



FINAL REPORT

April 2017

Alaska Legislative Task Force On Civics Education

“WELL, DOCTOR, WHAT HAVE WE GOT—A REPUBLIC OR A MONARCHY?”
“A REPUBLIC, IF YOU CAN KEEP IT.”

The above response is attributed to BENJAMIN FRANKLIN—at the close of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, when queried as he left Independence Hall on the final day of deliberation, in the notes of Dr. James McHenry, one of Maryland’s delegates to the Convention.

Executive Summary

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) surveyed a nationally representative sample of 9,100 eighth-graders in 2014. Students responded to multiple-choice and constructed-response questions designed to measure the civics knowledge and skills that are essential to the responsibilities of citizenship in America. The results showed only 23% of 8th graders were rated as “proficient” in civics. And while this was an increase from the first assessment in 1998, it reflected no change from the last assessment in 2010.

The Annenberg Public Policy Center in 2014 showed that only 25% of 1,400 respondents could name our three branches of government; 35% could not name any branch of government. This is stunning information. Beyond knowing what the three branches of government *are*, is perhaps more importantly to understand what they each *do*. Are our young people sufficiently aware of which branch is involved with, and how, and why we maintain our roads, label our food, or fund our military and schools? This is important information to understand when we go to the ballot box.

Everyone in this field seems to agree there is a systemic problem on some level, about how our young citizens perceive themselves, and subsequently act, as engaged responsible citizens, but clearly identifying that problem remains elusive. Some school districts appear to be doing well with civics education, while others arguably are not. Many wish to offer prescriptive solutions without knowing whether the medicine will remedy the ailment. In any event, this is an important conversation. If we want government to be of the people, by the people, and for the people, then we must address this challenge honestly, in partnership with educators and policy makers across the state and country.

The Alaska Legislature recognized a need to try to find a reasonable way to solve this problem by establishing the Alaska Legislative Task Force on Civics Education (TFCE) to offer some possible solutions. A major goal was seen in the form of reinvigorating our schools to engage students with their communities, with local leaders, service organizations, and gain more awareness of the public policy making process.

As was aptly put by Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, every day in school comes with the same set of questions for educators, and corresponding tools, as with any subject, we ask of and apply to our students:

- 1) What do we want students to know and do? – effective standards;
- 2) How will we teach students those things? – effective instruction and curriculum;
- 3) How will we know if students have learned it? – effective assessments;
- 4) What will we do if they don't learn it? – effective interventions;
- 5) What will we do if they already know it? – effective enrichment.

The Alaska Legislative Task Force therefore submits the following recommendations to help improve civics education and civics engagement in Alaska:

In this report, “Education Leaders” includes The University of Alaska (UnivAK), the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development (BOE), the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED), and organizational representatives of school boards, school administrators, teachers, parent-teacher organizations, student organizations, community and service organizations, and school-business partnerships.

TFCE REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Education Leaders should organize an “Alaska Civics Summit” event to bring together educators, education professionals, students, and civics advocacies, for the purpose of sharing innovations and best practices for improving civics curriculum resources, classroom tools, networking and civics engagement. This event should include components such as:
 - a. Forums, Presentations, Seminars, Workshops, Webinars, Courses, Classes, Competitions, Awards and Ceremonies;
 - b. Should be funded in creative ways as organized by Education Leaders; and
 - c. Be held over a period of 2-14 days at least biennially; and
 - d. Include a report summarizing the highlights of the Summit, and offering any recommendations, to the Legislature.
2. Education Leaders should launch a statewide effort to examine and adopt updated content standards, including specifically those for government and citizenship.
 - a. These standards should include a specific reference to the content of the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services under 8 U.S.C. 1446(b). and
 - b. Have detailed emphasis on, but not be limited to, the history and values of the United States, the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Rule of Law, Citizenship, and Civic Duty.
3. Education Leaders should vet civics curriculum options and ensure such curriculum is easily shared and equally accessible among educators in Alaska, so as to have ample educational tools available for meeting state standards in civics.

4. Education Leaders should partner with existing non-profit service organizations that offer programs or best practices in civics education and civics engagement, such as those described in this report, to improve communication, awareness, accessibility, and delivery of such programs;
5. Education Leaders should recognize the professional skills of and honor those who demonstrate outstanding leadership and effectiveness in delivering or promoting civics education in Alaska.
6. Education Leaders should develop a system of endorsements or commendations for inclusion on student transcripts, report cards, or diplomas, recognizing and honoring students who demonstrate excellence in civics education or civics engagement during their secondary educational career.
7. Education leaders should partner to promote programs in Alaska that would qualify as a “Presidential Academy,” a “Congressional Academy,” as defined by ESSA; or summer camps, a “School of Democracy,” or other endeavors to qualify for “Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants” available through ESSA, or other funding sources and programs promoting civics education and engagement.
8. Education Leaders should partner to identify and assign a person or persons to be responsible for the development and maintenance of a statewide clearinghouse or repository of civics education-related resources and curricula, to fulfill the following needs:
 - a. to increase awareness of current civics classroom resources and programs to educators;
 - b. serve as a liaison for connecting civics or service organizations to educators;
 - c. monitor and warehouse modern best practices in civics education and civics engagement programs;
 - d. make current civics curriculum resources freely and easily accessible to educators and researchers throughout Alaska via the internet or other means;
 - e. identify and connect educators with opportunities for professional teacher training and development in civics education and civics engagement programs;
 - f. identify, foster, or secure funding sources for supporting civics education, curricula, programs, or training opportunities for educators and students;
 - g. play a leading role in the fulfillment of the recommendations contained in this report, and other findings as may arise, for the overall improvement of civics education delivery and engagement in Alaska; and
 - h. identify and pursue funding opportunities for civics-related programs that may qualify for grant funding under the Every Student Succeeds Act.

The Office of the Lieutenant Governor and the Alaska Council for the Social Studies are specifically invited to participate in the efforts described in this section.

9. To the extent practical and appropriate, the TFCE encourages provisions be made to improve student opportunities for representation and involvement in policy-making processes. Decision-making bodies are encouraged to actively search for and include student involvement in organizations such as:
 - a. State-level Boards, Commissions, and Councils;
 - b. Local-level Community Councils or Assemblies;
 - c. Boards of Directors for Non-Profit, For-Profit, Service or community Organizations of all stripes;
 - d. Internships with the above described organizations; or
 - e. Student Advisory Committees, functioning either peripherally for, or integrated into the formal structures of, any of the organizations described above.

FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THIS REPORT:

The TFCE recognizes the current and foreseeable fiscal challenges facing the State of Alaska. Presently, the TFCE proposes to address funding components supporting the policy recommendations of this report as follows:

10. Education Leaders should partner with non-profit and service organizations, such as the Rasmuson Foundation or the Alaska Humanities Forum, to identify and secure federal funding relating but not limited to grants that may be available through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), or other sources.

When such time as increased funding opportunities arise, the TFCE recommends exploring state funding options such as:

11. The Legislature could establish a fund called the “Civics Education & Engagement Fund,” (CEEF) comprised of monies received from federal, state, or other sources, for the purpose of supporting civics education and civics engagement in the state;
12. The Legislature could initially capitalize and annually appropriate to the CEEF funds equal to 0.1% of the total amount appropriated as state aid to public schools as described in AS 14.17;
13. Money appropriated to the CEEF could be expended:
 - a. in a manner consistent with supporting the statewide coordination and maintenance of a civics education clearinghouse or repository; and
 - b. disbursed in an equitably proportionate manner consistent with school districts’ defined basic need for public school funding, as calculated in AS 14.17, for the express purpose of promoting civics classroom education and student-community engagement.

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A.

OFFICIAL ROSTER

Representing the Alaska Legislature:

Senator Gary Stevens, Chair
Representative Wes Keller, Vice Chair
Senator Mia Costello
Senator Berta Gardner
Representative Lance Pruitt
Representative Ivy Spohnholz

Representing the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development:

Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner, AK Dept. of Education & Early
Development
(Designee) Dr. Susan McCauley, Education Policy Coordinator, AK-DEED

Representing the Alaska Judiciary:

Dana Fabe, Senior Justice, Alaska Supreme Court

Representing the University of Alaska:

Dr. Forrest Nabors, Asst. Professor of Political Science, UAA

Representing Alaska School Boards:

Norm Wooten, Executive Director, Association of Alaska School Boards

A Teacher with Significant Experience in Civics Education:

Pamela Orme, Coordinator, Anchorage School District Social Studies
Curriculum
(Alternate) David Block, Retired Social Studies Teacher, Anchorage School
District, West High School

Representing Students:

Emma Potter, Student Representative, Anchorage School Board

B. Introduction

The Alaska Legislative Task Force on Civics Education (TFCE) was established with the passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution 1 during the 29th Legislature in the Spring of 2016. The text of the bill is attached as an appendix at the end of this report for reference.

Work began immediately to assemble a roster of members. A series of day-long meetings took place over the Summer and Fall of 2016, and continued into early 2017, to endeavor to meet the duties of the TFCE. The specific meeting schedule, to date, was as follows:

August 19, 2016
October 14, 2016
November 22, 2016
December 15, 2016
February 8-9, 2017

Over the course of this meeting schedule, over 40 education professionals and advocates formally testified before the TFCE.

The Stated Duties of the Task Force were as follows:

1. Analyze the current state of civics education in the state;
2. Analyze current civics education laws in other jurisdictions;
3. Identify best practices in civics education in other jurisdictions;
4. Review the merits of and considering options for implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act, P. L. No. 114-95 (2015), as it pertains to civics education in the state;
5. Evaluate the merits of and implementation requirements for requiring high school seniors to take and pass the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services under 8 U.S.C. 1446(b) as a prerequisite for graduating from high school;
6. Make recommendations to the legislature relating to substantially increasing civics literacy and the capacity of youth to obtain the requisite knowledge and skills to be civically informed members of the public;
7. Study and make recommendations about how to increase and improve civics education in kindergarten through grade 12 in public schools in the state;
8. Make funding recommendations related to the task force's recommendations to the legislature; and
9. Submit a report to the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives summarizing the findings and recommendations of the task force and notifying the members of the legislature that the report is available.

C. Working Definitions

In addition to the stated Duties of the TFCE, another important component was to establish working definitions with which to use as the TFCE went about its work. For vernacular consistency, and for the purposes of this report, the following working definitions were adopted by the TFCE:

Civics: The study of citizenship and government.

Citizenship: Accepting a social contract of being part of a system of government, including the rights protected by, and the duties for supporting, that government.

Government: The form or system of rule by which a state, community or nation is governed or ruled.

Civic Mission of Schools: Encouraging the development of civic skills that will prepare students to be competent, thoughtful, responsible, and participatory citizens throughout their lives.

D. Goals Supporting a Civic Mission of Schools

In addition to its stated Duties, the TFCE adopted the following goals for supporting a Civic Mission of Schools:

1. *Produce informed, responsible, and thoughtful citizens.*

Citizens should have a grasp of our history and the fundamentals of American democracy, an awareness of public issues, and have the ability to obtain accurate information, think critically, and enter into respectful dialogue with others.

2. *Improve active participation in community organizations.*

Citizens should maintain membership in, or contributions to, organizations working to address an array of cultural, social, and/or religious interests and beliefs.

3. *Reduce apathy and improve political participation.*

Citizens should work to accomplish public purposes, including group problem solving, public speaking, petitioning, protesting, and voting.

4. *Improve moral and civic virtues.*

Citizens should maintain a concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance, respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference.

5. *Foster continually relevant and active civics learning opportunities.*

Citizens should take part in activities from research projects and presentations, to simulations, mock trials and elections, and participation in student government.

6. *Provide teachers with access to civics-related professional development.*

Our educational system should include a funding component for improving collaboration and networking amongst teachers and civic education organizations, and recognize teachers who are doing good work in this area.

7. *Provide statewide leadership and support for local districts.*

Devise a means for the state of Alaska to establish a clearinghouse of civics-related best practices and resources for local school districts and teachers to utilize in the development and maintenance of their respective curricula.

E. Analyze The Current State Of Civics Education In The State

The TFCE meetings began with a statewide overview of existing civics education standards and curriculum in Alaska. A presentation was made by Dr. Susan McCauley, Education Policy Coordinator for the Alaska Dept. of Education & Early Development. In her presentation it was explained that existing statewide standards and regulations for civics-related education are fairly broad and brief. She cited relevant regulations, including:

4 AAC 04.020 “Skills for graduating students: A goal of the state public school system is to graduate students who will ... (7) be responsible and ethical citizens and community members...”;

4 AAC 04.030 “...a goal of the state public school system is to provide a working knowledge of ... (7) government and citizenship...”; and

4 AAC 04.140 “Content standards ... The content standards for ..., government and citizenship, history, Alaska history,...are adopted by reference.”

Alaska’s content standards for “government and citizenship” are not tied to grade levels. School districts are required to fulfill the standards by setting their respective local curriculum, which can vary considerably. Dr. McCauley emphasized that local districts have autonomy about how these broad content standards and regulations are met. The governing body of a school district is given wide latitude, but required to adopt and review curriculum on an ongoing basis, including curriculum review cycles. The same is true for choosing textbooks.

Setting and adjusting statewide standards is ultimately the decision of the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development (ABOE). However, the perspectives of teachers, school boards, and administrators should be consulted. Some districts have 12,000 students and others have 12 students. It’s a considerable challenge to be prescriptive in a state like Alaska, there being arguably no other state in the United States with such a challenge, given the diversity of Alaska’s school districts and student populations.

Dr. McCauley also advised the TFCE to consider the enormous variation in infrastructure between districts. For example, the Anchorage School District has a single person assigned to focus on social studies curriculum. The majority of other districts place that duty on an assistant superintendent, or a curriculum coordinator for all content areas, not just on social studies, or have no curriculum coordinator at all and rely entirely on teachers to develop curriculum.

Thus, considering our diversity and staunch embrace of “local control,” and coupling that with a state-level desire to improve civics education generally, finding an appropriate recommendation, let alone a statewide requirement, has proven to be the single most challenging compromise for the TFCE to identify, especially given Alaska’s current fiscal situation.

The Current State of Civics Education in the State, continued

Following Dr. McCauley's statewide overview of civics education, representatives from 13 school districts participated directly over the course of the TFCE meeting schedule. An effort was made to gather a diverse sample of districts across the state, particularly to include those in major urban areas, as well as rural areas. Each district provided an overview of their respective civics-related curriculum, course requirements, and related extra-curricular programs, listed in alphabetical order as follows:

Anchorage School District
Bering Strait School District
Fairbanks School District
City and Borough of Juneau School District
Kake City Schools
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
Kodiak Island Borough School District
Kotzebue Middle High School
Lake & Peninsula School District
Lower Kuskokwim School District
Mat-Su Borough School District
St. Mary's City School District
Sitka School District

Data Collection & Statewide Survey

In addition to the school districts that participated in the meetings directly, the TFCE commissioned the assistance of the Alaska Association of School Boards to administer a statewide survey among educators and administrators regarding their respective civics-related curriculum, course requirements, and extra-curricular programs.

As of January 4, 2017, 34 responses had been received, representing a wide variety of school districts in Alaska. The results of this survey summarized as follows:

- 82% YES “Is civics/American democracy/citizenship incorporated as part of the elementary grade (K-5) course of study?”
- 71% YES “Does your school district have a required civics/American democracy/citizenship course in grades 6-12?”
- 44% YES “Does your school district have an elective civics/American democracy/citizenship course in grades 6-12?”
- 62% YES “Is civics/American democracy/citizenship incorporated as part of another course in grades 6-12?”
- 76% YES Does your school district have a specific course or unit of a course where Alaska and local government are taught?
- 24% YES Does your district have a law-related education course?
- 32% YES Does your district have a character education program that includes a civic education component?
- 85% YES Does your district include current issues or current events in any social studies course?
- 65% YES Are civic education projects or simulations part of your social studies curriculum?
- 62% YES “Is your school district involved in co-curricular or extracurricular civic education programs?”
- 85% YES “Are your students involved in their own school governance?”
- 24% YES “Has your school district offered any in-service workshops on civic education?”
- 21% YES “Do you have a civic education course, program or unit that you think is exemplary?”

21% YES “Does your school district have a social studies supervisor?”

“Does your district have a course or unit that include[s] information about the following topics? (check those that apply)”

100% Alaska History

69% Alaska State Government, the Legislature, Court System, and Governor

69% The Alaska State Constitution

63% State/local current events

59% Your Local Community Government

“There is some interest in adding a requirement that all Alaskan students must pass the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Naturalization Test in order to graduate from high school. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of such a requirement?”

Responses to this last question varied widely as to the pro’s and con’s of requiring students to pass the USCISN (“civics”) Test in order to graduate from high school. But respondents spoke entirely against mandating such an exam, particularly for students with special needs, or in the context of “another unfunded mandate.”

The Current State of Civics Education in Other States

CSG Senior Fellows Richard Greene and Katherine Barrett are experts on state and local government, and columnists for *Governing* magazine, consultants to the Pew Charitable Trusts, special project consultants to the Volcker Alliance, fellows at the National Academy of Public Administration, and others. They were the principal authors of a white paper commissioned by the Council on State Governments (CSG), which was presented at CSG’s annual meeting in Williamsburg Virginia in December 2016. They joined the TFCE telephonically during its meeting on November 22, 2016 to share some insights to their imminent publication, which related to a decline in civics education, engagement, and “trust in government” around the country.

Mr. Greene and Ms. Barrett expressed having a long-standing interest in civics education, and being thrilled to both assist CSG in researching the topic, and in sharing with the TFCE some of their findings. It was their hope to help bolster civics education among states, a topic which “needs bolstering.” They explained having approached the task of examining civics education in the United States both academically and from a journalistic stand point. They researched the question “Why is civics education of any importance?” Their research brought them to the conclusion that, absent civics education, the level of trust in government faces an inevitable decline.

There is accordingly a connection between people not understanding how government works, which is to say at some or any level of federal, state, and local government; coupled with an inability to have faith that government is doing a good job at some or any of those levels. As the saying goes, people do not trust what they don’t understand. The Pew Research Center examined the decline in trust in government, and reported a dramatic decline since the 1950s.

