



Renewing the Social Compact



A Report of the Special Commission on
Civic Engagement and Learning

December 2012

“The body politic is formed by a voluntary association of individuals: it is a social compact, by which the whole people covenants with each citizen; and each citizen with the whole people, that all shall be governed by certain laws for the common good. It is the duty of the people, therefore, in framing a constitution of government, to provide for an equitable mode of making laws, as well as for an impartial interpretation, and a faithful execution of them; that every man may, at all times, find his security in them.”

- Excerpt from the Constitution of the
Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Preamble

December 31, 2012

Mr. William Welch, Senate Clerk
State House, Room 335
Boston, MA 02133

Mr. Steven James, House Clerk
State House, Room 145
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Clerks Welch and James:

Pursuant to Section 167 of Chapter 68 of the Acts of 2011, we are pleased to present you with “Renewing the Social Compact: A Report of the Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning.” This report is the product of the Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning which has convened monthly over the course of the past year to investigate ways to improve civic engagement and learning in the Commonwealth.

In transmitting this report we are called to a story about Benjamin Franklin at the time of the Constitutional Convention of 1787. You may recall that the deliberations surrounding the creation of our government were held in strict secrecy. Consequently, anxious citizens gathered outside Independence Hall when the proceedings ended in order to learn what had been produced behind closed doors. A Mrs. Powel of Philadelphia asked Benjamin Franklin, “Well, Doctor, what have we got a republic or a monarchy?” With no hesitation whatsoever, Franklin responded, “A republic, *if you can keep it.*”

Civic education is a critical component for the survival of our precious democracy. The current status of civic knowledge does not suggest such a priority, however. The 2010 National Assessments of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Civics and History showed that just 25% of students had a proficient understanding in these subjects so vital for our nation’s future. Clearly, there is work to do.

In carrying out its charge, the Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning has embraced the need to improve civics in the Commonwealth. Throughout the past year, the Commission has reviewed leading publications on civic engagement and learning, heard from government and educational leaders in these areas, and drawn from the collective knowledge of the group to present ways in which civics can be improved.

Building on this idea, the Commission looked at civic engagement and learning across the various levels of education, from elementary and secondary education, to higher education and adult education. “Renewing the Social Compact” provides guidance on defining civic engagement and learning, as well as examples of civics in action across Massachusetts. Most importantly, this report provides recommendations for improving the two areas at each level.

To that end, we are once again pleased to provide this report and look forward to continuing the work to improve civic engagement and learning in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

RICHARD T. MOORE, Chairman
Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning

Purpose

In 2011, the Massachusetts Legislature revived and continued the Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning, established under Section 106 of Chapter 182 of the Acts of 2008. The Commission was charged with an investigation and study of the status of civic engagement and learning in the Commonwealth, and making a final report on its deliberations and findings, including any recommendations and legislation to carry those proposals into effect. The Commission was comprised of legislative, administrative, educational, and special interest group leaders and officials. The purpose of this document is to provide a synopsis of the Commission's efforts since its inaugural meeting in December of 2011 along with recommendations to improve civic engagement and learning in the Commonwealth.



CHAPTER 182 OF THE ACTS OF 2008

SECTION 106. (a) There shall be a special commission on civic engagement and learning consisting of 3 members of the senate, 1 of whom shall be the senate chair of the joint committee on education, 1 of whom shall be a member of the majority party and 1 of whom shall be a member of the minority party who shall be appointed by the minority leader; provided, however, that 1 member of the senate shall be designated as co-chair of the commission; 3 members of the house of representatives, 1 of whom shall be the house chair of the joint committee on education, 1 of whom shall be a member of the majority party and 1 of whom shall be a member of the minority party who shall be appointed by the minority leader; provided, however, that 1 member of the house shall be designated as co-chair of the commission; the director of the legislative education office, or his designee; the chancellor of higher education, or his designee; the commissioner of education, or his designee; the president of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, or his designee; the president of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, or his designee; the president of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, or his designee; the president of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, or his designee; the president of the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies, or his designee; the president of the Massachusetts League of Women Voters, or his designee; the president of the Massachusetts Bar Association, or his designee; the Massachusetts state coordinator of the Center for Civic Education; a representative of local government appointed by the Massachusetts Municipal Association; a representative of the judicial branch appointed by the chief administrative justice of the trial court; the president of the Massachusetts Secondary Schools Administrators Association, or his designee; and 6 persons to be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be the dean of a school of education or chair of a department of education skilled in the preparation of teachers, 1 of whom shall have expertise in adult education, 1 of whom shall be a scholar in the field of civic education, 1 of whom shall have expertise in curriculum development with special emphasis on civic learning, 1 of whom shall have expertise in the field of civic engagement of youth and 1 of whom shall have expertise in service learning.

(b) The organizational session of the commission shall be convened by the co-chairs not later than 60 days after the effective date of this act whether or not all of the governor's designees have been appointed and qualified.

(c) The special commission shall make an investigation and study of the status of civic engagement and learning including, but not limited to: (1) an assessment of the status of civic education from kindergarten through undergraduate college education, with particular attention to compliance by agencies of public education and public higher education with section 2 of chapter 71 of the General Laws and section 2A of

chapter 73 of the General Laws, including an assessment of the civic knowledge of graduates of public high schools; (2) an investigation of the opportunities available to students for service learning that develops an understanding of the relationship of those experiences with democratic government and a review of programs that teach civic engagement knowledge and skills that are essential to the development of active citizens; (3) an investigation of the status of public and private programs that promote civic engagement and learning including, but not limited to, Student Government Day established in section 12M of chapter 6 of the General Laws and how those programs could be enhanced or expanded through cooperation among themselves and with other entities such as schools and colleges, and through additional resources from public or private sources to be more effective and generally available to a larger number of students or the population at large; (4) an assessment of best practices in civic education in the United States that could serve as models for improving civic engagement and learning in the commonwealth; (5) an assessment of the implementation of the history and social studies curriculum frameworks by the department of education and school districts, including recommendations for the development and assessment of practical skills for civic engagement that are complementary to the knowledge-based aspects of the frameworks; (6) an assessment of the need for a permanent entity to promote civic engagement by a responsible citizenry and to encourage the building of partnerships to enhance the teaching and learning of the principles of representative democracy; and (7) any other matters that the special commission considers relevant to the fulfillment of its mission and purpose.

(d) The special commission may conduct public hearings to gather information and to raise civic awareness, including the sponsorship of statewide or regional conferences involving educators, students or the public at large. The department of education and the board of higher education shall provide staff and other resources as the commission and those agencies consider appropriate. The special commission shall make its final report and recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry those recommendations into effect, by filing the same with the joint committee on education not later than January 1, 2009 . The special commission may make such interim reports as it considers appropriate.

Approved July 13, 2008



CHAPTER 68 OF THE ACTS OF 2011

SECTION 167. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the special commission on civic engagement and learning, established under section 106 of chapter 182 of the acts of 2008, is hereby revived and continued; provided, however, that the commission shall report to the general court the results of its investigation and study and its recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry out its recommendations, by filing the same with the clerks of the senate and the house and the joint committee on education on or before December 31, 2012.

Approved July 11, 2011

Members of the Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning

The Honorable Richard T. Moore, Chair
State Senator
Worcester & Norfolk District

Mr. Paul Toner
President
Massachusetts Teachers Association

The Honorable Sonia Chang-Diaz
Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Education

Mr. Thomas Gosnell*
President
American Federation of Teachers – Mass.

The Honorable Richard Ross
State Senator
Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex District

Mr. Robert Kostka*
Immediate Past President
Mass. Council for the Social Studies

The Honorable Alice Hanlon-Peisch*
House Chair
Joint Committee on Education

Mr. Norm Shacochis
President
Mass. Council for the Social Studies

The Honorable David Vieira
State Representative
3rd Barnstable District

Ms. Terry Yoffie
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Dr. Alan Bloomgarden, Ed.D.
Director of Community Engagement
Mt. Holyoke College

Mr. Ron Bell[^]
Office of Governor Deval Patrick

Ms. Elisabeth J. Medvedow
Executive Director
Discovering Justice

Ms. Emily Haber
Chief Executive Officer
Massachusetts Service Alliance

Mr. Luciano Ramos
Director of Community Partnerships
UMass-Boston

*Voted in favor of the adoption this report with reservation¹

^ΩVoted present on the adoption of this report

[^]Did not vote on the adoption of this report

¹ For clarifying statements see Appendix Document 1.

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Introduction

American leaders have consistently maintained that in order for our democracy to endure, students must be prepared with knowledge of government and the practices of an engaged citizenry. It has therefore been determined that policymakers have a responsibility to citizens and students to ensure they are informed and prepared, not only when they enter the voting booth, but whenever proposed policy changes may impact their lives, their occupations, or disagree with their ideologies.

Public schools have long been regarded as the catalyst for civic learning in America. Massachusetts native Horace Mann, the father of public education in the United States, declared the classroom a setting not only designed to prepare students for future employment, but to enable them to become active and informed citizens in our great democracy. This matter is addressed through M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 2 which requires American history and civics instruction in classrooms across the Commonwealth.²

Results of the most recent national tests in this area have disappointed many, however. The 2010 National Assessments of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Civics and History showed that just 25% of students had a proficient understanding in these subjects so vital for our nation's future.³

Over the past decade, policymakers and education leaders have renewed focus on improving civic engagement and learning, concentrating particularly on where and how schools, the States and, ultimately, the federal government should dedicate energies and resources.

In 2003, after convening a series of meetings involving some of the nation's most distinguished and respected scholars and practitioners in the area of civic education to determine the components of effective and feasible civic learning programs, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement and the Carnegie Corporation of New York published its findings in a report entitled "Civic Mission of Schools."⁴ Last year, the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools in partnership with the Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, the National Conference on Citizenship, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University, and the American Bar Association Division for Public Education built from and expanded off of those findings in a report entitled, "Guardian of Democracy: Civic Mission of Schools."⁵ These, along with a series of other studies, represented a common goal of establishing a more comprehensive and meaningful approach to civic

² M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 2 reads: "In all public elementary and high schools American history and civics, including the constitution of the United States, the declaration of independence and the bill of rights, and in all public high schools the constitution of the commonwealth and local history and government and a program relating to the flag of the United States of America, including, but not limited to, proper etiquette, the correct use and display of the flag, the importance of participation in the electoral process and the provisions of 36 U.S.C. 170 to 177, inclusive, shall be taught as required subjects for the purpose of promoting civic service and a greater knowledge thereof, and of fitting the pupils, morally and intellectually, for the duties of citizenship."

³ See Appendix Document 2.

⁴ See Appendix Document 3.

⁵ See Appendix Document 4.

engagement and learning in elementary and secondary education, despite disagreements on how that should be conducted.

