



How Education Organizations Can Use

All Together Now: Collaboration and Innovation for Youth Engagement: The Report of the Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge

Civic education is your concern

Preparing citizens to be voters, jurors, and members of their communities was the original purpose of public schools. Every state still has standards for civics or American government. Excellent civics education also teaches English/Language Arts and skills required for today's workforce: collaboration, deliberation, public speaking and more.

Current results are unacceptable

Only a quarter of young people reach "proficient" on the NAEP Civics Assessment, and White, wealthy students are four to six times as likely as Hispanic or Black students from low-income households to exceed that level.

Some standard reform proposals are misconceived

For example, we often hear that states should require a civics class. But nearly 90% of high school students already take at least one civics class, usually because of a state requirement.

Educating and engaging young people has long-term effects

Students who recall better civic education are more likely to be engaged. Discussing controversial current issues seems to boost knowledge and interest. Service-learning is helpful if students feel that they have addressed important social issues (but unhelpful if they do not). Belonging to student groups increases engagement in community life and politics.

Effective practices develop skills as well as knowledge

Good civic education develops skills, such as deliberation, collaboration, and public-speaking. Getting those outcomes requires more challenging standards for civics and better integration with other disciplines.

Yet there are major gaps in exposure and quality

Youth who miss out on civic learning opportunities are more likely to be students of color and low-income young people.

Strengthening civic education requires more support of teachers

A quarter of teachers we surveyed thought parents would object if they taught about politics in a government or civics class, and only 38% thought their district would give them strong support. Teachers who perceive support are more likely to be using civic education promising practices.

Summary and the full report are at www.civicyouth.org

What You Can Do

- ★ Provide space (online or offline) for members to share experiences with social studies and learn from one another about what has worked.
- ★ Feature a summary and link to the report in your member update or newsletter. Encourage members to use the topics to think about the state of civic education in their experience.
- ★ Create or share opportunities for teachers to learn about the [College, Career and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies](#) and how the framework can meet state standards in Social Studies and English Language Arts.
- ★ Offer professional development opportunities for teachers to learn about evidence-based promising practices for the social studies.
- ★ Support national efforts to strengthen social studies, and encourage your members to support coalitions in their state.
- ★ Host a webinar series or conference track featuring your members who are using innovative strategies or recommendations named in the report.

CIRCLE staff members are available to work with you on any of the above.