In a 1958 American National Elections Study, conducted through the University of Michigan and the National Science Foundation, when voters were asked about their level of trust in the federal government, 73% of respondents said “always” or “most of the time.” According to Mrs. Barrett, in a September 2016 Gallup poll voters were asked the same questions, the response rate has dropped to 25% for having an “always” or “most of the time” level of trust in the federal government. And while that rating is accordingly better for state governments, trust in government has decreased significantly at all levels.

According to Mr. Barrett, this erosion of trust runs roughly parallel to the erosion in civics education through the last century and early this century. Until the early 1970’s, the vast majority of public schools devoted reasonable amount of time to civics and government. One of the realities that shouldn’t be a surprise is the modern emphasis on math and science, STEM, and standardized testing, which has steadily pushed civics education out of the day-to-day classroom. In a 2014 study of time-use in elementary school classrooms it showed social studies in general received the lowest priority. The State of Illinois, which had recently passed a civics education requirement, noted that elementary school students were getting less than 20 minutes of social studies instruction a week.

Another finding made by Greene and Barrett was “civics” education being largely focused on understanding the fundamentals of the federal government, with little to no emphasis on state or community and local governments. The 2014 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) survey on civics, mentioned at the beginning of this report, indicated only 23% of 8th graders being rated as “proficient” in civics. They suggested that NAEP’s given definition for “proficiency” in this area weighed heavily on knowledge of the framework and functions of the U.S. constitution and federal government.

They recognized Alaska’s diverse geography and cultural landscape, and the complexities of having a standardized civics education platform given there being 200 tribal governments in Alaska each with potentially their own respective ideas as to what a “proficiency” in civics and citizenry should look like.

Greene and Barrett were effective at helping to identify a problem in civics education exists. One of their recommendations to help address it included an avoidance of assuming a single course or examination test would, in and of itself, be the solution. They stressed the importance of an integrated approach to include curriculum and development of civics awareness, knowledge and engagement, from early grades through college.

Another component they emphasized was finding student “buy-in” with classroom activities or projects that maximize choice and involve a community challenge or issue for students to become stakeholders in the democratic process and engage themselves directly in an effort to affect change. This can range from installing stop lights, to establishing a park, or neighborhood watches. There is no limit to what students could conceive and pursue to improve their community, state, or country.

Greene and Barrett stressed the importance of teacher training in civics education. There are too often instances of teachers teaching civics coursework where they themselves have not ever been taught about civics. At the college level there are very few to no requirements to

teach civics or history. Additionally, on-going professional development opportunities must be embraced if teachers are to have the tools necessary to bring to the classroom.

And finally, they expressed the effectiveness, and appropriateness, of state and local elected officials attending classrooms or school auditoriums. There are a variety of approaches to this type of program that can range from simply describing how that person got elected, to talking about the local structure of government, or even formal debates on issues. This is an example of direct modeling and helps young adults, who will eventually be new voters, learn and understand what the legislative bodies actually do and how to get involved in policy-making.

Analyze Current Civics Education Laws In Other Jurisdictions

Civics education laws, regulations, standards, and curriculum were found to vary widely across the states. Over the past several years state legislatures, governors, and state and local school boards have adopted a broad spectrum of policies intended to improve student preparedness for, or at least awareness of, civic education and engagement.

Policies range from accountability and assessments, graduation requirements, required curriculum, and of course broad standards. The method by which these policies are applied or enforced also vary widely, from strict state control or mandate to being only loosely encouraged, or required but not monitored or enforced.

The Education Commission of the States developed a comprehensive database of state legislative and executive activity relating to civics education policy, from 1995 to 2016. There is additional reference information and a link to the detailed database listed in the Resources section at the end of this report. A summary of the database is compiled in the chart below.

SUMMARY OF CIVICS EDUCATION-RELATED ACTIVITY AMONG STATES
Number of NEW Policies or Laws Enacted - 1995-2016

Type of Civics Education Promotion	1995-2004	2005-2014	2015-2016	Total
Increase or Change Course Curriculum, Graduation Requirements, or Civics Awareness in Schools; including Study of the Constitution, Bills of Rights, or Development of a 'Character Education' program	35	42	4	81
Create a Commission, Task Force, or Agency to Evaluate Civics Education	6	30	1	37
Promote or Require Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, or a Moment of Silence	21	3	2	26
Holiday Recognition or Principle Awareness, including establishing a 'Freedom Week', or observing holidays such as Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, 'Legislators Back-To-School' Day	9	7	1	17
Promote or Require U.S. Flag Display in Classrooms or Schools, including Flag Etiquette, or Display of the National Motto or Declaration of Independence	11	5	0	16
Encourage Community Service, Volunteerism, or Election Poll Working, including excused absences from school for doing such work	6	8	0	14
Improve Voter Registration Programs or Awareness	4	9	0	13
Provide or Promote Leadership Programs, Internships, or Field Trips	1	5	0	6
Increase Professional Development of Teachers for Civics Education Instruction	0	3	1	4
Require a Civics Exam or Minimum Civics Instruction For Graduation	0	0	14	14
Totals:	93	112	23	228

Current Civics Education Laws In Alaska

It is noteworthy that among the policies summarized in the above chart, the only “civics education” related statutory requirement in Alaska is for display of the U.S. flag at schools and for the Pledge of Allegiance. AS 14.03.130, enacted in 2000, states that local school boards “shall require that the pledge of allegiance be recited regularly...,” by saluting and pledging to the U.S. flag, or “to maintain a respectful silence.” Thus, Alaska law requires students to routinely acknowledge the U.S. flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag, but also gives immediate exception to any person; the right to choose to refrain from participating in that acknowledgement and pledge, provided they so do in respectful silence.

Secondly, there is a state regulatory, but not statutory requirement for students to complete a half-unit of study, typically a semester, in Alaskan history in order to qualify for high school graduation. The process for this requirement began in 2004 and was made effective on January 1, 2009. Alaska Administrative Code 04.06.075(d) states that students’ social studies requirement must include this half-credit in Alaska history “or demonstration that the student meets the Alaska history performance standards.” Exceptions to this requirement include a student who transfers into an Alaska public school “after the student’s second year of high school; or has successfully completed a state history course from another state.”

However the specific curriculum for this course of study is left to local school districts to determine. Furthermore, this required curriculum in Alaska History, while wholly appropriate, appreciated, and seemingly complied with around the state, is not particularly a course on “civics” education or engagement, as defined by the TFCE.

Civics-Related Laws in Alaska

The Alaska Legislature has periodically enacted “Designated Days of Honor” to recognize honorable Alaskan leaders, cultural icons, or significant occasions in Alaska’s history. A summary of designations related to Alaska’s history, or indirectly to civics education and/or engagement are as follows:

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>Observed</u>	<u>Enacted</u>
AS 44.12.030	Wickersham Day	August 24	1949
AS 44.12.040	Anthony J. Dimond Day	November 30	1955
AS 44.12.050	Ernest Gruening Day	February 6	1984
AS 44.12.055	Bob Bartlett Day	April 20	1984
AS 44.12.060	William A. Egan Day	October 8	1985
AS 44.12.065	Elizabeth Peratrovich Day	February 16	1988
AS 44.12.067	Ted Stevens Day	4 th Saturday in July	2011
AS 44.12.068	Vietnam Veterans Day	March 29	2013
AS 44.12.070	Alaska Flag Day	July 9	1992
AS 44.12.076	POWs & MIA Recognitions Days	April 9 & 3 rd Friday/Sept.	2000
AS 44.12.078	Women Veterans Day	November 9	2000
AS 44.12.080	Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	December 7	1995
AS 44.12.083	Alaska Territorial Guard Day	October 18	2005
AS 44.12.085	Dutch Harbor Remembrance Day	June 3	1995
AS 44.12.090	Juneteenth Day	3 rd Saturday in June	2001
AS 44.12.092	Alaska History Week	1 st week of March	2008
AS 44.12.100	Older Alaskans’ Day	2 nd Wednesday of Sept.	2006
AS 44.12.125	Alaska National Guard Day	July 30	2012
AS 44.12.130	Jay Hammond Day	July 21	2013
AS 44.12.135	Dr. Walter Soboleff Day	November 14	2014

While these designations are often promoted by and incorporated into school curriculum or community activities and organizations, they are neither mandated nor enforced by the state in any way.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Education Leaders should organize an “Alaska Civics Summit” event to bring together educators, education professionals, students, and civics advocacies, for the purpose of sharing innovations and best practices for improving civics curriculum resources, classroom tools, networking and civics engagement. This event should include components such as:

- a. Forums, Presentations, Seminars, Workshops, Webinars, Courses, Classes, Competitions, Awards and Ceremonies;
- b. Should be funded in creative ways as organized by Education Leaders; and
- c. Be held over a period of 2-14 days at least biennially; and
- d. Include a report summarizing the highlights of the Summit, and offering any recommendations, to the Legislature.

G. Identifying Best Practices In Civics Education In Other Jurisdictions.

The Task Force heard from several representatives of organizations and organizers of specific programs both in and out of Alaska, fostering civic mindedness, leadership development, and similar inter- or extra-curricular efforts for students to be trained in, or at least exposed to, civics education and engagement.

Legislative Programs

Looking inwardly at what legislatures do “in-house” for students and the public, we turned to Angela Andrews, Program Principal for National Conference of State Legislatures, who spoke with the TFCE about legislative activity in civics-related educational programs and practices among state legislatures. She described that in November 2016, five questions were posted to the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries (ASLCS) about civics education programs supported by state legislatures.

Representatives from the legislative bodies of Arizona, Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Nebraska, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming responded to the questionnaire. The detailed results of the listserv questionnaire are included as an Appendix at the end of this report. The specific questions and a summary of the responses is described below:

1. Does your legislature participate in an annual student government day, either by organizing the event or part of a team organizing the event? Most, but not all, respondents indicated their legislature neither organizes nor participates in a designated annual student government day. However, there does appear to be student government organizations who organize their own annual regional or statewide conventions to establish platforms and pass resolutions, for example, requesting policy decisions or actions that are in turn submitted to higher level decision-making bodies.
2. Does your legislature help to organize, or support, mock sessions when student groups visit the legislature? About half of the respondents indicated their legislature offer the use of legislative chambers for student mock floor sessions. What appears to be more common is for students to hold mock hearings of a committee considering a bill. Usually these sessions are organized by the respective sponsor of the student group, for example, the YMCA Youth in Government program organizers, with the legislative body simply offering the space, basic procedural materials and relevant guiding literature for students to follow.
3. Does your legislature host a page or internship program? Every respondent indicated having a page and/or internship program in their legislature. The variance comes from whether it is the legislative body organizing the program, or if it is organized through the university, school district, or other body providing the pages/interns.
4. Does your legislature organize or participate in other civics education programs, including partnering with other organizations? Nearly all respondents indicated partnering and coordination with a variety of organizations, including but not limited to Boys/Girls State, the YMCA Youth in Government Program, Project Citizen, Teen

Court, We The People, a “Silver-Haired Legislature” program, which educates senior citizens of the legislative process, Boy & Girl Scouts, and the NCSL’s “Back To School” program.

5. Does your legislature offer resources that explain the legislative process, provide an overview of the legislature or information about representative democracy? Every respondent indicated a variety of resources made available to the public, schools, and extracurricular programs explaining the legislative process and role of the legislative branch of government. Resources include, but are not limited to, comprehensive websites, pamphlets, guided tours, virtual tours, videos, coloring books, activity books, and various publications relating to representative democracy designed for all ages.

Civic Education vs. Civic Engagement

The TFCE was joined by Dr. Paul Baumann, Director of the National Center for Learning & Civic Engagement, Education Commission of the States. He shared a presentation entitled “Civic Education: Policies and Practices Across the States.”

Dr. Baumann expressed ECS’ position of being strong believers in learning from experience. As a neutral third-party, ECS offers unbiased information, and finds opportunities for collaboration among state policy makers.

A key idea of the structure of civic learning and engagement “competencies,” as presented by Dr. Baumann was to break it down into 3 main parts or goals as follows:

1. Civics Knowledge: facts, history, process, and the structure of government;
2. Civic Skills: both participatory and intellectual; and
3. Civic Dispositions: developing and justifying opinions, understanding bias and impartiality.

The TFCE was advised of the difference between civics education and civic engagement, that civics engagement activities should be an integral part of whatever civics education is being offered. Whereas, civic engagement can be defined as working to make a difference in the civic life or our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference; and civic education can be more traditionally viewed as the basic knowledge of how government works and one’s duty as a citizen, such as voting. When asked what the TFCE wished to accomplish, the consensus was essentially both.

Dr. Baumann encouraged the TFCE to review specific reports and resources he felt would be helpful to the TFCE’s mission. The first was “Guardian of Democracy.” This report was produced by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools and builds and expands on the findings published in 2003 by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Its overall message is that bringing a high-quality civics education to every American student

requires more than individual programs and curricula. It requires a systematic approach that is only possible through public policy. Since American federalism means that local, state, and federal governments share custody of education policy, restoring the civic mission of schools must be the responsibility of policymakers at every level.

The Guardian of Democracy report spells out a number of “proven practices” in civics education and preparation for civic engagement, acknowledged by the TFCE and summarized as follows:

- Classroom Instruction
- Discussion of Current Events and Controversial Issues
- Service-Learning
- Extracurricular Activities
- Student Participation in School Governance
- Simulations of Democratic Processes

Assessments & Accountability

The second report Dr. Baumann recommended was an ECS publication entitled “State Civic Education Policy Framework,” pointing out that while many individuals and organizations have sought to address the poor condition of civic education, the problem remains acute. Strong state policies are needed to establish and reinforce the fact that preparation for civic life is equally as important as, and important for, preparation for higher education and careers. Preparation for active citizenship was a foundational principle of public education in America from its beginning, and it is a principle that must be reaffirmed by each generation. This report reinforced the 6 proven practices listed above, and added the need for continuous improvement via the use of assessments and accountability.

A variety of assessments are available for states to use in measuring students’ civic learning and engagement. While some measure political knowledge, others attempt to measure school environment and levels of civic participation.

Utah requires all districts and charter schools to submit annual reports to the lieutenant governor and Commission on Civic and Character Education. These reports must summarize how civic and character education are achieved in the school districts or charter schools through an integrated school curriculum and in the regular course of schoolwork. Further, the state board of education is required to report annually on how schools in the state are preparing students to “become informed and responsible citizens through an integrated curriculum taught in connection with regular school work.”

In 2014 Florida began administering a statewide civics end-of-course assessment (EOC). Their civics EOC counts as 30% of a student’s grade. Assessment results are included in each school’s accountability indicator. While the EOC is the only legislated civic assessment, districts and schools also may choose to add their own alternative assessments. As reported in a recent American Enterprise Institute study, well-designed civic assessments that have academic consequences have the greatest impact on increasing political knowledge.

Additional Examples:

Comprehensive School Climate Inventory:

Measures multiple elements, including an orderly school environment parent/community involvement, collaboration within the school and instructional practices.

<http://www.schoolclimate.org/programs/csci.php>

California Healthy Kids Survey:

Assesses school connectedness, opportunities for meaningful participation and perceptions of safety across elementary, middle and high school. <http://chks.wested.org>

Communities That Care Youth Survey:

Gathers data on school, community, family, and peer risk and protective factors related to perceptions of school climate.

<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/CTC020/CTC020.pdf>

Colorado's Social Studies Assessments:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/newassess-sum>

NCLCE Civic Assessment Database:

This database contains questions categorized by national civics standards that have been juried by civic learning experts for their clarity and meaningfulness in relation to the competencies of civic knowledge, skills and dispositions.

http://www.ecs.org/Qna/splash_new.asp

Student Portfolios and Endorsements for Civics Achievement:

Some states are developing their own high-quality assessments, performance evaluations, and portfolios to include civic action projects. School districts in Tennessee, for example, are required to implement a project-based assessment in civics at least once in grades 4 through 8, and at least once in grades 9 through 12. Tennessee is the first state to use projects for statewide assessment of civics education.

Tennessee's policy is an example of how an assessment policy can reinforce instructional practices. Projects must be student-influenced and involve an inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions. They promote a hands-on, practical approach to learning. Students work to develop solutions to the issues they are studying. According to a report by the Tennessee comptroller, project-based civic assessments differ from other state-mandated assessments because they are not standardized tests developed by vendors, but instead are to be developed and implemented by school districts.

The C-3 Framework

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards is a product of the National Council for the Social Studies, which is comprised of representatives from several professional national organizations involved in the promotion of civics education and engagement. As Dr. Baumann described, it is an outstanding model for the development of civics education standards that focuses more on the synthesis of

information than the regurgitation of facts. A full reference and link to C3 resources is available at the end of this report. The following excerpt is taken from its introduction.

“Representatives from a group of state education agencies and from the leading organizations in social studies and its individual disciplines around the country collaborated to create a Framework to provide states with voluntary guidance for upgrading existing social studies standards. This Framework does not include all that can or should be included in a set of robust social studies standards, and intentionally preserves the critical choices around the selection of curricular content taught at each grade level as a decision best made by each state. The Framework aims to support states in creating standards that prepare young people for effective and successful participation in college, careers, and civic life.

The C3 Framework is centered on an Inquiry Arc—a set of interlocking and mutually supportive ideas that frame the ways students learn social studies content. By focusing on inquiry, the framework emphasizes the disciplinary concepts and practices that support students as they develop the capacity to know, analyze, explain, and argue about interdisciplinary challenges in our social world. It includes descriptions of the structure and tools of the disciplines, as well as the habits of mind common in those disciplines. Taken together, the C3 Framework provides guidance to states on upgrading state social studies standards to include the application of knowledge within the disciplines of civics, economics, geography, and history as students develop questions and plan inquiries; apply disciplinary concepts and tools; evaluate and use evidence; and communicate conclusions and take informed action.”

The approach taken by the C3 Framework appears to be quite innovative and incorporates the notion of both civics knowledge and engagement, knowing and doing. Although this model was touched upon relatively briefly, it did pique the interest and intent of the TFCE to recommend Alaska pursue revising Alaska’s content standards in citizenship and government in a manner that embraces some of the C3 Framework’s examples, or to at least review C3 further.

Identifying Best Practices in Alaska - Judiciary

There are several extracurricular programs that operate nationally and in Alaska. These programs are often funded privately, through classroom fundraisers, by parents of participating students, partially or entirely by school districts, or via grants from state or federal agencies. They consist of philanthropic or service organizations whose goal is to foster civics education, civics engagement, or leadership development by investing in individual students who express interest in such service or personal development.

