and adult leadership. In fact, teachers and administrators may have to intervene to encourage peaceful deliberation and to prevent violence, bullying, social ostracism, and other behaviors that undermine democratic norms.

Many contemporary educational reformers advocate smaller schools that are structured as communities and oriented toward explicit purposes or values.[68] Some experiment with dividing large schools into several academies that share the same building; holding deliberative meetings to discuss school issues and policies; reserving blocks of time for intensive, collaborative projects; placing student members on administrative committees and school boards; and enacting school constitutions. Such reforms often aim to improve academic performance and reduce behavioral problems, but they clearly have civic potential as well. For example, many more students have opportunities to participate in school governance and extracurricular activities if they attend small schools or academies rather than large, unitary schools.

Encourage students' participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures. There is less empirical support for simulations than for the other approaches listed so far, and many experts feel there can be no substitute for actual civic and political participation. Nevertheless, empirical evidence indicates that simulations of voting, trials, legislative deliberation, and diplomacy in schools lead to more political knowledge and interest. Role playing, mock trials, and dramas are reasonably common approaches in social studies classes, reported by 25 percent of fourth-graders, 32 percent of eighth-graders, and 34 percent of high school seniors who were surveyed as part of the 1998 NAEP Civics Assessment.

Kids Voting USA, for example, is a school-based program that combines mock voting with lessons about issues and the history of the franchise. Rigorous evaluations show positive effects on students' attention to news, discussion of current events with their families, and knowledge, especially among low-income participants. Parents of students involved in Kids Voting programs vote at significantly higher rates than other adults.[69]

Students who participated in a classroom simulation of an imaginary society run by majority rule became more tolerant.[70] An evaluation of the ICONS (International Communication and Negotiation Simulations) Project found that computer-based simulations of diplomatic negotiations increased the complexity and sophistication of adolescents' thinking about political issues.[71] And an evaluation of the Constitutional Rights Foundation City Works curriculum indicated that simulations were important to fostering interest in politics, service, and local government; social networks, social trust, and sense of increased civic capacity and commitment to participate.

Computer technology makes it much easier and more affordable to conduct elaborate simulations in classrooms—similar to role-playing exercises that once would have been conducted only by governments or research centers.[72] Initial results suggest that such simulations may often be valuable, although more research is needed.

Other Approaches: Schools and nonprofit organizations are experimenting with a range of other approaches to school-based civic education. While many seem intuitively promising (and some have been positively evaluated), we do not know of existing data and research that is adequate to recommend them at this time. They include the following:

- *After-school programs with a civic component.*
- *Civic education using materials from the mass media and popular culture.*
- *Classroom interaction with elected officials or other community members.*
- *Community asset-mapping projects (in which students canvass and describe the resources of their neighborhoods).*
- *Community service or volunteering without a curricular connection.*
- *Community service requirements.*[73]
- *Competitions (such as quiz bowl, geography bowl, model UN, mock trial, history day, or essay contests on civic or political themes).*
- *Classrooms in which students have a say in curricular choices.*
- *Courses devoted to the use of newspapers and other news sources.*
- *Comprehensive and thoughtfully developed high-stakes civic education exams that go beyond testing rote memorization of facts.*
- *Internships in government offices or in nonprofits.*
- *Mentors (either youth tutors or mentors for other youth or adult mentors for K-12 students).*
- *Reading programs with civic education content.*
- *Participation in neighborhood activism.*
- *Participation in social movements (such as environmentalism, Christian conservatism, or the disabilities rights movement).*

FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Work with state departments of education and local school district leaders to develop and establish comprehensive civic education curricula that emphasize civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Such curricula, generally, should include the following:

- *Formal instruction, using interactive methods, about the core documents, institutions, and processes of local, state, and federal government, such as the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, voting, the role of government, and the history and legal system of the United States.*
- *Opportunities to apply classroom-based knowledge in "real life" situations. Valuable opportunities for experiencing democracy and civic engagement firsthand include participation in community service, voluntarism, civic engagement projects, extracurricular activities such as student government, and mock elections or other simulations, combined with time for reflection and analysis of these experiences.*
- *Classroom discussion of local, national, and international issues, public policies, and events that put into larger social and political context the facts related to civic knowledge, as well as the encounters students have through their experiential learning opportunities.*
- *Classroom materials and discussion of the process of political and social change, particularly those that delineate the many ways that change has occurred historically and the constitutional rights that individuals and groups have to promote change.*
- *Classroom discussion of the values, responsibilities, rights, and benefits related to being an engaged and responsible citizen of one's community, state, and nation, and of materials that describe individuals who have made a difference at the local, state, national, or international levels.*

