



Education Commission
of the States



Developing Citizenship Competencies from Kindergarten Through Grade 12:

July 2006

- 
- Knowledge
 - Skills
 - Dispositions

A Background Paper
for Policymakers and Educators

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Education Commission
of the States



**NATIONAL CENTER FOR
LEARNING AND CITIZENSHIP**

Developing Citizenship Competencies from Kindergarten through Grade 12: A Background Paper for Policymakers and Educators

Judith Torney-Purta
Senior Advisor to the National Center
for Learning and Citizenship (2003-2005)
Professor of Human Development
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland 20742
jtpurta@umd.edu

Susan Vermeer Lopez
Program Director and Senior Policy Analyst
National Center for Learning and Citizenship
Education Commission of the States
Denver, Colorado 80203
svermeerlopez@ecs.org

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Executive Summary

Representatives at the school, district and state levels, as well as scholars and researchers, have been working with the Education Commission of the States' National Center for Learning and Citizenship (ECS/NCLC) to define citizenship education expressed in terms of three strands forming a "braid" of civic competencies. This updated version of the original paper released in 2004 responds to an interest among policymakers and advocates for further background information and policy frameworks to encourage, support, and reward or recognize quality citizenship education in American schools. The first version of this paper was disseminated to all attendees of the Second Annual Congressional Conference on Civic Education (December 2004) and to attendees at a Congressional Staff Briefing on the Decade of Behavior in Democracy (May 2005), and presented as a resource to participants in state forums to promote the civic mission of education.

Beginning with the rationale and recommendations presented in the *Civic Mission of Schools* report¹, this paper:

- Explores the existing research and professional work in the area of civics and social studies standards
- Explains how ECS/NCLC developed the three strands of civic competencies
- Outlines detailed examples of how these competencies might be used across grade spans
- Provides recommendations for state policymakers
- Describes a Web site that includes assessment materials to measure student civic outcomes and school and classroom climate as it contributes to civic education.

The paper is designed to help state policymakers incorporate civic skills, knowledge and dispositions, along with a developmental approach beginning in the early years of schooling, into state policies that support citizenship education.

"Strands" of Civic Competency

For the purposes of the discussion in this paper, citizenship education is divided into three strands of civic competencies: civic knowledge, skills and dispositions.

- *Civic-related knowledge*, both historical and contemporary, such as understanding the structure and mechanics of constitutional government, and knowing who the local political actors are and how democratic institutions function
- *Cognitive and participative skills* (and associated behaviors), such as the ability to understand and analyze data about government and local issues, and skills that help a student resolve conflict as part of a group
- *Core civic dispositions* (motivations for behavior and values/attitudes), which can include support for justice and equality and a sense of personal responsibility. Participation-related dispositions include support for norms of participation, and expectations of actual political or social involvement. Students will not necessarily connect knowledge and skills to these civic dispositions without experience or a reason to believe their participation is worthwhile.

The strands represent themes of accepted sets of standards, such as those of the Center for Civic Education (CCE) and the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), as well as a number of state standards. As illustrated in the cover's braid logo, the three strands are considered equal in importance and connected to one another. NCLC believes the balance between the three strands is a critical component of any systematic approach to citizenship education.

State Standards

While knowledge of civic content is the focus of most state standards, some standards also emphasize civic dispositions. However, standards in all three competency strands are not uniformly recognized in states' assessment and accountability efforts. While statutes specifically provide for the teaching of government, civics and/or citizenship in 45 states, less than half of those state assessment and accountability systems measure civic outcomes. This paper includes a discussion of performance standards related to civic knowledge, skills and dispositions.²

¹ Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE (2003), *The Civic Mission of Schools*, New York: Carnegie Corporation.

² Jeffery Miller (2003), *State Policies To Support Citizenship Education*, Denver, Colorado: Education Commission of the States.

A Developmental Approach

The paper also outlines how competencies relating to these strands are acquired from kindergarten through 12th grade, and provides examples of civic knowledge, skills and dispositions by grade span. According to research by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) by age 14, the average student in democratic countries is already a member of his or her political culture.³ This (and other research) makes the case for a developmental approach beginning in the early grades, rather than starting citizenship education in high school.

Professional Judgment Groups

Professional Judgment Groups (PJGs) consisting of state policymakers; state, district and school leaders; teachers and community partners; were convened by NCLC from October 2003 to February 2004. Participants who are experts and practitioners in the civic education field discussed how civic education should be conceptualized and delivered at different grade levels, and then identified necessary resources and policies. These policy approaches were tested in three states starting in fall 2004. The PJGs focused their work on the policy and resource levels needed to effect school reform. This effort also acknowledges the importance of other influences, such as parents, community groups and higher education. The results of the PJGs and the resulting state policy approaches were released at the 2004 Education Leadership Colloquium on the Civic Mission of American Education (ELC), which took place July 12-13, 2004, in Orlando, Florida.

Recommendations for Policymakers

The PJGs proposed the following recommendations to state policymakers who are supportive of the civic mission of education. Policymakers are advised to first examine their state's academic content standards to ensure they establish a sequence of civic learning in every grade throughout P-12 (early childhood through high school graduation) education, and develop students' knowledge, skills and dispositions. Members of the Professional Judgment Groups also considered a community connection to be an important element of civic development.

PJG members identified two options to deliver citizenship education, including a *social studies-based approach*, which places the responsibility of civics instruction on social studies teachers and departments; and an *interdisciplinary approach*, which is an integrated, whole-school design that includes all educators within a school (including teachers in all subjects, paraprofessionals and administrators).

Policymakers and education leaders are also encouraged to align citizenship education with other policies and accountability systems such as leadership, standards and accountability, adequate in-school support, and community involvement.

Recommendations for state policymakers, based on the findings of the Professional Judgment Group members, and evidence cited throughout the paper on positive attributes of effective citizenship education, include:

- Extending citizenship education into the elementary and middle grades
- Making citizenship education experience grounded in knowledge and explicitly designed to engage students
- Allowing more time for preparation and professional development to teach citizenship education
- Recognizing testing and assessment as important elements of any citizenship education program, and encouraging legislators to develop tests that go beyond civic knowledge.

ECS, in response to this recommendation, has developed a set of tools to address assessment for citizenship education and a school climate assessment instrument, which can be accessed at www.ecs.org/qna.

³ Judith Torney-Purta, Rainer Lehmann, Hans Oswald and Wolfram Schulz (2001), *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen*, Amsterdam: IEA, <http://www.wam.umd.edu/~iea>.

Developing Citizenship Competencies from Kindergarten through Grade 12: A Background Paper for Policymakers and Educators

The past four years have seen a remarkable set of actions promoting attention to a multidimensional view of civic competencies and commitment to the school's role in fostering them. Among the most important is a consensus document, *The Civic Mission of Schools*, issued in early 2003 by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). Nearly every previous report on this subject began with an assessment of the relatively gloomy picture of youth civic engagement as a rationale for proposed activities. The rationale contained in the Civic Mission of Schools represents a consensus (of liberal and conservative views, of practitioners, policy analysts and researchers) that is especially compelling. This report is seen as a critically important reference document in this area, and the rationale contained there is presented in **Box 1** as a frame for what follows.

Box 1: A Consensus Rationale

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

In recent decades, concern has grown about the increasing number of Americans who are disengaging from civic and political institutions such as voluntary associations, religious congregations and community-based organizations. This disengagement extends to political and electoral processes – voting and being informed about public issues. In many ways, young people reflect these trends. Americans under the age of 25 are less likely to vote than either their older counterparts or young people of past decades. Surveys have shown they are not as interested in political discussion and public issues as past generations were at the same point in their lives. In addition, there are gaps in young people's knowledge of fundamental democratic principles and processes. As a result, many young Americans are not prepared to participate fully in democracy when they become adults.

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

Individuals do not automatically become free and responsible citizens but must be educated about citizenship. In recent years, the call has increased for new strategies that can capitalize on young people's idealism while addressing their disengagement from political and civic institutions. How to achieve this goal, however, has been a matter of considerable debate among experts representing various perspectives. Political scientists, for example, focus on politics; educators focus on what happens in or near the classroom; service-learning advocates focus on service and volunteering, and their connection to the curriculum; and youth development specialists focus on the developmental experience of the young person.

Recently, however, various experts from these disciplines – teachers, civic leaders, policymakers, federal judges and even the President of the United States – agree that school-based civic education is one of the most promising approaches to increasing young people's informed involvement with political institutions and issues. It is also a promising way to spur interest in, and commitment to, service and voluntarism (*Civic Mission of Schools*, p. 8).

Rationale and Purpose of This Paper

The purpose of this paper is to provide a short history of and background for a multi-pronged initiative of ECS/NCLC. The paper begins by reviewing ECS' history in the process of citizenship education renewal, and continues with a review of existing sets of competencies and standards (as well as a synthesis of evidence regarding the climate for innovations in citizenship education). It also describes an important step in the process by which NCLC arrived at three strands of competencies (see **cover graphic**). The strands incorporate major features of previous sets of standards and a discussion of ways in which overarching competencies might be specified for different grades across K-12. The paper concludes with recommendations for state policymakers.

