

FOUR YEARS AFTER THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS REPORT: A SUMMARY OF THE LATEST CIRCLE RESEARCH ON SCHOOL-BASED CIVIC LEARNING

In February of 2003, Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE issued a major report on the state of K-12 civic education entitled *The Civic Mission of Schools* (CMS). The report drew upon the best research from several disciplines and offered “six promising approaches” for effectively providing civic education. After the publication of the CMS report, CIRCLE and Carnegie helped to organize the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, an advocacy effort. Composed of more than 40 organizations and funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Knight Foundation, the Annenberg Foundation, and the Gates Foundation, among others, the Campaign works to increase federal and state-level support for civic education. Its national advisory board is co-chaired by former Justice Sandra Day O’Connor and former Governor Roy Romer. The Campaign works closely with partners such as the Alliance for Representative Democracy, which has teams in every state, and the Education Commission of the States (ECS).

Since the initial publication of the CMS report, CIRCLE has awarded approximately 30 grants totaling more than one million dollars to support continued research into the six promising approaches for civic education.

According to the most recent policy scan of the ECS National Center for Learning and Citizenship, all 50 states and the District of Columbia now have a civics or government teaching or course requirement. Service-learning is available in about half of high schools. However, most students still lack a rich array of opportunities for learning and practicing citizenship. Other gaps include high-quality assessments of civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions and professional development opportunities for teachers.

While the Campaign advocates civic education, CIRCLE continues to provide the research base. Since the initial publication of the CMS report, CIRCLE has awarded approximately 30 grants totaling more than one million dollars to support continued research into the six promising approaches for civic education. Through these grants, scholars across the country are testing the promising approaches to see which components and designs provide the most benefit to the most students.

This article provides a summary of the latest CIRCLE-funded research on the six promising approaches.

Approach #1 Provide instruction in government, history, law, and democracy: The CMS report finds that classroom instruction in social studies increases civic and political knowledge and skills and increases political participation. Two CIRCLE Fact Sheets have provided further evidence. The first Fact Sheet, “Themes Emphasized in Social Studies and Civic Classes,” shows that young people who report that they recently chose to take a civics or government class are

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CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement

A LETTER FROM THE AUTHORS OF THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS REPORT

On behalf of Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE, we collaborated in 2002 and 2003 to organize *The Civic Mission of Schools* (CMS) report. Written by 60 authors, the report is probably best known for presenting evidence in favor of “six promising practices” for civic education in schools (see the cover article to this issue for recent evidence about those practices).

By 2003, there had been many evaluations of specific programs and types of programs, often with favorable results. Citing that body of research, *The Civic Mission of Schools* concluded that schools play an important role in helping young people gain the civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to participate fully in our democracy. That conclusion mattered for public policy because preparing the next generation for active and responsible citizenship is a crucial, and often forgotten, purpose of public education.

A deeper commitment, however, underlay our interest in programs and program evaluations. We believe that providing young people with school-based civic learning courses or activities, while important, is a means to a greater end: a democracy in which Americans of all ages and backgrounds have opportunities to contribute their ideas, energies, values, and passions—working alone and in groups to define and address common problems.

To generate that kind of participation, civic education is a necessary but not sufficient component of what must be a more comprehensive approach to “civic learning.” Under this rubric, government classes, service-learning experiences, and other individual programs/models can and should be the vehicles for young people to have more meaningful and substantive opportunities to participate as active and engaged citizens, often in collaboration with adults, in their schools, communities, religious institutions, and other arenas.

But even comprehensive civic learning is not enough to ensure that young people grow into adults who are engaged and active in political and civic life. Today, millions of young people, as well as adults, are turning away from traditional institutions, including government, that they see as deeply flawed, driven by money or special interests, and/or uninterested in working with citizens to address issues that affect all of us. In short, young people, like

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) promotes research on the civic and political engagement of young Americans. Although CIRCLE conducts and funds research, not practice, the projects that we support have practical implications for those who work to increase young people’s engagement in politics and civic life. CIRCLE is also a clearinghouse for relevant information and scholarship. CIRCLE was founded in 2001 and is funded predominantly by Carnegie Corporation of New York and The Pew Charitable Trusts. It is based in the University of Maryland’s School of Public Policy.