Work with state departments of education and local school district leaders to make these elements required parts of every student's school experience and at every grade level. Currently, civic education in most schools is not required or is relegated to a single semester course on U.S. government, usually at the high school level. We recommend that school administrators work with state departments of education and local school districts to discuss how civic education should be taught as a freestanding course at several grade levels. We also recommend that civic education be incorporated into reading, math, and science programs, where appropriate, at all grade levels so that it is an embedded part of the school experience for students of all ages. In reading classes, for example, students can read historic documents or biographies and be encouraged to discuss them. In science classes, students can be asked to develop projects that relate to community issues such as housing or health care or concerns such as cleaning up rivers or parks or testing water. Whatever the subject, we believe that civic content can be incorporated in a developmentally appropriate way, and we recommend that these approaches be encouraged and supported in schools.

Encourage schools to experiment with and implement civic education curricula in ways that are most appropriate for their communities and students. Recognizing that there is no single best way to encourage civic engagement with students and that teachers have many demands on them, we recommend that educators and institutions be allowed to experiment with new ways to provide civic education, especially strategies that build on or enhance already established curricula, programs, and/or activities; involve partnerships with youth-serving organizations in the community, including after-school programs; and emphasize the role individual citizens can play in public affairs at all levels of public life.

Allow and encourage educators to discuss complex and/or current events and issues in the classroom. One of the most commonly identified barriers to teaching civic content and skills effectively is the fear of censure or controversy that many schools and teachers face if these issues are discussed with students. To alleviate this fear and support teachers, schools, and students, we recommend that school administrators educate parents and community members as to the important role of current events in helping students to become educated and engaged citizens and then work with teachers to develop general parameters within which these discussions can take place. In addition, we encourage curriculum developers and textbook publishers to include materials on strategies for resolving differences and building consensus, as well as examples of how these processes have played out in the public arena so that young people can learn that conflict and difference (which are inevitable in a democracy) do not necessarily lead to polarization and gridlock.

Encourage schools to experiment with forms of pedagogy and management that exemplify democracy. Some experts believe that teaching civics and encouraging civic engagement are enhanced by establishing a democratic ethos or climate that permeates the culture of the school. They argue that teaching civics should not just be a lesson plan or activity but, instead, be reflected in the way a school operates, how it is organized, and how students and staff interact. Specifically, schools that ensure open classroom climates; have cultures that encourage students to express their opinions about the policies and rules of the institution and to formulate solutions for school problems; and use interdisciplinary instruction, cooperative learning, and student-focused techniques can help bring to life the principles and practices of democracy for students. Therefore, schools should be permitted to experiment with more democratic approaches to education so that the value of these promising but controversial models can be more thoroughly assessed. Not all endorsers of this report support this recommendation. Some are not persuaded that existing research supports far-reaching changes to make schools more democratic than they are at present; others are concerned about taking the democratization of education too far. They recommend that schools be encouraged to involve students as participants in the civic and political life of their institutions but in ways that are consistent with the argument that education itself is not a democratic process.

Enact policies that reflect a commitment to constitutional principles. Schools uphold freedom and democracy when they explicitly protect religious liberty and encourage freedom of expression by students, faculty, and staff. In such cases, freedom is linked inseparably to civic virtues and skills needed to sustain individual rights while simultaneously serving the common good.

Provide leadership development opportunities and recognition for administrators who are willing to support a system-wide commitment to civic education. Recognizing that administrative leadership is key to the success of school-based implementation of civic education, principals and superintendents need to make this a priority in their goals for school improvement. To do this, they must understand what quality programming looks like and how

programs are best implemented. Thus, supervisors and administrative officials should have access to professional development programs that will provide them with tools needed to implement effective civic education programs at the school and district levels.

We recommend that the leading organizations that work with school administrators — Education Commission of the States, American Association of School Administrators, National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the Education Support Professionals division of the National Education Association, the National School Boards Association, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Design, and the National Council for the Social Studies—be supported to provide this training and include civic education as a major focus of their national and regional programs. In addition, we recommend that these organizations create publications and forms of recognition that can highlight quality civic education programs.