As one step in this process, five Professional Judgment Groups examined the ways in which civic competencies such as those outlined here might be realized within two different policy approaches at the district and state levels. These policy options include delivering citizenship education through a social studies-based approach, which places the responsibility for civics instruction on social studies teachers and departments, and an interdisciplinary approach, which makes all educators within a school responsible for civics instruction.

This paper is based on two premises: (1) to participate in a democratic society, young Americans need civic competencies that extend beyond knowledge of the history of the ratification of the Constitution, and skills that contribute to their participation in conventional political activities such as voting; and (2) schools have a vital role to play in contributing to civic engagement.

Schools and other organizations foster civic engagement when they help students to do the following:

- Gain meaningful historical and contemporary civic knowledge
- Link knowledge gained in an abstract form to more concrete everyday situations in which it might be used
- Gain knowledge and skills in working with others toward political goals
- Gain skills in interpreting political information – such as that from mass media
- Learn how to participate in respectful discourse about social and political issues
- Learn about effective leadership in groups of peers, and how to mitigate the influence of negative experiences such as bullying
- Respect the rule of law and civil liberties
- Understand arguments concerned with the rights of groups subject to discrimination
- Join other students and adults to address a community need
- Learn about the root causes of community problems and assess opportunities to solve them
- Acquire a view of their community and nation based on appropriate levels of trust
- Develop a sense of identity that incorporates civic and political dimensions
- Demonstrate the willingness to spend time in bettering their communities
- Respect diverse adult role models who are politically active
- Link experiences in their families and communities with school-based civic education
- Express their views in media forms that are attractive and familiar to them.

History of ECS Involvement in Citizenship Education and the Carnegie-Supported Project on Citizenship

ECS History

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization involving key leaders from all levels of the education system. Its mission is to help state leaders shape education policy. As part of ECS, the National Center for Learning and Citizenship (NCLC), founded in 1998, focuses on state policies that support citizenship education. ECS collects and disseminates information through a variety of formats, including an extensive Web site about education policy; provides policy research and analysis; brings key education and policy leaders together through networks and partnerships; offers customized technical assistance to states; and convenes policymakers and education leaders through state, regional and national conferences, and through means such as Thinkers Meetings and Professional Judgment Groups, that provide input about policy specifics and implementation.

This section of the paper outlines the events and reports that led NCLC to its view of citizenship education's important dimensions. It also explains the process NCLC is undertaking to help state lawmakers improve citizenship education policies and their potential implementation.

NCLC uses the term “citizenship education” to mean the values, knowledge, skills, sense of efficacy and commitment that define an active and principled citizen (Eyler and Giles, 1999). Citizenship education, from NCLC's view, is the responsibility of entire schools and education systems at all levels, not solely of civics teachers and designated classes during high school. With the proper support in content, pedagogy and policy, it is possible for schools and teachers to effectively engage students in activities that foster citizenship competencies at all school levels and all subjects. Social studies courses, such as history and civics, are well positioned to teach citizenship, especially the acquisition of civic knowledge. These classes, however, support and are supported by other school- and community-based learning opportunities and should not be students' only opportunities to acquire citizenship competency.

NCLC believes that policymakers have an important role to play in helping districts and schools provide students with a well-rounded citizenship education. In particular, state policymakers can provide a framework for districts and schools to implement comprehensive citizenship education programs throughout the K-12 system. ECS, with its broad constituency of state policymakers, is particularly suited for developing effective methods to support states in developing comprehensive citizenship education policies. When called upon to help energize this constituency, ECS designed several potentially complementary approaches to state policies that will help engage all students in citizenship education.

The Carnegie-Supported Project and its Elements

In April 2003, the Carnegie Corporation of New York funded NCLC to help states produce comprehensive citizenship education policies. As a result of the Carnegie Corporation's investment, NCLC:

- Completed a Web-accessible scan of existing state-, district- and school-level policies designed to promote students' civic knowledge, attitudes or skills (available at www.ecs.org/nclc)
- Convened a Thinkers Meeting to begin the process of developing and identifying student-level competencies for citizenship education and published the first version of this document that builds on results of the Thinkers Meeting and consultations at the July 2003 Education Leadership Colloquium to assess the climate for policy, as well as some of the existing approaches and standards. The intent was to provide a starting point for delineating the content of student competencies
- Conducted in-depth interviews in selected schools and districts to better understand the unique elements that helped create – or impeded the creation of – successful citizenship education policies in a district (conducted June through October 2003 and available at www.ecs.org/nclc)
- Developed a state policy framework for citizenship education from which model state policies can be derived
- Disseminated the first version of this background paper (April 2004) and prepared this updated version (July 2006) that takes into account the work of the Professional Judgment Groups, other professional and policymaker reviews and a further examination of state policies and standards

- Piloted the policy options and findings of the Professional Judgment Groups in three states – New Hampshire, South Carolina and Wisconsin (pilot completed, July 2005).

In June 2005, ECS received a second grant from the Carnegie Corporation to help improve accountability for citizenship education through resources for assessment and district leadership. This work encompasses the following tasks, which support the themes of this paper:

- Continue to collect, categorize, revise and develop test and survey questions that assess the full range of knowledge, skills and dispositions that students need to be effective citizens
- Pilot and conduct interviews on the citizenship education test questions in three states
- Create a network of 100 district superintendents and school board members who are committed to the civic mission of schools. This network will also help conduct assessment pilots in their districts and produce a joint statement on accountability and citizenship education
- Disseminate findings widely through a communications campaign, Web-based policymaker toolkit and electronic database to give policymakers and state leaders access to a database of effective model citizenship test and survey questions.

These activities build upon a database including outcome assessments and a discussion of classroom climate developed by ECS with the support of the Civic Mission of Schools Campaign (Council for Excellence in Government) and the Center for Civic Education (that will be described later in this paper).

Box 2: ECS Policy Scans

ECS/NCLC provides state-by-state tracking of state policies on civic education that goes beyond standards (<http://www.ecs.org/nclc>). Some of this material appeared in 1999 in the form of a comprehensive chart covering 41 states. Among the factors included were graduation requirements, standards and frameworks, the strength of statutory language, program design, grade levels covered and relation to other curricula. A frequently updated list of policies in the areas of citizenship and character education is maintained on the ECS/NCLC Web site as well, and efforts are being made to include a greater variety of state policies and a further study of linkages among standards, other policies at state or local levels, and instruction. These efforts link different types of policy-relevant information and provide frequent updates of a rapidly changing situation.

The Thinkers Meeting: Background, Process and Follow-up Professional Judgment Groups

A major NCLC goal is the development and dissemination of a policy framework for citizenship education that states can use to create coherent collections of state policy. This framework will help state policymakers consider policies that effectively include the key elements of K-12 citizenship education. To meet this goal, NCLC convened a National Study Group on Citizenship in K-12 Schools, a 21-member group of K-12 and university teachers, students and representatives from national civics and education organizations. A Thinkers Meeting, including some members of the study group, was held May 29-30, 2003.

At the Thinkers Meeting, practitioners and policymakers from across the country gathered in Denver to generate lists of civic competencies for K-12 students. Led by NCLC staff and the senior author of this report, the group worked toward a framework identifying what students across grade levels need to know and be able to do to become effective citizens. The meeting addressed one of the recommendations in the *Every Student A Citizen* report, which encouraged the NCLC to develop a set of student competencies that: identifies the core sets of knowledge and skills for all K-12 students; establishes benchmarks and indicators of various degrees of success; and articulates the set of values that citizenship education is school-wide. Participants in the Thinkers Meeting applied their experiences and knowledge along with the resources provided by NCLC and other participants to deliberate and discuss student competencies for citizenship education. A wide range of domains was discussed:

- Dispositions/attitudes
- Expectations
- Behaviors/actions
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Efficacy
- Ideology
- Philosophy
- Values and commitment.

Three working groups considered competencies in cognitive, behavioral and affective categories, as well as developing provisional lists (although the discussions ranged more widely than strict definitions of these terms would suggest). In addition, the groups called attention to a number of other considerations, including the importance of connecting student competencies across categories, teachers' instructional competencies, schools as communities, making it safe to teach about politics, ways of assessing competencies, and ways to counter the tendency of tests in reading and mathematics to crowd citizenship-related material out of the curriculum.

At the annual Education Leadership Colloquium (ELC), held July 16-17, 2003, the authors of this report met with participants, including state policymakers, chief state school officers, citizenship education leaders and advocates to discuss results of the Thinkers Meeting and its implications for developing state policies to support citizenship education.

The next phase of this work was to convene four Professional Judgment Groups from October 2003 to February 2004 with the charge of creating and establishing policy and practice recommendations for four instructional approaches:

- Civics course-based
- Standards-based approach to citizenship education (based in most cases on social studies, civics or history standards)
- Citizenship education infused across the curriculum as part of standards-based reform
- Citizenship education using a community-connected approach.