Programs, Awareness and Promotion of the Judiciary and System of Justice

Dana Fabe, Senior Justice for the Alaska Supreme Court and TFCE member, spoke about the role and successes of the judiciary’s outreach efforts. Thanks to collaborations with a number of entities for their help with funding and organization of events and student activities.

Every school year, the Alaska Court System works with legal organizations, schools, and educational groups to foster law-related education in Alaska. The Alaska Bar Association, the American Bar Association, the Anchorage Bar Association and many other groups offer excellent educational programs that help students better understand the judicial system and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Color of Justice

Color of Justice is a law-related education program founded by the National Association of Women Judges designed to bring students from across the state together for engaging workshops and activities designed to introduce them to the study of law and to encourage them to consider legal and judicial careers. It is especially intended to show multi-ethnic students that a legal career is an option for them.

Hundreds of students from communities and villages across the state participate in two days of workshops and other activities presented by representatives from prestigious law schools around the country. The program is supported by the Alaska Bar Association, Alaska Federation of Natives, Alaska Native Justice Center, Council on Legal Education Opportunity, Law School Admission Council, and the Northwest Indian Bar Association. The two-day program takes place at alternating locations around Alaska.

Color of Justice sessions included workshops and gaming activities, including "MentorJet: A Speed Mentoring Experience," where students meet with diverse lawyers, judges, and justices to share their success stories; "Constitutional Cranium," a quiz show on constitutional knowledge; a "You Be the Judge" program posing challenging ethical and legal questions, and various case studies examining legal issues and questions.

Justice for All

The "Justice for All" Art Contest asks students to submit two-dimensional artworks on a specific theme. The 2016 theme was "Fairness, Diversity, Equality: Our justice system depends on them. What do they mean to you?" The contest accepts entries from K-8 students from all across Alaska. Finalists are selected by members of the court system's appellate staff, representatives from the Alaska Bar Association's Law-Related Education Committee, and members of the Alaska Supreme Court's Fairness, Diversity & Equality Committee and Access to Civil Justice Committee. It is privately sponsored and features cash prizes. This theme is presumed, but was not confirmed at the time of writing this report, to be incorporated into classroom curriculum as at least part of a lesson plan on justice, fairness, diversity, equality, and character building.

iCivics

iCivics is a web-based education project founded by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (Ret.) to teach students civics and inspire them to be active participants in our democracy. Alaskan educators and their students are encouraged to visit the website and check out the games, web quests and other great resources for civic learning. Among other things, perhaps one of the most direct mentoring options of this program is to

arrange for a judge or attorney to visit classrooms and guide an iCivics activity. It is free and targeted for classrooms. See www.icivics.org.

Law Day

Law Day is celebrated every year on May 1, and focuses on our nation's heritage of liberty under the rule of law. This national day of celebration was officially designated by joint resolution of Congress in 1961. The 50th anniversary of U.S. Supreme Court case, *Miranda v. Arizona*, was acknowledged in 2016. The Miranda Warning has become ingrained in law enforcement and has permeated popular consciousness through countless recitations in films and television shows. Yet Miranda is only part of the story when it comes to the procedures for ensuring justice. The 2016 Law Day theme - *Miranda: More than Words* - explored the procedural protections afforded to all of us by the U.S. Constitution, how these rights are safeguarded by the courts, and why the preservation of these principles is essential to our liberty.

Supreme Court LIVE!

In February 2010, the Alaska Supreme Court launched a new educational outreach program, Supreme Court LIVE!, to bring oral arguments in actual pending cases to student audiences at Alaskan high schools. Designed to help students better understand our justice system, this unique learning opportunity debuted at West High School in Anchorage on February 19, 2010, before 400 high school students from across the Anchorage School District.

Since then the Supreme Court has held similar sessions to hear oral arguments at schools all over the state, and have been met with great success. Keys to this success are the advance visits to classrooms by volunteer attorney teams. Attorneys provide both an overview of the legal system and appellate process and an in-depth review of the specific cases to be heard. As a result, students come to the arguments prepared and engaged, and leave with a good understanding of the process and the issues at stake.

The Alaska Bar Association's Law-Related Education Committee

Stephanie Galbraith-Moore also joined the TFCE to speak about this component of civics education activity vis-a-vis the judiciary. She has served as Chair of Alaska Bar Association's "Law-Related Education Committee" (LRE) for quite some time. It is the mission of the LRE to provide civics education and outreach. This group of attorneys and judges volunteer their time and serve as the "foot soldiers" for the programs referenced above, providing support with the logistics associated these activities. The LRE has grown to include representatives from various communities across Alaska. They meet monthly to share ideas and report activity around the state, and to arrange for classroom participation around the court system's outreach programs.

The LRE helps educate students about adult life by assisting with Mock Trial Judging, the "We The People" program, development of the Youth Law Guide; the Handbook for Teens and Young Adults, facilitating lesson plans for topics on juvenile justice, curfew, entering the real world, cars and guns, school day requirements, truancy, the selective service, and encounters with law enforcement. The Alaska Bar Association and the LRE believe the

law is the foundation of civics education, and that all three branches of our government substantiate the law. See:

https://www.alaskabar.org/servlet/content/youth_law_guide.html

The TFCE recognizes the great time, effort, and resources that have gone into making these programs successful. A significant amount of collaboration and partnership, including financial support most often provided by non-public entities, have turned these programs into what can only be considered “best practices” in Alaska, at least as regards best practices offered through the judiciary. For additional information see:

<http://www.courts.alaska.gov/outreach>

Identifying Best Practices in Alaska – Non-Profits

Maida Buckley with the Center for Civics Education joined the TFCE to advocate for programs and best practices she felt important to bring to the attention of the TFCE. Ms. Buckley wears many hats, including serving as the State Coordinator for the “We the People” program, the “Kids Voting” North Alaska Program Director, “Fairbanks History Day” Coordinator, and the “Gilder-Lehrman History Teacher of Year” Alaska Coordinator.

Her presentation iterated six proven practices consistent with what the TFCE identified elsewhere as they went through their investigative process. These proven practices were summarized as follows:

1. Provide instruction in content
2. Incorporate discussion of current events
3. Community service applicable to classroom instruction
4. Extracurricular activities that involve students in community
5. Student participation in school governance
6. Simulations of the democratic process

The following were advocated as exemplary programs embodying these practices:

History Day – www.nhd.org

Students choose historical topics related to a theme and conduct extensive primary and secondary research through libraries, archives, museums, oral history interviews and historic sites. After analyzing and interpreting their sources and drawing conclusions about their topics’ significance in history, students present their work in original papers, websites, exhibits, performances and documentaries.

Project Citizen – www.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen

Students create a “portfolio” representing work done to analyze issues within their school, community, or state and present public policy solutions to address their selected problem. This particular program was also advocated for, and discussed in greater detail, by its state coordinator Annie Armstrong, below.

We The People – www.civiced.org

The We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution Program promotes civic competence and responsibility among the nation’s upper elementary and secondary students. The *We the People* textbook, its interactive strategies, and the simulated congressional hearing make teaching and learning exciting for both students and teachers.

Kids Voting - <https://www.kidsvotingusa.org>

Kids Voting USA is a nonpartisan, grassroots-driven voter education program committed to creating lifelong voting habits in children, increasing family communication about citizenship, and encouraging greater adult voter turnout.

The TFCE received a strong message from Ms. Buckley that there are many exciting civics-related activities and programs happening in Alaska, but that coordination and collaboration between schools, teachers, organizers and organizations, etc. is paramount. When advocates and organizers operate as “islands” or in pockets, the overall strength and effectiveness of their respective efforts is not nearly as strong or successful as it could be were there more of a statewide or larger umbrella of resources and communication between the groups.

Ms. Buckley argued effectively that there appears to be unequal access to civics education resources across the state. Accordingly, during the No Child Left Behind era, advocates for core skills in reading, writing, and math were the priority of the day. More recently, the science and engineering (STEM) advocacy has done an effective job communicating their needs and imperatives to policy makers in our education system. Now we need equivalent focus on civics. Social Studies has been increasingly squeezed out of curriculum priority.

The Center for Civics Education has done extensive research showing that students who are involved in civics-related programs have higher voter turnout, better National Assessment Program (NAPS) test results, and better Advanced Placement (AP) testing results. The improvements are significant. Students who are involved in these projects do better on their follow up assessments.

Finally, Ms. Buckley made a clear case for ample “ramp up” time for classroom implementation. In a phrase, this translates to professional development for teachers. Brief workshops are nice, but without 30 hours of training there is no significant change in the curriculum delivery. Accordingly, 56 hours is ideal, to include working with mentor teachers and professional learning communities. Training for teachers is critical for these skills to be realized; for teachers to be effective citizens, and to pass along values of citizenship to students.

Project Citizen – www.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen

Annie Brenner Armstrong, an assistant professor of Secondary Education at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks School of Education, also serves as the State Coordinator for Project Citizen.

Accordingly, Project Citizen aligns well with ESSA. It is sponsored by the Alaska Center for Civic Education, and is officially endorsed by the National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL).

Ms. Armstrong spoke convincingly that Project Citizen's time has arrived. Given the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the stage is set for Project Citizen to be a very relevant and useful program in helping meet ESSA standards, by offering parameters for high level engagement with students to build public policy-making skills. It involves whole classrooms selecting a public policy issue, either in their school, community, or beyond, then researching and examining that issue, building alternative proposals, developing a plan, timeline and budget for a solution, and presenting their proposal competitively to their school or local decision-making body. Up to 5 projects are then chosen to compete in a statewide showcase. There is then one state winner that qualifies to present their project at a national showcase.

Over the course of this program, students are exposed to and become aware of all three branches of government, including their community advisory and policy-making boards. They learn what information resources are available and how to use them; to read, write, and think critically; exercise approaches to consensus building and problem solving, and they naturally develop a sense of pride and confidence in being able to make a difference through their efforts.

Historically, Project Citizen has been funded primarily by federal grants and donations funneled through the national non-profit Center for Civics Education. Federal funding expired in 2010. Since then, local school districts, teachers, parents, and students have been generating a patchwork of funding to facilitate program needs. To some extent, regional native corporations have also invested in this program. Most of the expenses arise for students wishing to travel to compete in the statewide and national showcase. The online resources for teachers, including lesson plans and instructions, and evaluation procedures are otherwise all provided free on the Project Citizen website.

Currently there are 6 Alaska schools participating in Project Citizen, down from many more in the past. According to Ms. Armstrong, a big reason the program has not grown is absence of federal grant funding, coupled with a lack of awareness of the program within Alaska. Ms. Armstrong is making outreach efforts to teachers and principals to at least improve awareness, and is also exploring improving funding options, particularly for student travel and improving access to state and national teacher development for this and similar civics related programs.

Youth Vote

Cari Zawodny, Coordinator for Alaska's "Youth Vote," a program sponsored by the League of Women Voters in Anchorage (LWVA), joined the TFCE to describe the program and its efficacy.

Youth Vote involves students in the democratic and electoral process during each election cycle. In a mock election conducted electronically, students are given the opportunity to vote for federal and state candidates, and ballot issues on Election Day. The students who

comprise the Youth Vote Planning Team set project goals, establish committees, help coordinate the mock election, and host a live-television candidate and issues forum.

These mock elections typically have well over 10,000 students participating in the Anchorage area, and include a student-created ballot measure on a student rights or other relevant public policy issue, for example whether minors should have access to mental health services without parental consent. The build-up to the election involves activities such as teen round table discussions, and formal and informal interactions with state and federal candidates. Polling results are presented at Election Central on election night.

The goal of this program is clearly to improve long-term voter turnout. It serves to engage young and future voters with their social studies curricula, and specifically in the election process and the importance of voting. Student organizers often receive extra credit in their social studies coursework, in addition to building confidence and empowerment by going through the organizational process, which in turn builds on a desire to continue the duties of citizenship.

According to Ms. Zawodny, the LWVA has found the Generation Z potential voting demographic (ages 0 to 15 currently) is much larger than imagined. Youth Vote is actively trying to expand their exposure to young voters in Anchorage and beyond, sparking increased interest in the election process.

This will appropriately include partnerships with the National Student-Parent Mock Election, and grade-appropriate curriculum that can be shared online (<http://nationalmockelection.org>). Additional resources can also be found via organizers for the National Voter Registration Day <http://nationalvoterregistrationday.org> . LWVA is planning to branch out to provide materials such as this on-site to whole classrooms rather than individual students who get help organize Youth Votes.

The TFCE meanwhile encourages the LWVA to look outside of Anchorage and involve as many school communities in Alaska as possible in the Youth Vote program.

The Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Foundation (HOBY) (<http://hoby.org>)

The TFCE was joined by HOBY's Chief National Programs Officer, Vicki Ferrence Ray. The HOBY-Alaska Leadership Seminar Chair, Ms. Erin Orchard, an alum of the program, also attended and testified before the TFCE.

Established in 1958, HOBY's mission is "to inspire and develop our global community of youth and volunteers to a life dedicated to leadership, service and innovation." HOBY works closely with private business partners, as well as public schools across the country and even globally, to bring youth together for personal growth and leadership development. They offer a variety of seminars, workshops and even world tours that focus on their core values of volunteerism, integrity, excellence, diversity, and community partnership. Theirs is entirely a mission for life-long civics engagement, embodied by a series of programs as follows:

Leadership Seminars

This is HOBY's flagship program, involving 10,000 high school sophomores from across the country joining at one of HOBY's 70 State Leadership Seminars, one of which is in Alaska, to recognize their leadership talents and apply them to become effective, ethical leaders in their home, school, workplace and community. The 3-4 day seminars are filled with interactive activities and workshops, and is based on the Social Change Model of Leadership, developing leadership from three perspectives: Personal Leadership, Group Leadership, and Leadership for Society.

Following this initial program, as students choose to involve themselves more deeply, HOBY offers progressively more intensive immersion in leadership development. Subsequent programs are its "World Leadership Congress," "Community Leadership Workshops," and "Advanced Leadership Academy," all of which are done in the spirit of life-long civic engagement by employing experiential learning and services learning activities. For this reason, the TCFE recognizes HOBY's efforts as being among best practices.

The CloseUp Foundation (www.closeup.org)

Kayla Epstein, a 14-year coordinator and teacher for the Close Up – Alaska program, joined the TCFE to share how Close Up works and its contribution to civics education and engagement in Alaska.

Close Up's mission is "informing, inspiring, and empowering young people to exercise the rights and accept the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy." It was founded in 1971 by Steve Janger and has since then successfully strived to meet its mission, involving students in the democratic process through current issue debates, collaborative learning, and the development of citizenship skills.

The CloseUp-Alaska program was established in the mid-1980s and is loosely affiliated with the national program. The Southeast Regional Educational Research Center (www.SERRC.org), through its "All Alaska Academy," has been the primary logistical facilitator for CloseUp-Alaska for much of its time here. Close-Up operates peripherally to Alaska's formal K-12 school system, statewide, to include a wide variety of students from communities throughout the state.

Close-Up-Alaska usually runs two or three cohorts of 7th-12th grade students in one-week courses during the Spring, when the Alaska Legislature is in session. The number of sessions varies according to demand, and has consisted of anywhere from 7 to 43 students per course. Students therefore meet in Juneau, Alaska's state capital, to study and participate in the legislative, executive, and judicial processes. This includes mock committee meetings, meeting with legislators, shadowing staff, studying a piece of legislation or issue of their choice, writing speeches, preparing for and giving testimony, interviewing lobbyists, writing budgets, and writing and presenting formal testimony.

Close-Up is a non-profit organization, and is tuition-based. Students must each currently pay \$750 to cover housing, meals, and administrative costs of the program, in addition to

travel expenses getting to and from Juneau. Participants may receive funds from grants, from school districts, and from private or personal sources.

Most if not all Alaska legislators are acquainted with CloseUp and the caliber of students and dedicated teachers and chaperones that are involved in the program. It is clearly a very hands-on approach to both civics education and engagement, aligned with Alaska's content standards for government and citizenship, and serves to inspire young Alaskans to become our future leaders. The TFCE recognizes CloseUp-Alaska as being among the best practices for civics education and engagement in our state.

“Let’s Talk Alaska”

Bill Hall, a former director of the civics advocacy group Alaska Common Ground (akcommonground.org), along with Kameron Perez Verdia, President and CEO of the Alaska Humanities Forum (AKHF- www.akhf.org), both joined the TFCE to share a new idea for promoting civic engagement, “Let’s Talk Alaska” (LTA).

LTA is a community library-based program inspired by the Kettering Foundation (www.kettering.org). It’s focus is on the distinction between dialogue versus deliberation in the context of community service and civics engagement. Its approach is in the use of humanities, framing public issues and ideas into a values-based dialogue.

Mr. Hall and the LTA group are working with Alaska Humanities Forum on a grant that could grow into a statewide network. LTF proposes using humanities scholars to help construct dialogue questions, then bringing youth together with elders to promote deliberation. LTA is developing a civics process to help youth realize the essence of public policy and problem solving is learning how to listen. LTA participants are currently self-selecting and often older citizens. The goal is to place younger and older citizens together for dialogue and deliberation, which is where the Humanities Forum comes in.

AKHF’s mission is to connect Alaskans, primarily through forums for youth, leadership, educators, and the public. They use creative methods to engage people with the use of such things as art, history, and music to foster dialogue and deliberation on questions about who we are as a people, and where we are going as a state. Humanities are about the human experience, our lives, our triumphs, our tragedies, our stories we tell so we can learn and bridge cultural and societal differences. AKHF was involved in the implementation of the original Alaska Studies curriculum, and continues to support that curriculum via their website. There’s an opportunity for organizations like AKHF to play a stronger role supporting schools and improving efforts to engage youth in civics activity. They are ready to partner.

While this particular LTA program has not yet proven to be a “best practice,” as it is in a fledging state at the time of this report being written, it was nonetheless an appropriate discussion item TFCE and was viewed as having great potential to contribute significantly toward improvements in civics education and engagement among Alaskans.

Testimony on Best Practices From Leading Social Studies Teachers in Alaska

The TCFE felt it important to solicit input from teachers recognized as having significant experience, success, and exceptional passion for the subject area of civics education and engagement.