FOR STATE AND FEDERAL POLICYMAKERS

Increase the amount of federal funding available to states for civic education. There is widespread agreement that civic education is still starved for financial support compared to other subjects. While there is support for civic education through the U.S. Department of Education, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and other federal agencies, this needs to be sustained and expanded. Therefore, we recommend the establishment of new federal funding streams for civic education — or the expansion of existing ones such as Learn and Serve America and "We the People," the new American history initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities. This kind of federal investment, we believe, will help to drive research in the areas of conceptual development and best practice, state education policies, and the development of new and better civic education programs.

Explore the possibility of establishing a new federal entity with responsibility for civic education. Currently, programs relevant to civic education are fragmented across several agencies, including the Department of Education, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Archives, and others. We believe that establishing a single, ongoing federal entity to coordinate national efforts in this crucial area may help to address this problem. One proposal, for example, is to establish a National Civic Education Foundation, which would commission research on civic education, encourage the development of model programs, help design and implement curricula, and serve as a national clearinghouse on civic education for teachers and schools across the country. This would provide visibility and stature to the issue, much as the National Science Foundation did with science, by providing funds for research, facilitating professional development in the field, offering fellowships, and disseminating best practices.

Provide financial incentives and rewards to schools and educators who demonstrate exemplary skill in developing and implementing effective civic education curricula in their institutions. Many good civic education programs exist, but most are small in scale and lack the capacity or resources to be replicated in other communities. Therefore, we recommend that some funding be provided to showcase these model programs, evaluate them, and, ultimately, disseminate the results to communities across the country. This dissemination can occur through case study documents, regional conferences, and national recognition for exemplary programs.

Provide more resources for school and community partnerships that encourage students to be active in volunteering, community problem solving, voter registration, producing cultural products with civic value, and other nonpartisan activities that state funds can and should support. Local governments can also develop civic internship programs with their local school districts so that immediate experiential learning opportunities are available to students.

Promote civic responsibility and engagement through actions and words. In addition to standard good government practices such as promoting high ethical standards, open government, and effective constituent communication and service, political leaders can encourage greater involvement among young people in two ways. First, although healthy skepticism about government and vigorous criticism of our leaders and institutions are valuable democratic traditions practiced by citizens, the news media, interest groups, and candidates, excessively negative political campaigns, particularly ones that target democratic institutions, may undermine public trust and foster cynicism among young people about the efficacy and importance of government and civic engagement. We recommend, therefore, that all elected officials and candidates for public office follow campaign practices that focus on issues (including those of concern to young people); address substantive aspects of their opponents' records; and promote, rather than denigrate, democratic institutions and citizens' confidence in them.

Second, we recommend that elected officials, as part of their representational function, actively promote civic education by regularly visiting schools to interact with students, talk with them about democracy, and provide them with materials about democratic institutions. Policymakers can also work with educators to increase students' knowledge about democracy by helping to strengthen the educational content of participatory learning programs such as mock trials and legislatures, internship programs, and tours of democratic institutions.[74]

Work within national organizations to promote civic education in all states. Policymakers who are committed to civic education and civic engagement should not only promote programs within their own states and jurisdictions, but also work to make or keep civic education a priority of organizations such as the National Governors Association, the National Association of Secretaries of States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Education Commission of the States, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Council of the Great City Schools, the National School Boards Association, and other associations of policymakers with national reach.

Promote standards for civic education. In the current educational environment of "high-stakes testing," the focus tends to be on math and reading while civics and government get little attention. As a result, a message is being sent that civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes are not valued. We believe that education for citizenship is on a par with reading, math, and science and, in fact, could and should be included in standard setting when developing education policy. This is an opportunity to devote special attention to closing the gaps that currently exist between rich and poor students in their tendency to engage civically. We therefore recommend that schools be held just as accountable for their ability to instill civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes in their students as they are for reading and math. This could be accomplished in two ways:

Offer the National Assessment of Educational Progress Civics Assessment frequently, in the states as well as nationally. *Commonly referred to as the "nation's report card," the NAEP is useful for assessing approaches to instruction used in various states, identifying gaps in knowledge or differences in performance among demographic groups, and holding policymakers accountable for the overall success of schools. The NAEP Civics Assessment has been conducted only occasionally, while assessments in reading and mathematics are conducted annually. Also, unlike the assessments in reading, writing, mathematics, and science, the civics assessment does not have a state-level component (with separate representative samples), so it is impossible to assess state programs using NAEP data.*

While the 1998 NAEP Civics Assessment is not a perfect instrument, experts agree that it is a worthy vehicle, subject to continuing debate and modification. Thus, we recommend that the NAEP Civics Assessment be conducted every three years with separate representative samples in each of the states. This would allow researchers and educators to learn much more about what works in civic education, as well as help citizens hold their own elected officials responsible for progress in civics. Finally, it would give the field the higher stature and visibility it deserves.