In February 2004, a "review" group met to combine and review the findings from the four groups. The "review" group helped to distill the four policy approaches mentioned above into two strategies for policymakers to deliver citizenship education, either through social studies courses or an interdisciplinary approach. All of the Professional Judgment Groups also reviewed materials in this background paper and suggested changes. The end product is a brief description of different ways of organizing instructional approaches and a set of policy and practice recommendations related to citizenship engagement for states and districts to use as guidelines. This product, entitled "Experts Offer Recommendations for Improving Citizenship Education," was released at the Education Leadership Colloquium July 12-13, 2004, in Orlando, Florida and is available at www.ecs.org/nclc.

The Current Situation: Standards, Courses and the Quality of Civic Education

The Intended Curriculum for Citizenship

An assessment of the extent to which citizenship education is and could be provided as part of formal education should begin with the “intended curriculum” or what groups with statutory power over education believe should be included in students’ civic preparation. This is often reflected in standards linked to requirements for graduation or promotion (see **Box 3**).

Standards of the Center for Civic Education (CCE) and the National Assessment of Civics (NAEP)

To examine the “intended curriculum” of citizenship education in the United States is not as straightforward as in some other countries, where there are nationally mandated curriculum standards. In the United States, only voluntary national standards are appropriate, and the Center for Civic Education (CCE), with support from the U.S. Department of Education, produced such standards in 1994. These standards served as the basis for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) administered in 1998 and reported in 1999 (and will serve as the basis for another civics NAEP in 2006).

CCE’s standards are organized around three categories: content, skills and dispositions (see **Table I**). The standards are described and thoroughly detailed in the CCE document, National Standards for Civics and Government. They have been extensively disseminated nationally and internationally to shape both curriculum and assessment. In addition, CCE’s Civitas document, produced in 1991, before the national standards, identified core values of American constitutional democracy such as equality, justice, patriotism, individual rights and the public or common good.

Box 3: A Definition of Standards

Generally speaking, standards are defined as what students should know and be able to do by grade level (knowledge and skills). In the case of citizenship education standards, both the Center for Civic Education (CCE) and the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) offer national voluntary standards related to civic education and social studies. Both emphasize a multidisciplinary approach, meaning that civic or social studies standards are supported by other subject areas and in the “informal curriculum” of the school. NCSS also offers curriculum standards for social studies, which include strands such as “civic ideals and practices” that emphasize the importance of civic dispositions.

States are encouraged to use these national standards in developing their own. Some states also include performance standards, along with content standards. Performance standards focus on civic skills and often require performance assessment, which can be expensive and difficult for states to implement.

Table 1

Content Standards / Organizing Questions in the National Standards (CCE)

- I. What are civic life, politics and government?*
- II. What are the foundations of the American political system?*
- III. How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values and principles of American democracy?
- IV. What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?
- V. What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy?

*Used in grades 5-12, simplified versions of questions I-II used for grades K-4

Skills in the National Standards (CCE)

Intellectual Skills:

- Identifying and describing
- Explaining and analyzing
- Evaluating, taking and defending positions

Participatory Skills:

- Interacting
- Monitoring
- Influencing

Civic Dispositions in the National Standards (CCE)

- Becoming an *independent* member of society
- Assuming the personal, political and economic *responsibilities* of a citizen
- *Respecting* individual worth and human dignity
- *Participation* in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful and effective manner
- *Promoting* the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy

Standards of the National Council for the Social Studies

Another influential set of curriculum standards was issued by the National Council for the Social Studies in 1994 after an extensive process of consultation. A number of the 10 thematic strands have relevance to citizenship, while others are related to economics or geography. Two strands relate directly to citizenship:

- Power, authority and governance (how people create and change these structures)
- Civic ideals and practices in a democratic republic.

Several other strands have an indirect relationship. Early grade, middle grade and high school performance expectations are presented. For example, under civic ideals, students in the early grades are asked to explain actions citizens can take to influence public policy decisions. In high school, students are to analyze and evaluate the influence of various forms of citizen action on public policy (not just a particular decision). Sets of essential skills also are detailed: acquiring information, using information and social participation. Generally, the NCSS standards are less elaborate and encyclopedic than the CCE standards. However, skills are more fully considered in the NCSS standards.

These standards have been strengthened and sharpened by an NCSS Task Force on Citizenship (charged in 2001 with “revitalizing citizenship education”). As a large membership organization of teachers and teacher educators, NCSS has exemplified ways of implementing these standards in its publications. For example, a lesson suitable for early elementary students discusses “defining good citizenship” (in *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, September 2002) and “Using Newspapers To Teach about Elections” (in *Social Education*, September 2002) is aimed at middle school students. Lessons about citizenship or ways of studying history in relation to citizenship appear frequently in NCSS publications.

In addition to these two major sets of standards, other sets of influential standards are in the field – many focused more on civic participation or engagement and less on content knowledge. For example, standards developed by a Carnegie-sponsored group, including psychologists, sociologists and political scientists meeting at Stanford in 1999, emphasized youth development in citizenship outside as well as inside school. Standards from the Constitutional Rights Foundation emphasize youth engagement adapted to a particular context in the community.

Other groups have developed lists of competencies or outcomes relating to service-learning experiences (emphasizing the ability to evaluate and criticize public norms or institutions and to build social capital). If service-learning is to be a prominent feature of civic education or if out-of-school organizations for young people are to participate, the content and skills standards developed by CCE and NCSS may need to be augmented with other perspectives.

State Standards

Attempts to document the intended curriculum for the 50 states and the District of Columbia have been undertaken over the past 10 years, some related directly to the voluntary national standards covered previously. State standards for civics education, however, are evolving rapidly and are often difficult to track. In 1999, Kenneth W. Tolo, in collaboration with CCE, reviewed state standards in light of the voluntary national standards developed by CCE.

The findings included:

- Overall, more than half the states had statutes specifically addressing civic education and more than half the states had course requirements.
- State standards were perceived to influence funding, textbook selection, course sequences and curricular design at the district level.
- State-level assessments sometimes were aligned with these standards, but in only a few states (at that time) were tests dedicated to civic topics; more usual were assessments in the context of history or social studies generally.
- Most standards focused on the section of the CCE standards that address the ways in which government established by the Constitution embodies the principles of American democracy (see **Table I**, Content Standards, Question III).
- State standards were addressed in a variety of courses, including U.S. history and government.
- A survey of teachers and curriculum coordinators in several districts indicated that many were unaware of the national standards or unclear how their teaching related to them.

In November 2003, NCLC developed a database of state education policies that support citizenship education, which is searchable online and allows comparisons to be made between states. The NCLC database offers similar conclusions to Tolo's analysis (see **Box 2**).

An updated version of the NCLC database since April 2004 shows an increase in state policy support for citizenship education, specifically in providing for the teaching of government, civics or citizenship in statute, state course or civic requirements for government and civics, and in exit exam requirements.

Overall, progress in state policy support over the 2004-06 period includes

- All 50 states and the District of Columbia specifically provide for the teaching of government, civics and/or citizenship
- 49 states and the District of Columbia have a course or credit requirement in government, civics or social studies for high school graduation
- Thirty states and the District of Columbia currently include civic outcomes within their accountability systems.

For more categories and information on the ECS citizenship education database, see <http://www.ecs.org/nclc>.

The National Conference of State Legislatures also offers a database of recent state policies on the Trust for Representative Democracy Web site at <http://www.ncsl.org/public/trust/civiceduc.cfm>.

A 2002 CCE telephone survey of state social studies supervisors found that many states had separate standards documents for civics/government, while others incorporated civics/government as strands under a social studies standards document. The personnel questioned in all but two states reported that CCE's national civic standards had been influential in developing the state standards.

Because standards tend to be diverse and extensive, questions have been raised about their quality and practicality. In *Educating Democracy: State Standards To Ensure a Civic Core*, published by the Albert Shanker Institute, historian Paul Gagnon developed a set of ratings of state-level standards. In his lowest rating of all standards, he deemed that no state was realistic in matching standards to the amount of time necessary to teach to an adequate level of performance. Lack of realistic expectations for American history courses was especially serious, with somewhat less vague standards for civics. Gagnon also found that serious problems in producing a coherent and teachable set of standards resulted when isolated strands for civics, economics, geography and history were written by separate teams.

The problem, then, is not that there are too few standards or too little complexity in the way they are delineated. Rather, it seems that teachers have too little time either for instruction or for lesson planning, and too few opportunities for content-rich professional development. The challenges for state policy are to set more realistic standards and to provide teachers with what's needed to give individual students the opportunity to learn.