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many adults, want to participate but are frustrated by political processes and institutions that were founded on a notion of democratic participation but seem closed to ordinary citizens.

Turning away, however, is not the answer. More participation is. Civic learning means not only learning about systems, but understanding how to change them for the better. We must prepare young citizens for politics but also improve politics for citizens. Those who care about civic learning, therefore, must focus on both the supply (young people) and the demand (the system) as equally important factors in achieving a goal of a more involved and informed citizenry. (Please see "Youth Civic Engagement: An Institutional Turn" in the March 2006 issue of this newsletter).

It is with this comprehensive message and framework that the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools—a national coalition of more than forty educational, policy, and professional organizations committed to better school-based civic learning—was created. Since then, the coalition has worked diligently to advance and promote the policy recommendations contained in the CMS report. With a board led by former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and former Governor Roy Romer, the coalition has commissioned a national poll that showed parents willing and eager to see civic education reinstated in schools; created a national database of best practices, programs, and curricula that were vetted by teams of educators and experts; and helped to pass legislation that encourages more frequent testing of civic knowledge.

The report has also generated a wave of new and rigorous research studies on civic education, particularly at the high school level, thanks to funding from Carnegie Corporation of New York. Since 2003, CIRCLE has distributed more than one million dollars to 30 of the nation's leading scholars who are conducting studies on such topics as the state of civics textbooks, the impact of youth media in classrooms, and student deliberations about issues.

But much needs to be done—under difficult conditions. Resources are scarce for experiential education. The No Child Left Behind Act, enacted just before the release of the Report, has driven attention toward subjects other than civics and democracy. It also reduces opportunities for communities to deliberate about and influence the priorities of their own schools. That means that communities cannot choose to emphasize civic learning—and also that students cannot experience full community engagement in the governance of their schools. Finally, in an era of high-stakes, standardized tests, the teaching of values, deliberation, and collaborative skills are easy to overlook.

Despite these challenges, excellent programs continue to flourish and grow, and comprehensive policies have been enacted in several school districts and states. From Hudson, Massachusetts to the State of Washington, increasing numbers of jurisdictions are incorporating richer curricula and better assessments of civic learning.

The best assessments do more than determine whether young people know "how a bill becomes a law" or how many senators there are. Testing should also include assessments of young people's civic skills—their ability to understand and discuss current issues, vote, and get involved in community affairs—but these outcomes are hard to measure. For that reason and others, research must continue to be a priority in all efforts to promote comprehensive school-based civic learning at all levels—curricula, standards, testing, and policy.

We have made considerable progress. But there is much more to be done and much of this work begins with rigorous research that informs the development of richer civic learning curricula; tests that include a broader set of civic-related factors; standards that embrace civic skills, attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge; and policies that advance all of these. These are the elements of a more comprehensive approach to civic learning for all young people in the nation's K-12 schools, and, thanks to the hard work of all those who participated in the CMS report, we are well on the way to achieving those goals. ■



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RESEARCH ROUNDUP

The Research Roundup column highlights recent research findings commissioned or generated by CIRCLE. Also included is an update on new CIRCLE products such as Fact Sheets, Research Articles, Research Abstracts, Bibliographies, and Datasets.

CLASSROOMS PRODUCE POSITIVE CIVIC OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS: RESULTS FROM A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Joseph Kahne and Susan Sparte investigate civic outcomes among high school students in Chicago in their forthcoming article entitled, “Developing Citizens: A Longitudinal Study of School, Family, and Community Influences on Students’ Commitments to Civic Participation” (funded by the Spencer Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust). The most important finding is that what happens in classrooms has a meaningful impact on students’ commitment to civic participation.