Concurrent with these efforts, leaders in higher education have also embarked on an investigation of civic engagement and learning in colleges and universities across the United States. In January 2012, the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement released a report entitled “A Crucible Moment,” continuing the dialogue on the importance and need of civic learning and democratic participation in Higher Education.⁶ “A Crucible Moment” calls on educators and public leaders to advance a 21st century vision of college learning with civic learning and democratic engagement as an expected part of every student’s college education.

Recognizing the need and importance of improving civic engagement and learning, in 2008, the Massachusetts Legislature created a Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning. That Commission was revived and continued in 2011 through the passage of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 State Budget.

From late 2011 through 2012, the Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning met on a monthly basis to discuss the status of civic engagement and learning in the Commonwealth. Beginning with a discussion on the scope of civic engagement and learning, the Commission set out to define these two areas. After that, the Commission reviewed the status of civic engagement and learning in schools of elementary, secondary and higher education across Massachusetts. Expanding these talks to adult education, the Commission ultimately deliberated over ways in which these areas may be improved, keeping in mind the core principles articulated in recent publications.

This document begins with testimony on the need for civic engagement and learning along with a discussion of defining these two terms. It then provides recommendations for improving civic engagement and learning in each of the stages of learning in the Commonwealth. Finally, while the Commonwealth faces challenges in its delivery of civic engagement and learning, there are indeed a host of formidable examples of educators and civic groups incorporating civics in their curricula and activities, and students employing their civic knowledge in solving community problems. This report sheds light on those success stories and offers them as examples of how civic learning and engagement can work in Massachusetts.



⁶ See Appendix Document 5.

Summary of Recommendations

Elementary and Secondary Education

- Implement civics requirements throughout K-12 education.
- Develop a model curriculum that aligns with the history and social science curriculum framework.
- Appropriate sufficient funds to implement the MCAS history test, including remedial services, effective as early as the 2015-2016 school year.
- Establish a Commonwealth Medal for Exemplary Civic Engagement and Learning.
- Re-energize student engagement by evaluating and revising Student Government Day and establishing a working group to review the current state of student participation in the Student Advisory Council and Student Regional Councils.

Higher Education

- Articulate a compelling, concise statement of purpose for civic engagement and learning with specific civic engagement and learning goals in higher education in the spirit of educating students for the duties of citizenship.
- Dedicate resources to create, expand, and make more sustainable educational and administrative infrastructure for enabling and sustaining civic engagement among students, faculty and staff in higher education.
- Support the Department of Higher Education's Vision Project Goal 6: Civic Education and Engagement, which calls upon the public higher education system to develop the means by which to promote civic engagement and learning of all students as a key measureable educational outcome, and ensure Goal 6 is accomplished by coordinating planning and implementation of higher education goals with those set for K-12.

Adult Education

- Establish a coordinating center to support the civic engagement and learning of non-student adults in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- Establish a Commonwealth Medal for exemplary programs or initiatives in adult civic engagement in the public, private or non-profit sectors.

A Case for Civic Engagement and Learning, and Guiding Principles⁷

Thank you Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this Special Commission for the honor and privilege of speaking with you today, here in the cradle of Liberty, Beautiful Boston!

I'd like to start by thanking one of this nation's most distinguished state legislators, a fellow member of the Steering Committee of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools and past president of the National Conference of State Legislatures, the tenacious and talented Senator Richard T. Moore, for his essential role in establishing this Commission and his national leadership in the cause of restoring the civic mission of our nation's schools.

There are two quotes that seem to me to sum up the purpose and goal of civic learning. The first is "Democracy needs to be re-born in each generation and education is its mid-wife," said the great 20th Century education reformer John Dewey. The second is "Knowledge of our system of government is not passed down through the gene pool, it has to be taught and we have work to do." So says Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, co-chair of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools.

A library full of studies and research reports show the pathetic state of basic civic knowledge among our fellow citizens. This sorry lack of civic knowledge has become a staple of late night comedians, including Massachusetts' own Jay Leno in his famous 'Jay Walking' segments. More alarming, many studies show the current record rates of alienation and disengagement from the instruments of governance "We the People" truly own; particularly among our younger citizens.

Why is this so?

I submit one of the major reasons why, is the lack of effective, high quality, student-centered civic learning opportunities in our schools.

Unfortunately, we know that civic learning and democratic engagement are not staples of every student's education today, as they have been in the past and must be for our nation's future. In too many schools and on too many college campuses, civic learning and democratic engagement are add-ons, rather than an essential part of the core academic mission.

Too many schools are pushing civic and service-learning to the sidelines, mistakenly treating education for citizenship as a distraction from preparing students for college and career.

This shunting to the sidelines of civic learning is counterproductive. Preparing all students for informed, engaged participation in civic life is not just essential—it is entirely consistent with the goals of increasing student achievement and closing achievement gaps.

As Tony Wagner of the Harvard Graduate School of Education says, there is a "happy convergence between the skills most needed in the global knowledge economy and those most needed to keep our democracy safe and vibrant;" more about that in a minute.

⁷ Testimony of Ted McConnell, Executive Director of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools (CMS)

What is the state of civic learning in our schools? The most recent reliable national measure we have on how well our nation's schools are meeting their civic mission is the 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reports on Civics and History, released last May. The results of these tests are shocking; barely one quarter of students could demonstrate a frankly dumbed down proficiency in these critical subjects.

Less than half of 8th graders surveyed knew the purpose of the Bill of Rights; and only 1 in 10 had age-appropriate knowledge of the system of checks and balances between our branches of government. These results are the same as the results of the last two National Assessments in Civics conducted in 2006 and 1998.

Scores on the 2010 NAEP were even lower for low-income and minority students, with African-American students scoring on average, 24 to 30 points lower than their white counterparts. This persistent civic achievement gap undermines the equality of all citizens.

These results show the consequences, mostly unintended, of decades of ignoring the essential civic mission of our nation's schools. Many are quick to blame the so-called 'No Child Left Behind' Federal law. To be sure, NCLB and states mandating high stakes testing in a few subjects over all others has had a negative effect on civic learning; particularly in those schools under the greatest pressure to meet the 'Annual Yearly Progress' or AYP mandates, generally schools serving disadvantaged populations. But the decline in attention and resources for civic learning began far longer than a decade ago when NCLB came into existence.

Until the 1960s, three courses in civics and government were common in American high schools, and two of them ("civics" and "problems of democracy") explored the role of citizens and encouraged students to discuss current issues. Today those courses are very rare. What remains is a course on "American government" that usually spends little time on how people can – and why they should – participate as citizens. This remaining course is usually offered in the 11th or 12th grade, which is both too little and too late. And, it completely misses the large number of students who drop out before their senior year and who are arguably in the greatest need of understanding their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

In the elementary grades civic learning used to be woven through the curriculum. Today, slightly more than a third of teachers report covering civic learning related subjects on a regular basis according to the 2010 NAEP test.

In far too many schools, civic learning is taught in a didactic, teacher lecture format, rather than through student centered inquiry, simulations and the opportunity to discuss current events. How civic learning is provided matters a great deal.

And yes, the sad fact is less than half the states, by our count only 18 or 19, require any kind of meaningful assessment in civic learning, sending the message that this is not an essential part of schooling.

Now, the statistics I've just cited on the sorry state of civic learning are national. What about here in Massachusetts?

According to the citizenship education policies database maintained by the Education Commission of the States:

- All Massachusetts public high school students are required to complete courses in American history and civics although state law does not specify the actual number of required units or credits.
- Your State Standards and Curricular Frameworks are among the better ones in the nation; but most knowledgeable experts agree the vast majority of state standards in this area are an overloaded laundry list of dates and facts to be memorized, rather than an exploration of the 'how' and 'why' of civic engagement.
- The high school History and Social Science exam was slated to become part of the state's graduation requirement for students beginning with the class of 2012. And Assessments in history and social science, among other subjects, are one of the gauges used to evaluate the performance of both public school districts and individual schools in the states.

Is this enough, is this adequate to meet the civic mission of Massachusetts Schools? That's up to you to decide and your fellow citizens of this great Commonwealth.

I'd next like to draw your attention to some resources that can help you decide if your current approach to civic learning is adequate and that can help you make recommendations to improve civic learning here in the Bay State.

You may have noticed that I do not use the term civic education, rather the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools uses the term Civic Learning to convey the six necessary elements or proven practices that constitute effective 21st Century civic learning. These six proven practices are: (1) student-centered classroom instruction in civics & government, history, economics, law and geography; (2) service learning linked to classroom learning; (3) experiential learning; (4) learning through participation in models and simulations of democratic processes; (5) guided classroom discussion of current issues and events, and (6) meaningful participation in school governance.

A full explanation of each of these six proven practices, along with the latest research on effective civic learning is contained in a report provided to each of you today. Published by our Campaign this past September, "Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools" is the national civic and service learning community's consensus document on how every state, every school district and school in the nation can improve and strengthen civic learning for all students.

The "Guardian" Report also contains research showing the positive impact of high quality civic learning on more than just attainment of civic knowledge and skills. For instance, civic learning helps form the attitudes of students in ways today's employers report seeking in their employees. Students who experience high quality civic learning are more tolerant of others, more willing to

listen to differing points of view and take greater responsibility for their actions and to improve their communities; all important 21st Century workplace skills.

Massachusetts is one of the 48 states in the process of adopting the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts. The new Common Core English standards provide great opportunity to inject civic learning content. Our colleagues at the Los Angeles County Office of Education have developed a how-to guide on how to do this. It's called "Preparing Students for college, career and Citizenship." I'll leave a copy with Senator Moore and encourage you to make this available to all schools in the Commonwealth. Better yet, use this guide to produce your own Massachusetts guide on how to use the new English Common Core to provide effective civic learning.

There are some incredible, very useful, nationally recognized civic learning resources right here in your own backyard.

The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University is the national go-to institution for the best research on effective civic learning and engagement. CIRCLE is directed by the brilliant Dr. Peter Levine. I urge this Special Commission to consult with Dr. Levine and his colleagues for effective ways to improve and strengthen civic learning here in Massachusetts.

The nation's foremost expert on the growing and disturbing civic learning opportunity and achievement gap is Dr. Meira Levinson of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dr. Levinson will be publishing the definitive book on this subject next month. I also urge the Commission to consult with Dr. Levinson on how to ensure no Massachusetts school student is 'left behind' in acquiring civic knowledge and skills due to their circumstances.

Want to know how to elevate the issue of civic learning to the attention of busy policymakers? Talk to Trey Grayson who before he became the Director of the Institute of Politics at Harvard, was the Secretary of State of Kentucky and led efforts to increase the civic literacy and engagement of Kentucky's citizens – a movement that has been recognized as a national model.