Mr. Chip Abolafia, a social studies teacher at Bethel Regional High School, Lower Kuskokwim School District, and acting President of Alaska Council for Social Studies, joined the TFCE to share his perspective and offer suggestions on improving civics education in Alaska.

Mr. Abolafia explained three critical needs for improving civics education in Alaska:

- 1) clearer standards, and subsequent curricula, for government and citizenship;
- 2) establishing a statewide clearing house and/or coordinator for gathering, updating, and bringing awareness to civics curriculum resources for teachers across the state;
- 3) marked improvement in teacher training and professional development in civics education.

ON STANDARDS

Mr. Abolafia explained that civics education and corresponding curriculum has fallen woefully behind the times. Emphasis on reading, writing, math (STEM), and related assessments have been so over-emphasized as to place significant de-emphasis on social studies and citizenship, among other content areas. He indicated that after having used the same civics resource materials for over 10 years, his district had finally launched a curriculum review process, in which he took a leading role. Mr. Abolafia argued that Alaska's content standards for government and citizenship fall short of providing any significant guidance to teachers and local decision makers as to what, when, and how to teach in civics content areas.

The current state standards on government and citizenship are presented in 3 pages, almost half of which speak to international affairs and economics – a different topic. With so much focus on reading, writing and math, there has been little time left in the school days for other content areas. That aside, Mr. Abolafia spoke highly of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies as a model for improving civics education and engagement.

ON A CLEARINGHOUSE

Following an improvement and clarity of standards, Mr. Abolafia indicated a need for better curricula resources. Accordingly, the Alaska Council on Social Studies has launched an effort to gather resources for teachers, but that there is a long way to go. To some extent, school districts are sharing curriculum. He urged that Alaska students would benefit greatly from a statewide coordinator to establish and maintain a civics education clearinghouse, compiling all the free resources available to teachers and districts, and substantially improving awareness and utilization of those resources and programs. For example, he had only that day of his involvement with the TFCE learned of the “Color of Justice” program from prior testimony, and would later be sharing it with his counterparts.

Mr. Abolafia made a salient point regarding the role of social studies and civics as a content area helping to develop healthy minded young adults. Social studies/ civics is the only subject charged with teaching how to have polite and civil conversations about critical community issues. Civics education also instills a sense of having and seeking opportunities for hope. Rural communities have particularly high rates of youth suicide, abuse, and alcoholism. The civics education process includes analyzing and taking actions toward social policies affecting these behaviours. Many students who have had positive exposure to civics education and engagement now serve on their local community council, addressing important community issues like sewage, public safety, and public health.

There are pockets of outstanding educators and civics education resources being used in Alaska that positively impact students. But there needs to be a mechanism for capturing a larger audience of students to expand awareness and delivery of civics education resources. Assembling and delivering curriculum will allow teachers to teach and not burden them with actual curriculum development.

ON TEACHER TRAINING

Mr. Abolafia spoke of a need for continued professional teacher training in civics education, not only for experienced teachers to have awareness of the latest trends, but especially for new teachers. Like other content specialties, in order for civics education and engagement to be realized, we must foster and inspire a new generation of social studies teachers to be moved to pick up the torch and be the new advocates and leaders for this content area.

There is a solid foundation of social studies leaders and advocates in Alaska, but they are aging. Consideration should be made as to who is going to take our place. Meanwhile, changes in the retirement system are affecting the population of all teachers. With the retirement of leaders in the social studies teaching community, there is a need for coordination to bring in the next cohort of leaders and train them, in conjunctions with a clearinghouse of resources. Senior social studies teachers may take ownership of their work, but are also happy to contribute resources and curriculum to the teaching community for the overall good of our students and citizenship. Effective professional development (PD) can be expensive. It can require travel. It certainly requires time. Sometimes the training is brought into the district, because of various mandates about which PD is required to be taken at certain times of the school year. But again, there are resources available to help reduce costs and bring PD in civics to teachers. It is a matter of finding and sharing those resources openly with the social studies teaching community via the use of a state coordinator.

Mr. Greg Huff, a retired U.S. Government and Economics Teacher, and former director of the Alaska Council on Economic Education, joined the TFCE to share his perspective on civics education in Alaska and to offer recommendations.

Mr. Huff's testimony joined others in confirming there has been an ongoing de-emphasis of social studies curriculum. Other content areas primarily in reading, writing, and math (RWM) driven by mandatory assessments, have steadily pushed interest in and priority for civics education to the side. With the curriculum fairly fully loaded with RWM, it

gives the impression to teachers that those content areas are the most important. Therefore as teachers select coursework for their day-to-day lesson plans, civics gets left behind. This trend has been compounded with a movement toward “political correctness,” resulting in many teachers avoiding teaching social studies topics involving current issues that may be considered controversial. Talking about and facing such issues in a civil and structured manner is the cornerstone of civics education and engagement.

He urged continued and improved partnering with non-profit organizations, and especially Alaska Native corporations, to help deliver best practices found in programs such as Close Up, We the People, and others. He echoed a need for program and resource awareness, and at least a “directory” of current resources for teachers to access lesson plan development. This would greatly improve teachers’ ability to use their time teaching instead of building curriculum on their own.

Mr. Huff also supported the theory that civics education and engagement promotes public health and community involvement, reducing “social strife.”

Mr. David Block, is a semi-retired teacher at West High School, an adjunct professor at the University of Alaska-Anchorage, and the Alaska Pacific University. He has more than 20 years of experience teaching social studies, language arts, and theatre. Mr. Block had an engaging dialogue with the TFCE about the history and current state of civics education in Alaska.

Mr. Block challenged the TFCE to consider what it intended to accomplish and to consider defining what embodied “civics education.” He spoke favorably of former community-focused programs and curriculum he personally developed that has since dissolved, not from lack of funding, but from diminished leadership and incoming teachers being driven instead to teach curriculum targeted for assessments.

Mr. Block conveyed that curriculum and program development takes time, and teachers are being asked to fill their time preparing for particular targeted outcomes that don’t match what the TFCE is striving for. For example, in the latest package of evaluation models, Anchorage teachers have been told in English class to talk about English, and if there’s something going on in the community that’s related, it shouldn’t be talk about it because it’s not part of the curriculum target. That type of directive is pervasive through various content areas, and it is contrary to the what should be the core mission of civics education and engagement.

There are or have been great programs, including speech and debate; We the People, drama, and live court sessions, for example. Community service and senior projects, or building student portfolio’s have been good examples. Many such programs have been cut or reduced to strictly non-graded extra-curricular activity, not because of funding deficiencies, but because the curriculum drivers force classroom time be spent on reading, writing, and math in preparation for corresponding assessments.

Mr. Block commented that the NCLB was not the monster it was made out to be, but that as a result of over-achieving efforts toward compliance, around 70% of school districts

have cut some sort of social sciences and arts programs. Assessments are excellent for accountability, but they end up canceling out so much of what our education system is attempting to accomplish. He referenced a Columbia University study, about the pros and cons of testing, wherein testing is effective for getting comprehensive data, but students can't take a quantitative test about how they feel about their country, or a community issue. Civics can neither be taught nor learned in front of a computer screen. It requires getting out into the community, or bringing community leaders into the classroom, for example.

However, Mr. Block pointed out a barrier to engaging students with community leaders, or taking students on excursions, as being the crippling effect of school systems' safety and liability protocols. Teachers can no longer invite legislators or various speakers into the classroom without that volunteer first going through a 40-minute sexual abuse screening and background check. Currently, students may freely ride the city bus, but a class cannot attend such things as a courtroom trial session, a community play, or candidate forum, because of liability insurance restrictions imposed on the schools and teachers.

In preparing students for real world civics engagement, we should start with "what do we want students to know," and focus on outcomes. It's not enough to just know and love our system of government, but to also take ownership and responsibility for it.

Victoria Otte, is a retired social studies teacher with a long career at Gruening Middle School in Anchorage, Alaska. She served on the Alaska Legislature's "Citizen's Advisory Task Force on Civics Education" in 2007-08, which produced a final report available at: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/subjects/socialscience/alaskataskforcefinal.pdf>

Ms. Otte agreed with the previous testimony she had heard regarding curriculum, training, best practices, programs and effectiveness in delivering civics education and engagement.

She added that administrators tend to be risk averse, and that teachers are pulled in many, often too many directions. For the goals of the TFCE to be realized; they must include an approach to civics that will "win the hearts and minds" of teachers and administrators. There must be found a convincing way to capture educators with the fact that civics is just as important as algebra, grammar, and physics. Of course every teacher feels their own content area of expertise is a high priority. But the common denominator remains that we are all citizens with a certain duty, or as Dr. Nabors phrased it, to prudently "exercise our share of democracy."

Ms. Otte especially commended the "Project Citizen" program as an excellent way to get students involved in their community. She appreciates how "hands-on" it works for students to pick an issue and research that policy to see what and how things might be changed for the better. It is a true experiential learning process that engages student in the public policy-making process. She recalled many students commenting over the years about how it opened their eyes to their community, and would be an experience they would never forget. She concluded by stating "the kids remember it after they graduate because they care about it; you've captured their hearts through a meaningful project."

She also closed by suggesting the current TFCE review the report from the task force she served on for this same subject, to offer additional background and to possibly reinforce its recommendations.

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/subjects/socialscience/alaskataskforcefinal.pdf>

Mr. Lem Wheelles, is a long-time U.S. Government teacher and student government advisor at Dimond High School in Anchorage, Alaska. He actively teaches year-round, through the summers and online courses, in all things government.

He shared the analogy of having personally studied French from 3rd Grade through college, but indicated he was not fluent. Why? Because he never went to a French-speaking country. He professed having a fairly full vocabulary, but not fluency. He felt this analogy could be applied to government and citizenship. Students can learn things in the classroom, but until they immerse themselves in the community and engage for at least 8 hours or more they will not become fluent. He encouraged any civics-related activities to include attendance and participation in neighborhood council meetings, action committees, or assemblies; writing letters to officials, setting appointments and interviews with local or state officials, and holding mock votes. In this manner did he also recant having many students come back to him over the years saying their work in his civics courses was the most meaningful experience, to date, in their educational career.

Mr. Wheelles also suggested the best thing to be done for civics education should start with full pay, professional development, and fewer days of statewide mandated testing. He recognized that there's no "silver bullet" for reforming our education system, particularly but not exclusively as regards civics, but that a wide variety of support, partnership, and access to curriculum resources is a minimum requirement for success.

Greg Brown is a long-serving and lauded teacher of U.S. History at Dimond High School in Anchorage, Alaska.

He was particularly pleased and encouraged to see the TFCE asking what role humanities can play in the improvement of civics education. He is another advocate for direct participation, immersion, and engagement as being the best methodology for teaching civics. He specifically commended the "American Legion Oratorical Contest" (<https://www.legion.org/oratorical>) for being an outstanding example of experiential learning in the area of civics and humanities, with long-term positive effects on young citizens.

The American Legion Oratorical Contest is "a constitutional speech contest," established in 1938 to develop knowledge of and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. The program presents participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship. The primary requirement of the prepared orations must be on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution, with emphasis on a citizen's duties and

obligations to our government. There are local, state, and national level competitions with substantial scholarship opportunities for contest winners.

Mr. Brown further shared that sometimes a single teacher – not all the teachers – touch the life of a child through effective delivery, guidance and engagement. Those teachers may take a particular lesson plan, for example, and share it with their peers. Those peer-teachers then over time adapt the lesson plan to their own style or approach, and in turn make it their own to pass along, and so on. Mr. Brown impressed upon the TFCE that is critical for a better system to be set up for teachers to connect with each other across the state. Someone within the state, whether it be at the state or local level, someone needs to take the lead to gather civics resources for teachers.

TESTIMONY FROM STUDENT LEADERS

Emma Potter, is a senior at South High School in Anchorage, Alaska, who serves as the student representative on the Anchorage School Board, and on the TCFE. During one of the TFCE meetings, she was attending the Fall Conference of the Alaska Association of Student Governments (AASG - <http://aasg.org/>), where she solicited the input of other student leaders from around the state.

This AASG conference was a 3-day event including 550 student delegates representing every school district in Alaska. The conference included a number of workshops. A general assembly of the delegates was also held to discuss, vote and pass various resolutions making policy requests to improve student life and academic development in general.

Ms. Potter reported live from the Conference. She indicated that students, particularly those in rural districts, are generally dissatisfied with the limited range of course offerings and are interested in having a more diverse selection available to them. They would elect to take more social studies courses, for example U.S. government or economics, if they were offered. There is interest in taking classes outside of the required coursework, but elective courses are not offered because they are not part of the required curriculum for graduation, nor subject to assessments. Many students suggest incorporating civics curriculum to the required Alaska History classes.

Collin Lease, is a student leader at West Valley High School in Fairbanks, Alaska. He serves on a student achievement focus group for the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Superintendent's office.

Their student group helps spell out areas of need for students in their district. However, he reported the subject of civics has never come up in any of their meetings; that civics is evidently not seen as an area in need of improvement. When asked if he felt this was happening because of a sense of the subject already being taught adequately, Mr. Lease responded no, that civics is simply under-taught and not considered at all. He continued by stating that many senior projects are focused on career preparedness and instead could, or should, be allowed to incorporate a civics or community engagement project as part of their graduation portfolios.

Tristan O'Donoghue is another student leader at West Valley High School in Fairbanks, Alaska. He spoke of the prevalence of apathy and the need for finding ways to engage more students in government and community service. Students took initiative during the last election process to set up a forum at their school for local school board candidates. A student planning committee coordinated with social studies teachers to make the process part of a class research project. Questions were compiled and edited and a school-wide forum was held, hosting both candidates, and featuring the pros and cons of the ballot measures being proposed. Student leaders were thrilled with the success of the forum and hope to share the format and planning strategy with other schools in the state.

Jasmin Carter, is a senior at Eagle River High School, in Eagle River, Alaska. She expressed interest in seeing the required Alaska Studies curriculum include more about Alaska politics and its legislative process. Increased interactive learning to include exposure to Alaska's legislature would go a long way to improving civics education in Alaska.

Ms. Carter indicated she is on the Anchorage planning team for the upcoming Youth Vote project. They were planning meet and greets, and a forum for all candidates for state office; compiling questions and creating a mock ballot for students to participate in the November elections. She advocated for all school districts to adopt a similar program for how effective it is to encourage voter turnout and community engagement.

In light of the Best Practices observed in Alaska and in others States, as described above, the TFCE recommends the following:

RECOMMENDATION #3:

Education Leaders should vet civics curriculum options and ensure such curriculum is easily shared and equally accessible among educators in Alaska, so as to have ample educational tools available for meeting state standards in civics.

RECOMMENDATION #4:

Education Leaders should partner with existing non-profit service organizations that offer programs or best practices in civics education and civics engagement, such as those described in this report, to improve communication, awareness, accessibility, and delivery of such programs;

RECOMMENDATION #5:

Education Leaders should recognize the professional skills of and honor those who demonstrate outstanding leadership and effectiveness in delivering or promoting civics education in Alaska.

RECOMMENDATION #6:

Education Leaders should develop a system of endorsements or commendations for inclusion on student transcripts, report cards, or diplomas, recognizing and honoring students who demonstrate excellence in civics education or civics engagement during their secondary educational career.

RECOMMENDATION #7:

Education leaders should partner to promote programs in Alaska that would qualify as a “Presidential Academy,” a “Congressional Academy,” as defined by ESSA; or summer camps, a “School of Democracy,” or other endeavors to qualify for “Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants” available through ESSA, or other funding sources and programs promoting civics education and engagement.

RECOMMENDATION #8:

Education Leaders should partner to identify and assign a person or persons to be responsible for the development and maintenance of a statewide clearinghouse or repository of civics education-related resources and curricula, to fulfill the following needs:

- a. to increase awareness of current civics classroom resources and programs to educators;
- b. serve as a liaison for connecting civics or service organizations to educators;
- c. monitor and warehouse modern best practices in civics education and civics engagement programs;
- d. make current civics curriculum resources freely and easily accessible to educators and researchers throughout Alaska via the internet or other means;
- e. identify and connect educators with opportunities for professional teacher training and development in civics education and civics engagement programs;
- f. identify, foster, or secure funding sources for supporting civics education, curricula, programs, or training opportunities for educators and students;
- g. play a leading role in the fulfillment of the recommendations contained in this report, and other findings as may arise, for the overall improvement of civics education delivery and engagement in Alaska; and
- h. identify and pursue funding opportunities for civics-related programs that may qualify for grant funding under the Every Student Succeeds Act.

The Office of the Lieutenant Governor and the Alaska Council for the Social Studies are specifically invited to participate in the efforts described in this section

RECOMMENDATION #10:

Education Leaders should partner with non-profit and service organizations, such as the Rasmuson Foundation or the Alaska Humanities Forum, to identify and secure federal funding relating but not limited to grants that may be available through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), or other sources.

H. ALASKA CONTENT STANDARDS

In 2006 Alaska adopted standards in the following content areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Geography, Government and Citizenship, History, Skills for a Healthy Life, Arts, World Languages, Technology, Employability, Library/Information Literacy, Cultural Standards, and Alaska History

These content standards in their entirety comprise a document of 249 pages, the vast majority of which (195 pages) are used to describe in thorough detail, the standards for English / Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, including grade-level expectations. The TFCE examined only the current Alaska standards for government and citizenship, as adopted in 2006, which are contained in less than 3 full pages, seven subsections A-G, as follows (verbatim):

- A. **A student should know and understand how societies define authority, rights, and responsibilities through a governmental process.** A student who meets this content standard should:
- 1) understand the necessity and purpose of government;
 - 2) understand the meaning of fundamental ideas, including equality, authority, power, freedom, justice, privacy, property, responsibility, and sovereignty;
 - 3) understand how nations organize their governments; and
 - 4) compare and contrast how different societies have governed themselves over time and in different places
- B. **A student should understand the constitutional foundations of the American political system and the democratic ideals of this nation.** A student who meets this content standard should:
- 1) understand the ideals of this nation as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights;
 - 2) recognize American heritage and culture, including the republican form of government, capitalism, free enterprise system, patriotism, strong family units, and freedom of religion;
 - 3) understand the United States Constitution, including separation of powers, the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, majority rule, and minority rights;
 - 4) know how power is shared in the United States' constitutional government at the federal, state, and local levels;
 - 5) understand the importance of individuals, public opinion, media, political parties, associations, and groups in forming and carrying out public policy;
 - 6) recognize the significance of diversity in the American political system;
 - 7) distinguish between constitution-based ideals and the reality of American political and social life;
 - 8) understand the place of law in the American political system; and
 - 9) recognize the role of dissent in the American political system.
- C. **A student should understand the character of government of the state.** A student who meets this content standard should:

- 1) understand the various forms of the state's local governments and the agencies and commissions that influence students' lives and property;
- 2) accept responsibility for protecting and enhancing the quality of life in the state through the political and governmental processes;
- 3) understand the Constitution of Alaska and Sec. 4 of the Alaska Statehood Act, which is known as the Statehood Compact;
- 4) understand the importance of the historical and current roles of Alaska Native communities;
- 5) understand the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and its impact on the state;
- 6) understand the importance of the multicultural nature of the state;
- 7) understand the obligations that land and resource ownership place on the residents and government of the state; and
- 8) identify the roles of and relationships among the federal, tribal, and state governments and understand the responsibilities and limits of the roles and relationships.