The study simultaneously compares numerous influences on the development of civic commitments in the Chicago public schools, where “85% of students come from low-income backgrounds and 91% are students of color.” No other large-scale study has examined civic commitments at more than one point in time during high school while also collecting detailed information about exposure to a broad range of school-based practices that are believed to help develop civic outcomes. The Kahne and Sparte study follows 3,805 students from a total of 47 Chicago high schools. It controls for demographic factors, pre-existing civic commitments, and academic achievement and focuses on civic commitments as the chief outcome.

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CLASSROOM-BASED CIVIC LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES MATTER

Kahne and Sparte find that students’ racial and ethnic backgrounds have very little impact on their civic commitments, once other factors are taken into account. The civic engagement of their families and neighborhoods do matter, but the impact of service-learning and other classroom-based civic learning opportunities is substantially larger. Being required by teachers to keep up with politics and government and learning how to improve the community, for example, are highly effective forms of civic education. There are also statistically significant effects from other teaching methods, such as exposing students to civic role models.

Kahne and Sparte find positive effects from participating in after-school programs, but the effect sizes are smaller than those attributed to civically oriented classroom activities such as service-learning and classroom discussions of current issues. These findings indicate, however, that extracurricular activities that focus directly on civic and political issues and on ways to act both civically and politically would likely be more consequential.

Being required by teachers to keep up with politics and government and learning how to improve the community, for example, are highly effective forms of civic education.

Similarly, the study finds that measures of the school context—whether students generally feel supported or like they belong to the school community—have only modest links to civic commitments.

CLASSROOMS HOLD GREAT PROMISE FOR DEMOCRACY, YET ATTENTION TO CIVIC EDUCATION DECLINING

The authors argue that healthy democracies need citizens with civic skills and knowledge. Late adolescence is a critical time for the formation of identity, in general, and for civic development, in particular. The current state of youth civic participation and knowledge is troubling, and low-income students are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to democratic institutions. Overall, attention to the civic mission of schools is declining as most research and policy focuses on the development of “human capital”: resources that make individuals more competitive in the labor market.

Drs. Kahne and Sparte conclude, “By providing particular kinds of classroom-based civic learning opportunities, it appears that schools—including those in very large and challenged public school systems—can support the development of students’ commitments to civic participation.” To learn more about this research please visit www.civicsurvey.org. ■

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THE CALIFORNIA SURVEY OF CIVIC EDUCATION: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PREVALENCE AND IMPACT OF CIVIC EDUCATION ON GRADUATING SENIORS

The California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools (www.cms-ca.org) commissioned Joseph Kahne and Ellen Middaugh of Mills College to conduct the *California Survey of Civic Education*. This survey assessed the prevalence and impact of civic education practices in California's high schools on graduating seniors throughout the state.

In 2005, the survey was administered to 2,366 graduating seniors who had completed the 12th grade U.S. government course mandated by the California History/Social Science Framework and Standards. Major findings of the survey included:

- * Young people have a strong desire to help other people, as evidenced by their involvement as volunteers and their commitment to charity work.
- * Young people express considerably less commitment to engaging in political work.
- * Despite taking a course in U.S. government in their senior year, high school seniors' knowledge of structures and functions of government and of current political issues is modest, at best.

CURRICULUM EFFECTS: PINPOINTING WHAT WORKS IN THE CLASSROOM

In addition to the above findings, the survey asked students about what happened in their high schools and classrooms. The authors of the report then analyzed the relationship of these opportunities to various outcomes, including civic commitments, skills, knowledge, and activities (see Table 1 for a complete list of civic outcomes measured). They found that numerous opportunities in classrooms, schools, and in after-school settings were related to these civic outcomes, even after controlling for demographic factors. Their ability to assess causality was limited because they could not assess initial levels of student commitments (they are currently completing a longitudinal study of CA high school students that does control for prior commitments with support from CIRCLE and the MacArthur Foundation). Following is a discussion of the associations found between school-based civic opportunities and student civic outcomes.

Classroom content and practices. Students enrolled in classes that emphasized civic engagement in the curriculum and provided relevant material about civic and political structures and functions reported and demonstrated more of the skills and knowledge they need for effective citizenship. Moreover, they found that discussing current events was positively associated with civic outcomes,

particularly when the discussions were tied to students' interests. Curricula that present opportunities for students to consider multiple viewpoints concerning a single issue appear to be beneficial.