Supplemental civic learning programs can help provide effective civic learning many schools are not equipped to provide. One of the best and most innovative of these programs was founded right here in Boston. Generation Citizen trains college student volunteers to be civics mentors and partners them with secondary level teachers to implement an 'Action Civics' curriculum. Generation Citizen is empowering under-served, disadvantaged students to be active participants in the democratic process. The Generation Citizen approach and curriculum works equally well in inner-city Boston and leafy Newton. Talk to Generation Citizen's founder and Director Scott Warren to find out how to serve diverse school populations.

Speaking of supplemental programs, I would be remiss if I did not mention the innovative civic learning program founded by my civics boss, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. iCivics is an on-line series of games that teach about our system of government and the importance of civic engagement using tools (on-line games) students use every day in their personal lives. These engaging and informative games are available free of charge to every school. Check them out at

icivics.org. I challenge this learned group to play the iCivics games, I learn something new each time I do.

There are a few of the resources, national and right here in Massachusetts that can help this Special Commission transform and improve civic learning for every student in the Commonwealth.

Why should we care about civic learning in our schools? Why should we challenge every school in Massachusetts and the nation to restore the civic mission of schools? To answer that, I would like to remind you of a story that is told about the close of our great Constitutional Convention, September 1787 in Philadelphia. Ben Franklin, old crone, 'what sort of government have you men given us? A Republic Madam, if you can keep it!

If we can keep it indeed! For nearly two hundred years that has been the civic mission of our schools. To educate about and pass along anew this great experiment in self-governance to each generation.



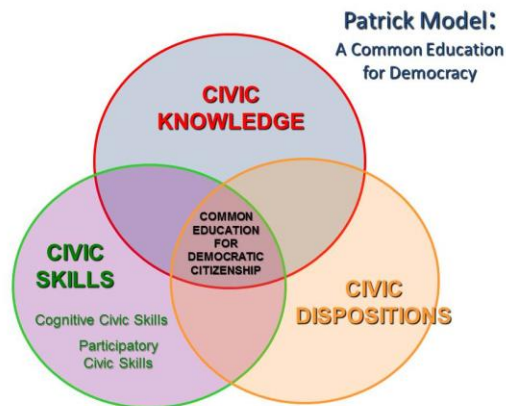
Defining, Cataloging, and Assessing Civic Engagement and Learning⁸

Michael X. Delli Carpini, Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication and former Director of the Public Policy program of the Pew Charitable Trusts, provided a useful description of democratic civic engagement:

*Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual voluntarism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy. Civic engagement encompasses a range of specific activities such as working in a soup kitchen, serving on a neighborhood association, writing a letter to an elected official or voting. Indeed, an underlying principle of our approach is that an engaged citizen should have the ability, agency and opportunity to move comfortably among these various types of civic acts.*⁹

Following from this description, people who are civically engaged have an awareness of and participate in the civic and political life of their communities.¹⁰

Consistent with Delli Carpini's characterization of civic engagement is Professor John Patrick's "common education for democratic citizenship."¹¹ While intended as a guide to international teacher preparation, the model serves equally well not only for school curriculum but for higher education and adult education:



Fleshing out the model further, Patrick describes in more detail the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required, and these are summarized in the table below:

⁸ Prepared by Charles S. White, Ph.D., Boston University

⁹ Source: Raise Your Voice Campaign (2006); See also Cone, R. E., Kiesa, A., and Longo, N. V. Raise Your Voice: A Student Guide to Positive Social Change. Providence, RI: Campus Compact, 2006.

¹⁰ Source: <http://spotlight.macfound.org/blog/entry/michael-delli-carpinis-definitions-key-terms>

¹¹ Source: Patrick, J. J. (2003). Defining, delivering, and defending a common education for citizenship in a democracy. In Patrick, J.J., Hamot, G.E., and Leming, R.S. (Eds). (pp. 5-23. Civic learning in teacher education: International perspectives on education for democracy in the preparation of teachers, Volume 2 Bloomington, IN : ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education.

Civic Knowledge	Civic Skills	Civic Dispositions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core concepts & principles of democracy • History of democracy • Practices of democratic citizenship • Constitutions & democratic institutions • Continuing issues and landmark court decisions • Perennial issues about the meaning/uses of core ideas 	<p>COGNITIVE SKILLS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying & describing information about civic life • Analyzing & explaining information about civic life • Synthesizing information about civic life • Evaluating, taking, & defending positions on public events & issues • Thinking critically about conditions of public/civic life • Thinking constructively about how to improve civic life <p>CIVIC PARTICIPATORY SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacting with other citizens to promote personal & common interests • Monitoring public events & public issues • Deliberating & making decisions about public policy issues • Influencing policy decisions on public issues • Implementing policy decisions on public issues • Taking action to improve political/civic life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirming the common & equal humanity & dignity of each person • Respecting, protecting & exercising rights possessed equally by each person • Participating responsibly in the political/civic life of the community • Practicing self-government & supporting government by consent of the governed • Exemplifying moral traits of democratic citizenship • Promoting the common (public) good

Reviewing both Delli Carpini’s and Patrick’s conceptions of civic education and engagement, one can see that a robust conception of civic engagement includes both civic *and* political life – contributing to civic life through community service *and* to political life by engaging with the governing institutions of the community. This point is well made by Daniel Kemmis, former mayor of Missoula, Montana, commenting on people’s use of the term “taxpayers.” Kemmis wrote:

People who customarily refer to themselves as taxpayers are not even remotely related to democratic citizens. Yet this is precisely the word that now regularly holds the place which in a true democracy would be occupied by "citizens." Taxpayers bear a dual relationship to government, neither half of which has anything at all to do with democracy. Taxpayers pay tribute to the government, and they receive services from it. So does every subject of a totalitarian regime. What taxpayers do not do, and what people who call themselves taxpayers have long since stopped even imagining themselves

*doing, is governing. In a democracy, by the very meaning of the word, the people govern.*¹²

Note also that in Patrick’s model, there is no directionality indicated; that is, one domain of democratic education need not be accomplished before another can begin. Indeed, it appears much more likely that knowledge, skills, and dispositions are mutually generative and reinforcing.

Creating an Inventory of Civic Engagement Content, Skills, and Dispositions

We can use the elements of Patrick’s education for democracy curriculum to create an inventory schools can use to gauge the current state of their civic engagement and learning. The following chart suggests a way of organizing that information.

CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT INVENTORY

	Pre-K/K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	“PROMISING PRACTICES” EMPLOYED
KNOWLEDGE: “Where do students learn and apply knowledge about . . .” ¹³														
Core concepts & principles of democracy														
History of democracy														
Practices of democratic citizenship														
Constitutions & democratic institutions														
Continuing issues and landmark court decisions														
Perennial issues about the meaning/uses of core ideas														
COGNITIVE SKILLS: “Where do students learn and practice the skills of...” ¹⁴														
Identifying & describing														

¹² Source: Daniel Kemmis. (1995). *The Good City and the Good Life*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, p. 9.

¹³ Much of this can be drawn directly from the *Massachusetts History/Social Science Framework* (1994).

¹⁴ These should be correlated to the *Common Core State Standards*. See for example *Preparing Students for College, Career, and CITIZENSHIP: A California Guide to Align Civic Education and the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects* (2011). The document can be retrieved at http://commoncore.lacoe.edu/documents/preparing_students_civic_education_connections.pdf.

information about civic life														
Analyzing & explaining information about civic life														
Synthesizing information about civic life														
Evaluating, taking, & defending positions on public events & issues														
Thinking critically about conditions of public/civic life														
Thinking constructively about how to improve civic life														
CIVIC PARTICIPATORY SKILLS: “Where do students learn and practice the skills of...”														
Interacting with other citizens to promote personal & common interests														
Monitoring public events & public issues														
Deliberating & making decisions about public policy issues														
Influencing policy decisions on public issues														
Implementing policy decisions on public issues														
Taking action to improve political/civic life														
CIVIC DISPOSITIONS: “Where do students learn about and have an opportunity to display . . .”														
Affirming the common & equal humanity & dignity of each person														
Respecting, protecting & exercising rights possessed equally by														

each person															
Participating responsibly in the political/civic life of the community															
Practicing self-government & supporting government by consent of the governed															
Exemplifying moral traits of democratic citizenship															
Promoting the common (public) good															

For grade-level inventories one might specify which one or combination of “promising practices” will serve as the pedagogical base for the content. From here we can derive criteria for assessment of civic learning and engagement from the grade-level inventories:

**CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT
GRADE X**

	On what specific content, skills, and dispositions are students to be assessed?	By what means will students be assessed?¹⁵ (e.g., paper & pencil exams, writing products, oral presentations, portfolios, etc.)
KNOWLEDGE:		
Core concepts & principles of democracy		
History of democracy		
Practices of democratic citizenship		
Constitutions & democratic institutions		
Continuing issues and landmark court decisions		
Perennial issues about the meaning/uses of core ideas		
COGNITIVE SKILLS:		
Identifying & describing information about civic life		
Analyzing & explaining information about civic life		
Synthesizing information about civic life		

¹⁵ For ways to implement “promising practices,” see *Guardian of Democracy* (CIRCLE 2012).

	On what specific content, skills, and dispositions are students to be assessed?	By what means will students be assessed?¹⁵ (e.g., paper & pencil exams, writing products, oral presentations, portfolios, etc.)
Evaluating, taking, & defending positions on public events & issues		
Thinking critically about conditions of public/civic life		
Thinking constructively about how to improve civic life		
CIVIC PARTICIPATORY SKILLS		
Interacting with other citizens to promote personal & common interests		
Monitoring public events & public issues		
Deliberating & making decisions about public policy issues		
Influencing policy decisions on public issues		
Implementing policy decisions on public issues		
Taking action to improve political/civic life		
CIVIC DISPOSITIONS: “Where do students learn about and have an opportunity to display...”		
Affirming the common & equal humanity & dignity of each person		
Respecting, protecting & exercising rights possessed equally by each person		
Participating responsibly in the political/civic life of the community		

	On what specific content, skills, and dispositions are students to be assessed?	By what means will students be assessed?¹⁵ (e.g., paper & pencil exams, writing products, oral presentations, portfolios, etc.)
Practicing self-government & supporting government by consent of the governed		
Exemplifying moral traits of democratic citizenship		
Promoting the common (public) good		

ADDITIONAL SELECTED READINGS

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Civic Engagement and Learning in Elementary and Secondary Education

Recommendation: Implement civics requirements throughout K-12 education.

The Commission recommends the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education implement M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 2 in a meaningful way throughout K-12 education that is consistent with the previously outlined civic knowledge, skills and dispositions. The Department should also determine compliance with the statute and take appropriate steps to assist school districts that are non-compliant or not substantively compliant with the provisions of the law.

The Commission further recommends including participatory forms of student engagement as a pedagogy that can offer rich experiential learning when tied to meaningful analysis and understanding of civic issues and processes.

Recommendation: Develop a model civics curriculum.