D. A student should understand the role of the United States in international affairs.

A student who meets this content standard should:

- 1) analyze how domestic politics, the principles of the United States Constitution, foreign policy, and economics affect relations with other countries;
- 2) evaluate circumstances in which the United States has politically influenced other nations and how other nations have influenced the politics and society of the United States;
- 3) understand how national politics and international affairs are interrelated with the politics and interests of the state;
- 4) understand the purpose and function of international government and non-governmental organizations in the world today; and
- 5) analyze the causes, consequences, and possible solutions to current international issues

E. A student should have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively as an informed and responsible citizen. A student who meets this content standard should:

- 1) know the important characteristics of citizenship;
- 2) recognize that it is important for citizens to fulfill their public responsibilities;
- 3) exercise political participation by discussing public issues, building consensus, becoming involved in political parties and political campaigns, and voting;
- 4) establish, explain, and apply criteria useful in evaluating rules and laws;
- 5) establish, explain, and apply criteria useful in selecting political leaders;
- 6) recognize the value of community service; and
- 7) implement ways of solving problems and resolving conflict.

F. A student should understand the economies of the United States and the state and their relationships to the global economy. A student who meets this content standard should:

- 1) understand how the government and the economy interrelate through regulations, incentives, and taxation;
- 2) be aware that economic systems determine how resources are used to produce and distribute goods and services;
- 3) compare alternative economic systems;
- 4) understand the role of price in resource allocation;
- 5) understand the basic concepts of supply and demand, the market system, and profit;
- 6) understand the role of economic institutions in the United States, including the Federal Reserve Board, trade unions, banks, investors, and the stock market;
- 7) understand the role of self-interest, incentives, property rights, competition, and corporate responsibility in the market economy;
- 8) understand the indicators of an economy's performance, including gross domestic product, inflation, and the unemployment rate;
- 9) understand those features of the economy of the state that make it unique, including the importance of natural resources, government ownership and management of resources, Alaska Native regional corporations, the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation, the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, and the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority; and
- 10) understand how international trade works.

G. A student should understand the impact of economic choices and participate effectively in the local, state, national, and global economies. A student who meets this content standard should:

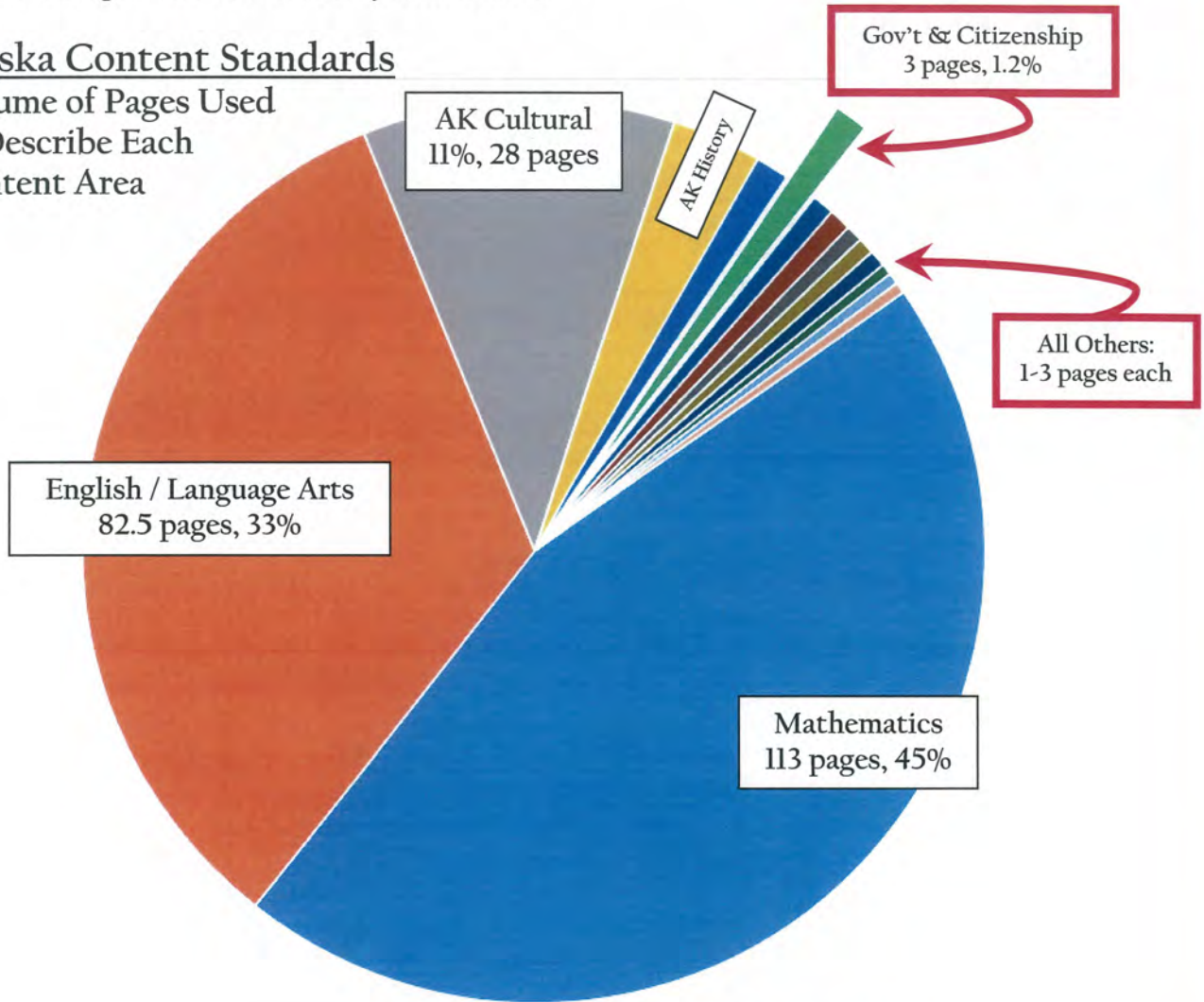
- 1) Apply economic principles to actual world situations;
- 2) understand that choices are made because resources are scarce;
- 3) identify and compare the costs and benefits when making choices;
- 4) make informed choices on economic issues;
- 5) understand how jobs are created and their role in the economy;
- 6) understand that wages and productivity depend on investment in physical and human capital; and
- 7) understand that economic choices influence public and private institutional decisions.

Initially, these standards would appear to be reasonably sufficient for providing a framework for districts to build curricula around civics education. However, the latter subsections place increasing emphasis on international affairs and economics, which is arguably an entire different field of study from "government and citizenship." On closer examination, these standards reference "economics" 16 times, where citizenship is referenced in only one subsection, for a total of 3 times. The "United States" is referenced 8 times, 4 of which in the context of international affairs. The one use of the word "society" is also in the context of foreign policy. There is no use of the word "civics" or "social studies."

Below is a simple chart illustrating the proportionate volume of written material describing Alaska's standards by content area.

Alaska Content Standards

Volume of Pages Used to Describe Each Content Area



STANDARDS CONTENT AREA	PAGES DESCRIBING	%	LATEST YEAR ADOPTED / REVISED
ALASKA CULTURAL	28	11.24%	1998
ARTS	1	0.40%	2015
EMPLOYABILITY	1	0.40%	2006
ENGLISH / LANGUAGE ARTS	82.5	33.13%	2012
GEOGRAPHY	3	1.20%	2006
GOV'T & CITIZENSHIP	3	1.20%	2006
HEALTH EDUCATION	15	0.60%	2006
HISTORY, ALASKA STUDIES	8	3.21%	2006
HISTORY, U.S. & WORLD	2	0.80%	2006
LIBRARY/INFO. LITERACY	15	0.60%	2006
MATHEMATICS	113	45.38%	2012
SCIENCE	2	0.80%	2006
TECHNOLOGY	15	0.60%	2006
WORLD LANGUAGES	1	0.40%	2006
TOTAL:	249	100%	

During the era of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002-2015), Alaska's content standards for math and English / language arts were greatly expanded and written in detail by grade level. More recently there has been increasing focus on career readiness (formerly "voc-tech"), science, technology, and engineering (STEM). As other areas of study have become the champion priority of the day, and the corresponding efforts and resources that go with it, other areas such as civics have slowly taken a back seat. There is no diminishment here of the importance of math and ELA, for example, nor any fault in making the standards pie bigger. But it is time to give civics standards and curricula a bigger slice of that pie.

Upon briefly examining Alaska's other content standards peripheral to civics, it was noted there being some overlap of citizenship incorporated into existing history standards. Specifically in the last section of history standards it states: "(D) A student should be able to integrate historical knowledge with historical skill to effectively participate as a citizen and as a lifelong learner;" and that a student should "base personal citizenship action on reasoned historical judgment with recognition of responsibility for self and others;" And it was further noted that the "United States" is mentioned only once in the standards for history.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

Education Leaders should launch a statewide effort to examine and adopt updated content standards, including specifically those for government and citizenship.

- a. These standards should include a specific reference to the content of the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services under 8 U.S.C. 1446(b). and
- b. Have detailed emphasis on, but not be limited to, the history and values of the United States, the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Rule of Law, Citizenship, and Civic Duty.

I. Review The Merits Of And Consider Options For Implementing The Every Student Succeeds Act, As It Pertains To Civics Education In The State;

On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), legislation to rewrite the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and replace the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). ESSA provides support to high schools where one-third or more of students do not graduate. It also provides support to schools with groups of traditionally underserved students who consistently demonstrate low performance. The law requires data on student achievement and graduation rates to be reported as well as action in response to that data. However, unlike NCLB, states, districts, and schools will determine what support and interventions are implemented.

The TCFE solicited the input of professionals well-versed in the requirements of this federal legislation, including Ms. Lee Posey, Federal Affairs Counsel, National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), who offered a presentation entitled “Opportunities for Civics Education in the Every Student Succeeds Act,” and Ms. Margaret MacKinnon, Director of Assessment & Accountability for the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED).

ESSA is a 392-page document. The vast majority of the Act covers three main policy buckets: Accountability, Assessments, and Turning Around Low Performing Schools in the content areas of English / Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. However, there are also included, however briefly by comparison, some key provisions pertaining specifically to civics education.

ESSA (20 USC 6661-62, Sections 2231-32) authorizes the U.S. Secretary of Education to carry out an American History and civics education program to improve:

- (1) the quality of American history, civics, and government education by educating students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights; and
- (2) the quality of the teaching of American history, civics, and government in elementary schools and secondary schools, including the teaching of traditional American history.

“Presidential Academies”

To accomplish this, ESSA sets up a competitive grant program for “eligible entities” to establish “Presidential Academies” that offer a seminar or institute for teachers of American history and civics, which—

- (A) provides intensive professional development opportunities for teachers of American history and civics to strengthen such teachers’ knowledge of the subject s of American history and civics;
- (B) is led by a team of primary scholars and core teachers who are accomplished in the field of American history and civics;
- (C) is conducted during the summer or other appropriate time; and
- (D) is of not less than 2 weeks and not more than 6 weeks in duration.

There is a selection process, teacher stipends available, and priority given to Presidential Academies that “coordinate or align their activities with the National Park Service National Centennial Parks initiative to develop innovative and comprehensive programs using the resources of the National Parks.”

“Congressional Academies”

ESSA also sets up a corresponding competitive grant program for “eligible entities” to establish “Congressional Academies” that offer a seminar or institute for outstanding students of American history and civics, which—

- (A) broadens and deepens such students’ understanding of American history and civics;
- (B) is led by a team of primary scholars and core teachers who are accomplished in the field of American history and civics;
- (C) is conducted during the summer or other appropriate time; and
- (D) is of not less than 2 weeks and not more than 6 weeks in duration.

There is a selection process and student stipends available. Grant funding for both of these Academies requires a 100% match of funds from non-Federal sources.

An “eligible entity” expected to qualify to create these Academies is:

- (1) an institution of higher education or nonprofit educational organization, museum, library, or research center with demonstrated expertise in historical methodology or the teaching of American history and civics; or “a consortium of” such entities.

Activities in Research and Innovation

Outside of Presidential and Congressional Academies, there is another section within ESSA (20 USC 6663, Sec. 2233) establishing a competitive grant program to “promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative American history, civics and government, and geography instruction, learning strategies, and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low-income students and underserved populations.”

Grants will be made to “eligible entities” for the purposes of finding and offering new innovative, evidence-based approaches to, or professional development programs in, American history, civics and government, and geography in the school system.

An “eligible entity” in this grant program means an “institution of higher education or other nonprofit or for-profit organization with demonstrated expertise in the development of evidence-based approaches with the potential to improve the quality of American history, civics and government, or geography learning and teaching.”

These civics “Academy” programs, teacher training opportunities, and research and innovation efforts, are being encouraged and have the apparent goal of providing all students with access to a well-rounded education, improving school conditions for

student learning, and improving the use of technology to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students.

A “Well-Rounded Education” and “Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants”

ESSA places particular emphasis, however broadly, on student access to a “well-rounded education.” Specifically in the section “Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants” (Title IV Part A), there is a formula program where states can distribute federal funds to districts for a “well-rounded education.” Civics education is one of the many allowable activities for those funds.

To qualify for these funds, Alaska must establish a state plan for how it will support school districts in providing a well-rounded education. The plan must include strategies for supporting school districts in providing equitable access to rigorous coursework for subjects in which female students, minority students, English learners, children with disabilities, or low-income students are underrepresented.

ESSA defines a well-rounded education as “courses, activities, and programming in subjects such as English, reading or language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, *civics and government*, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, physical education, and any other subject, as determined by the State or local educational agency, with the purpose of providing all students access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience.” (Title VIII, Part A, Section 8101)

ESSA and Funding Realities

The TFCE recognizes potential federal funding opportunities for promoting many existing best practices and development of new civics program innovations under ESSA. However some uncertainty remains as to what if any changes may occur with ESSA as a new executive administration enters Washington D.C., and what funding levels Congress will provide to the grant programs established in ESSA.

RECOMMENDATION #9:

To the extent practical and appropriate, the TFCE encourages provisions be made to improve student opportunities for representation and involvement in policy-making processes. Decision-making bodies are encouraged to actively search for and include student involvement in organizations such as:

- a. State-level Boards, Commissions, and Councils;
- b. Local-level Community Councils or Assemblies;
- c. Boards of Directors for Non-Profit, For-Profit, Service or community Organizations of all stripes;
- d. Internships with the above described organizations; or
- e. Student Advisory Committees, functioning either peripherally for, or integrated into the formal structures of, any of the organizations described above.

J. Evaluate The Merits Of And Implementation Requirements For Requiring High School Seniors To Take And Pass A “Civics” Exam As A Prerequisite For Graduating From High School.

INTRODUCTION

To become a naturalized U.S. citizen, an immigrant must apply for citizenship and pass a “naturalization test” (<https://www.uscis.gov/us-citizenship/naturalization-test>) comprised of arguably simple but fundamental questions about, for example, the U.S. structure of government, principles contained in the Bills of Rights, the balance of powers between the branches of government, and characteristics of the current executive administration. The test’s content emphasizes the founding principles of American democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship while also serving as an important instrument to encourage civic learning and attachment to the country.

There are 100 questions on the test. At one time the format of the test was written, multiple choice, and all 100 questions were asked. To pass the test required answering at least 60 of the questions correctly. A 60% mark on any other classroom exam is by normal standards a “D-“ grade, barely passing. The test has since become oral-based. There continue to be 100 “study questions,” of which only 10 are asked. Answering 6/10 correctly continues to be a passing score.

The creation of the TFCE was first inspired, in part, by a report shared with the Chair of the TFCE indicating that, of the immigrants entering the United States and taking this civics exam to become naturalized citizens, approximately 92% of immigrants were passing the test. Accordingly, when that same test was given to cohorts of graduating high seniors in Arizona and Oklahoma, only 3-4% were passing the same test. The contrast was shocking and compelled the Alaska Legislature to exam civics education in its state public school system.

Alaska is not the only state to have begun looking at civics education. There is a movement underway to make passing this civics exam a requirement before graduating from high school, as a way to make understanding basic U.S. Government principles compulsory. The TFCE spent a considerable amount of time discussing whether such a mandate was justified. In fact, the question of a required civics exam was a common theme throughout the hearings, and was asked of almost everyone that testified before the TFCE.

The Joe Foss Institute – and the Civics Education Initiative

Dr. Lucian Spataro, Chief Academic Officer for the Joe Foss Institute, is a leading spokesperson for the effort to create a civics exam requirement across America. The best way to summarize the work of the Joe Foss Institute and its national Civics Education Initiative is to share Dr. Spataro’s testimony presented in writing to the TFCE, as follows:

Statement of Dr. Lucian Spataro on behalf of the Joe Foss Institute

The Joe Foss Institute (JFI) is the enduring legacy of the late Joe Foss, a World War II Medal of Honor recipient who founded the Institute in 2001. JFI now serves nearly 2 million students through its Veterans Inspiring Patriotism program, bringing civics

educational materials and curriculum, including the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and a U.S. flag, into the classroom for teachers and students to discuss. It is an inspiring program that serves students, teachers, and Veterans in all 50 states.