According to Dr. Kahne, "One instructional strategy that appeared to be particularly effective was having students work on projects with students from different backgrounds." Among students who reported opportunities to do this "a lot," 54% agreed that being involved in state and local issues was their responsibility, compared to only 29% of students who did not report having these opportunities. These experiences were also associated with a greater commitment to vote, more political knowledge, and greater interest in politics more generally.

Extracurricular activities. Participating in student groups was also positively associated with students seeing themselves as connected to the society, learning skills and internalizing norms of group membership, and obtaining opportunities to consider varied civic commitments and ways to pursue them. For example, students involved in extracurricular activities were 24% more likely to agree that being involved in state and local issues is their responsibility than those not involved in such activities.

TABLE 1: SELECT CLASSROOM PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH DESIRED CIVIC OUTCOMES

Classroom Practices		Commitment to Participate	Intend to Vote	Informed to Vote	Civic Skills	Social & Political Trust	Political Knowledge	Political Interest
CMS Promising Approaches	Instruction in Govt., History, Law	★	★	★			★	
	Discussion of Current Events				★			★
	Service-Learning				★			
	Extra-Curricular Activities	★	★		★			
	Student Voice	★				★		
	Simulations			★	★			★

Note: For a complete list of classroom practices tested and their civic outcomes, please see the full report.

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Student voice in the school. Students who report having a chance to voice their opinions about school policies were more committed to participation than those who said they had few opportunities to voice their opinions about school policies.

Provide multiple opportunities for civic learning. Effective civic education includes multiple opportunities for learning. Education for democracy should not rely on a one-semester course taken during the senior year. While some aspects of a schools' curriculum, such as the high school government course, clearly have the potential to significantly support multiple goals, it's also clear that educating for democracy should not rely on a one-semester course taken during the senior year. Rather, opportunities to educate for democracy exist throughout the high school curriculum and they build upon each other. A schoolwide

commitment is therefore necessary.

ACCESS TO CIVIC OPPORTUNITIES UNEVEN

Unfortunately, access to the type of school-based civic opportunities discussed above is uneven. The *California Survey of Civic Education* shows that students intending to go to four-year colleges receive significantly more civic learning opportunities than other students. Therefore, the report recommends that all California schools identify ways to strengthen their current civic education practices and to ensure that they deliver these opportunities to all of their students—not primarily to those who are more academically successful. A state-funded teacher professional development program for civic education would be important to support. To read the full report, visit http://www.cms-ca.org/civic_survey_final.pdf ■

ECS STUDY REVEALS GAPS IN STATE-LEVEL POLICY REGARDING CIVIC EDUCATION

In June 2006, The Education Commission of the States (ECS) National Center for Learning and Citizenship (NCLC) conducted a policy scan to define the current state of citizenship education. The study found that states were emphasizing knowledge of civics and government, obtained through traditional classroom instruction. Civic knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient; citizens also need skills and dispositions to sustain and enhance American democracy. These three competencies—knowledge, skills and dispositions—are at the heart of civic education.

THE STATE OF CIVIC EDUCATION

All 50 states and the District of Columbia have a requirement to teach material or offer at least one course in civics and/or government. While 49 states and the District of Columbia have enacted state standards for civics and/or social studies as academic subject areas, few standards cover skills and dispositions as well as knowledge.

The ECS Policy Scan highlights eight states that have effectively addressed all three components of civic competencies. These states are Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Virginia. In these states, students are required to recognize the privileges and responsibilities of good citizenship, including active civic and political participation in a pluralistic society. Often, these state standards require students to understand the United States' interaction with other nations and to

compare and contrast American political and economic systems to those of the rest of the world.

Requirements for studying civics or government have strengthened substantially since 2003, but accountability has remained relatively constant. As of June 2006, only 21 states had accountability measures (such as examinations) for civics and/or social studies.