The Implemented Curriculum: Evidence from Transcript Reviews and the IEA CivEd Study

Important information about the scope of citizenship education received by students was collected from the transcripts of graduating seniors by researchers Niemi and Smith in a reanalysis of the High School Transcript Study (HSTS) with data from 1987, 1990, 1994 and 1998, and parallel material from the 1970's and early 1980's. Courses were coded into the following categories: American history, economics, sociology/psychology, American government and politics (separating civics and problems of democracy), and international relations.

The study found "substantial erosion in the proportion of students studying American government in a stand-alone course [over this period]" (p. 282). History courses continue to be strongly represented, but the extent to which citizenship is incorporated or emphasized in history is not clear.

The first phase of the IEA study (see **Box 4**) is also a source of information about the intended curriculum. In the late 1990's, the national research coordinator for the United States in this study surveyed coordinators of social studies in the states and found the following:

- Respondents from 45 states estimated that the majority of school districts in their state taught United States government or civics sometime between grades 6 and 12.
- Representatives from 34 states said the majority of districts in their state taught state and local government, often in courses combined with either state history or United States government. Courses specifically on government were likely to be offered at grades 8 or 9 and 12 (Hahn, 1999, p. 590).

The IEA case study further concluded there was remarkable similarity among the three most widely used textbooks. They emphasized the structure and function of national, state and local government beginning with representative democracy and introducing the Constitution as a foundation both for democracy and national identity. The texts discussed the three branches of government and tended to emphasize citizens' rights more than responsibilities. Although the books discussed the existence of the two political parties, they made little mention of the function of a multiparty system (Hahn, 1999). How textbooks are used in teaching to these standards is a matter of debate (Chambliss and Calfee, 1988). Teachers reported they rely on them as general guides rather than as sole sources. Students, in contrast, reported the books are used extensively (and sometimes commented they were boring lists of facts or were old-fashioned).

Principals surveyed as part of the IEA study in the United States in October 1999 reported more than half the 9th-grade students were required to study civic-related topics five periods per week. Only about 20% of students were not taking a civic-related subject (Baldi et al, 2001). Reports from students corroborated these estimates of time studying civics-related topics. IEA data from teachers in the United States (and other countries) indicate the teaching of a core of content topics, especially national history, the national constitution and citizens' rights. Teachers considered international organizations and economics less important and covered them less fully. These teachers' reports were corroborated by the responses of U.S. students about topics studied, with the Constitution, how laws are made and the Congress the most studied topics, and international organizations and other countries' governments the least studied.

The teachers reported an emphasis on knowledge transmission and respect for national heritage and tradition. Across countries, textbooks, worksheets and recitation predominated, with role-playing exercises and projects used more rarely. In the United States, students were asked about the instructional methods used in their classrooms. Baldi et al. indicated in the U.S. national report that reading from the textbook and filling out worksheets were the most frequent activities reported by students, with role-playing, debates, discussions and more interactive lessons much less frequent.

Both students and teachers internationally were asked one set of identical questions about what is learned in school. Similar percentages of both groups within each country agreed that students learn how to cooperate in groups with other students, to understand people who have different ideas and to contribute to solving social problems in the community. Within each country, however, the proportion of teachers who believed students learned about voting in school tended to be considerably higher than the proportion of students who believed they had learned about this topic (Torney-Purta et al, 2001). This discrepancy was especially large in several countries in which students appeared unconvinced about the importance of voting and other forms of political participation. Students were more likely to vote in countries where the curriculum emphasized voting.

While many teachers teach about elected officials or elections that are important in history, implicit messages about the importance of elections may not be coming across to students. A relatively small proportion of students reported in the IEA survey they had opportunities to learn about the debate and discussion that are part of election campaigns.

The Current Climate for Citizenship Education and the Role of the Teacher and Administrator

The review of standards and requirements, along with discussion at the May 2003 Thinkers Meeting and the 2003 Education Leadership Colloquium, leads to some tentative conclusions about the current climate for education for citizenship and related policy. The current emphasis on teaching core subjects such as reading and mathematics might be crowding history and civic-related subject matter out of the curriculum. There is an unspoken assumption that students will learn how to fulfill the role of citizen from sources other than the school.

In the last 10 years, many new requirements, competencies and standards relating to citizenship education provide useful starting points for developing comprehensive state policies. These documents, however, also deserve closer examination. These documents:

- Frequently consist of encyclopedic coverage of details of government structures or historical documents that may have little meaning to students and do not connect to their own identity as a citizen with responsibilities and rights
- Are often complex, making it difficult to adapt them for students in the early years of school or for immigrants and/or second-language learners
- Sometimes suggest covering a topic in the same way at several grade levels, rather than cumulatively building more complex understanding on basic concepts presented earlier
- May be difficult to connect to students' motivation to learn about their communities
- Sometimes focus almost exclusively on patriotic observances, which are important but incomplete as preparation for engaged citizenship.

Box 4: The IEA Civic Education Study

In the early 1990's, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA, a comparative education association of nearly 60 member countries with headquarters in Amsterdam) explored the subject of civic education to develop a measuring instrument and conduct a test and survey of young people. In the first phase of the IEA Civic Education Study, participating nations wrote case studies about the expectations for 14-year-olds learning about civic-related subjects (Torney-Purta, Schwille and Amadeo, 1999). After cross-national consensus building, considerable agreement about a core set of expectations for civic education was achieved.

Knowledge about democracy and its principles, sense of engagement and willingness to participate in civil society organizations, attitude of trust in government and about the rights of various groups formed the basis for the test and survey, which made up Phase 2 of the study. A three-year process of test development involving research coordinators from more than 20 countries arrived at an instrument suitable for classroom administration across countries. Fourteen-year-olds were tested because that was the last year before school-leaving age in some countries.

The instrument included three core domains: democracy, democratic institutions and citizenship; national identity and international relations; and social cohesion and diversity (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswalk and Schultz, 2001). The IEA instrument also included a measure of concepts of the good adult citizen. The knowledge test had two subscales – content knowledge (relating to concepts of democratic governmental structures, citizenship, international organizations and social diversity) and skills in interpreting civic information (e.g., a political leaflet, political cartoons).

The test and survey were administered in 1999 to 90,000 students, a nationally representative sample of students in the modal grade for 14-year-olds. In the United States, more than 2,000 students in grade 9 participated (from a nationally representative sample of schools). Each sampled school surveyed three teachers of civic education-related subjects (often history or social studies) and the school principal.

The climate relating to teachers' or administrators' roles can be characterized this way:

- The teaching activities and subject matters that teachers are expected to emphasize (i.e., those which are tested) are often not those explicitly connected with making students thoughtful or participating citizens.
- Concern exists about how instruction can help students acquire better literacy skills (as a tested subject).

Considerable uncertainty exists about how enhanced literacy (or other currently valued aspects of education) might contribute to students' identities as citizens. Generally speaking, an inadequate evidence base exists for making connections between citizenship and other areas of the curriculum.

- Few teachers have access to high-quality professional development in civic-related subjects and fewer have preparation time to fully incorporate suggested new content or effective approaches into their classes.
- Opinions vary over the best way to enhance the teaching force's proficiency in teaching citizenship. For example, is a degree in history or political science the only appropriate preparation for teaching citizenship? How can teachers in the nonspecialized elementary grades acquire the necessary background to teach citizenship?
- Many current teacher candidates are from the generation in which conventional political participation is at an unprecedented low. This raises the importance of pre-service preparation, but the direction to be taken is not clear.
- There is hesitation about whether and how to incorporate enhanced opportunities for students' voice and input in their schools and classrooms.
- Although some methods, such as service-learning, make explicit connections to the community, uncertainty exists about how to use citizenship education systematically to meet the needs and concerns of the community and its members.
- Ambivalence also exists about whether and how to incorporate service-learning into citizenship education programs. Research shows that teachers using service-learning in other subjects do not necessarily connect it to the civics curriculum. When high-quality service-learning is used for civic outcomes, research shows it does help improve students' skills and dispositions.
- Because of the political nature of teaching and learning citizenship, teachers often are unsure of the boundaries around engaging students in political activities.

Complementary National Campaigns and Frameworks to Increase Supportive Policies

Since the original publication of this paper, two national efforts to support the civic mission of K-12 education have been initiated. The Civic Mission of Schools (CMS) Campaign, which provides funding to coalitions in 18 states, is designed to promote promising practices outlined by CMS (see **Box 5**). The organization is governed by a National Advisory Council headed by former Colorado Governor and current Los Angeles Unified School Superintendent Roy Romer and retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, and also by a steering committee of representatives of leading civic education organizations.

The CMS Campaign has developed resources such as an Advocacy Toolkit and examples of practice, both available on its Web site at www.civicmissionofschools.org. State coalitions that are funded by the CMS Campaign have undertaken activities such as developing and supporting statewide coalitions that advance the civic mission of education, focusing on social studies and its integration into curriculum, disseminating model school board policies, and incorporating civic learning into planning processes at the state department of education. An excerpt from the Civic Mission of Schools report is below, and illustrates the effects of promising practices on students' civic competencies.