Historically, one of the primary goals of public education, as envisioned by Thomas Jefferson, was to instill in our youth the civic virtues that would sustain our fledgling republic.

Today, however, we are facing a crisis. As the emphasis has shifted to science, math, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), the importance of teaching basic civics has been left behind. Justice O'Connor has often termed this the quiet crisis in education, but we truly believe it is the quiet crisis in America.

While it may not be playing out every day on the front page, the sad fact is that we have a crisis in civics education that has become an epidemic on our watch over the past few decades.

The implications of these shortcomings are wide-ranging, and I have no doubt you have seen them exposed in Alaska. The recent Presidential election is a good example. In previous presidential election cycles, Alaska's voter turnout has consistently averaged 60% or more. Just a few weeks ago, Alaskans turned out at a rate of approximately 48% the lowest rate in history for a presidential year. This situation will continue to get worse until it is addressed, not just in Alaska but also across the country, and because this epidemic has developed on our watch it is our responsibility to act urgently to do just that.

We've all seen the embarrassing man-on-the-street interviews on late-night TV where Americans are unable to answer even basic questions about our nation. Numerous studies and surveys have shown that a vast majority of American students and many adults lack the basic understanding of how our country was founded, how it is governed, and what it means to be a citizen.

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, only 9 percent of 4th grade students can identify a picture of Abraham Lincoln and tell us two things he did that were important. The results don't improve as our children matriculate. Just seven percent of 8th graders could correctly identify the three branches of government and overall – only 24% of seniors in high schools scored proficient or above on the NAEP civics test.

The national achievement gap in reading and math is unsurprisingly also present in social studies and civics. Scores were even lower for low-income and minority students, with African-American students scoring on average, 24 to 30 points lower than their white counterparts.

This persistent civic achievement gap undermines all citizens but disproportionately affects civic engagement and empowerment for underrepresented communities, impacting everything from voter turnout to trust in our institutions. It comes as no surprise, when people do not understand the system by which they are governed, including how to affect

change in that system, they are naturally frustrated and this often leads them to disengage from the political process.

Recognizing these problems, in 2014 JFI launched the Civics Education Initiative, which is based on a simple concept – that American high school students, as a condition for graduation, should be able to pass the very same test that all new immigrants must pass to become citizens.

The Citizenship Test is 100 questions that cover basic facts of U.S. history and civics. Since launching the initiative, fourteen states have now enacted this exact or similar legislation and an additional 25 states will be considering this legislation next year. By the end of 2017, we hope to have enacted this legislation in over half the country.

Our Initiative was specifically designed to provide schools, teachers, and students with maximum flexibility. By using a well-established test and study materials that are readily available online, this legislation can be implemented with no cost to states and districts. In fact, JFI is developing online lesson plans for each of the 100 questions as a resource for teachers. We now have an online test portal that teachers can access for free to help them administer the test. (<http://civicseducationinitiative.org/take-the-test/>)

This initiative is certainly not a punitive measure. Nearly 92% of new immigrants applying for citizenship pass this test on their first attempt, and I would hope our students could do as well or better. Those that don't pass the first time can try as many times as they need, the questions stay the same each time and our free test portal even helps them identify areas that they need to study further.

The Citizenship Test is also not intended to be one-size-fits-all. Instead, it establishes a baseline of knowledge, like learning your multiplication tables in math, or the alphabet for reading and writing, to ensure our students know at least as much about the fundamentals of how our country operates as foreign-born citizens are required to know. It is not a panacea, or a silver bullet, but it is meant to be a strong first step toward ensuring and encouraging civic engagement in our youth.

As a professor myself I have a question for any educators present. What is the one question that you know a student will always ask you without fail every time during a lecture, and I mean every time?

“Is This Going To Be On The Test?”

If you answer YES, the students all lean forward, they take notes, and are engaged in the subject matter. On the other hand, if you say NO, the entire class leans back and you can see them relax, drift off, and disengage. So from a student's perspective, having Civics on a test that matters is important. As this relates to America, the same is true. We want our students leaning forward and engaged, but every year that goes by more students are being left behind due to a lack of emphasis being placed on how our government works. Help us put Civics on a test that matters today, so our students graduate as actively engaged, informed, and responsible citizens.

A national survey conducted by JFI in 2014 showed that 78% of left, right, and independent voters support this initiative as proposed. And we asked those voters if they would support legislators who supported this initiative, and 75% of voters across the country said yes. It gets great bi-partisan support. Our effort is nonpartisan. We are not an ideological group.

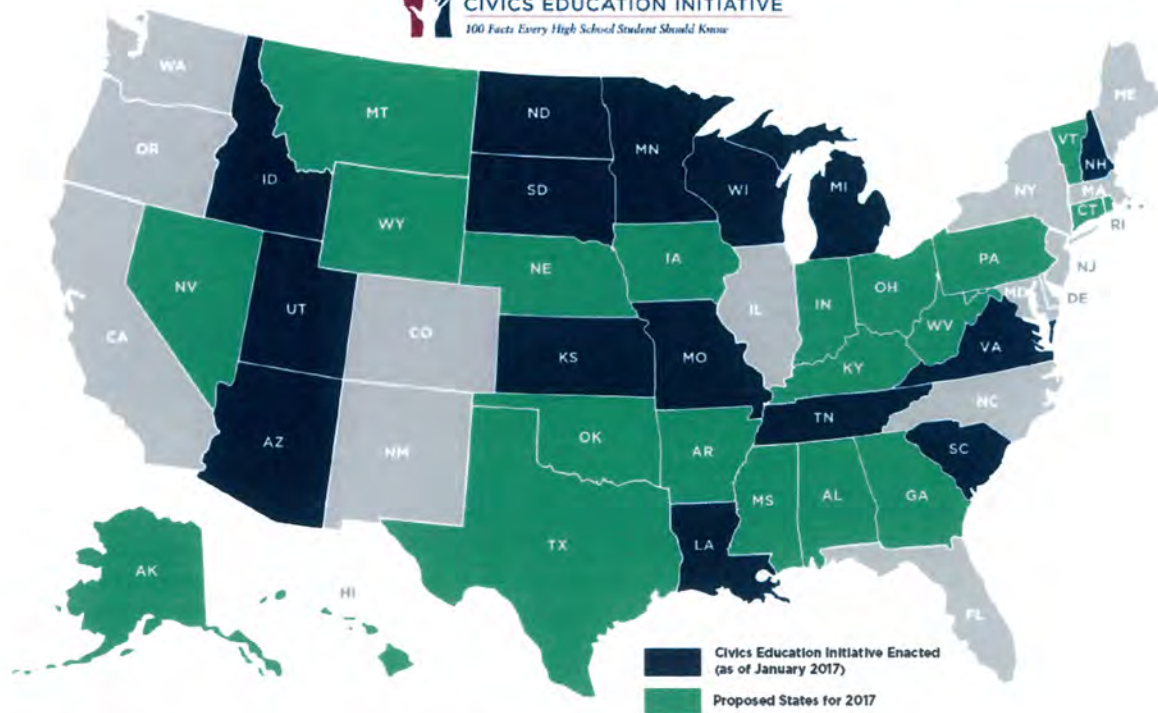
It is not your standard standardized test. It is not high-stakes. It is not expensive because there is no requirement to compile and report data. It is not tied to performance, so there are no salary or school funding consequences. It has zero fiscal impact because it is only administered at the school level. We have built a free test portal and are preparing to launch an online course. We have a repository of lesson plans, catered to different grade levels and different courses. We ask all states to customize and localize the test. We are hoping states will customize it.

We have also built an interactive online engaging course. As students move through the course, if they miss a question, they are given an option to watch a quick video lesson plan to learn about the topic they missed. As a student moves through this online course, it's not dissimilar to a game where someone makes decisions about directions to go. Each student has a unique experience that focuses on areas where they need more instruction. If they miss a question, they receive the lesson plan on that topic. Everyone finishes at their own pace, everyone passes the test, everyone reaches the finish line.

The JFI Civics Education Initiative wants to elevate civics education on par with reading, writing and math. If it's tested, it's taught. <http://civicseducationinitiative.org/>



CIVICS EDUCATION INITIATIVE
100 Facts Every High School Student Should Know



A Civics Exam Graduation Requirement: North Dakota

Kirsten Baesler is the North Dakota Superintendent of Public Instruction for the state of North Dakota (NDSPI). The NDSPI is a nonpartisan, statewide elected position who oversees the education of North Dakota public school students, preschool through grade 12.

North Dakota recently passed legislation mandating high school students to take and pass the “citizenship test” described above, as a condition for graduating from high school. Ms. Baesler described her experience passing and implementing the new law, which went into effect August 1, 2015. She testified that having the civics test as a graduation requirement has made a significant difference in improving broad, equal implementation of civics education and overall increased engagement around civics.

High School seniors in North Dakota are now required to take the full 100-question federal citizenship exam used by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for people who want to become American citizens. Students must score at least 60 percent correct answers on the exam before they may graduate from high school. In subsequent years, students will be required to score at least 70 percent to graduate.

Ms. Baesler argued that, starting with the Revolutionary War, U.S. veterans have fought and died to preserve our country’s traditions. It is our responsibility to pass this knowledge on to our children. As President Reagan said, “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.”

The North Dakota civics testing requirement has accordingly sent an unequivocal message to students that knowing how government functions is as important as math, science or English. It has reinvigorated school instruction about government in North Dakota. It has given teachers a starting point to explore the issues that our Founders confronted when they were writing our Constitution. Teachers are finding innovative ways to bring civics lessons and materials alive in their classrooms. They are teaching things and using available resources and materials in ways they weren’t four years ago.

A civics testing requirement in North Dakota did not require new courses, extra expense or onerous recordkeeping. Schools are not required to report student civics exam results to the state. Principals, as education professionals, are trusted to ensure all requirements of state law are met before they and their school board confer a diploma to a student in their district. Schools may administer the exam in small chunks, they may distribute responsibility of questions to different courses and teachers, and spread the administration of the test over several months or several years if they desire. Each school district makes the decision that best suits their needs and their students’ needs. Students may start taking the exam as early as the seventh grade and attempt the exam as many times as necessary to be successful before they graduate. Students can then focus on parts of the test they have trouble with during previous attempts.

Schools have a lot of leeway in making sure their students meet this graduation requirement. Meanwhile, legislators and policymakers can uphold their responsibility to

set high expectations for all students while maximizing local control to help students reach those expectations in the most appropriate way for their schools and communities.

North Dakota is finding students taking these 100 questions much further than the government classroom, with peer learning, and developing their own form of interdisciplinary curriculum. For example, geography students are partnering with their art teachers to do projects. It becomes much more than simply rote memorization for the test. The curriculum is not limited to just U.S. government, economics, or political science. The instruction is spread across content areas so as to not hold one teacher responsible for preparing students for the test.

Prior to enacting the required citizenship test, there were efforts on many levels to elevate the issue and importance of civics. Many folks in North Dakota talked about the need for a central resource center for civics education materials and resources, including the various civics programs that are available. However it became apparent that those resources were not available to all students unilaterally. Ms. Baesler stressed the importance of equal access; and especially that:

“it is not enough to have a resource center or clearing house if there’s no incentive to access it – it is not enough to have quality civics materials available to some students but not to others. The only way to ensure equal access to education, and indeed to democracy, is to ensure we hold all students to the same high expectations of learning from these resources and materials.”

Ms. Baesler concluded by commenting that every day that goes by without action means more students will fall behind when it comes to civic knowledge, disengaging from the political process and damaging our democracy. A civics test requirement is an equity issue for North Dakota. It is dangerous not to have all citizens knowledgeable and engaged in our government at all levels – local, state and national. The civics education test has made certain all North Dakota students are learning how our government works, the history and foundation of the United States and how to become more active and engaged in the world around them.

The Citizenship Test in Alaska – Current Use

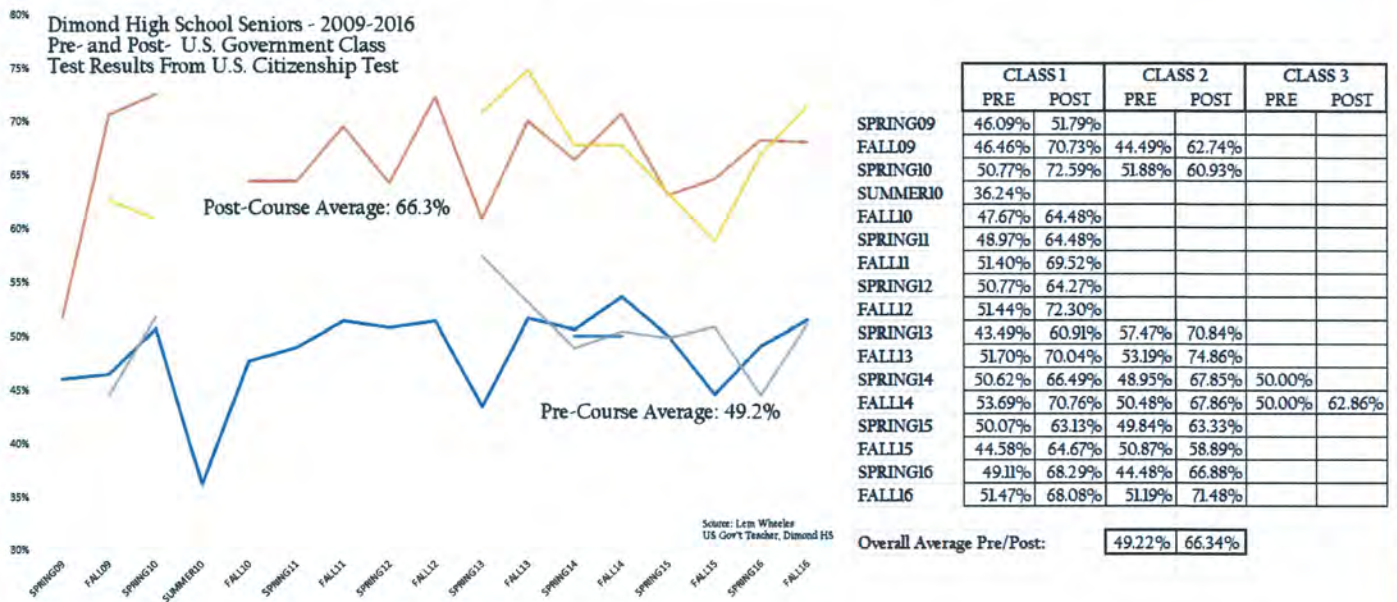
In addition to his general testimony described above, Mr. Lem Wheelles, a teacher of U.S. Government at Dimond High School in Anchorage, Alaska, spoke specifically about his perspective on using the U.S. Citizenship Test (“USCT”) in his classrooms. He shared with the TFCE that he has administered the Test to his U.S. Government students for many years. He also indicated having collected the data of the results of his assessment since 2009. At the beginning and end of every Spring and Fall semester, and occasionally during a Summer course in U.S. Government, Mr. Wheelles administers the Test to benchmark his students’ initial (“Pre-Course”) understanding, and end-of-course (“Post-”) understanding of the principles of U.S. government.

His method is to use 90 of the 100 questions, choosing to skip 10 of the questions he feels are redundant. For example, if one question is “What is the Bill of Rights?” and another question is “What do you call the first 10 Amendments?,” he includes only one of those

questions. There are a handful of other questions he omits for being too difficult to quickly score. He uses a fill-in-the-blank format for consistency, as that was the version available from the U.S. Immigration Services website when he began using the USCT.

Interpreting the data, he pointed out there are always fewer Post-Course scores, as inevitably a handful of students drop the course or transfer during the semester after taking the Pre-Test. He further pointed out consistent improvement between Pre- and Post-course scores, approximately 20+% points improvement for each cohort. If or when a student does not show significant improvement, he noted it is likely because it is typically a student already scoring 85% or higher on the Pre-Test.

It is noted that about half of the questions on the USCT are actually in the purview of his U.S. Government course, the others falling under U.S. History or other courses. These have all been high school seniors taking the general education, not AP-level, U.S. Government class, representing a broad demographic.



The above chart illustrates the Pre- and Post- course testing results of high school seniors taking U.S. Government class with Mr. Lem Wheelers at Dimond High School, from 2009 to 2016. The U.S. Citizenship Test was given at the beginning and end of each semester of the course. The 90-question fill-in-the-blank test resulted in students having an average score of 49.2% correct at the beginning of the course, and a corresponding average of 66.3%. A score of 60% is considered a passing grade.

Notwithstanding his use of the Citizenship Test, Mr. Wheelers spoke strongly against making it a mandate for high school graduation. He advocated approaching the USCT with multiple courses, not just a standard U.S Government course, nor a singular program designed to teach according to the USCT. His primary concern was having a mandate that required reporting its results to the district or state level for graduation requirements, as then the test would come with a cost, in addition to “taking away from my time with

students as I focus on their needs.” He assured the TFCE that civics is already infused in school curriculum. Mandating the USCT might improve knowledge, but not meaningfully increase engaged citizenship. He expressed his hope that the legislature would instead help find ways to better prepare students for becoming engaged citizens.

Other educators provided similar testimony over the course of the TFCE meeting series. Mr. Greg Huff, a retired U.S. Government and Economics Teacher, was another example. He used the USCT in much the same manner as described by Mr. Wheelles, although apparently without having compiled the data. He spoke in favor of demonstrating, at the district level, students having made improvement over the course of the semesters. However he was critical of the USCT insofar as it focuses largely on the federal government, and in the rote memorization of facts. He would prefer to see a course or assessment that helped students understand our system of government more deeply, and in an applied manner, such as how bills become law, how to get funding for road construction, or ways to bring change to your community. He too spoke of the importance of finding a balance between civics education and civics engagement.

Victoria Otte, another retired social studies teacher, testified that she used the USCT for her middle school students, but not as a part of their grades. She was of the opinion, which was shared with her students, that the USCT “is what immigrants need to know. You live here. Don’t you think you should know it too?” She believed students should know the material, but that the USCT content in and of itself is “memorization and trivia.” The USCT does not help student engage in their community, nor bestow a sense of duty and citizenship. She cited the success and effectiveness of the popular modern play “Hamilton” and how, by contrast, it serves to make civics “personal.” Civics education should include components of engagement, of story-telling, of marrying politics, theatre, and history, for example. It should cross disciplines and be made personal. That, in combination of the USCT, would help bring us closer to preparing students for citizenship in their adult life.