In addition to requiring course and teaching requirements, some states have found other ways to foster civic skills. Some examples include:

- displaying historical documents and mottos;
- developing handbooks for citizenship education;
- recognizing citizenship education with awards;
- involving youth as judges or precinct officers in official elections; and,
- providing new sources of funding for civic education.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIC KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS

Reviewing and rewriting state standards is a significant undertaking. The recommendation of the ECS Policy Brief is not that states immediately revamp their standards, but that state education leaders recognize the equal importance of civic knowledge, skill and dispositions, and take steps to support the efforts of school districts to provide opportunities for students to acquire these competencies. To read the full Policy Brief, please visit <http://www.ecs.org/> ■

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more likely than other young people to say that:

- they helped solve a community problem;
- they can make a difference in their community;
- they have volunteered recently;
- they trust other people and the government;
- they have made consumer decisions for ethical or political reasons;
- they believe in the importance of voting; and,
- they are registered to vote.

Furthermore, Melissa Comber's CIRCLE Fact Sheet "Civics Courses and Civic Skills" shows that civics related classes had a positive effect on students' ability to interpret political texts, follow the news, and discuss politics with their parents. Comber controlled for numerous observable factors.

Effects of civics instruction are likely long-lasting. CIRCLE research suggests that classroom instruction in civic topics likely produces long-term benefits. For example, an ongoing evaluation by Michael McDevitt and Spiro Kioussis found that students who participate in the Kids Voting USA (KVUSA) civics curriculum received long-lasting civic benefits. KVUSA is a curriculum that helps several million students to study and discuss politics and policy issues and then participate in mock elections. McDevitt and Kioussis used a rigorous, quasi-experimental research design to compare students exposed to Kids Voting with similar students not in the program. They found that after two years, students who participated in KVUSA were still more likely than their counterparts to discuss issues outside of class and to follow the news. In particular, three KVUSA curriculum components—frequent discussion of the election in class, teacher encouragement of opinion expression, and participation in get-out-the-vote drives—showed lasting effects on the civic development of the high school students studied. Complete findings can be found in CIRCLE Working Paper 49.

Gaps in instruction need to be addressed. While research clearly shows that there are powerful, probably long-lasting effects of civics instruction, quality and quantity of this instruction is unequal. Joseph Kahne and Ellen Middaugh conducted a survey of over 2,000 California high school seniors who completed a U.S. government course mandated by the California History/Social Science Framework and Standards. They found that access to school-based opportunities to develop civic commitments and

capacities are uneven. Kahne and Middaugh's research (funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Annenberg Foundation, and the W. R. Hearst Foundation, not by CIRCLE) tested the six promising approaches and related strategies and found they were associated with greater civic capacities and commitments. However, college-bound students had significantly more access to these opportunities than students not planning to attend college. For more on this study see: *The California Study of Civic Education* (http://www.cms-ca.org/civic_survey_final.pdf).

Moreover, Meira Levinson's research documents evidence of a growing civic achievement gap between students of different races and socio-economic and immigration statuses in her CIRCLE Working Paper 51 "The Civic Achievement Gap." Using previous research and her own experience as a teacher in urban schools in Boston and Atlanta, Levinson shows that poor, non-white students demonstrate lower levels of civic and political knowledge, skills, positive attitudes toward the state, and participation than their wealthier and white counterparts.

Approach #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. This recommendation was based on research that showed that 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.

An ongoing evaluation of the Kids Voting USA program by Michael McDevitt and Spiro Kioussis builds upon these findings and shows that classroom discussions of election issues can have a "trickle-up effect," benefiting not only the student but also parents and caregivers.

Using the IEA Civic Education Study, David Campbell finds that taking a civics course has a positive effect on students' civic knowledge and skills. He also finds positive results when there is an open climate for classroom discussion. In fact, once Campbell includes measures of deliberation in his statistical model, course-taking no longer has a significant impact. In other words, discussion explains the increases in civic knowledge, skills, and anticipated political participation that appear to come from taking

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a civics course. Campbell concludes, “The bottom line is...quality trumps quantity. The degree to which political and social issues are discussed openly and respectfully has a greater impact on civic proficiency than the frequency of social studies class.” For more information, see CIRCLE Working Paper 28.