Work with states to reexamine their existing social studies and civic education standards. *Policymakers and education leaders should work together to ensure that standards reflect the promising approaches and goals of civic education outlined in this report. They can draw on comprehensive standards for civic education that have been developed by voluntary associations such as the Center for Civic Education and the National Council for the Social Studies. Whatever standards and frameworks are considered or adopted, they should be based on current research regarding the developement of students' conceptual understanding of civic principles, institutions and processes.*

FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Few topics related to K-12 civic education produce as much agreement in the field as the need for greatly improved teacher education and professional development, even if there might be disagreement over what constitutes the best training. The value or need for professional development may be highest in social studies, where the traditional civics or government courses are taught. We, therefore, recommend that institutions preparing or serving teachers:

Strengthen the civic dimensions of pre-service and in-service teacher education. Schools of education must help teachers and administrators understand the democratic and civic mission of schools and the first principles of our framing documents. Administrators, for example, should understand First Amendment issues — challenges they face almost daily. It is impossible to model democratic freedom and constitutional principles if one doesn't know what they are. Teachers and administrators also need to understand methods and issues in the teaching of civic education. These methods are relevant to social studies courses and other subjects in the K-12 curricula.

Thus, we recommend that agencies that accredit teacher education programs (such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) institute new standards relating to civic education. As part of the accreditation process, schools and colleges of education should be held accountable for teaching pre-service teachers and administrators about the role of education in a democracy. This teaching can be integrated within courses or offered through other structured educational experiences.

We also recommend that schools of education reexamine their required, foundational courses to strengthen the dimensions of in-class and out-of-class experience that relate to understanding the civic purpose of schools in a democracy and ways of creating a strong civic education curriculum and a democratic atmosphere in schools. Courses that cover such matters should be rigorous and should be offered early in the teacher education program.

Initiate efforts to elevate the stature of civic education and educators who contribute to it. In the field of civic education, there is a need not only for more and better teacher education, but also for inspiration and an enhanced stature of the discipline. Currently, few institutes are focused on developing a critical mass of promising new civic education teachers, expanding the field to include science and English teachers, and/or becoming prestigious forums to promote the richer approach to civic education outlined in this report. We therefore recommend that more

government and foundation funding be provided for these kinds of training institutes, so that the stature of civic educators can be enhanced. Fellowships, for example, might be offered to new educators to encourage them to pursue a teaching career in civic education. The James Madison Memorial Fellowship Program, established and supported by Congress, is an example of a successful fellowship program that, with continued support, can help elevate the stature of civic education.

Encourage teachers already in the classroom to obtain continuing education credits in this area. We recommend that all teachers be offered the opportunity to acquire continuing education credits related to civic education so that they can become better skilled at inculcating the civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes students need to become responsible and engaged citizens. Examples of this kind of opportunity might include seminars that introduce educators to policymakers and community leaders; curricula that help educators bring these individuals into their classrooms; programs that help teachers learn to establish a classroom and school climate likely to foster democracy; financial support for ongoing or advanced education in teaching government, civics, history, and/or service; and conferences at which interested teachers can share experiences.

Encourage college teachers in many disciplines to offer courses and to provide enrichment programs and teaching materials that benefit civic education at the K-12 level. Current and future K-12 teachers should have opportunities to take college-level courses that help them to understand complex social issues, the role of citizens in a democracy, and how to grapple with moral questions. It is also beneficial for other community members (such as parents, civic leaders, and clergypeople) to experience such courses. Moreover, to meet their civic responsibilities, scholars should consider translating their research into formats that are appropriate for use in K-12 classrooms.