Box 5: Excerpt About Promising Practices and Competencies from the Civic Mission of Schools

Many schools across the country have adopted the following approaches (and sometimes combinations of them), and research clearly demonstrates their benefits. These approaches produce different types of benefits, ranging from knowledge of politics to civic skills to willingness to volunteer.

Most Substantial and Direct Benefits from Each Promising Approach

Approach	Civic and political knowledge	Civic and political skills	Civic attitudes	Political participation	Community participation
<i>Classroom instruction in social studies</i>	✓	✓		✓	
<i>Discussion of current issues</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Service-learning</i>		✓	✓		✓
<i>Extracurricular activities</i>		✓			✓
<i>Student voice in school governance</i>		✓	✓	✓	
<i>Simulations</i>	✓	✓	✓		

Given these diverse outcomes, educators, policymakers and communities should agree on priorities when they select an approach to civic education and/or integrate more than one approach in a curriculum that develops several dimensions of civic and political engagement at the same time.

The CMS states work in collaboration with a complementary initiative that has a presence in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Alliance for Representative Democracy, an organization co-founded by the Center for Civic Education, the Center on Congress at Indiana University and the National Conference of State Legislatures, has secured funding to host five Congressional Conferences, one each fall, beginning in 2003 and ending in 2008. Each conference hosts a delegation from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

During the 2006 state legislative sessions, 25 pieces of legislation on civic education were introduced; six measures have been passed by both chambers and are signed or awaiting the governor’s signature; one was vetoed. Recent legislation in Maryland supports a state summit on civic learning and Utah enacted a measure that creates a seven-member state Commission on Civic and Character Education. Additional state-level accomplishments include the development of a California Survey on Civic Education and the inaugural meeting of the Southern Coalition for Civic Literacy.

With the purpose of further clarifying civic concepts and content categories, John Patrick, director of the Social Studies Development Center, Indiana University developed a framework, which derives core concepts from the CCE Standards. This framework was merged with the competencies discussed in the ECS Thinker’s Meeting held in May 2003 and summarized as civic knowledge, skills and dispositions. Patrick, based on many years of work in civic education in the United States and internationally, derived six core concepts for students at all levels of pre-adult education and in teacher education programs to use in comparing and evaluating democratic systems (see **Box 6**).

Box 6: Excerpts from John Patrick’s Core Concepts of a Global, International and Comparative Education for Democracy

1. *Representative Democracy (Republicanism)*
Free, fair and competitive elections of representatives in government
2. *Rule of Law (Constitutionalism)*
Observance of the rule of law in the government, society and economy; an independent judiciary
3. *Human Rights (Liberalism)*
Natural rights/constitutional rights to liberty, equality and justice; political or public rights; personal or private rights
4. *Citizenship (Civism)*
Membership in a people based on legal qualifications for citizenship; rights, responsibilities and roles of citizenship
5. *Civil Society (Communitarianism)*
Pluralism, multiple and overlapping group memberships and identities; civic participation for personal interests and the common good
6. *Market Economy (Capitalism)*
Freedom of exchange and economic choice through the market; protection of private property rights (Patrick, 2003, p.28).

Five of these six concepts have been merged into **Table 2**, containing three categories of content and the three strands of competencies listed above as an organizing framework for the competency lists.

Table 2: The Intersection of Three Categories of Content (from Patrick) and Three Strands of Competencies (from NCLC)			
	Strands of Competencies		
Categories of Content	A. Knowledge	B. Skills	C. Dispositions
1. Democracy/Law			
2. Citizenship/Human Rights			
3. Civil Society			

Each of the three strands of competencies will be considered in the next sections. Market Economy from Patrick’s list is more likely to be part of economics-related subject matter than civic-related subject matter and has not been incorporated here.

The Three Strands of Competence

Knowledge

Knowledge relating to democracy, citizenship and civil society is already an important dimension of competency lists and deserves to remain so. **Box 7** summarizes the Civic Mission of Schools consensus view about knowledge.

Box 7: Research-Based Recommendations Regarding Knowledge from the Civic Mission of Schools

Schools should provide instruction in government, history, law and democracy. The NAEP and IEA studies indicate that students perform better on tests of civic knowledge and skills if they have studied a range of relevant subjects, such as the Constitution, U.S. history, the structure and processes of government and elections, and the legal system. In particular, the breadth and amount of such instruction correlates with improved knowledge of citizens' rights, of state and local government, and of the structures and functions of government. Similarly, evaluations of specific programs (such as the "We the People" curriculum of the Center for Civic Education) clearly show that such approaches can have a positive impact on students' tolerance, civic knowledge and skills.

Formal instruction in U.S. government, history or democracy is most promising as a way to increase civic knowledge. Knowledge is a valuable civic outcome, quite apart from any relationships it may have with other forms of engagement. Americans should grasp a body of facts and concepts, for example, the fundamental principles of U.S. democracy and the Constitution; the tensions among fundamental goods and rights; the major themes in the history of the United States; the structure of our government; the powers and limitations of its various branches and levels; and the relationship between government and the other sectors of society. Studying these concepts does not have to be seen as "rote education," but rather as intellectually challenging and beneficial. Knowledge also helps people engage politically. More knowledgeable adults are more likely to vote on the basis of issues rather than perceived personalities; they vote more consistently; and they distinguish better between substantive debates and personal attacks. There is little evidence, however, that political knowledge correlates with volunteering or group membership.

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

The May 2003 Thinkers Meeting generated a short but comprehensive list of knowledge-related competencies, making it clear that historical as well as contemporary understanding and illustrations are essential. Examples from these competencies can fit into each of Patrick's three conceptual categories:

- Examples of knowledge relating to the content category of "Democracy: The System or Rule of Law":
 - ▶ Understand the structure and mechanics of constitutional government and political institutions
 - ▶ Understand democratic principles such as the rule of law, majority rule and minority rights, representative government and constitutionalism
 - ▶ Understand historical conflicts over the meaning of the Constitution.

- Examples of knowledge relating to the content category of “Citizenship/Human Rights”:
 - ▶ Understand the legal system and the rights of citizens, such as freedom of religion, speech and association
 - ▶ Know how ordinary citizens can act and have acted in the past to create change
 - ▶ Understand ideologies and other bases on which political organizations (such as political parties) are formed.
- Examples of knowledge relating to the content category of “Civil Society”:
 - ▶ Understand reasons for disagreement as well as consensus on issues of public concern
 - ▶ Describe local community assets and problems and their connection to broader issues, including the important local actors
 - ▶ Know about issues that might be addressed through community service.

Skills

Competencies related to skills are also part of most (if not all) of the standards documents, though they sometimes may be merged with knowledge. Many feel it is appropriate for schools to transmit skills that would make students’ current and eventual participation more informed and effective, but that it is less appropriate for schools to actually require participation. Sympathetic to this viewpoint, the Thinkers Meeting generated a list of civic actions and behaviors (ranging from paying taxes to voting to being active in one’s community to protesting injustice) and then looked at skills whose possession would enhance either the effectiveness of the behaviors or the likelihood that students would participate in them. They distinguished thinking skills (similar to cognitive or intellectual skills described in the IEA study in **Boxes 4 and 8**, and the NAEP assessment, respectively) from participatory skills (similar to the leadership, group mobilization and communication skills in **Box 8**).

Box 8: Research Findings on Skills in Citizenship Education

The IEA Civic Education Study measured skills in interpreting political information (leaflets, cartoons, news articles) because these are potentially important in the process of getting information related to elections, issues and protest (though probably less so for volunteering). IEA measured this directly with right-and-wrong-answer items, including this kind of stimulus material. These skills can be thought of as a kind of specialized literacy (decoding information where differences in point of view are important). And these skills can be taught (at least as evidenced by the increase in scores between ages 14 and 17 in the IEA data and the fact that countries which emphasize a hands-on approach in their curricula, such as the United States, Australia and Sweden, tend to have 14-year-old students who excel in them). In fact, American 14-year-olds are far more proficient in demonstrating their skills in interpreting political information than they are in showing they understand the principles and concepts of democracy. On the skills subtest in the IEA study, they scored at the very top of the 28 countries. In content knowledge of democratic principles and concepts, however, these same students were tied for 10th place, scoring at the same level as students from Russia, Slovenia and Hungary (and well below Finland and Greece, for example).

The Political Participation Project concentrated on skills in being part of, mobilizing or leading a group that might take political or social action (including volunteering, getting others to vote, managing conflict-related problems) (Burns, Schlozmann and Verba, 2001). This was measured retrospectively by asking adults about their experience. The researchers viewed these skills as resources acquired through experience in adult employment as well as in adolescence. They argue that the absence of these resources in women is a serious issue in the generation they surveyed.

Examples of these skills generated at the Thinkers Meeting also can be incorporated under the three content categories derived from Patrick.