Senate Bill No. 183 (Sen. Chandler), House Bills No. 136 (Rep. Jay Barrows), 154 (Rep. Elizabeth Poirier) and 174 (Rep. Martin Walsh) filed in the 2011-2012 General Court would have established civics as a requirement for graduation in all Massachusetts high schools. These bills were reported favorably, along with Senate Bill No. 223 (Sen. Richard Moore) by the Joint Committee on Education as Senate Bill No. 2222, An Act to involve youth in civic engagement which was referred to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

The Commission recommends that a version of Senate Bill No. 2222 be re-filed for the 2013-2014 General Court directing the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in collaboration with a youth advisory committee, to develop, adopt and/or embrace existing curriculum which shall align with the history/social science curriculum framework. The curriculum should align with the above Civic Learning and Engagement Inventory, and M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 2. The Department should also create an evaluation assessing the curriculum, pedagogy and teaching materials before piloting the course, unit, or program. Funding should be sought or appropriated in order to carry out this recommendation in the FY14 State Budget, or as soon as possible.¹⁶

Recommendation: Implement the MCAS History Standards Test.¹⁷

Although students are required to take a U.S. History course, they are not required to pass it. The implementation of history standards, which includes knowledge of government, economics, geography, as well as history, can only be meaningful and successful if learning is evaluated through inclusion on the MCAS test.

¹⁶ For model legislation, see Appendix Document 6.

¹⁷ Clarifying statements submitted by Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association (MSSAA), Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies (MCSS), Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), Matthew Roy, Ph.D., and Rep. Alice Hanlon-Peisch. See Appendix Document 1.

The MCAS form of assessment enjoys wide support across the Commonwealth. Recently, the Pioneer Institute conducted a poll of stakeholders. The following is a report on the results of that survey:

Strong majorities of Massachusetts parents, state legislators, and history and social studies teachers believe state leaders should move forward with plans to have U.S. history join English, math and science as subjects in which public school students should be required to pass an MCAS test in order to graduate from high school, according to a public opinion survey conducted by national pollster David Paleologos for Pioneer Institute.

The U.S. history MCAS graduation requirement was scheduled to be implemented beginning with this year's graduating class. But in 2009, the state Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education recommended and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved postponing the requirement, citing the \$2.4 million annual cost of administration...

Legislators are the strongest supporters of reinstating the history MCAS graduation requirement, with 64 percent of those polled either strongly or somewhat supportive of the measure. Sixty-three percent of history and social studies teachers and 59 percent of parents also believe it should be reinstated. Massachusetts is one of only nine states that doesn't require students to demonstrate knowledge of history or civics to graduate from high school.

Seventy-seven percent of teachers and 74 percent of parents believe there is a connection between the subjects that are tested and those that are taught in school. In recent years, middle school social studies departments have been eliminated in Massachusetts and those courses are being taught by English, math and science teachers. High schools are replacing history and social science electives with other subjects.

Instead of the connection between what is tested and what is taught, legislators were asked whether they believed the annual \$2.4 million could be found to administer the MCAS history test. More than two-thirds (68 percent) believe it could.

By overwhelming margins ranging from 88 percent to 97 percent, all three groups agree that every Massachusetts public school student should study our nation's founding and history. Nearly as large a majority – 84 percent of legislators, 83 percent of teachers and 82 percent of parents – believe Massachusetts should focus more attention on educating public school students in U.S. history.

The parent survey consisted of 500 Massachusetts residents who are likely to vote in the presidential election and have children under the age of 18 in their household. David Paleologos's firm, DAPA Research, also polled 150 history and social studies teachers. Twenty-five legislators participated via personal interviews. All surveys were completed from May 1-9.

*The poll results were released at Pioneer's May 10th event, "The Power of the Supreme Court: A Civics Lesson." Watch video clips of the keynote speakers and panel discussion: Jeff Shesol, former Clinton speechwriter and author; Willard Sterne Randall, presidential historian; and, Thomas Birmingham, chief architect of Massachusetts' 1993 education reform, and moderator of panel discussion.*¹⁸

While the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has requested funding in several past budget proposals, insufficient resources are currently available to implement the MCAS history test. The Commission therefore recommends that the Governor and Legislature appropriate sufficient funds through the FY14 State Budget, or as early as possible, to implement the MCAS History test, and that there be sufficient lead time for prep work and remedial services.¹⁹

Recommendation: Establish a Commonwealth Medal for Exemplary Civic Engagement and Learning.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education should develop and administer an award program recognizing students graduating from high school, teachers and civic education partners who demonstrate active civic engagement through a specific project, initiative or portfolio of activities. Each year, honorees will receive a medal with a distinctive ribbon, known as the "Commonwealth Medal for Exemplary Civic Engagement and Learning." The Department should establish the standards for awarding the medal on a statewide basis and encourage school districts to adopt the award and make it available to students and teachers.

Massachusetts recognizes "the honorable and outstanding achievements of youthful citizens, and as a reminder to these young citizens that they prepare for their responsibilities and obligations as the future leaders of the state and the nation," in "Youth Honor Day" (M.G.L. Chapter 6, Section 15G MGL). It is recommended that this current day, which normally requires a gubernatorial proclamation, but receives little attention, be revised to be the day on which schools or other organizations recognize leadership and involvement in civic learning and engagement, highlighting examples in each community, and awarding the Commonwealth Medal.

Recommendation: Re-Energize student engagement in various programs.

Massachusetts has a long history of encouraging student participation in state government from the establishment of Student Government Day (MGL Chapter 6, Section 12M), Youth Honor Day (MGL Chapter 6, Section 15G), Student Advisory Councils and Regional Councils (MGL Chapter 15, Section 1E), Student Membership on School Committees (MGL Chapter 71, Section

¹⁸ For the full report, see Appendix Document 7.

¹⁹ The Commission recognizes the value in giving sufficient flexibility to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to implement this recommendation, and the essential need for adequate funding and advanced preparation as Commissioner Mitchell Chester advised at the May 21st, 2012 Commission meeting.

38M), and the Massachusetts Youth Council, among others. Budget deficiencies and competing priorities have weakened the Student Government Day program, in particular, making it less meaningful to participants. The Commission therefore recommends that this program be evaluated and revised to make it a more meaningful education experience, and to broaden the opportunities for more students to learn about state government by training and requiring participants to share their participation with more students. This evaluation should include consideration of additional necessary resources, either through appropriation or private sources of funding, needed to carry forth the program.

Members of the Commission conducted a survey of legislators and legislative staff to see who had participated in Student Government Day as high school students. Twelve individuals responded. The Commission recommends that a working group be established of these former participants to assist with the 2013 Student Government Day and that the working group convene after the 2013 event to evaluate the program, recommend revisions, and explore the potential for new partner or sponsor organizations. The working group should also review the expansion of student internship opportunities in state and local government, including the possibility of establishing a civic engagement grant program for the hire of high school students for summer internships.

The Commission further recommends that a working group be established to review the current state of student participation in the Student Advisory Council and Student Regional Councils established under MGL Chapter 15, Section 1E. This working group should also conduct a survey of school districts to determine which districts are in compliance with the Student Advisory Committees outlined in MGL Chapter 71, Section 38M; and further to inventory which school committees have exercised their option under the statute to expressly grant the right of the Student Advisory Committee chairperson to attend executive sessions. The working group, in cooperation with the Department and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, should prepare a report on the status of student participation and recommend any changes to these programs within the 2013-2014 school year.



Civic Engagement and Learning in Higher Education²⁰

Overview

- Commission recommendations should provide direction to institutions of higher education regarding the purposes and actions to which they should dedicate themselves, in order to advance civic engagement and learning among campus constituencies (faculty, students, administrators, programs and offices), and between such constituencies and their communities.
- Commission recommendations should reinforce the roles and responsibilities of public higher education in advancing civic engagement in the Commonwealth.
- Commission recommendations should be specific and focused to have direct impact upon public institutions of higher education, yet broad enough to provide guidance and direction also to the state's robust private higher education sector.
- Commission recommendations should provide such guidance and direction to both the purposes and actions to improve civic engagement and learning as above.

Recommendation: Articulate purposes for civic engagement and learning in higher education.

The Commission endorses the recommendations of the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement of January 2012 as they pertain to higher education. Contained in the document, "A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future," these recommendations articulate a) a compelling, concise statement of purpose for civic engagement and b) specific civic engagement and learning goals:

a) Statement of Purpose (from "A Crucible Moment")

"A socially cohesive and economically vibrant US democracy and a viable, just global community require informed, engaged, open-minded, and socially responsible people committed to the common good and practiced in "doing" democracy."

b) Civic Engagement and Learning Goals

Higher education institutions should seek to:

- Foster a civic ethos across all parts of campus and educational culture;
- Make civic literacy a core expectation for all students;
- Practice civic inquiry across all fields of study; and
- Advance civic action through transformative partnerships, at home and abroad.

²⁰ Prepared by Alan H. Bloomgarden, Ed.D, Matthew H. Roy, Ph.D, and Shelley Tinkham, Ph.D. (DHE).

In practice, the pursuit of these goals will involve the advancement and enhancement of interdependent partnerships with K-12 education, state and local government agencies and policymakers, non-profit agencies, and other key stakeholders essential to the fulfillment of the Commission's civic engagement and learning goals.

Recommendation: Dedicate resources to advance capacities for civic engagement and learning in higher education.

The Commission urges state and private institutions of higher education to pursue the above purposes and goals by dedicating resources to create, expand, and make more sustainable their educational and administrative infrastructure for enabling civic engagement among students, faculty and staff. Improving civic engagement and learning requires colleges and universities to develop and maintain robust support for learning and service partnerships between students and community institutions and organizations. Options institutions should consider in meeting this goal are:

- Enhancing and integrating curricular, work-study, and volunteer student community service and learning opportunities that promote active and informed civic participation and engagement;
- Increasing emphasis on various aspects of civic education engagement and learning components of academic programs that prepare individuals for professional licensure in various fields;
- Providing clear entry points for community partners to facilitate community access by organizations and institutions wanting to engage with students and faculty to simultaneously enhance civic learning and community resources;
- Providing campus access points for research collaborations, connected with practical and ethical training for all involved in research partnerships;
- Supporting faculty development and curricular initiatives to advance community-engaged learning and civic engagement;
- Supporting development and program resources for campus and community organization personnel; and
- Enabling and ensuring that campus-community partnerships reinforce and enhance community capacities to redress local issues.

While facilitating student learning, knowledge generation and institutional aims, principles of mutual benefit, reciprocity, and sustainability must govern these interactions. Institutions of higher education must acknowledge that civic engagement requires capacity both on campus and in communities among partner organizations (schools, non-profit organizations, government agencies, etc.) to enable collaborative citizenship education and preparation while achieving meaningful community impact.