FOR SCHOLARS AND RESEARCHERS

Develop and implement more rigorous studies (including longitudinal research) about effective service-learning and other civic education approaches. Little research currently exists that compares various programs, examines long-term effects, focuses on civic outcomes (such as likelihood of voting, keeping abreast of current events, and volunteering) as well as academic and psychological benefits (such as increased self-esteem or improved grades), and considers risks and costs in addition to benefits. In many cases, important indicators are overlooked altogether, among them a tolerance for diversity (of people and ideas), the ability and willingness to engage in civil discourse, and the ability to analyze news and information critically. To better ground standards and develop effective curricula, educators need to have more thorough analysis of the critical concepts that need to be addressed at each age so that programs can build on a solid developmental framework. These studies will require ongoing support as part of an extensive research program that examines comparable populations of students who are exposed to different forms of civic education and that look for long-term effects on specifically civic outcomes. Studies of other countries' programs and their effectiveness can also make a considerable contribution. All these studies require more substantial and long-term funding than is currently available to support civic education research.

In addition, researchers use different measures of civic engagement, which makes conclusions or generalizations about these studies difficult, if not impossible. Thus, we recommend conducting more research that helps to define and develop standardized indicators of civic engagement, especially those that expand the meaning of citizenship and take a broader view beyond voting, volunteering, and knowing facts about the government. We also recommend

more independent research, particularly studies that evaluate programs in ways that illuminate which programs are effective and why. Finally, there must be more analysis of civic engagement programs across heterogeneous populations, particularly identification of programs that are effective with young people who experience disproportionate amounts of marginalization and discrimination.

Develop indicators for civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes at each phase of K-12 schooling. These indicators should go beyond the measures of knowledge that are appropriately assessed by the NAEP Civics Assessment. They should also include measures of attitudes and behaviors appropriate to each grade level, including efficacy, interest in current events, participation in community organizations, volunteering or community service, and taking part in politics.

FOR FUNDERS

Create a new Teacher Corps of master civic education teachers who will be given the platform and resources to train and inspire a large, new cadre of young civic educators.

Support efforts to bring new players to the table. To generate interest in civic education—and ultimately, to implement this ambitious agenda—we recommend broader outreach to constituencies that may have an interest in these issues such as news companies and journalists; educational associations, including math, science, and English teachers and administrators; school reform groups; groups that organize after-school programs; business leaders; artists and entertainers; specialists in marketing to youth audiences; and young people themselves.

Support efforts to build national and state coalitions of educators, policymakers, parents, young people, and community leaders to advocate for better and more civic education in schools. There are constructive and vigorous debates within the fields of youth civic engagement and civic education, but there is also remarkable consensus—reflected in this document—about the nature of the problem and the array of effective solutions. Thus, it is time for the field to organize for effective advocacy; private funders can play a useful role in supporting such advocacy.

Issue an annual "report card" on the nation's schools as to which are best practicing civic education and why. This should be a collaborative document describing aggregate trends in civic education and youth engagement and also case studies on new and promising practices.

Provide support for a national commission that will bring attention to the issue and advocate for better civic education in schools. This commission should be part of a national campaign that brings together leading educational organizations, as well as leading organizations representing policymakers, to promote civic education within and across each organization's arena.

End Notes

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1 Kenneth W. Tolo (Project Director), *The Civic Education of American Youth: From State Policies to School District Practices,* Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin, Policy Research Project Report, Number 133 (1999), pp. 13-14.

2 "National Youth Survey" released on March 4, 2002, by CIRCLE, the Center for Democracy and Citizenship and the Partnership for Trust in Government at the Council for Excellence in Government.

3 The relationship between religious participation and political participation is well established. See, e.g., Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995). For the most recent data, see the "National Youth Survey."

4 For summary, see Sheldon Berman, *Children's Social Consciousness and the Development of Social Responsibility* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), especially pp. 11-39.

5 Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) surveys from 1968 to 1971 found that 12-16 percent of incoming college freshmen had worked for a political party. The last time the question was asked was in 1992, when 7.3 had percent worked for a party. National Election Studies (NES) surveys have never found very many youth (ages 17-24) working for candidates or parties during a current election. But the highest levels of recorded participation were 5.4 percent in 1970 and 5.6 percent in 1982; in 2000, the figure was just 1.8 percent.

6 Monitoring the Future data analyzed by Child Trends (www.childtrendsdata-bank.org/family/school/32ReligiousServices.htm).

7 "National Youth Survey" compared to the same question on a 1998 survey by the National Association of Secretaries of State.

8 Andrew W. Weiss, Anthony D. Lutkus, Wendy S. Grigg, and Richard G. Niemi, *The Next Generation of Citizens: NAEP Civics Assessments—1988 and 1998* (June 2001), U.S. Department of Education, NCES 2001-452, p. 37.