- Examples of skills relating to the content category of “Democracy: The System or Rule of Law”:
 - ▶ Be able to understand, analyze and check the reliability of information about government from media sources and political communications
 - ▶ Be able to articulate the meaning of abstract concepts such as democracy and patriotism
 - ▶ Be able to articulate the relationship between the common good and self-interest and use these ideas in making decisions.
- Examples of skills relating to the content category of “Citizenship/Human Rights”:
 - ▶ Be able to express one’s opinion on a political or civic matter when contacting an elected official or a media outlet
 - ▶ Be able to participate in a respectful and informed discussion about an issue
 - ▶ Be able to reach an informed decision about a candidate or conclusion about an issue
 - ▶ Be able to analyze instances of social injustice and decide when some action or nonviolent protest is justified.
- Examples of skills relating to the content category of “Civil Society”:
 - ▶ Be able to analyze how conditions in the community are connected to policy decisions
 - ▶ Be able to act in a group in a way that includes others and communicates respect for their views
 - ▶ Be able to resolve conflict and build consensus in a group
 - ▶ Be able to envision a plan for action on community problems and mobilize others to pursue it.

Dispositions and Motivations

Motivation and the disposition to be engaged civically are built over a span of years, not in the last two years of high school. Some motivations for engagement are based on positive experiences (for example, academic success in civic-related subjects), others on negative experiences (for example, experience with injustice). Several examples follow:

Acquiring knowledge and practicing citizenship in the community is sometimes a by-product of the pursuit of another goal. Students may learn facts about the Constitution because passing a test on these facts is required for promotion, or they may volunteer in the community because it looks good on a college application. This type of learning does not necessarily promote a long-lasting disposition that will sustain engagement. Young people gain motivation when they can readily see the people they trust value their nation and/or their community and the democratic principles that sustain them. Students gain such exposure by being surrounded by practices, symbols, groups and individuals that reinforce the message that democracy is important. Community service, which is undertaken in a partnership or collaboration with respected adults who talk with young people about their experiences, is a potentially important source of this kind of motivation. Classrooms with respectful discussion also have a role.

The knowledge and cognitive skills acquired in and out of school serve as motivators when they help young people develop a framework for understanding what happens in their community or nation and a reason for believing their participation is worthwhile. This has several layers: knowledge itself; accepting norms that participation is worthwhile; having the skills to assess a situation from different points of view; and possessing the dispositions, motivation and skills to actually participate. This knowledge and these skills provide a background for engaging in effective participation. What is important about this type of motivation is that enhancing young people’s skills encourages them to believe in their own self-efficacy and in the more generalized efficacy of getting together with others to take action. This is a positive type of dispositional pattern, but it depends on meaningful knowledge, on experience in settings in which students can feel empowered and on feedback from respected adults. This is an orchestration of experience that is rare for the majority of students.

Finally, motivation may result when students get upset or angry about something, often about injustice they feel personally or see in the lives of others. This is a kind of motivation that can be prompted by volunteer experience, but if the resulting action is to be constructive, it often requires discussion with adults.

Box 9: Research Findings on Dispositions, Motivations and Values in Citizenship Education

Some educators place an emphasis on cultivating civic dispositions (also called civic virtues or motivations), often meaning students' responsibilities and acceptance of duties to obey the law and participate in activities associated with conventional adult political activity and with being a contributing member in solving problems in the community. The IEA results show that when asked about norms for citizens' participation, 14-year-olds across countries agree that adults should obey the law and vote, but other aspects of what is called conventional political participation (discussion participation, party membership) are much less likely to be seen as important.

Willingness to volunteer also can be considered a positive civic disposition. In contrast to its importance as a predictor of voting, the IEA test score on civic content knowledge is not a significant predictor of the likelihood of volunteering as an adult in the United States. In some countries, the less knowledgeable students say they are more likely to volunteer. Instead, currently being a member of a volunteer organization and learning in school about community problems and how to solve them are the important correlates of willingness to volunteer. It also is important to note that considerable emphasis is placed on the confidence students develop in participating within the school environment, in discussion with parents and through organizational membership in general. Different experiences are important in promoting voting and volunteering (see also **Table I**, Skills in National Standards).

There is evidence the school can address many types of attitudes and dispositions, especially those priming different kinds of dispositions toward participation and attitudes supporting rights for groups experiencing discrimination. Family influences are especially important for values development, a factor supported by the IEA relationships between attitudes and reported participation with parents in discussion.

In another study, *The Civic and Political Health of a Nation: A Generational Portrait* (Keeter, 2002), "civic" (volunteering or helping to solve community problems) is distinguished from "electoral" (voting, campaigning) engagement. This research supports the idea that volunteering predicts electoral behavior. Only 15% of the 15- to 25-year-old respondents are engaged in electoral activities, while only slightly more (17%) are engaged in civic activities. Only 11% engage in both.

Another category, consumer activism, had a surprising response. Over half report boycotting a product or buying something as a positive response to a company's practices. This research also suggests that open conversations in schools and political discussions at home are important to student engagement, as well as having an example of volunteering in the home. The 19 indicators identified in this research have been duplicated in other studies, both in K-12 and higher education.

The Thinkers Meeting group that dealt with topics related to dispositions and motivations found them linked in many respects to knowledge and skills transmitted at school, but suspected they also were linked to experiences at home more than to the other two strands.

- Examples of dispositions relating to the content category of "Democracy: the Rule of Law":
 - ▶ Patriotism and commitment to American democracy
 - ▶ Support for justice, equality and other democratic values and procedures.
- Examples of dispositions relating to the content category of "Citizenship/Human Rights":
 - ▶ Respect for human rights and willingness to search out and listen to others' views
 - ▶ Sense of realistic efficacy about citizen' actions
 - ▶ Sense of personal responsibility at many levels (obeying the law, voting).
- Examples of dispositions relating to the content category of "Civil Society":
 - ▶ Social trust in the community
 - ▶ Personal commitment to others and their well-being, and to justice.

An advisory group that met in August 2005 to provide guidance on the assessment database and second stage of Carnegie-funded work advised that the civic dispositions categories be divided into *core civic dispositions* (such as civility and concern for others) and *participation-related civic dispositions* (such as a willingness to undertake social or political action, and the disposition to look critically at issues and political materials).

In summary, intersecting the results of several meetings convened by ECS with Patrick's three concepts provides a useful set of exemplars of competencies in the areas of civic knowledge, skills (thinking skills and participation skills) and dispositions (core civic disposition and participation-related dispositions).

Civic Assessment and the QNA Database

With the support of the Civic Mission of Schools Campaign and the Center for Civic Education, the NCLC developed a database of items assessing civic outcomes based on requests from state coalitions. The outcome assessment items in the database are based on the same categories in this report: Civic Knowledge, Civic Thinking and Participation Skills, and Core Civic Dispositions and Participation-related Dispositions. The searchable categories in the database include:

- Question types (multiple choice, short answer, extended response and rating scale)
- Content areas, which are based on the categories identified by John Patrick, (see previous section of this paper) (Democracy and Government Structure, Citizenship, Civil Society, Other)
- Core Competencies (Civic Knowledge, Civic Thinking Skills, Civic Participation Skills, Core Civic Dispositions and Participation-related Dispositions)
- Grade levels for which the items are suitable: (3-5, 6-8, 9-12).

Each item is also searchable by the five theme questions found in the Center for Civic Education National Standards, which is intended to help states align these test questions with their state standards. Users can access a feature of the database to compile items into a test.

A School Climate Assessment Instrument also is available. School climate refers to the suitability of learning environments for engaging students as citizens in the school, classroom, and the community. Some aspects of positive school climate and classroom climates include open debate and discussion in the social studies classroom, youth voice in making school decisions, open and respectful communications among students and teachers from diverse backgrounds, and a strong school/community partnership that fosters opportunities for service-learning and other types of involvement in the community. The specific framework proposed in the school climate instrument includes:

- Recognition of the civic purpose of education
- Meaningful learning of civic knowledge
- Cooperation and collaboration
- Mutual trust and positive interactions
- Engagement in and learning about the community
- Opportunities for students' input and participation
- Thoughtful and respectful dialogue about issues.

To develop this assessment database, an advisory board of experts in citizenship education, policy, and assessment was convened in January and August 2005, to discuss specific items and the categories and content of the database. Sources included items released from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test, IEA Civic Education study/ CEDARS, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), an inventory of school climate (developed by Professors Stephen Brand and Robert D. Felner) and statewide assessments of civic knowledge and civic assessments (compiled from state Web sites). A complete list of sources and more detail on this database and the school climate assessment instrument can be found at www.ecs.org/qna.

Principles for a Continuous and Increasingly Complex Consideration of Citizenship Competencies Beginning at Kindergarten

A variety of studies of elementary and middle school students, including the IEA Civic Education Study, shows that in democratic countries the average student is already a member of his or her political culture by age 14. Students' attitudes about the economic role of government and their trust in government-related institutions, for example, already match in many respects those of adults in their society. Identity groups already exert an influence; at 14, there are already gender differences in support for women's rights and differences between immigrants and native-born students in their attitudes toward immigrants' rights. Between 9th grade and high school graduation, substantial gains in political knowledge and civic skills occur.