Further Explanation/Rationale: This focus upon building on- and off-campus capacities is critical. Civic participation and community engagement depends upon organizations, institutions and people in communities – in the non-profit, education, business, government and other sectors – to create appropriate learning opportunities, and to serve as co-educators. But the mechanisms

to construct and steward these opportunities require investment and maintenance. On campus, the infrastructures to achieve those aims are often underdeveloped to handle the growth these recommendations will inspire. In the community, current and prospective partners have their own missions to fulfill and services to deliver, and without support, capacity, and/or compensation their sustainable investment in higher education partnerships is at risk. By addressing capacities, these recommendations will identify more promising avenues for dedicating resources and implementing programming that advance the Commission's civic engagement aims.

Recommendation: Emphasize civic engagement and learning in public higher education.

The Commission recommends supporting the Department of Higher Education's Vision Project Goal 6: Civic Education and Engagement which calls upon the public higher education system to develop the means by which to promote civic learning and engagement of all students as a key measurable educational outcome. The Commission's recommendations are in alignment with the goal of the Vision Project to create comprehensive and contemporary civic education and engagement programming that takes into account all aspects of the student experience, including academic coursework, service-learning, extracurricular activities and off-campus programming.

Further Explanation/Rationale: In May 2010, the Board of Higher Education voted unanimously to adopt the Vision Project as the public agenda for public higher education in Massachusetts. The Vision Project is based on the premise that Massachusetts needs the best-educated citizenry and workforce in the country if it is to meet the demands of the Commonwealth's innovation-oriented, knowledge-based economy and culture.

To achieve this end, the Board identified five key educational outcomes in which public higher education should aspire to national leadership: college participation; graduation and student success rates; level of student learning; alignment of degree production with workforce needs, and elimination of disparities in educational outcomes among subpopulations. The first Vision Project report was presented to the public in September 2012.

The Board added a sixth key educational outcome to the Vision Project focused on civic education and engagement in March 2012. This addition was in response to the public higher education community's critique that while the Vision Project's initial set of key outcomes and metrics included specific references to workforce development, they lacked parallel references to preparing a well informed and engaged citizenry.

The Department of Higher Education has now charged a Civic Education and Engagement Study Group, comprised of representatives from the community colleges, state universities, University of Massachusetts, and institutions outside of public higher education, with the task of writing a report that will establish and articulate the goals and objectives of the civic education and engagement outcome of the Vision Project, including developing a set of recommendations to achieve these goals and objectives.

An investment in the Vision Project's Civic Education and Engagement educational outcomes supports the Commission's goals in light of today's growing reach of public higher education. More Massachusetts residents are now attending public higher education institutions than ever before and 9 out of 10 public higher education graduates (Massachusetts residents and non-residents) remain in state, working or pursuing further education.²¹ The vast majority (67%) of Massachusetts public high school graduates who enroll at an in-state institution do so at a public college or university.²²

Total enrollment patterns are also shifting.²³ The public campus enrollments have grown at twice the rate of independent colleges and universities in the past five years.²⁴ In 1967 only 30% of all undergraduate students in Massachusetts attended Massachusetts public colleges and universities, today it is 52%.²⁵ And this rate is even higher with groups of students traditionally underrepresented in higher education, 59% of African-American and Latino undergraduates and 72% of Massachusetts adult undergraduates age 25 and older.

Supporting the Vision Project promises a strong return for the development of civic education and engagement among current and future Massachusetts residents.



²¹ This rate is measured one year after graduation. Source: Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

²² Source: U.S. Department of Higher Education (IPEDS), Fall 2010.

²³ There are 29 public colleges and universities and 104 independent colleges and universities in the Commonwealth.

²⁴ Source: U.S. Department of Higher Education (IPEDS), Fall 2010

²⁵ Source: U.S. Department of Higher Education (IPEDS), Fall 2010

Adult Civic Engagement and Learning²⁶

A. Summary

Recommendation: Establish a center within an existing agency or institution to coordinate and encourage programs to promote civic engagement and education for the adult population that will complement similar efforts for kindergarten through higher education.

The central mission of this center will be to promote and facilitate civic engagement for the non-student adult population by providing information resources and referrals, training and participatory education concerning the roles and structures of government and civic institutions. The center should be non-partisan in its operations and orientation. The center would not have political ends, but rather would co-exist in the political realm as a model for responsible civic engagement on public issues.

The center may realize this mission by providing training with internet-based tools, offering templates and curricula for local civic organizations and initiatives, and by making referrals to organizations that offer complementary services and programs. The center would be statewide in scope, serving a variety of populations and communities with both broad-based and targeted efforts, and coordinate its adult-focused efforts with programs that promote civic education for the K-16 population. The center would deploy traditional and emerging media suitable to the diversity of a changing population and shifting technologies.

Rationale; issues and limitations

Why establish a center?

Our communities, Commonwealth and institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, depend on the participation and support of adults with civic skills and literacy. Civics is a building block for society; civic engagement is essential for a successful, participatory democracy. In turn, a robust democracy reinforces our economy, our institutions and the cultural and communal life of our Commonwealth.

Adult civic engagement is a necessary companion to civic education in our schools; the lessons learned among children and adults would be reinforced, and any changes in school curricula and testing that require support from voters will depend on the relevance of civics education and engagement to both populations.

Issues and Limitations

Partisanship. Civics and government are often seen through a partisan lens. To mitigate polarization and partisanship in the operations and activities of the center, it should be defined, established and operated as non-partisan.

²⁶ Prepared by Joshua Ostroff, Terry Yoffie, Terri Stone, Roger Desrosiers, Luiciano Ramos, Anne Ziaja and Shelley Tinkham, Ph.D. (DHE).

Oversight. The proposed center would not exist in a vacuum. It may be subject to economic, political and commercial interests. The center will itself require oversight, transparency and accountability to ensure that it serves its mission fairly and effectively as a model for the civic standards it seeks to promote. A governing structure that provides effective oversight and balanced perspectives is important. A founding board may include representatives of:

- Secretary of the Commonwealth
- Secretary of Education
- The General Court
- Major political parties
- City and Town Clerks
- Town Moderators
- Local government
- Public and private higher education
- Nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations specializing in civic engagement and education
- Foundations and corporations

Staffing and functions

Staffing and support for the center must balance goals with limited means. A director and a small staff to provide communications, training, development and programming are appropriate.

Measurement

Measurement is essential to any program's success, and among the tasks of a governing board is to develop appropriate measures to assure that the center's mission is delivered. Voting, volunteerism, knowledge testing, program participation/attendance and other metrics could guide the center's progress and direction.

B. Representative program content and services

The center may offer information and services about these topics:

- Fundamentals of government and constitutional principles
- Government structure at the local, regional, state and federal level
- Voting information
- Volunteering and public service
- Effective citizenship
- Legislative primer
- Governance laws
- Templates for establishing civic organizations
- Texts and training about compromise, consensus and conflict
- Civic engagement training and practice

- Initiatives and referenda in the democratic process
- Workplace-based programs in the private, public and non-profit sectors

In addition to direct training and services, the center may offer internships or fellowships as a means to build internal and external capacity, sustain or expand its offerings and collaborate with other institutions.

Existing programs focused on civic engagement will help guide the center. Within Massachusetts, many communities have developed programs to encourage civic participation at the local level, such as Lexington²⁷, Northampton²⁸ and Chelsea, and the State Legislature has a longstanding Legislative Seminar series²⁹ that has trained thousands of citizens on the legislative process. The Secretary of the Commonwealth has developed many publications and resources³⁰ to encourage civic participation and knowledge. Corporations in Massachusetts that encourage non-partisan civic participation and engagement should be highlighted. Programs outside of Massachusetts would also be referenced.

A small number of states have established initiatives to address the goals of this recommendation, including Oregon³¹ and Washington State³². Many states offer targeted programs that focus on certain individual goals, such as citizenship skills for new citizens, young adults, offenders or other populations.

The center should recognize excellence in civic engagement by nominating for Commonwealth Medals both private and government/non-profit programs and initiatives.³³

C. Potential Hosts and Funding

The center may be housed in an agency of state government, at an institution of higher learning, at a library or institute, or at a foundation or non-profit organization with a compatible mission.

Funding may be through a combination of state appropriation, foundation grants or corporate and individual gifts. The initial sources of funding must be adequate to ensure ongoing operations, and to allow the development process time to take root.



²⁷ Source: <http://ci.lexington.ma.us/towngovernment/citizensacademy.cfm>

²⁸ Source: <http://www.northamptonma.gov/bestpractices/>

²⁹ Source: <http://www.malegislature.gov/Engage/SpecialEvents>

³⁰ Source: <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm>

³¹ Source: <http://oregonvotes.org/pages/voterresources/civics-toolkit/index.html>

³² Source: <http://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/civics-education.aspx>

³³ For examples of awards recognizing public, private and non-profit entities for excellence in civic engagement see Appendix Document 8.

Models of Civic Engagement

“The only principles of public conduct that are worthy...are to sacrifice estate, ease, health and applause, and even life, to the sacred calls of his country. These...sentiments, in private life, make the good citizen; in public life, the patriot and the hero.”

- James Otis, Jr. (1725-1783)

Those who founded Massachusetts and those who have served in, or influenced, the public life of the Commonwealth saw the establishment and preservation of democracy as a dynamic force, an act of service that defined our state and nation by offering a better way of life to an ever expanding definition of the body politic.

President John F. Kennedy, addressing the Massachusetts General Court prior to his inauguration as the Nation’s 35th President, told us that Massachusetts “leaders have shaped our destiny long before the great republic was born. Its principles have guided our footsteps in times of crisis as well as in times of calm. Its democratic institutions – including this historic body – have served as beacon lights for other nations as well as our sister states.” He then stated, “For what Pericles said to the Athenians has long been true of this commonwealth: ‘We do not imitate—for we are a model to others.’”

Quoting Governor John Winthrop, President Kennedy went on to state, “We must always consider...that we shall be as a city upon a hill – the eyes of all people are upon us.” Continuing, he affirmed, “Today the eyes of all people are truly upon us – and our governments, in every branch, at every level, national, state and local, must be as a city upon a hill – constructed and inhabited by men aware of their great trust and their great responsibilities.”

Since President Kennedy uttered these words, the role of civic education, once envisioned as the justification of a free public education by Horace Mann, seems to have been lost in our current climate of preparing students for effective competition in the global workplace through a focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Yet if citizens feel powerless to govern themselves, or to influence public policy and build consensus through the democratic process, they will resort to using their economic success to buy the power to control their destiny and the destiny of others.

Although it may be true that education in civic engagement and learning has waned in the past few decades, there are still among the youth of the Commonwealth, examples to be found of young people who are still “aware of their great trust and their great responsibilities,” and who have become civically engaged in an effort to address problems facing society or their community.

The Commission has collected some of those stories in an effort to offer hope, ideas, and practical resources for the people of the Commonwealth who may be interested in renewing the social compact that has made Massachusetts a leader among the states of this country.