9 The correlation between education and political participation is the "best documented finding in American political behavior research," according to Norman H. Nie, Jane Junn, and Kenneth Stehlik-Barry, *Education and Democratic Citizenship in America* (Chicago, 1996), p. 31. It is evident in two surveys conducted in 2002 that included people between 15 and 25: the "National Youth Survey" and Scott Keeter, Molly Andolina, Cliff Zukin, and Krista Jenkins, *The Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Generational Portrait* (2002), available at www.civicyouth.org/research/products/youth_index.htm.

10 *21st Century Skills for 21st Century Jobs,* a report of the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Labor, National Institute of Literacy, and the Small Business Administration (January 1999), p. 2.

11 Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), pp. 287-335.

12 See, e.g., Vaughn L. Grisham, *Tupelo: The Evolution of a Community* (Dayton, OH, Kettering Foundation, 1999).

13 See especially the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Civics Assessment, a federal study conducted most recently in 1998; and the International Association for the Evaluation of Education (IEA), a 1999 assessment of the civic knowledge of 90,000 14-year-olds in 28 countries. For analysis of the NAEP, see Richard G. Niemi and Jane Junn, *Civic Education: What Makes Students Learn* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), which finds significant positive correlations between civic knowledge and (a) the amount and recency of civics course work in high schools, (b) exposure to a wide variety of topics relevant to civics, and (c) discussions of current issues in class (p. 148). For analysis of the IEA data, see Judith Torney-Purta, "The School's Role in Developing Civic Engagement: A Study of Adolescents in Twenty-eight Countries," *Applied Developmental Science*, vol. 6, no. 4 (2002), pp. 202-211, which finds positive correlations between civic knowledge and interest and (a) discussion of current issues in class, and (b) explicit teaching about voting.

14 Judith Torney-Purta, Rainer Lehmann, Hans Oswald, and Wolfram Schulz, *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen* (Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2001), available at www.wam.umd.edu/~iea.

15 Anthony D. Lutkus, Andrew W. Weiss, Jay R Campbell, John Mazzeo, and Stephen Lazer, *NAEP 1998 Civics Report Card for the Nation* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U. S. Department of Education (1999); Stéphane Baldi, Marianne Perie, Dan Skidmore, Elizabeth Greenberg, and Carole Hahn, *What Democracy Means to Ninth-Graders: US Results from the International IEA Civic Education Study* (Washington, DC, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

16 John Patrick and John Hodge, "Teaching Government, Civics and Law" in James Shaver, *Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning* (New York: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 427-436.

17 Weiss et al., p. 25.

18 Torney-Purta et al., 2001.

19 See a Harvard College senior thesis by Nathaniel Leland Schwartz, "Civic Disengagement: The Demise of the American High School Civics Class" (2002), based on teacher interviews.

20 For example, the Academy of American Studies, a charter high school in Queens, NY, makes American history a pervasive theme in all of its classes from ninth to twelfth grade and achieves among the highest average test scores in New York City. The Academy is required to draw a representative student body, and most of its students come from working-class immigrant families. (To date, no formal, independent study has been conducted to assess the impact of the school's American history curriculum on student achievement.)

21 M. Kent Jennings and Laura Stocker, "Generations and Civic Engagement: A Longitudinal Multiple-Generation Analysis" (unpublished paper, 2001).

22 For arguments against "zero tolerance," see (e.g.) Rich Ayers, William Ayers, Bernadine Dohrn, and Jesse L Jackson Jr. (eds.), *Zero Tolerance: Resisting the Drive for Punishment: A Handbook for Parents* (New York: The New Press, 2001), and "Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline" by the Advancement Project and the Civil Rights Project (Boston: Harvard University, 2000) at www.law.harvard.edu/groups/civilrights.

23 Constance A. Flanagan and Nakesha Faison, "Youth Civic Development: Implications of Research for Social Policy and Programs," *SRCD Social Policy Report*, vol. xv, no. 1 (2001), pp. 6-7.

24 "One in Five U.S. Children Are Children of Immigrants," Urban Institute report (September 2, 2000).

25 According to the "National Youth Survey," young people (ages 15-25) who were born abroad or whose parents immigrated to the United States were more likely (by margins of about eight percentage points) to volunteer and to volunteer regularly than their counterparts. According to the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) of 1998, students born abroad are less likely to volunteer than native-born students. However, children of immigrants are more likely to volunteer than children of parents born in the United States.