Early studies of elementary school children showed that from grade 2 to grade 8 attitudes change (toward less personalized attitudes about government and more awareness of issues). Rudimentary concepts of fairness and freedom of speech exist. By 8th grade, children were much like adults in many of the dimensions underlying political awareness (Hess and Torney, 1967 reissued 2006).

The 1998 NAEP framework looked at three levels of competency at each of the three grade levels tested (4, 8 and 12). The resulting competencies, however, were only moderately well-integrated across grades, and a number of them presented difficulties for paper-and-pencil measurement. Some state frameworks are probably a better source for grade-level competencies, but this is beyond the scope of this paper.

Based on these findings and on studies in developmental psychology, however, a sequence of experiences such as the following seems appropriate:

In the *early elementary grades*, build on children's interest in what adults do to introduce them to voting as a process. Expand their curiosity about how governmental processes work and how America developed its form of government (much as how their curiosity is built about how trains work). A concrete point is easier to grasp than an abstraction at these levels. Careful scaffolding of experience is important.

Prompt students to think about issues outside their immediate environment (both past and present). Certain aspects of law and institutions such as elections can be discussed in rudimentary form. As students learn to read, or as they hear stories in the classroom, include books with historical, social and civic content. Early elementary students often have the opportunity to take field trips into the community, which can be excellent opportunities to connect these experiences to classroom discussions of government's role in influencing their communities.

In the *late elementary grades*, build on children's growing ability to understand others' perspective and increase opportunities to look at community issues. Encourage participation in out-of-school organizations that have age-appropriate ways of involving children in their communities. Begin formal (but not rote) civic education classes and make explicit the civic-related themes that are central in social studies and history topics. Ask "what is a meaningful connection for a child of this age between this topic and some kind of understanding of the importance of informed and skillful citizen involvement in a democracy or ways in which one can become personally engaged in one's community?" (see Torney-Purta and Richardson, 2003).

In *early adolescence*, offer the first full civic education course (preferably at grade 7 or 8) or make the history course one in which explicit attention is given to citizenship education competencies. Have daily discussions of related issues in the classroom, rather than infrequent current events exercises. Think of innovative out-of-class or homework assignments that will make these issues engaging for students. Provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate service-learning (or, for the students who prefer or whose parents prefer, opportunities to review community assets and risks). Make it possible for students to engage with adults in common activities and to talk with them about those activities.

Continue formal (but not rote) civic education classes and make explicit civic-related themes central in history and the social studies. Introduce democratic simulation exercises, such as mock trials and town meetings. For a range of curriculum topics, ask “what is a meaningful connection for a student of this age between this topic and some kind of understanding of the importance of citizen involvement in democracy or ways in which one can become personally engaged in civil society?” Consider using the school as a democratic laboratory.

In *high school*, study issues in the context of history and politics in greater depth. Expand the complexity of exercises in reasoning and finding information about social and civic topics. Encourage students to compare sources, which can mean analyzing media and other sources of information to assess their validity. Provide opportunities for relationships with adults engaged in common projects and opportunities to discuss the many dimensions of civic and political identity. Allow students to work in groups to address a local issue. There is quite a bit of good material in state competencies and textbooks at the high school level already; the challenge is to choose the materials and activities that will be motivating to students.

At all levels, it is important to realize there are individual as well as developmental or age differences. Building competencies is a cumulative process. For example, the student who gains a good understanding of the basic nature of elections in the primary grades has a foundation to build more advanced understanding. Individual differences are present in all classes but tend to be larger at higher grades.

Anyone who is a parent or a teacher knows that some 8-year-olds have considerable curiosity about how the social world outside their immediate environment operates and how people different from themselves think, while other 8-year-olds do not. Some 11-year-olds will read parts of the news section of a newspaper, while others will go right to sports or comics. Some 14-year-olds are alienated from society, while some can be mobilized to engage in their community. By this age some young people may begin to reject their community as having too few opportunities. Some 17-year-olds are so preoccupied with their right to be silent in front of their peers that they refuse to utter a word in class, while others voice an opinion on any subject (informed or not). The school can aim its civic education programs at the average student, but should provide opportunities to build variations addressing both developmental and individual differences, as well as fitting into the community in which the school is located.

As a more detailed illustration, **Table 3** presents a draft schematic of one aspect, elections, taken from the first two rows of **Table 2** (dealing with Democratic Institutions/Law and Citizenship/Human Rights,). **Table 4** presents a similar schematic dealing with understanding processes of conflict and agreement (or consensus). Because there is less elaboration available of competencies appropriate for the lower grades, that is where **Tables 3** and **4** concentrate. Almost any government text or set of state standards would yield appropriate high school examples.

The purpose of these tables is to suggest some developmentally appropriate themes and examples. The examples are meant to be illustrative, not comprehensive, and to suggest ways in which connections might be made to several subject areas in the curriculum (for example, history, language arts, science, and environmental studies). These tables are based on the national voluntary standards developed by the Center for Civic Education and National Council for the Social Studies. The categories of civic knowledge, civic thinking skills, civic participation skills, and civic dispositions and motivations are derived from the braid illustration on the front of the paper.

Table 3: An Example of K-12 Civic Competencies: Government and Elections

Grade Span	Civic Knowledge	Civic Thinking Skills	Civic Participation Skills	Core Civic Dispositions	Participation-related Dispositions
	<i>What students should know about citizenship</i>	<i>Cognitive civic skills students should possess</i>	<i>Participatory civic skills students should possess</i>	<i>Core civic dispositions students should possess</i>	<i>Participation-related dispositions students should possess</i>
	<i>Know:</i>	<i>Be able to:</i>	<i>Be able to:</i>	<i>Demonstrate:</i>	<i>Demonstrate:</i>
K-3	<p>...that groups and leaders beyond those in family and school influence people's actions (by rules, laws).</p> <p>...that leaders are often chosen by election and what an election is.</p>	<p>...recognize pictures of national leaders (and distinguish between those who are historical and contemporary).</p> <p>...consider basic aspects of candidates or positions before voting.</p>	<p>...participate in a simple election (both as voter and candidate).</p>	<p>...independent and cooperative accomplishments.</p>	<p>...support for equality and fairness in voting.</p>
4-6	<p>...why only adult citizens vote in most elections.</p> <p>...what elected representatives do.</p> <p>...that citizens can and cannot do various things to influence the outcome of elections.</p>	<p>...interpret a simple news story or political cartoon about an election.</p>	<p>...discuss the reason for making an electoral choice.</p> <p>...give persuasive reasons about why citizens should vote.</p>	<p>...commitment to equality and fairness and the ability to consider the public good as well as self-interest.</p>	<p>...ability to give examples and describe importance of cultural unity and diversity within and among groups.</p>
7-9	<p>...that elections have their basis in the Constitution (and basics about the history of the right to vote).</p> <p>...about elections at the local, state and national levels.</p> <p>...the role of political parties and interest groups.</p>	<p>...interpret a news story or political cartoon about an election that shows different perspectives.</p> <p>...get information about candidates.</p>	<p>...persuade others to become a candidate or to vote based on a reasoned and respectful argument.</p>	<p>...participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic.</p>	<p>...a sense of personal responsibility to vote and seek fair elections.</p> <p>...motivation to seek information before voting.</p>
10-12	[Many examples from standards]	[Many examples from standards]	[Many examples from standards]	[Many examples from standards]	[Many examples from standards]

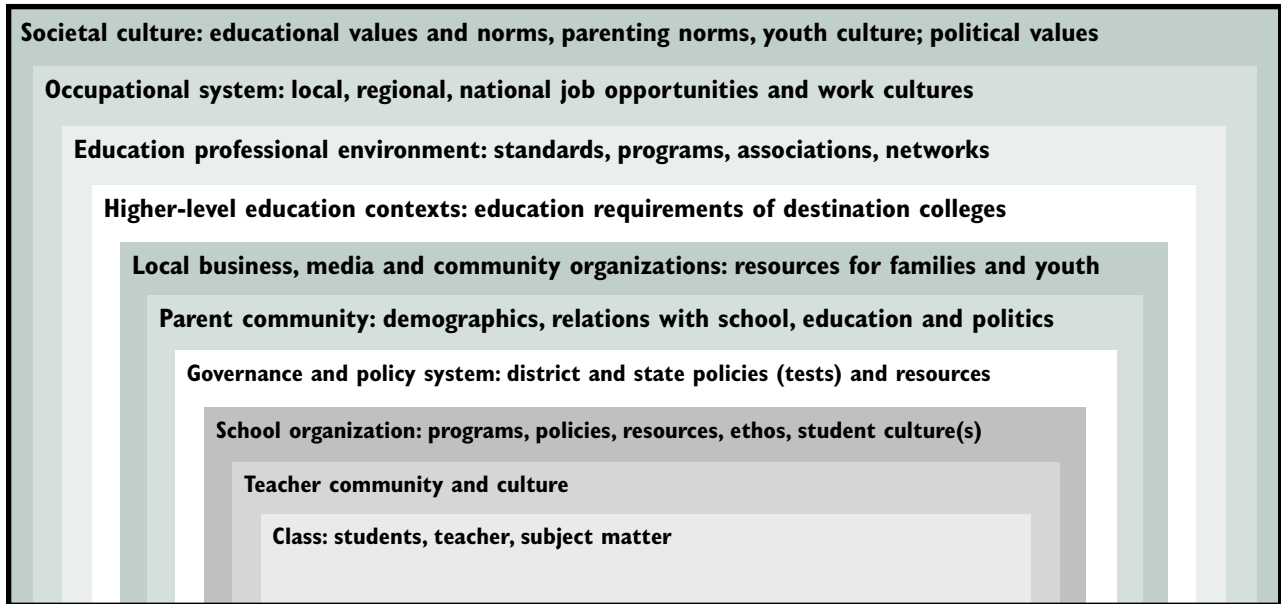
Table 4: An Example of K-12 Civic Competencies: Conflict and Consensus