MILFORD

Teen rallies support for skate park repair

By Derek McLean
Daily News Staff

MILFORD — It has become near impossible for local skateboarders such as Milford High School junior Morgan Callahan, 16, to use the town's rapidly deteriorating skate park, forcing them to take their hobby to the streets at the dismay of the public.

Last year, the town spent around \$4,500 to renovate the beat-up and less-than-a-decade-old skate park located next to Memorial Elementary School on Walnut Street. In the spring, it was renovated by a local volunteer using the funds, only to quickly fall back into disrepair about a month later, said Parks Director Michael Bresciani.

The skate park now only has two ramps, one that has falling beams and nails sticking out, and the other, a half-pipe that has large holes in the middle of it. As a result, skateboarders, bike riders, and rollerbladers have been forced to use rails, curbs, benches, ledges or anything they can find around town so they can grind and perform tricks.

Callahan is one of the local teens that has taken

to the streets every day to pursue skateboarding, which his favorite pastime. He said that every time he does, it is just a short time before he is told to stop by police or residents.

Frustrated, Callahan formed a petition on Change.Org. last week to replace or repair the park so he can once again have a place to skateboard in peace.

Over the course of the week, Callahan has already surpassed his goal of 70 signatures by other local skateboarders, parents, concerned area residents and friends. Many of them have showed their support on the petition's comment section.

Skateboarding "is a good way to keep us out of trouble. It's a good hobby that lets us stay active and healthy. ... We just need a safe place to go where we won't get in trouble," said Callahan on Monday. "The town is going to have to keep kicking us out. ... It's not good for anybody."

Callahan said that he has around 20 friends his own age that bike or skateboard. He said that when the skate park was in commission, 30-40 people would be using it daily.

His classmate, Tristan La-taille, 17, a local skateboarder who signed the petition said, "It's really, really frustrating. I hate having to deal with the cops and people yelling at us, for doing an activity that we love."

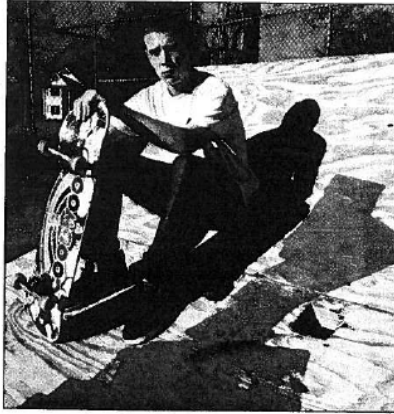
Callahan said the skate park was never fully fixed properly by the volunteer, which is why it is again a shambles. In the petition he wrote, "There is holes, cracks, and nails sticking up in the very few ramps that are still in-tact."

Bresciani said that the volunteer, whose name was not immediately available, did a good job with the repairs and said, "It's sad its in disrepair again."

He said there are no current plans to repair the skate park, but the department will likely discuss rebuilding the wooden ramps using more structurally sound materials, such as cement.

In his petition Callahan said, "This town needs a safe environment for kids to do what they love and not get in trouble for it. Back when the Milford skate park was in good condition, it attracted many skaters/bikers

SEE PARK, A8



Milford High School Junior Morgan Callahan said the local skate park is unusable and is in disrepair. PHOTO BY DEREK MCLEAN

PARK

From Page A3

from surrounding towns and gave many teens a safe place to enjoy recreational activities."

He said on Monday that after he gets the signatures he needs, he will present the petition to town officials in the near future. Thanks to

the outpouring of support he has received, he is now confident that he can make a difference.

To sign the petition visit: www.change.org/petitions/milford-skatepark-needs-desperate-help.

Derek McLean can be reached at 508-634-7582 or dmclean@wickedlocal.com.



High Schoolers and Town Meeting Up the Smoking Age, Clear the Air

Two articles proposed by Brookline High School students pass almost unopposed at Annual Town Meeting.

By Liza Katz/Brookline Patch, May 30, 2012

Two of the articles discussed and voted on during last night's Town Meeting were proposed by students at Brookline High School, who are part of the school's Peer Leadership program.

"It's heartening to me as moderator to have high school students...participate in the civic process," said Moderator Sandy Gadsby.

Town Meeting voted almost unanimously to increase the age of tobacco sales to 19, and unanimously to impose clean air standards for construction programs.

Tobacco Sales

Article 12, submitted by Eric Dumas, proposed that the age of tobacco sales be raised to 19 years old. Belmont and Needham have already taken similar measures, and Watertown is considering doing the same.

"When you drive by Brookline High School, what is the first thing you see?" questioned Dumas, who is a pitcher on Brookline High School's baseball team. He pointed out that a passerby would first notice the groups of kids smoking outside, which he said "reflects poorly on our school."

Raising the age of tobacco sales to 19 would mean that very few high school students could purchase cigarettes legally in Brookline. This would make it more difficult to obtain access to cigarettes and for younger students to pick up the habit of smoking from older ones.

Furthermore, Dumas argued, those who graduate from high school without using tobacco products are highly unlikely to start smoking as adults. Most people who currently smoke started as teenagers; in contrast, very few started during their adult years. Young people's brains, studies have shown, are also much more sensitive to addiction than adult brains.

The Advisory Committee voted unanimously in favor of the resolution, as did the Advisory Council on Public Health. After a resounding chorus of "Aye"s from the auditorium, the motion carried by a vote of 169-1.

Clean Construction Standards

Article 26, submitted by Catherine Marris, Jake Wolf-Sorokin, and Pema Doma, dealt with cleaner construction standards for Brookline.

The article proposed that the town limit the emissions coming from construction vehicles and enforce the no-idling bylaw more strictly. These actions, the petitioners explained, would reduce carbon emissions as well as the incidence of asthma in young people.

"Growing up, two of the members of my immediate family had asthma," said Doma. Her early experience made her aware of the limitations this condition causes and inspired her to take action. She also pointed out that while just one out of ten teenagers in Massachusetts have asthma, that rate is one out of four in Roxbury.

"We truly believe that air quality should be equal for everyone," said Marris.

Doma and Marris are part of the youth organization YMORE (Youth of Massachusetts Organizing for a Reformed Economy), which joins urban and suburban youth in Massachusetts to work towards common goals in society.

Article 26 also carried, with unanimous support from the Town Meeting.



Hopedale teen meets with governor

By Jessica Trufant/Milford Daily News, July 12, 2012

HOPEDALE – When Kiara Lum heard that the Governor's Youth Council was accepting applications in the fall of 2010, she applied on a whim, knowing it was a prime opportunity. But she couldn't have anticipated the impact the council would have on her.

"Mostly what I've gained is growing as a person. I'm not in a big city, so it's helped me expand out of my comfort zone, and meet all these people coming from all walks of life," said Lum, 17.

"I do think we've made an impact, and we will continue to past Governor Patrick's time in office."

The Governor's Youth Council is comprised of 28 young people ages 14 to 20 who represent the state's 14 counties. Council members are selected for two-year terms to advise Gov. Deval Patrick on key issues affecting youth across the commonwealth.

"It's really different than anything I've been a part of," said Lum, who will be a senior at Hopedale High School this fall, and served as the student advisory representative to the School Committee. "As a group, all these teens are really leaders, and they can make a difference, and people look up to them. Together we're a force to be reckoned with."

Patrick on Monday hosted members and alumni of the Governor's Youth Council at the State House for the first council reunion. Past and present members, including Lum, shared with Patrick what they have accomplished as part of the Youth Council, and their future goals.

"He sat in the circle with us, and we discussed the things that were relevant, and it was good because in person he's laid back, and we were joking around with him," Lum said. "He discussed our initiatives, and he said he wants our feedback, so we'll be doing more work in an advising capacity."

Member of the 2010-12 Youth Council focused on the issue of bullying, and worked with schools to host "No Name Calling Day" on Jan. 25 to raise awareness.

"It's great to see that there's so much you can do to get the word out about a cause and get involved with the schools," said Lum, who helped organize anti-bullying talks in classrooms and made banners for "No Name Calling Day."

The council is currently planning initiatives for the start of the school year, and on June 16 members will film a public service announcement on their work.

"I continue to be impressed with these amazing young leaders. Their commitment to civic engagement make them incredible role models for the next generation," Patrick said in a press release.

The council has opened Lum's eyes to various careers that she said she otherwise would have never considered, and she now has better understanding of how education and government work together.

"There's been intense and tricky parts along the way, but overall the council has made me very optimistic and since (the council is) so young I think it can only become better and a more integral part of the state government," she said.



Sharon teen hopes to see bathroom bill win passage

By Fred Hanson/The Patriot Ledger, July 12 2012

SHARON – Even though it was years ago, Catherine Rutley remembers well what it was like when she couldn't stray too far from a bathroom. "It was a little embarrassing and really limiting," said Catherine, 16, who has ulcerative colitis.

She usually wouldn't go anywhere without her mother, Alison, who could explain to a sales clerk why her daughter couldn't wait to use a bathroom.

While Catherine, who is about to start her senior year at Sharon High School, is symptom-free now, she doesn't want to see others suffer as she did.

Her father, Jonathan, helped draft a bill that would require retailers to open their employee-

only bathrooms to people who suffer from inflammatory bowel disease if a public bathrooms aren't available or readily accessible.

The bill, sponsored by state Rep. Louis Kafka, D-Stoughton, has received final approval in the House and is awaiting action in the Senate.

"I'd like to see it passed and sent to the governor by the end of the month," when the Legislature will end its formal sessions for the year, Kafka said.

If not, he will try to get it approved during an informal session the Legislature will hold for the rest of the year, he said.

Since the bill has gained publicity, Kafka has heard from more people who have had experiences similar to Catherine Rutley's.

“Some people have shunned going to public places because they have an immediate need for facilities and sometimes they’re not available,” he said.

Catherine has testified before a legislative committee in favor of the bill, and recently met with state Sen. President Therese Murray, D-Plymouth, to urge passage. She’s hopeful the bill will pass this year.

“I remember those days like yesterday, and I don’t want anyone else to suffer those embarrassing accidents in public, because I

remember how embarrassing those accidents could be.”

State Sen. Brain A. Joyce, D-Milton, who set up the meeting between Murray and Rutley, thinks the bill has a good chance of passing.

“We’ve been reaching out to all the senators, and there seems to be a fair amount of support,” Joyce said.

The legislation is modeled after an Illinois law known as Ally’s Law, named for Ally Bain, a young girl who suffered a violent attack while shopping at a national chain retailer and was denied use of a restroom by a manager. Similar laws have been passed in 11 other states.



Let 17-year-olds vote

By Corinne Plaisir and Carline Kirksey/Reuters, July 24, 2012

LOWELL – We are teenagers – 17-year-old teenagers – and at a time of increasing voter apathy, we want to vote. We’ve come up with a way to encourage our peers to become good life-long voters and combat decreased voter turnout – by lowering the voting age to 17 in our hometown’s municipal elections here in Lowell.