David Block gave another example of routinely using the USCT for gauging student knowledge. He agreed that the USCT tested “historical facts every kid should know.” He was alarmed at times about how little his students knew about U.S. Government. He believed that U.S. citizens “should know as much as a naturalized citizen needed to know.” He described giving his students the USCT at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. It was part of their final grade. If a student scored less than 70% on the USCT, they would fail his course. He did this year after year and was “brutal about it.” He chose to stop using the USCT about 6 years ago.

“I threw it out because I decided it was no longer a good test for what I wanted them to know. What I really wanted them to know was where their polling place was, or how to register to vote, or how to sign up for an internship. That kind of stuff will not be learned because of the immigration test.”

While the USCT itself does compel basic knowledge of the facts and structure of our government, it does not really help address the more fundamental problem of getting students more engaged and prepared for adult civic life.

CIVICS EXAM - CONCLUSION

While we are told 37 states have a stand-alone civics course, some states require a civics test, and a handful require passing the USCT in order to graduate, there was no consensus among the TFCE membership to forward a recommendation of requiring the USCT for graduation from high school.

However, there are merits in requiring taking an exam, but not necessarily requiring reporting the results of the exam. Funding for such a mandate should not be an issue if reporting requirements are removed and schools are given full flexibility in the approach to the test.

There was general acceptance that the USCT helped confirm student knowledge of basic U.S. government; but taking the test by itself would not likely address the many other underlying issues such as apathy, trust in government, and unpreparedness for adult civic life.

If the TFCE and others agree that “if it is tested it is taught,” then requiring a test will compel instruction. Meanwhile, requiring a civics test in conjunction with the other recommendations of this report, by setting a higher bar and greater expectations, recognizing a need for more civics activity in the classroom and community, and improving equal access to civics-related resources and programs, will hopefully in the broader picture continue to respect local control, and also result in the overall improvement in civics education and civic engagement among young Alaskans.

(Reiterating) RECOMMENDATION #2:

Education Leaders should launch a statewide effort to examine and adopt updated content standards, including specifically those for government and citizenship.

- a. These standards should include a specific reference to the content of the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services under 8 U.S.C. 1446(b). and
- b. Have detailed emphasis on, but not be limited to, the history and values of the United States, the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Rule of Law, Citizenship, and Civic Duty.

K. INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS FROM TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Submitted by Senator Berta Gardner
January 2017

The Civic Education Task Force was a fascinating experience. We learned that a number of states require students to pass the United States naturalization test as a condition of graduation. Initially I thought this was an interesting idea but came to realize that civic engagement is not measured in any meaningful way by memorizing the multiple choice answers to a 100 question test. Civic engagement is a vastly different concept which has to do with variety and depth of involvement and interaction in a community.

Some of my favorite ideas from the task force have to do with activities that expose students more to these kinds of opportunities. In addition to programs like Close Up, We the People, and American Legion's Boy/Girls State that intentionally seek to teach students government, several other programs like service projects, school clubs, school business partnerships, parents in the schools programs, and take your child to work days, also contribute to a student's understanding and engagement.

Most of us have circles of people with whom we interact, are influenced by and have influence upon. The size and number of these circles are a function of our involvement with others. Someone actively working towards improving aspects of their neighborhood, community, city and state, is much more likely to feel a stronger sense of purpose, accountability and connection to the people they know, and places they live. Someone who is less engaged, may not feel the same sense of connection or investment and could easily feel isolated and indifferent to the people and places in their area.

Some years ago I was privileged to be in Barrow during a whale harvest festival. A woman approached me angrily, complaining about the International Whaling Commission. When I asked questions about whaling she spoke to me strongly and passionately about the cultural importance of whale harvesting. She explained why it was so important in her culture and community, especially for young men. She told me how easy it is for boys on the cusp of manhood to get caught up in trouble if they don't see an important role for them in their community. For these young men, being part of a whaling crew was a "coming of age" ceremony, a process of teaching them levels of service and obligation, of being an essential part of a team with responsibilities beyond the critically important task of delivering a sacred food source to their community.

Listening to the task force presentations and discussion, my understanding of that whaling conversation shifted. I recognized that what she was talking about was the true meaning of civic engagement. It's a feeling of connection to a community and having a sense of purpose and accountability to the people around you.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS FROM TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Submitted by David Block
December 2016

Response from anecdotal evidence tells us something is wrong, but honestly we don't have a lot of data on what this really means. Or even if there is something wrong. We have a feeling, from watching Comedians interviewing people on the street, but before we move strongly ahead, we need to make sure we are not wasting resources, among these being time, on the part of educators, students and families by steaming forward without a real problem.

To do that, I think we need to move back to a question I originally proposed weeks ago, which is...what do we mean by civics education? And that really means... what do we want? What outcomes? Do we really want just that students can correctly answer 6 questions out of 10 on a naturalization exam? Or do we want them actively engaged in the process of their nation? Or is there something else we want? While we have listened to a lot of expertise, I'm not sure we have come to a conclusion yet on either of these questions.

I also think that a survey might give us a picture of what is happening in different districts, but I don't know that it directs us to any action if we do not know how what they are doing is successful if we have not yet identified what is "success." I have a few observations:

First. I think we need to find an Alaskan Solution to an Alaskan Problem. While civics knowledge may be an issue nationally, I don't think we can develop a single solution for a problem which has multiple causes. I think we would be remiss if we just adopted a one prong solution and walked away thinking our job is done. Also, what works in California will not work here. Nor North Dakota. Or anyplace else. We live here knowing Alaska is Unique. Especially in its diversity. What will work in Bethel will not in Barrow. What works in Anchorage will not work in Skagway. This means that whatever decision we make MUST include some element of local control and input. Top down educational initiatives have always become the "flavor of the month" until they are proven wastes of time and money and then we move on to the next one.

Second. We need to identify things we are already doing well. I think this task force has seen a LOT of positive practices in Alaska. What I'm hearing from the different districts tells me that we are already doing a great deal in civics education. In fact, I'm convinced that the "problem" we are perceiving may be just that, largely perception, and not reality. By which I mean, the problem may not be a problem of information delivery, but may instead be related to any number of other issues which assault students: poverty, hunger, language proficiency, literacy, special education needs, substance abuse. The list goes on.

Programs like HOBY, Close Up, Youth Court, etc are great and are all over the state. We've heard from districts doing outstanding civics activities. I think we need to listen hard to what is being done and be very careful that whatever we implement doesn't throw the baby out with the bathwater. If we implement something that steals time from one of these great programs, we are not serving civics learning at all. We need to discover what the real problem is, and address that.

With respect to those who are considering adopting a test, I'd point out that the Joe Voss Institute, which is the source of the Civics Education Initiative and is trying to mandate the Naturalization Test is seeing only limited success nationally for the very reasons we've discussed here. Only 14 states have adopted the test as is. Many more have turned it down. For most states, they've found the test actually doesn't test what we really want as outcomes. The test only looks at federal information, it tests at the lowest level of cognition and there is every indication that this information is lost over time. So in regards to assessment, we want to make sure we are properly assessing what we really want as outcomes.

As Superintendent McDonald said... we are already assessing students in every class they take. Assessment isn't the issue. Something else must be. I'm actually more interested in how other states have turned the Voss initiative upside down, and while they might consider the test, they are using it in different ways. I think we all agree that we want students to know the three branches of government, but I can assure you it is being taught, so there must be another reason besides simply memorizing the information that it is not sticking. I would submit it is context and use.

To that end, requiring a stand-alone class or a test will not fix the problem. Instead we need to make opportunities for students to engage in the community and actually USE the information they are getting in the classrooms. If you don't use it, you lose it. Mr. Keller gave a perfect example when he said he really didn't tie the classroom learning he had received to reality until he got involved in government.

To that end, I would propose the following: That we make a resolution to recommend all local districts adopt the following practices in their social studies departments with special focus on 2-6. And that they adopt some form of assessment, of their choosing, to measure the civics knowledge of students prior to graduation.

SIX PROVEN PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE CIVIC LEARNING

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/10/48/11048.pdf>

1. Classroom Instruction: Schools should provide instruction in civics & government, history, economics, geography, law, and democracy. Formal instruction in these subjects increases civic knowledge and increases young people's tendency to engage in civic and political activities over the long term. However, schools should avoid teaching only rote facts about dry procedures, which is unlikely to benefit students and may actually alienate them from civic engagement.
2. Discussion of Current Events and Controversial Issues: Schools should incorporate discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events in to the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives. When students have an opportunity to discuss current issues in a classroom setting, they tend to have a greater interest in civic life and politics as well as improved critical thinking and communication skills.
3. Service-Learning: Schools should design and implement programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction.

4. Extracurricular Activities: Schools should offer opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities outside of the classroom. Studies show that students who participate in extracurricular activities in school remain more civically engaged than those who did not, even decades later.
5. School Governance: Schools should encourage meaningful student participation in school governance. Giving students more opportunities to participate in the management of their classrooms and schools builds their civic skills and attitudes.
6. Simulations of Democratic Processes: Schools should encourage students to participate in simulations of democratic processes and procedures. Evidence shows that simulations of voting, trials, legislative deliberation and democracy, leads to heightened civic/political knowledge and interest.

L. REFERENCES & CIVICS RESOURCES

The following list of resources and references were used to help compile this report. It is not exhaustive by any means. Many thanks and kudos to the individuals and organizations that have contributed to date on advancing civic education and awareness, whether included on this list or not.

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CIVICS EDUCATION AND STATE LEGISLATURES

Submitted by Angela Andrews, Program Principal

In November 2016, a question was posted to the listserv of the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries (ASLCS) about civics education programs supported by state legislatures. Here are the questions and below are the responses.

1. Does your chamber or legislature participate in an annual student government day, either by organizing the event or part of a team organizing the event?
 - a. If yes, please explain your role and identify the date of student government day.
2. Does your chamber or legislature help to organize, or support, mock sessions when student groups visit the legislature?
 - a. If yes, how many mock sessions are held each year and/or approximately how many students participate in mock sessions per year?
 - b. Does your chamber or legislature host a page or internship program?
 - c. If yes, please share the parameters of the page or internship program (i.e. -- # of students per semester or per session, selection process, any specific goals of program, etc)
3. Does your chamber or legislature organize or participate in other civics education programs, including partnering with other organizations (i.e. – Girls State/Boys State, We the People, Project Citizen, Citizen Seminars/Forums, NCSL’s Legislator Back to School program, etc)?
 - a. If yes, please explain.
4. Does your chamber or legislature offer resources (printed or digital) that explain the legislative process, provide an overview of the legislature or information about representative democracy (i.e. – videos, web pages, coloring books, etc)?
 - a. If yes, please explain.

Arizona House

1. Yes, we have many student organizations that utilize our chamber for civics training. We usually show the organizers how to utilize the mic board but usually not the voting system
2. We do not generally organize these sessions, however, we do have a “education” module on our voting system that allows students to vote on either a school uniform

bill or a ban on texting while driving. We probably have 10-12 sessions a year for students.

3. We have both a page and an internship program. There are approximately 20 pages and 25 interns.
 - a. The selection process is rigorous and can be seen in greater detail here: <http://www.azleg.gov/azleginternships/>
 - b. The page program can be found here: <http://www.azleg.gov/careeropportunities/housepage.pdf>
4. Yes, we work with Girls State/Boys State, YMCA, Teen Court and others.
5. Yes, Arizona Bill! <http://www.azleg.gov/alisPDFs/hbillaw.pdf>

Alabama House

1. NO
2. YES – We conduct between 50 and 75 mock sessions per year on the floor of the Alabama House for school groups that schedule tours through the House Public Information Office. On average, there are about 60 students per tour.
3. YES – The Alabama House has a page program administered through the Speaker and Clerk’s offices. Generally, school students between the ages of 12 and 18 with good grades are recommended by members but the requirements are flexible. Each of the 105 House members are allowed two pages during a regular session but they can get permission to have more than two. The number of pages varies but an average per regular session would be about 250. Pages work for one three-day legislative week (Tuesday-Thursday) and are unpaid. There is an intern program for college students that is administered by the Alabama Law Institute. Those college students – juniors and seniors -- who are selected through an application process for the program work approximately 30 hours per week either with a leadership member or with a specific committee clerk for the entire regular legislative session and receive college credit for their experience. The number of interns varies but averages about 20 per regular session.
4. YES – The Alabama House partners or has partnered with the YMCA Youth Legislature, Alabama Girls State, Alabama Boys State, We the People, and the Alabama Silver-Haired Legislature, which educates senior citizens in the operation of the legislature and how the legislative process works.
5. YES – School groups that tour the floor of the Alabama House watch a eight-minute in-house produced video on the operation of the House. We also provide fourth-grade level booklets about the House and the State of Alabama, and our website provides various information for students and teachers.

Colorado House

1. No
2. We are not involved in the planning. We’re just here to help them if they have questions, and we provide a Sergeant-at-arms for security and control. So far only Youth in Government holds mock sessions in the Capitol.
3. No - the educational institutions who provide interns during our legislative sessions organize their own programs.

4. The YMCA Youth in Government meets in the Capitol for three days each year in November the three days before Thanksgiving. We book all the committee rooms for them and they also use both House and Senate Chambers. Project Citizen also hold meetings in the Capitol. The YMCA does all the organizing - we're just here to support them. This year Girls State may come to the Capitol as well, but they will plan their own event.
5. We have a number of pamphlets that are free to the public: A short history of the Legislature, Public Participation in a Legislative Hearing, Questions and Answers, Guidelines for Lobbyists. We also have a coloring book, a pamphlet on state symbols, information on self guided tours.

Connecticut Senate

1. CT Senate lets YMCA do a student government and also the Credit Union
2. NO
3. Legislative Management does an internship program
4. No
5. Yes it is on our website and also printed information

Illinois House

1. No.
2. Members sometimes request an opportunity for a visiting student group to have access to the Floor for a discussion about the legislative process and a mock vote on an issue. The request goes through the Speaker's office for approval, which typically grants authority 50 times a year.
3. Members may sponsor an honorary page-for-the-day to work for the House on a session day. The program provides 10 spots each session day (5 Democratic and 5 Republican) which are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - a. The General Assembly sponsors an internship program through the University of Illinois at Springfield (<http://www.uis.edu/illaps/ilsip/>) that supports five students in each legislative caucus and four students for the Legislative Research Unit.
4. Youth & Government (YMCA) has a simulation for 1,000 high school students in our chamber during a weekend in March.
 - a. Model Illinois Government is a similar program for 150 college students that meets over a weekend in March.
 - b. The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute through Southern Illinois University hosts 150 students for a policy and voting simulation for a day on a weekend in April.
5. The Legislative Research Unit provides a flow chart of how a bill becomes law (<http://www.ilga.gov/commission/lru/howabillbecomesalaw.pdf>)
 - a. Each legislative caucus has a coloring/activity book that can be ordered from the Legislative Printing Unit for use by its Members' constituents and another pamphlet on how a bill becomes law.

Nebraska Legislature

1. No.
2. Yes. The Clerk's Office partners with local civic engagement organizations to host approximately 15 groups of high school students at the Capitol throughout the school year. Students simulate a committee hearing on a legislative bill that was introduced during a recent session. Elected officials representing the three branches of government speak to the students about the role of each branch. The students also learn about the history of the Legislature and the legislative process.
3. Yes. Twenty-five to 30 college students are hired to serve as pages each session. These are selected based on their applications, letters of recommendation from their senators, and interviews with the Speaker and the Clerk.
4. Yes. The Clerk's Office hosts a four-day legislative simulation for high school students every June called the Unicameral Youth Legislature. Nebraska senators also participate in NCSL's Back to School Program.
5. Yes. This information can be found on our website and in several printed and digital resources we produce that explain the history and process of the Nebraska Legislature:
 - a. Inside our Nation's Only Unicameral: This color booklet provides information about the history of the Unicameral and the lawmaking process, including photos and information about current state senators. The book also describes student programs offered by the Legislature and provides details about visiting the Capitol.
 - b. Unicam Kids: In this illustrated book for fourth graders, George Norris, the "father of the Unicameral," provides a guided tour through the Nebraska State Capitol. Along the way, kids learn about their unique unicameral Legislature, the state senators who represent them and the process of how a bill becomes a law. This publication has a sister website for students that contains videos and coloring pages.
 - c. Unicameral Update: This is an online news source produced by the Clerk of the Legislature's Office and maintained daily throughout the legislative session. It also is available as a weekly print publication and a weekly e-mail subscription.

Virginia House

1. YES. Created and manage Project CAPITAL, a pre-service teaching institute for graduate students in the process of becoming licensed Virginia educators. It is a flexible date, usually in mid-November. Host and provide staff for Model General Assembly for the YMCA. It is flexible date usually in March-April.
2. YES. The House of Delegates Clerk's Office staff conduct free, one-hour mock legislative session when the legislature is not in session. On an annual basis,

approximately 250-300 Chamber Presentations are conducted for 7,000-8,000 K-16 students, civic groups, and the general public.