Grade Span	Civic Knowledge	Civic Thinking Skills	Civic Participation Skills	Core Civic Dispositions	Participation-related Dispositions
	What students should know about citizenship	Cognitive civic skills students should possess	Participatory civic skills students should possess	Core civic dispositions students should possess	Participation-related dispositions students should possess
	<i>Know:</i>	<i>Be able to:</i>	<i>Be able to:</i>	<i>Demonstrate:</i>	<i>Demonstrate:</i>
K-3	<p>...that persons in the present and in history sometimes differ about what the best course of action is.</p> <p>...how leaders sometimes help groups achieve consensus.</p>	<p>...show nascent awareness of other perspectives.</p>	<p>...participate in a simple discussion that recognizes and respects different points of view.</p>	<p>...willingness to listen to others.</p>	<p>...willingness to articulate one’s own views.</p>
4-6	<p>...about important debates in history—how they have been resolved and that some served as “turning points.”</p> <p>...how consensus as well as conflict contributes to political dialogue.</p>	<p>...recognize and find sources (newspapers, cartoons) where different points of view are presented.</p> <p>...take another person’s or group’s perspective.</p>	<p>...frame an argument, giving both sides fair treatment.</p> <p>...argue using evidence, reason and persuasion in school-based or local issues.</p>	<p>...willingness to consider the public good as well as self-interest in resolving a conflict.</p> <p>...willingness to participate in discussion to build consensus.</p>	<p>...motivation to seek information and evidence from media sources.</p>
7-9	<p>...about more complex historical and contemporary debates.</p> <p>...mechanisms used to resolve conflict in school, community, nation.</p>	<p>...interpret a news story, speech or political cartoon that presents different perspectives.</p>	<p>...make a presentation using evidence, reason and persuasion on national as well as school-based or local issues.</p>	<p>...willingness to engage someone with an opposing point of view in discussion (while conceding valid points).</p>	<p>...understanding of politics as ideas that may differ but reach agreements that are generally binding as a group.</p>
10-12	<p>...how different political groups differ on issues (e.g., political parties, interest groups).</p>	<p>...compare different news sources.</p>	<p>...evaluate the effectiveness of different strategies to make a point.</p>	<p>...traits such as civility and respect for law in facilitating thoughtful participation in public affairs.</p>	<p>...motivation to work toward self-accepted political and civic goals on issues where people differ.</p>

Embedded Contexts of Schooling Relating to Civic Education

The last remaining piece of this paper is a graphic to orient the Professional Judgment Groups (PJGs) to the variety of contexts in which civic education is embedded, delineating the groups involved and influencing the actions suggested. **Box 10**, which contains a modification relating to citizenship of a schematic originally developed by McLaughlin and Talbott to apply to high schools more generally, can serve as a way to examine the implications of the material presented in this paper. Although the participants in the PJGs looked at all these levels, and affirmed their importance, they focused on the government and policy systems.

Box 10:



Adapted from Professional communities and the work of high school teaching, Appendix A, p. 144, of McLaughlin, M. and Talbott, J. (2001). Gray shaded portion refers to proximal influences on teaching.

Suggestions for State-level Policymakers and Advisers Using This Document

As indicated previously, this document and the process behind its development are not intended to supplant other work in the field of civic education but rather to extend it and make it more coherent and effective.

Positive and effective civic education programs meet the following criteria:

- Fit into the three categories of content and three strands of competency detailed earlier
- Incorporate strands of civic preparation in designated courses and across the curriculum, through schooling and related community experience
- Include, as appropriate, didactic instruction, experiential learning, issue-centered classroom discussion, peer interaction outside the classroom
- Emphasize meaningful learning and authentic engagement
- Expect students to reason about the support for their own positions and reflect about their experience in and outside the classroom
- Evaluate students in a developmentally appropriate way to assess more than easily measured facts; for example, analytical or participatory skills
- Connect to the world outside the classroom, not only to what's in the textbook
- Make knowledgeable, committed and caring adults accessible to students
- Allow different opinions to be expressed, not expecting one right answer for every question
- Empower students to solve problems
- Make links among subject areas, for example, not unnecessarily isolating learning to read from reading about their communities and nation.

It is important that state education policies integrate citizenship education in the elementary years, starting with simple concepts and progressing to more complex concepts, which allows students to embrace citizenship as part of their identity by age 14.

Some states have standards or lists of competencies that have been strongly influenced by the National Voluntary Civic Education Standards (CCE), while others reference standards more closely to the NCSS Standards or the National Standards for History. Some may have developed programs that relate to standards with a different focus (for example, service-learning) or an emphasis on objectives such as loyalty and patriotism. The entry point into examining standards or lists of competencies will be different among states and districts and schools, but the direction of each effort should toward:

- Greater coherence around concepts such as those identified by Patrick and illustrated here, rather than encyclopedic detail
- Making sure the three strands (knowledge, thinking skills and participatory skills, and core civic and disposition-related civic skills) are all represented and related to one another, rather than an overwhelming focus on content knowledge
- Extending citizenship teaching in the primary and middle school grades, rather than a predominant emphasis on high school
- Making the curriculum suitable for students at a variety of learning levels, especially second-language English students and students from homes with poor literacy and economic resources
- Making citizenship education experiences more likely to engage and motivate every student, rather than relying primarily on the incentive to get good grades or to be accepted into college
- Enabling teachers to adequately cover the material in the lists of competencies by allowing more preparation time and professional development support
- A developmentally appropriate testing procedure that moves beyond multiple-choice items about facts to more informative ways of benchmarking students on knowledge, skills and motivations to be active citizens.

NCLC will update a review and analysis of policies, practices and resources that support quality citizenship education on its Web site at www.ecs.org/nclc.

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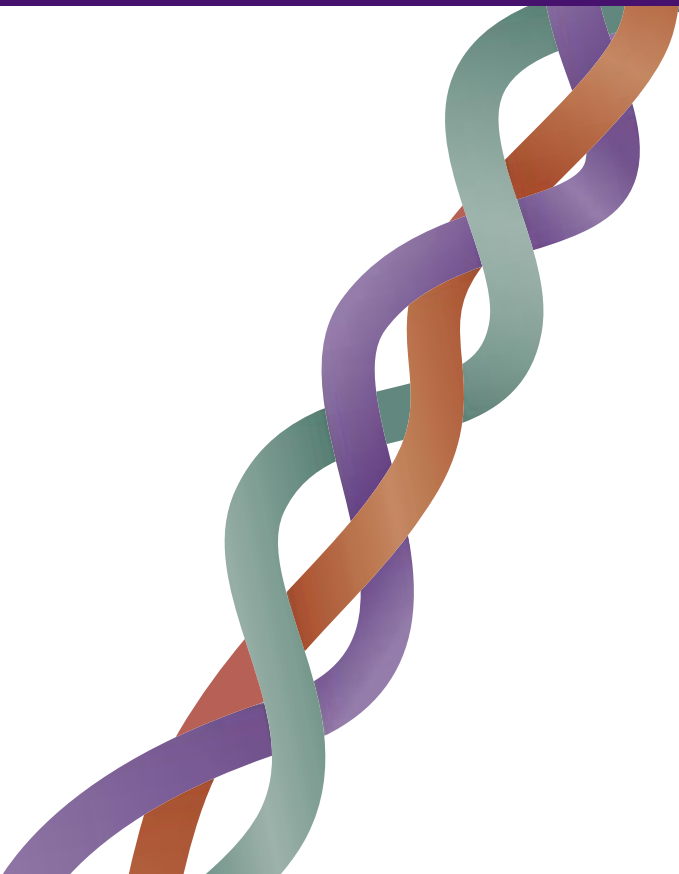
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700 Broadway, Suite 1200
Denver, CO 80203-3460
303.299.3600
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