Diana Hess and her colleagues are currently engaged in a four-year, mixed method study designed to investigate what high school students learn from participating in social studies courses that emphasize the discussion of highly controversial international and/or domestic issues. Preliminary findings from this research suggest that ideological diversity within the classroom is important to effective conversations. Hess notes, “It is clear to us that classes with a range of political views are more interesting spaces for discussions of issues than classes where most of the students are ideologically aligned.” Hess and colleagues have found that often classrooms include students with a fairly wide range of ideological diversity, but many times students are unaware of the range of diversity unless the teacher works to “activate” their awareness. Teachers can activate awareness by including issue-discussions in the curriculum and making sure that no single opinion or view dominates the discussion. According to Hess, “When this happens, students recognize that there is conflict, and believe that the airing of conflicting political views is normal, interesting, and productive.” Complete findings from this research are forthcoming.

Approach #3 Design and implement programs that provide students with opportunities to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction. Research has long shown that service-learning, when done well, can have a positive civic outcome on students, including increasing civic and political skills, civic attitudes and community participation. Recent research provides supportive evidence and further guidance.

Service-learning is most effective when it: lasts for at least one semester, is linked to standards, involves direct contact with service recipients, and includes cognitively challenging reflection activities among other components. In CIRCLE Working Paper 33, Shelley Billig and colleagues present findings from their survey of more than 1,000 high school students. Their findings suggest that service-learning is effective when it is implemented well, but it is no more effective than conventional

social studies classes when the conditions are not optimal. Being implemented well meant that it was of sufficient duration (at least a semester), that it was linked to standards, involved relatively close contact with service recipients, and had cognitively challenging reflection activities, among other components. The study also showed that service-learning had an effect greater than that of other active learning techniques. The study compared more than 1,000 high school students who participated in service-learning programs with those who did not participate in service-learning programs. The two groups were matched for similar demographics and student achievement profiles.

Other research shows that even average service-learning produces positive civic effects. Preliminary findings from Joseph Kahne and Susan Sporte’s longitudinal study of students in the Chicago Public Schools (funded by the Spencer Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust, not CIRCLE) found that courses that provide service-learning experiences have substantial impact on students’ commitment to civic participation. Their study of over 3,800 students from 47 high schools in Chicago controlled for demographic factors, for pre-existing civic commitments, and for academic achievement. These controls allowed the researchers to make stronger claims regarding the causality of various civic learning opportunities (as opposed to most studies which merely find a relationship between civic instruction and civic outcomes). One common criticism of service-learning is that it shows positive effects because the best students “self-select” into service-learning courses. However, Kahne and Sporte’s study finds that students of all academic levels can benefit from courses that provide service-learning experiences. Complete findings from this research are forthcoming.

Service-learning also produces long-term academic outcomes. Research from Alberto Dávila and Marie T. Mora found that students were more likely to finish high school and graduate from college if they participated in high school classes with mandatory community service (a rough proxy for service-learning). For example, they estimate that service experiences—when required as part of high school courses—raise the odds of graduation from college by 22 percentage points. Dávila and Mora note, “Civic activities undertaken during high school are related to significantly higher odds that individuals graduate from college in later years, when controlling for a host of socio-economic and

demographic characteristics.” Complete findings are contained in CIRCLE Working Papers 52 & 53.

Approach #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. The longest study that shows this pattern was begun by Kent Jennings in the 1960s. CIRCLE research finds additional benefits from extracurricular participation.

Involvement in student government increases high school academic performance and the odds of college graduation. In two CIRCLE Working Papers (52 & 53) Dávila and Mora, using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS), find that civic engagement activities raise the odds of graduation from college and improve high school students’ progress in reading, math, science and history. For example, Dávila and Mora found that “involvement in student government between 1990 and 1992 increased the odds of being a college graduate by 2000 by nearly 18 percentage points.”