Our bill, currently in a statehouse committee, would provide for a city ballot question in November 2013 to let Lowell voters decide whether or not 17-year-olds can vote in its municipal elections, and only its municipal elections. If yes, 17-year-olds will be able to vote in 2015, for the first time anywhere in the country. Lowell has led in historic efforts before: from the Industrial Revolution to Mill Girl strikes to having the first co-ed high school in the country. We are ready to lead again.

We started the voting age movement after a 2009 youth-led city council candidates’ forum held by a nonprofit youth development organization, the United Teen Equality Center (better known as UTEC, where we serve as youth organizers). Before the forum, teens surveyed hundreds of their peers to find out what the top issues were. Youth representation

was among the top three issues. All city council candidates were asked if they would support lowering the voting age to 17 in our local elections; 18 out of 19 said yes.

In 2010, the Lowell City Council successfully passed a home-rule petition that was sent to the Statehouse. With its favorable passage from the Joint Committee on Election Laws, our bill has now made it further than any other bill of its kind. Now our bill has to go through both the House and Senate floor to reach the governor’s desk by July 31. After the governor receives our bill, it will come back to Lowell for a final vote.

It seems illogical for 18 to be the voting-age threshold. Eighteen-year-olds are either starting work or going to college, often in a city far from home. At best, they find that their first opportunity to vote locally is by mailing in an absentee ballot. Seventeen-year-olds are still at home, likely still in school and definitely still affected by their local politics. They are directly impacted by local policies affecting our schools and community. Seventeen-year-olds are surrounded with the support they need to be coached through practicing their civic rights. They are in the last stage of their lives before

they leave and begin adulthood. It is at this age that the next generation should be taught and guided through voting.

There's evidence that 17-year-olds are intellectually ready to vote. A research study done in 2011 by Rutgers University at Camden professors Daniel Hart and Robert Atkins found that 16- and 17-year-olds score the same on questions about political knowledge as 21-year-olds. Seventeen-year-olds are usually seniors in high school and have usually completed their history or civics requirements. They have a leadership role in their schools and are busy preparing for their futures; voting should be built into this stage in life.

In 1970, it made sense to lower the voting age to 18 from 21 because of the changing times. Ted Kennedy in his speech to the Senate in 1971 said: "Our young people today are far better equipped – intellectually, physically, and emotionally – to make the type of choices involved in voting than were past generations of youth." He also said: "I believe that both the exercise of the franchise and the expectation of the franchise provide a strong incentive for greater political involvement and understanding." All that still holds true.

We know that voting at 17 will increase voter turnout in our community. According to Notre Dame political scientist David Campbell's research, when high school students are exposed to civic norms and practices, voter turnout increases by 7 percentage points. Peter Levine, Director of Circle (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) at Tufts University testified at our public hearing for our bill and stated that voting at an early age becomes habitual. He said that today's system "is a recipe for low turnout, and the effects are

lasting, because research shows that voting is a habitual behavior." A study done by Penn State political scientist, Eric Plutzer in 2002, found that the best way to create participating voters is to use the idea of habitual voting to get young people voting in their hometowns early.

Over the coming days, we look forward to working with Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo to transform our bill into an opportunity for Lowell to be the pilot for this idea. In fact, Circle has committed to help continue to research the impact of allowing 17-year-olds to vote and get practical results. As stated in an editorial in the *Republican*, a local newspaper in Springfield: "Everyone likes to bemoan the low rates of voter participation across our nation. Here's a golden opportunity to look at one way of increasing turnout. The arguments – on both sides – are only theoretical now. Getting some practical results only makes sense." This past year Lowell saw a voter turnout of less than 19.75 percent, the lowest in its history. This is a major challenge to our democracy.

Our bill is unique. It asks for the state legislature to allow the people of our city to be able to vote on this issue by placing the question as a referendum on Lowell's 2013 municipal ballot. To do so, we need the state legislature's approval by July 31. Each of the more than 40 teens who work on this campaign has his or her own personal motivation for becoming involved. For some, it is because they once felt discouraged and disengaged by the system. For others, it is being able to fight for the next generation that is the most rewarding. Ultimately, we feel that the people of Lowell deserve to have a say on whether 17-year-olds should vote in municipal elections. That's why we've adopted the rallying cry of "Let Lowell Vote!" It's time to try something new.



Students to discuss civic at statehouse

Associated Press, December 11, 2012

BOSTON – Students will share ideas for fighting gang violence and improving public

transit and teen employment with public officials at the Massachusetts Statehouse.

Sponsored by the nonprofit Generation Citizen, about 250 students are expected to participate in Wednesday's event.

The middle school and high school students will present their ideas about how to improve Boston.

Nonprofit officials say Boston City Councilor-At-Large Felix G. Arroyo, state Sen. Katherine

Clark and state Rep. Gloria L. Fox will provide feedback meant to help students' ideas become reality.

The students are from schools in Boston, Malden and Arlington and have taken a course in civics that teaches them how they can become agents of change.



Boston University's Projects in Civic Engagement Facebook Page a Capsule of Student Civic Engagement Stories and Ideas

(<http://www.facebook.com/projectsincivicengagement>)



Plymouth Community Intermediate School eighth-graders win civic action award

Wicked Local Plymouth, June 30, 2011

BOSTON – A group of eighth-graders from Plymouth Community Intermediate School were awarded “Best Portfolio” for their research and presentation of a citizen awareness project.

This is the third consecutive year that PCIS history teacher Mike Martin and eighth-grade students from Ranger House have won the Massachusetts Project Citizen Showcase, held at the State House in Boston.

Project Citizen is a federally funded and organized civic education program in which students are urged to identify a problem in their local community and present a public policy solution.

Martin's students won “Best Overall Portfolio” for their project, the highest honor in the program, for their analysis of school cafeteria serving trays.

The Showcase included middle and high school classes from eight schools across the commonwealth.

The PCIS students chose to eliminate the use of Styrofoam in their school, recognizing the product as a threat to their health and their community.

“I am always pleased to see our young people taking an interest in their communities,” Senate President Therese Murray, D-Plymouth, said. “These students are great role models. Through teamwork, they showed they can identify an issue and address it. I commend them on their leadership and civic action.”

The eighth-graders created an action plan and presented it to a panel of elected officials and staff members who determined the best proposals.

The students reviewed the affects, costs and effectiveness of Styrofoam trays used in the PCIS cafeteria. And after completing extensive

research, the students decided to try and replace the Styrofoam plates with hard plastic compartmentalized trays. They interviewed Patrick VanCott, food service director for the Plymouth Public Schools. He considered the students’ research valuable and used their work to determine that hard plastic trays are more cost efficient and made the change.

“My students did such a great job in presenting their case,” Martin said. “I am very proud of them. Their project to ban Styrofoam in the school cafeteria is implemented. As eighth-graders, they should be proud of what they have accomplished.”

The team of winning PCIS students includes Ashley Bernard, Joshua Callender, Michael Davies, Jennalyn De’Nobrega, Lauren Goldie, Corey Leaden, Mareanna Moore, Brent Pope, Colby Randall, Eli Silverman, Haley Taraska, Kailee Taylor, Chelsea Watt, Christine Hanson, Alexis Ryan and Gabby Oliveira.



Tobacco sales banned in Pittsfield stores with pharmacies

By Dick Lindsay/The Berkshire Eagle, June 8, 2012

PITTSFIELD – Add Pittsfield to the growing list of Massachusetts communities that have banned tobacco sales at stores with pharmacies.

The prohibition is one of several health regulations the city’s Board of Health has adopted aimed primarily at keeping youths from buying cigarettes and other tobacco-related products.

The five-member board this week unanimously approved the revisions to its tobacco control regulations, effective Aug. 1.

The ban will affect 10 city businesses with pharmacies belonging to six retail chains. The traditional pharmacies include four Rite Aid stores and one CVS. The prohibition would also extend to the two Stop & Shop supermarkets, along with two other grocers, Big Y and Price Chopper, and the Walmart department store.

Earlier this spring, Lee, Lenox and Stockbridge together became the first Berkshire County communities to enact the pharmacy ban, a statewide movement that began four years ago. Since 2008, a total of 36 cities and towns, Boston and Springfield included, have prevented nearly 320 stores from selling tobacco products - - 58 of which are independent pharmacies and the rest major retailers.

While there’s no proof the ban will curtail youth smoking, reducing access to tobacco products increases the chances of a healthier city, according to Dr. Philip Adamo, chairman of the Pittsfield Board Health.

"There’s plenty of science out there that shows tobacco is detrimental to our health ... and it’s not just for the smokers, but people who are around the smokers," he said.

Adamo's remarks came Wednesday night following a public hearing on the anti-tobacco regulations, supported by all who spoke before the five-member panel.

Several felt that pharmacies, as well as other health-related businesses, selling tobacco products doesn't make sense.

"It's not fair to sell things detrimental to your health in a place that is supposed to promote health and wellness," said Bailey Stokes.

The president of the Taconic High School chapter of SADD, Students Against Destructive Decisions, cited how their group is part of a statewide movement called Youth Alive 84.

"The 84 stands for the 84 percent of [Massachusetts] youth who are tobacco-free," Stokes said. "We want to make the number 100."

The board did invite representatives of the affected stores to comment in writing or at the hearing regarding the ban, but they received zero response, according to board member Jay Green.

The ban and other regulations approved in an effort to curb youth smoking were developed in

collaboration with the Tri-Town Health Department. Tri-Town, the primary health agency for Lee, Lenox and Stockbridge, administers the state-funded, local tobacco awareness program to nine other communities, including Pittsfield, North Adams and Great Barrington.

Tri-Town director James J. Wilusz applauded the city's health board, as did the Tri-Town board, with approving a regulation to prevent the sale of nicotine delivery devices to minors and ban their use indoors. Previously, someone under the age of 18 could buy so-called "e-cigarettes," which deliver the nicotine fix without the tobacco.

"Pittsfield is sending a strong message to the community that tobacco use and prevention is a priority and that the board's actions will further protect our youth from being influenced by tobacco products," Wilusz said after the meeting.

In addition, the revised tobacco regulations in Pittsfield, as well as in Lee, Lenox and Stockbridge, include a ban on tobacco sales in educational institutions, the elimination of outdoor smoking where food is served, and the requirement that tobacco retailers post signs with a smoking cessation hotline phone number.



We the People: A Civic Education at a Crossroads

By: Jane Spitz/South Shore Living, April 2011

When it comes to educating young people about our nation's rich history and the rights and responsibilities of its citizens, one unique program stands out from the rest.

Students from Braintree and Pembroke High School arrive at John Joseph Moakley Federal Courthouse in Boston on a brisk Saturday morning in January, dressed neatly in skirts and suits, with backpacks slung over their shoulders. Armed with a semester's worth of research and history analysis, as well as a special appreciation for the American Constitution, they pass beneath the building's towering archways and join a growing crowd of young people from nine other Massachusetts high schools — prepared to test their knowledge.