26 IEA data for the United States, analysis by Judith Torney-Purta.

27 Census Bureau Current Population Reports (November supplements) analyzed by CIRCLE.

28 Torney-Purta et al., 2001, p. 142.

29 Keeter et al., 2002

30 "National Youth Survey."

31 General Social Survey data. Among those under 26, approval of dining at home with someone of a different race rose from 77 percent in 1972 to around 90 percent in the mid-1980s. Among those 26 and older, approval rose from about 70 percent to about 80 percent in the same period. The question about First Amendment protection for racially offensive speech was asked only in 1994, when 70 percent of young people favored it, compared to 64 percent of older people.

32 Keeter et al., 2002.

33 IEA data are from Torney-Purta, et al., 2001, p. 105. See also the General Social Survey: In 1994, the proportions wanting to decrease immigration by "a lot" were 27.7 percent of youth and 37.1 percent of people over 25; in 2000, 18.8 percent of youth and 23.2 percent of older people felt this way.

34 HERI surveys.

35 Wendy M. Rahn and John E. Transue, "Social Trust and Value Change: The Decline of Social Capital in American Youth, 1976-1995," *Political Psychology*, vol. 19, no. 3, 1998, pp. 545-565.

36 Keeter et al., 2002.

37 Census Bureau Current Population Reports (November supplements) analyzed by CIRCLE. The decline of youth as a proportion of the electorate is partly the result of a fall in youth as a percentage of the overall population; but youth turnout per citizen population is also down.

38 National Election Studies data.

39 HERI annual surveys.

40 Torney-Purta et al., 2001, pp. 62-63.

41 Baldi, Perie, Skidmore, Greenberg, and Hahn, 2001.

42 Mark Hugo Lopez, "Civic Engagement Among Minority Youth," CIRCLE fact sheet (September, 2002), at www.civicyouth.org/research/areas/race_gender.htm.

43 Torney-Purta et al., 2001, Weiss et al, and Baldi et al. Voting statistics are from Census data, analyzed by CIRCLE.

44 Baldi et al., Torney-Purta et al., 2001.

45 Torney-Purta, 2002.

46 IEA data from Judith Torney-Purta and Wendy K. Richardson, "Anticipated Political Engagement Among Adolescents in Australia, England, Norway and the United States," in Jack Demaine (ed.), *Citizenship and Political Education Today* (London: Palgrave Publishers, in press).

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50 Samuel L. Popkin and Michael Dimock, "Political Knowledge and Citizen Competence," in Stephen Elkin and Karol Soltan (eds.), *Citizen Competence and Democratic Institutions* (Penn State Press, 1999).

51 IEA data (see Torney-Purta et al., 2001, Torney-Purta, 2002, p. 208).

52 See Gordon Cawelti and James P. Shaver, *Improving Student Achievement in Social Studies* (Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service, 1999).

53 "National Youth Survey."

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55 NAEP data. See also focus group results reported in Carole L. Hahn, "Challenges to Civic Education in the United States," in Judith Torney-Purta, John Schwille, and Jo-Ann Amadeo, *Civic Education Across Countries: Twenty-four National Case Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project* (Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement,1999), pp. 601-602.

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57 Carole Hahn, *Becoming Political* (New York: SUNY Press, 1998), Diana Hess, "Discussing Controversial Public Issues in Secondary Social Studies Classrooms: Learning from Skilled Teachers" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1998); Torney-Purta, "The School's Role," pp. 209; Judith Torney-Purta, Carole L. Hahn, and Jo-Ann M. Amadeo, "Principles of Subject-Specific Instruction in Education for Citizenship," in Jere Brophy (ed.), *Subject-Specific Instructional Methods and Activities, Advances in Research on Teaching*, vol. 8 (2001), pp. 388-389.

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72 Kahne et al., 2002.

73 Some people have philosophical objections to service requirements. There is also some negative information about their impact on voluntary service: see Arthur A. Stukas, Mark Snyder, and E. G. Clary, "The Effects of 'Mandatory Volunteerism' on Intentions to Volunteer," *Psychological Science*, vol. 10, no. 1 (1999), pp. 59-64. About 20 percent of sixth to twelfth grade students are in schools that require service (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education*, 2001, indicator 16).

74 For more information about how elected officials can promote public trust, see the websites of the National Conference of State Legislatures' Trust for Representative Democracy (www.ncsl.org/trust) and the Council for Excellence in Government (www.excelgov.org).

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