Sports participation shows positive civic effects. Contrary to some previous research, CIRCLE’s analysis of a large survey of 18-to-25-year-olds found a positive relationship between participation in team sports and a variety of civic outcomes. The CIRCLE Fact Sheet, “Participation in Sports and Civic Engagement” by Mark Hugo Lopez and Kimberlee Moore finds that young people who are involved in sports report higher levels of voting, volunteering and engagement in their community than those who do not participate. In particular, the data show that young people who participated in sports activities during their high school years were more likely than non-sports participants to have: volunteered (32 percent vs. 21 percent); registered to vote (58 percent vs. 40 percent); voted (44 percent vs. 33 percent in 2000); and followed the news closely (41 percent vs. 26 percent).

“We considered that people who choose to participate in sports may also tend to choose to participate in politics and civic affairs, and sports may not be the reason for their civic engagement,” said Mark Hugo Lopez, research director at CIRCLE. “However, the relationship between sports and civic engagement remains

even when we statistically control for other factors like gender, race/ethnicity, income, other high school activities, region and educational attainment. That result suggests that sports have positive civic effects for many young people.”

Approach #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 all young people to engage civically.

This finding is not based so much on program evaluations and experiments as on survey results. For example, the IEA Civic Education study found there was a positive relationship between students’ knowledge of politics and interest in current events (on the one hand) and their confidence that they could make a difference in the way their school was run and their belief that their student council had an impact on school policies (on the other hand). These effects were also found in a subsample of schools where educational outcomes were generally poor. Thus student “voice” may have important benefits for less advantaged students.

Tools to help schools measure student “voice.” CIRCLE supported the development of the *School Citizenship Education Climate Assessment* —a self-assessment tool developed to help schools evaluate their citizenship education strategies and policies. Among other things, the tool can be used by schools to measure levels of student “voice.” For example, the tool measures how much students are involved in school planning activities such as working to solve school problems as well as their level of engagement within the school governance through activities like student councils. The tool was created for the Education Commission of the States (ECS) by Gary Homana, Carolyn Barber and Judith Torney-Purta of the University of Maryland. For more information see CIRCLE Working Paper 48 and the ECS Web site (www.ecs.org/qna). The ECS Web site also contains a set of items for assessing outcomes of civic education in the areas of knowledge, skills, and dispositions across the elementary, middle, and high school grades.

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RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

From Research to Practice, a column dedicated to recognizing successful "bridges" between researchers and practitioners, reports on research with practical implications for youth civic engagement. Additionally, it presents concrete examples of how practitioners have applied this research to encourage the participation of young people in civic and political life.

IN USE: THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS REPORT

Four years after its original publication, *The Civic Mission of Schools* (CMS) report is being used daily to inform practice and influence policy. It is being widely disseminated and used in a number of innovative ways including serving as the basis for discussion at many state summits on civic education that have occurred since 2003; as required reading in teacher education courses; and, as an advocacy tool for those seeking to create or support civic education policy.

A conservative estimate suggests that over 30,000 copies of *The Civic Mission of Schools* report have been distributed across the country. Evidence suggests that people are not just reading the report, but they are also using it to inform action. In fact, in 2004, the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Public Education reported that *The Civic Mission of Schools* had had a "galvanizing influence" on law-related education in America.

This article presents three examples of how the CMS report is being used in planning, research and teacher preparation. The first example shows how schools and districts can use the report for planning. The second example presents a research project that tested the report's "six promising approaches" to civic education. And the third example illustrates how the report is being used in professional development opportunities for teachers.

EXAMPLE #1: INFORMING SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEVEL PLANNING

One goal of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools is to ensure the CMS report does not "sit on the shelves," but instead is used by schools and school districts to improve and build upon their own civic education efforts. To support such groups, the Campaign developed an Advocacy Toolkit. Among other things, the Civic Mission of Schools' Advocacy Toolkit provides guidance on how the report can be used by schools and school districts in planning sessions centered on civic education.

Specifically, it suggests that school leaders: *can analyze their own schools' curricula in light of the Civic Mission of Schools' six promising approaches, assessing where civic learning can be best integrated (for instance, through choice of texts with civic content in reading instruction).*

For school district leaders the Toolkit suggests: *developing new standards or assess existing ones in light of the six promising approaches recommended in The Civic Mission of Schools report*

and invite stakeholders from the schools, civic groups, business and community leaders, and parents, to participate in this process.