The day these students had been preparing for over the past few months is finally upon them. It is the culmination of the "We The People" history program, a competition at which students from history classrooms around the state testify at mock congressional hearings in front of a panel of honorary judges.

Once inside the courtrooms, small groups of students huddle together for last minute study sessions, but when the judges enter the room the students stand up and the room falls quiet.

"When the Constitution and declaration were written, 20 percent of the population was enslaved. The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments addressed perennially troubling issues with our country's government," says student Ethan Anderson from Braintree High School speaking of amendments related to the abolition of slavery, which ensured citizenship and the right to vote for men of all races, respectively. "This was a huge stepping stone in the civil rights movement," says Anderson.

Together with two of his classmates, Anderson made up one of six teams in his class, the number required in order to compete in the simulated congressional hearings. Formal presentations are followed by questioning from one of 12 panels of volunteer "judges" who then assess students' depth of understanding as well as their ability to apply their knowledge.

Citing various Massachusetts ballot questions of recent years — the outlawing of dog racing and legalizing marijuana — students address James Madison's distinctive concerns about protecting individual rights and majority rule. The judges, in this case a former school superintendent, a naval officer, and a law and history professor, compliment the students on their ability to effectively reference current-day examples.

"Unfortunately, many Americans have a general idea about the Constitution, but their level of understanding is often not too deep," says Richard Flanagan, a Braintree history teacher who has accompanied his classes to the state competitions for the past three years. Flanagan attributes the We the People course in particular to his students' development of a positive view of the political process and democracy in general as they become better informed, contributing citizens. "Studies have shown that We the People alumni outperform university students on political knowledge tests, exhibit less political cynicism, and are more politically tolerant than the average American," he says.

For Chris Ronan, a senior in Flanagan's class who will soon turn 18 and vote for the first time, the course supplied the impetus to examine the meaning behind political rhetoric.

"I never understood the differences between the two parties, but now I am following the news more closely and getting more out of it," says Ronan.

If a student's ability to analyze subject matter and appreciate its relevance to real life are indicative of the value of a course and the effectiveness of a teaching strategy, then We the People has been a resounding success.

"I started the school year thinking this would just be another class," says Drew Fox Jordan, a junior from Braintree. "As the months went on, I realized how much this class changed me. I had fallen in love with the subject matter. I made up my mind to pursue a career as a teacher so

Education on the Chopping Block

Ever since the We The People program began in 1987, more than 28 million students and 90 thousand educators have participated. We The People State Competition Coordinator Roger Desrosiers has been involved for 24 years.

"It's a truly dynamic program that has done a lot of good for a lot of young people," says Desrosiers. "It enriches the students' learning and helps create informed citizens."

Up till now, We The People has maintained bipartisan support, but because it falls under "earmarked" funds, the latest push to cut back on government spending has placed We The People as well as countless other innovative projects in jeopardy. In December, all new earmarks were dismissed. With the budget for 2012 before the congress, the future funding for the Education for Democracy Act, civic education programs, and other prominent national civic education endeavors is

that I can contribute to the next generation's understanding of our government and the political system."

Jordan is not alone. The We the People program was created by an act of Congress in 1987 in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights and in recognition of the importance of civic education. West Warwick High School in Rhode Island offered the class that inaugural year. Its popularity continued, and in 1996, then high school sophomore Brandon Hall, who now teaches history at Pembroke High School, participated as a member of the state championship team. At the end of the year, his class traveled to Washington D.C. to compete in the nationals. Hall became enthralled with the philosophy behind the Constitution and with everything about the United States government.

"That's why I became a history teacher," says Hall, who clearly shared his students' excitement and anxiety as they welcomed judges into the courtroom by standing in silent reverence. On several occasions during the sessions, Hall nodded with approval when students looked back at him for his subtle assurance.

This is the first year Pembroke High School students have participated in the program, thanks to Hall, who was instrumental in bringing the We the People program to the school. Hall attended the weekend workshops provided to teachers at every school that signs on to take part. During the weeks leading up to the competition, he assisted his students with their preparation after school.

Not unlike a college course, the class requires a lot of reading, independent thinking, and cooperative study. Funding is provided through the Federal Department of Education, who supplies curriculum, textbooks, and support for educators. Students challenge each other intellectually and rely on one another to get the most out of the experience. For many, being part of an academic team is a unique opportunity. "At this level, under this much scrutiny, the pressure is real—but positive," says Hall.

In addition to teamwork, We the People offers a unique chance for students to speak publicly in a courtroom setting. From Stephanie Jones's point of view, the experience was like a dream come true.

"We went in feeling pretty nervous, but also confident," says the Pembroke senior. She plans on pursuing a law degree because, as she puts it, "I have to get back in the courtroom." Jones especially enjoyed the political discussions and debate that occurred regularly in class and was looking forward to the competition. When her team had completed their testimony, she said, "I can't believe it's over. We needed more time, I was going to bring up bullying legislation and every students' right to an education."

Each team was given a total of ten minutes to present testimony. The judges and Hall commended Jones and her teammates on their breadth of knowledge. "The work you did was reflected here today. I think we crushed it!" enthused Hall in addressing his students. All the anxiety fell away as the competitors took a moment to recognize their achievement. A few self-congratulatory cheers were audible as they left the courtroom.

uncertain.

Other education programs slated to be cut include:

American Federation of Teachers
Center on Congress at Indiana University
Close Up Foundation
Communities in Schools
Council for Economic Education
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Writing Project
New Leaders for New Schools
Project GRAD
Reach Out and Read
Reading is Fundamental
Teach for America
The International Organization on Arts and Disability
A vote on a continuing resolution was scheduled for March 4th. At the time this magazine went to press, a ruling had not yet been made. To learn more, visit www.civiced.org

The Constitution has been the subject of debate since it was written. With the advent of the Tea Party, a movement that claims to be premised on love of the document—members carry pocket-size copies of the Constitution to underscore their commitment to a strict application of its wise words—an investment in studying the tenants upon which this country was founded seems especially timely.

The value of the We The People program is recognized by both liberals and conservatives; democrats and republicans. Teachers agree that it is not their job to represent a particular political opinion but to give students the tools in order to analyze varied positions and make decisions for themselves. Many students at the competition spoke of increased interest in government, policy, and civic involvement since taking the course.

"I can definitely tell that there has been growth in my students' admiration for the founders and our democracy. Everyone forms an opinion and enjoys a lively debate," says Hall, who, like Flanagan, plans to continue inspiring his students to participate in the democratic process.

<http://www.ssliving.com/core/pagetools.php?pageid=12063&url=%2FSouth-Shore-Living...> 4/10/2011
/SouthShore-Living/April-2011/We-the-People-A-Civic-Education-at-a-Crossroads/



BEHIND THE SCENES

**Susan MacLeod
and
Cathie Watkins**

Lowell's Legal Eagles

*An innovative after
school program gives
Lowell students a be-
hind-the-scenes look at
the judicial system.*

Graffiti on a classroom wall. A student, clad in jeans and a hooded sweatshirt, spotted near the scene of the crime, writing on the wall with a purple Sharpie. A clear-cut case. Or is it?

That was the evidence that confronted students in an after-school-program at Lowell's Robinson Middle School last year. The students had to untangle the case for themselves as part of an innovative mock trial program sponsored by the nonprofit Discovering Justice. With the support of local attorneys who volunteer to act as coaches, the students take on ripped-from-the-headlines legal problems, learn to engage in legal analysis and ultimately try a case before an actual judge in a real courtroom.

Teachers Cathie Watkins and Susan MacLeod, say that the mock trial program offers students an up-close look at the legal system. Along the way, the students also learn valuable skills, including how to analyze evidence, how to ask questions in a legal context, and what the appropriate etiquette is in a courtroom.

Watkins says that in addition to their new understanding of the legal system, the Robinson students gained something even more important: self-confidence. "Some of the students were so shy when they started, but by the time it ended they were able to get up in front of a judge and a jury and make their case," says Watkins, who is beginning her fifteenth year at the Robinson.

After they were presented with the case of the graffiti-marked classroom wall—and a suspect to go with the crime—each student was assigned a part in the legal drama that followed, including a live hearing before a local Lowell judge. Students had to give opening statements, closing statements and question witnesses. While local prosecutors and defense attorneys assisted with fine tuning, the writing—not to mention the acting—was all done by the students themselves. MacLeod, now in her



ORDER IN THE COURT Susan MacLeod and Cathie Watkins model their plaque from their students' successful showing at a mock trial competition.

eight year teaching at the Robinson, says that many of the students who signed up for the course didn't realize that they'd be acting out an actual trial. "They all took it incredibly seriously and they did a fabulous job," says MacLeod.

The course culminated in a hour-long trial, the fictional Gaines vs. Genovia School District, before two Lowell Juvenile Court judges, and a jury of students, lawyers and teachers. The jury heard testimony from the young man suspected of "tagging" the school wall and, who in turn sued the school, claiming that his rights had been violated by the principal's excessive search. The jury ultimately found in favor of the defendant.

Student Lane Longtin, who participated in the mock trial program, says that he signed up because he's always had an interest in the law—particularly famous unsolved cases. (Longtin counts among his favorite books a series starring a kid lawyer). Thanks to the after-school-program, Longtin is now thinking that he'd like to be a lawyer—when he gets out of middle school. "I got to do the cross examination for the defendant's side," says Longtin. "I've met some lawyers before but this is the first time that I got to really see what it's like to be in the courtroom."

Watkins and MacLeod say that while enrichment programs are often made available to honors students, or students in wealthy districts, the mock trial program is for kids who are usually left out. Discovering Justice, the nonprofit that oversees the mock trial program, offers it only to schools in communities with significant populations of underserved students. In addition to Lowell, the trial program is also being offered in Boston, New Bedford and Worcester. The program is intended to expose younger students to the judicial system in a positive way.

Watkins says that as far as she's concerned the verdict for the program is in. "It was new for us and it's been a real success. We have students who now feel comfortable speaking in front of a group when they didn't before." She says that for a school that has the challenges faced by the Robinson, which serves some of Lowell's poorest students, being able to offer an innovative program like Discovering Justice means a lot. "Eighty percent of our students are on free or reduced lunch and homelessness is an issue for some of our kids," says Watkins. "This after school program enriches their lives." ■

For more information about Discovering Justice, visit www.discoveringjustice.org



“The better educated our citizens are, the better equipped they will be to preserve the system of government we have. And we have to start with the education of our nation’s young people. Knowledge about our government is not handed down through the gene pool. Every generation has to learn it, and we have some work to do.”

- Justice Sandra Day O’Connor,
Co-Chair, National Advisory
Committee, Campaign for the
Civic Mission of Schools

APPENDIX