The Advocacy Toolkit can be found at www.civicmissionofschools.org.

EXAMPLE #2: INFORMING A RESEARCH AGENDA Several researchers have built upon findings from *The Civic Mission of Schools* report (see the text box on page 11 for examples). One study in particular, the *California Survey of Civic Education*, tests the impact of the "six promising approaches" on students' civic outcomes. The survey, commissioned by the California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, was constructed and administered by Professor Joseph Kahne and Ellen Middaugh of Mills College. According to the authors, "Our survey indicated that the school and classroom practices emphasized in *The Civic Mission of Schools* report and related strategies were associated with higher levels of civic capacities and commitments."

The report recommends that professional development programs for teachers on civic education incorporate "research-based promising approaches." The report concludes by pointing out a need for future research that would: (1) better define the effects of various promising approaches on desired civic education outcomes and (2) distinguish dispositions and effects as they relate to various groups of students. In addition, research should be conducted to determine teacher and administrator perspectives on these practices.

EXAMPLE #3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS

The California Survey of Civic Education report indicated the need for teacher professional development programs for civic education, which is something that the New Hampshire Alliance for Civic Engagement (NHACE) is in the process of organizing.

For the 2005-2006 school year, the New Hampshire Board of Education revised the state's minimum standards and strengthened the civic/government requirement. In order to graduate from high school, students must take a free-standing (half-credit) civics course on both national and state issues in addition to the US/New Hampshire history requirement. NHACE learned that, faced with this new requirement, teachers needed better resources to teach state civics.

As a result, NHACE is bringing together eight experienced high school government and civics teachers from around the state for four days in the spring/summer of 2007 to develop lesson plans for the NH state civics curriculum. The teachers will have an opportunity to learn about current research and best practices and will hear from various state officials about their work. *The Civic Mission of Schools* report will provide an overview of current trends and research on civic education for the teachers, who will also hear from education professors in the state. The final product will be lesson plans that will be made available to all schools and teachers in the state.

Mica Stark, Managing Director of the NH Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College, sees this initiative as a great way to connect existing resources and talented teachers. He also notes that the initiative could be easily replicated by practitioners in other states.

For more on ideas on how to implement the findings from *The Civic Mission of Schools* report, contact CIRCLE's Youth Coordinator, Abby Kiesa at akies@umd.edu. *

A SAMPLE OF RESEARCH INFLUENCED BY THE CMS REPORT

"Longitudinal Gains in Civic Development through School-Based Required Service"

by Metz, E. & Youniss, J.
Political Psychology, 2005

"Civic Mission of School Libraries"

by Kranich, N.
American Association of School Librarians, 2006

"Why We Vote: How Schools and Communities Shape Our Civic Life"

by Campbell, D.
Princeton University Press, 2006

"Deliberative Learning: An Evaluative Approach to Interactive Civic Education"

by Kioussis, S. & McDevitt, M.
Communication Education, 2006

CIRCLE IN THE NEWS

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- ≡ "Young Voters Find Voice in Facebook," by J. Vargas,
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- ≡ "Can Political Participation be Taught," by J. Miller
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by M. Pitsch **Wisconsin State Journal**
2/5/2007
- ≡ "Election Day Voter Registration Would be Safe,
Effective" *Globe-Gazette* Editorial
Globe-Gazette (IA), 3/18/2007
- ≡ "Teachers Say Civics Lessons Should be Part of
Curriculum" by P. Davis
Providence Journal Bulletin (RI), 1/16/2007

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Approach #6 Encourage students' participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures. The CMS Report cited evidence that simulations of voting, trials, legislative deliberation, and diplomacy in schools can lead to heightened political knowledge and interest. Civic simulations include traditional programs such as mock trials and the Model United Nations, as well as innovative computer-based games. CIRCLE has not yet sponsored original research on simulations other than the mock voting component of Kids Voting USA. ■

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