3. YES.
 - a. House of Delegates Page Program: Established 1847, it has become a residential program for 13 and 14-year old male and female students from across the Commonwealth. The Speaker of the House appoints approximately 40 students who reside in Richmond for the duration of the Virginia General Assembly Regular Session (7 or 9 weeks). Students submit an online application and must receive a letter of endorsement from their delegate to be considered for appointment. Once selected, the House Clerk's Office administers the House Page Program. The House of Delegates Pages are paid non-partisan staff, reside in a hotel during the week, maintain school work, and assist all members and staff of the House of Delegates. For more information: <http://capclass.viriniageneralassembly.gov/PagePrograms/PagePrograms.html>
 - b. Internships: Secondary and higher education students interested in interning with their delegate or during the legislative session can contact legislators directly and inquire about opportunities for internships. The House of Delegates Human Resource Director also can assist students by answering questions and supplying contact information.
 - c. Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) manages Capitol Semester, an internship and weekly policymaking seminar that accepts applications from higher education students nationwide. Students apply, and if accepted will participate in an internship with members of the Virginia Senate or House of Delegates. Internship preferences are honored but not guaranteed — final placement is determined by the student and the office sponsoring the internship. Interns work a minimum of 20 hours per week and also gather for a weekly policymaking seminar to hear from key leaders in the State Capitol. Students pay the VCU semester tuition and fees and a need-based financial award may be available to students who qualify. For more information: <http://www.wilder.vcu.edu/programs/virginia-capital-semester/>
4. YES. The House of Delegates Clerk's Office collaborates on the following programs (Lead organization in parentheses):
 - a. First Assembly Day (Historic Jamestowne, Colonial National Historic Park, National Park Service)
 - b. Girl Scout Day at Capitol Square (Virginia House of Delegates ICS Office & Girl Scouts of the Commonwealth of Virginia)
 - c. Model General Assembly (YMCA)
 - d. NCSL Legislator Back to School Program
 - e. Project Citizen (Center for Civic Education)
 - f. Virginia Civics Summit (Commission on Civics Education, Virginia General Assembly)
 - g. Virginia History Day (George Washington's Mount Vernon)
 - h. Virginia Girls State (American Legion Auxiliary)
 - i. Virginia Rules (Virginia Office of the Attorney General)

- j. Virginia State and Local Civic Education Module (Virginia Department of Education & Virginia Tech)
 - k. We the People (Center for Civic Education, Montpelier)
5. YES. EDUCATIONAL WEBSITES
- a. Capitol Classroom: <http://capclass.virginiageneralassembly.gov/>
 - b. The Capitol Classroom website provides legislative information about Virginia in an educational and entertaining setting for K-12 students and adults. Learn about Virginia's symbols and emblems, history, Members of the General Assembly, the Virginia State Capitol, and How a Bill Becomes a Law! Virtual Tours at the Virginia State Capitol: <http://virginiacapitol.gov/virtualtours/virtualhome.html>
 - c. You can tour the inside of the Capitol by viewing videos or by clicking on the "Explore this Room" button. This button allows you to navigate, or "walk," around rooms and explore in more detail items that are of interest to you.
 - d. When exploring the "Virtual Grounds" part of this website, you can see how the Capitol's landscape has changed through time. There are educational videos and interactive maps in this area.
 - e. Also, for the benefit of teachers, those interested in learning, or students, points of interest which have Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) significance are indicated with the Apple & Book icon on them
6. PUBLICATIONS
- a. The House of Delegates Clerk's Office produces 15 branded publications designed for Elementary, Middle, and High School/Adult levels. All publications are available in print, PDF, and online. The publications are free and available to schools, legislators, and the general public. We offer the following:
 - b. Coloring Book (Grades K-3)
 - c. Activity Book (Grades 4-5)
 - d. How a Bill Becomes a Law (Three versions: Elementary, Middle, and High School/Adult)
 - e. Pocket Glossary (Three versions: Elementary, Middle, and High School/Adult)
 - f. State Emblem poster
 - g. Bookmarks (Assortment of 5)
 - h. Visitor and Educator Guides
 - i. Capitol Square and Monument Maps
 - j. House of Delegates Gallery Guide

Washington House

- 1. No.
- 2. Our Civic Education program does provide teachers with materials to do their own mock committee public hearing on a bill – instructions, mock bills and bill reports, scripts, role definitions, etc. The Civic Ed program will help with the mock

committees by arranging for a committee room and providing assistance. The Legislative Tour office offers educational tours aimed at school groups and geared to the different grade levels or interest areas.

3. Host Internship or Page Program

PAGE PROGRAM:

- During the Legislative Session only (January – March/April).
- Approximately 40-50 per week with half in the Senate and half in the House.
- Students attend for one week only .
- 14 – 16 years of age.
- Pages run errands, help with minor tasks like stuffing envelopes, and pass out notes or amendments in the House and Senate Chambers.
- Parents are responsible for housing, but program provides a list of people who are interested in housing pages.
- Pages are paid \$135 per week to offset cost of coming to Olympia.
- Each Senator and Representative is allowed to sponsor a specific number of pages each session.
- Senators and Representatives may establish any criteria they want for page selection, but most sponsor pages on a first come, first served basis.
- While they are nearly identical, the program is divided into House and Senate programs with each group supervised by different people. Currently, there is talk and exploration into combining the two programs into one program -- the Legislative Page Program.
- Both Senate and House pages spend 2 hours per day in Page School where they learn about state government and the legislative process.
- Page School is taught by 2 social studies teachers and is attended by both Senate and House pages.

INTERN PROGRAM

- 60 – 70 college juniors or seniors.
- Competitive selection process (not patronage).
- Must receive academic credit from their university for the internship.
- Interns must stay the full session -- January – mid-March in even numbered years or the end of winter quarter/spring semester in odd numbered years.
- Work 40 hours per week, 8:00 – 5:00, Monday – Friday.
- Paid \$1300 per month to offset costs of moving to Olympia.
- Interns attend 3 days of Orientation and mandatory panels and academic seminars during the internship.
- Assigned to work for either 1 senate office or 2-4 House offices.
- Some House interns are assigned to both Democrat and Republican offices.
- Every effort is made to place interns in offices where they are politically comfortable and/or with similar issue interests.

- The work assigned to the interns must have academic value.
 - Interns are not allowed to run personal errands for their office or do work with no academic value such as scanning business cards, stuffing envelopes, etc.
 - Interns learn about state government, the legislative process, and gain professional work experience.
 - Interns are hired and supervised by the House and Senate Civic Education Coordinators.
4. We support We the People, YMCA Youth & Government, and other programs with use of our facilities and educational resources. We have the Legislator Back to School materials, but they are not used much. The Civic Education Program offers a week long, hands-on program, *Legislative Scholars*, for teachers to learn about the state government and the legislative process. The Civic Ed program also has a webpage that contains lesson plans, activities, and materials for a mock committee.

The Civic Education program sponsors Civic Education Day every February. Civics groups are invited to display. It is currently in transition as we review the program to redefine the goals and better meet the needs of everyone involved. As part of Civic Ed Day, teachers doing notable work in civic education are featured on our Facebook page.

5. The Legislative Information Center provides a wide variety of resources and educational materials for the public to learn about state government and the legislative process both online and in hard copy. They also teach classes on the various aspects of the legislative process – How A Bill Becomes a Law, using the bill tracking program, How to Testify in a Committee, etc. There are coloring books and activity sheets geared to different age groups. (Some could use updating.) The Civic Education Program provides information and resources for teachers and students on our webpage. This includes mock committee materials, lesson plans, and links to other helpful sites. The Civic Education Program just finished developing activities for legislators to use when visiting classrooms or other groups and are awaiting feedback

Wisconsin Senate

1. No
2. No
3. Yes. We have a Senate Page/Messenger program in which we hire Pages for part-time and full-time positions.
4. The Wisconsin State Senate runs a Senate Scholar program which brings juniors and senior high school students from around the state to spend an educational week at the Capitol, learning about our legislature and the legislative process. We also take part in the NCSL's Legislator Back to School program, and are planning to roll out a

new program that is called Page for a Day, in which students ages 12-17 can spend a day as a page in the Capitol.

5. We offer civic educational materials via our website and also have printed legislative student guides.

Wyoming House

1. No
2. Every summer, usually in June, Boys State uses the House chamber for a mock session they conduct. The number of students varies from 20-40. Last year was an unusually small session. Our LSO provides them with copies of previously considered bills and some paperwork in order to learn about the process. Any school group or organization can visit during session. We have small groups of 2-3 or groups as large as 100. We ask them to schedule their time here and it is on our web site at this link. Group Visits to the Session:
<http://legisweb.state.wy.us/LSOWEB/Participate.aspx>
3. Yes we have both a student page and an intern program. The student pages are usually from the Presiding Officer's district and are chosen by him/her or by their local high school. They are usually High School seniors so they are 18 years of age. They come and work in the chamber for 2 weeks (the maximum the school allows for their absence). They are paid while here (\$105/Day) and if from out-of-town are eligible for per diem. If it is a general session we have 4 students, budget session, 2 students. We interview them and provide them a short training session. They shadow an adult page for the first day or so until they get the flow. They are supervised by Session Staff. We recognize them at the end of their time with us and allow them to address the Chamber while in session about their experience and what they learned. They are given a State seal pin and a proclamation signed by all the Senators.
 - a. The Internship program is run by a Session person hired by our LSO. It has to be a Wyoming student but can be from a high school, Community College or University of Wyoming. Here is the link to the web site with that information: <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/LSOWEB/Internship.aspx>
4. Yes, as explained above. Project Citizen, not much has happened there as they have lost their funding. We do not do a lot with Citizen Seminars/Forums because we have not had requests to participate with them. Following is our link for Legislator Back to School program:
<http://legisweb.state.wy.us/BackToSchoolProgram/backtoschoolmain.aspx>
5. Yes, we have printed and digital information for the public. We also have age-specific coloring/workbooks that we get through NCSL. We have not developed any of our own. We have developed a Citizen's Guide and it was particularly helpful as we are in a temporary facility for a few years as our Capitol is currently being renovated. It gives an elementary guide to citizens about the process and how they can participate. Lobby and Gallery decorum and what to expect at a Standing Committee meeting are also outlined.

APPENDIX B
AASB Survey

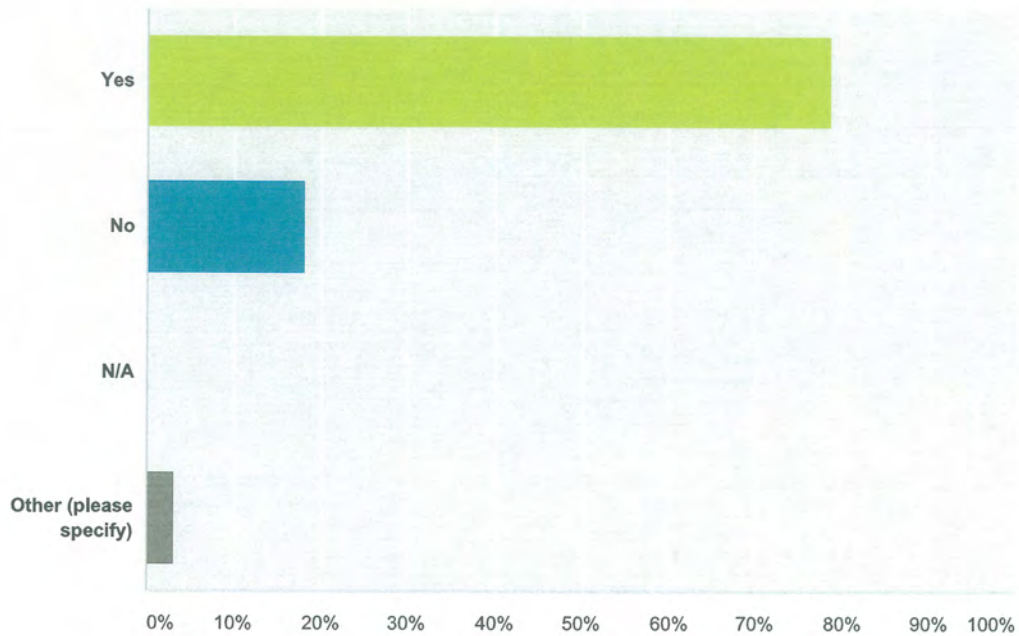
Q1 How many schools/students do you represent?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	4/412	1/4/2017 1:56 PM
2	1,275	1/3/2017 3:43 PM
3	3 schools/309 students	1/3/2017 1:32 PM
4	435	1/3/2017 1:02 PM
5	2	1/3/2017 12:52 PM
6	12/315	1/2/2017 10:35 AM
7	48,000 students	12/30/2016 8:57 AM
8	35	12/29/2016 10:08 AM
9	1 school 126 students	12/28/2016 1:45 PM
10	One school at each grade level (3) - about 630 students	12/26/2016 7:52 PM
11	1/87	12/23/2016 8:36 AM
12	3	12/22/2016 4:00 PM
13	2 schools	12/22/2016 3:01 PM
14	1/36	12/22/2016 3:01 PM
15	47 Schools and 18,815 students	12/22/2016 2:07 PM
16	700	12/22/2016 1:48 PM
17	1/120	12/22/2016 12:09 PM
18	730	12/22/2016 11:04 AM
19	1/260	12/22/2016 9:59 AM
20	1/120	12/22/2016 9:27 AM
21	8 sites, 300 students	12/22/2016 9:24 AM
22	6 schools; 800 students	12/22/2016 8:26 AM
23	44/8800	12/22/2016 7:43 AM
24	12 small schools	12/21/2016 8:42 PM
25	4 Schools/900 Students	12/21/2016 8:06 PM
26	1/10	12/21/2016 6:39 PM
27	1900	12/21/2016 5:39 PM
28	1/100	12/21/2016 5:39 PM
29	10/2035	12/21/2016 5:32 PM
30	12	12/21/2016 5:11 PM
31	4 schools/424 students	12/21/2016 3:01 PM
32	one school, approximately 115-120 students	12/21/2016 2:43 PM
33	4/340	12/21/2016 2:35 PM
34	300 students	12/21/2016 2:10 PM

Q2 Is civics/American democracy/citizenship incorporated as part of the elementary grade (K-5) course of study?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 1

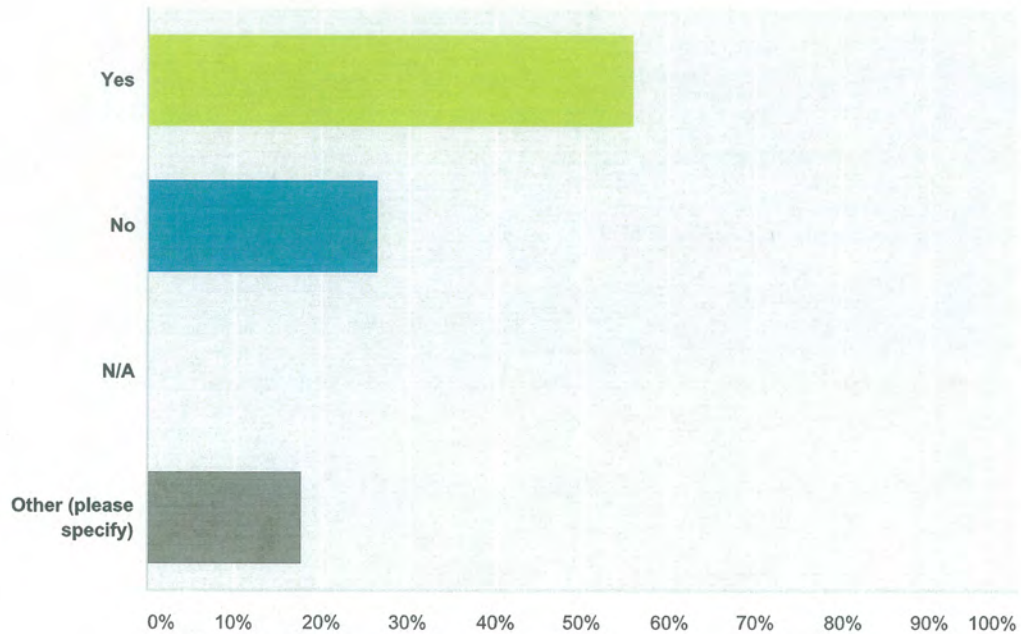


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	78.79%	26
No	18.18%	6
N/A	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	3.03%	1
Total		33

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Western Hemisphere History and Geo in 4th, US Historian 5th (United States History: (up to 1900) New Nation, Western Expansion, Nation Divided, & Rebirth of a Nation (Includes Geography & Civics), and 6th (Twentieth Century U. S. History)	12/30/2016 8:57 AM

Q3 Does your school district have a required civics/American democracy/citizenship course in grades 6-12?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 0

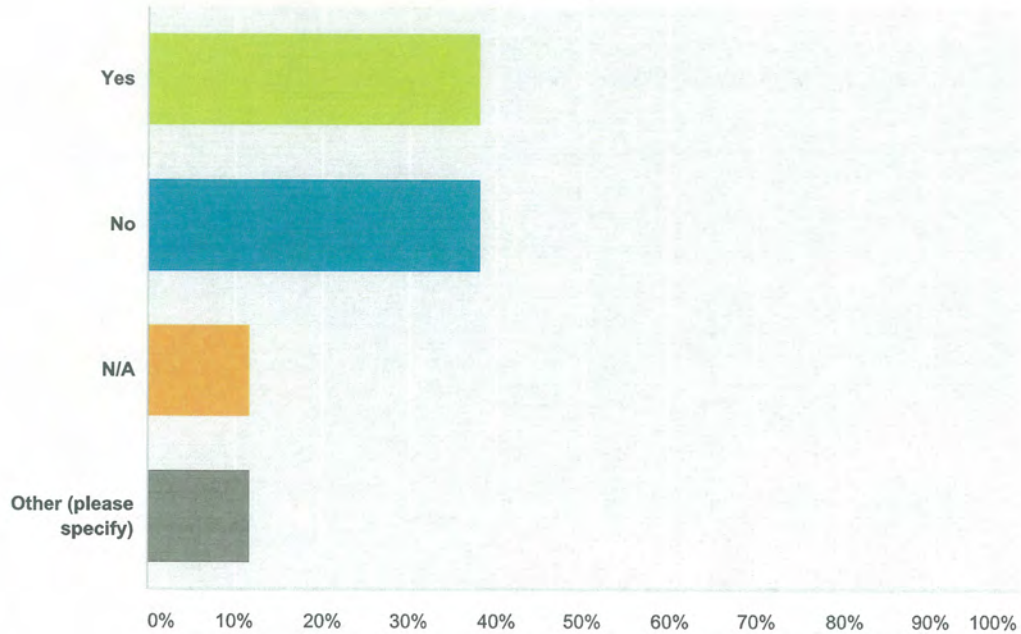


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	55.88%	19
No	26.47%	9
N/A	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	17.65%	6
Total		34

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	US history in 8th and 10th, US Gov't in 11th or 12th	12/30/2016 8:57 AM
2	We require American Government and US History, but not Civics specifically.	12/29/2016 10:08 AM
3	part of Government class	12/22/2016 3:01 PM
4	Incorporated as part of other courses	12/22/2016 9:27 AM
5	US History is required and incorporates much of this.	12/22/2016 8:26 AM
6	Required Standards	12/21/2016 2:35 PM

Q4 Does your school district have an elective civics/American democracy/citizenship course in grades 6-12?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 0

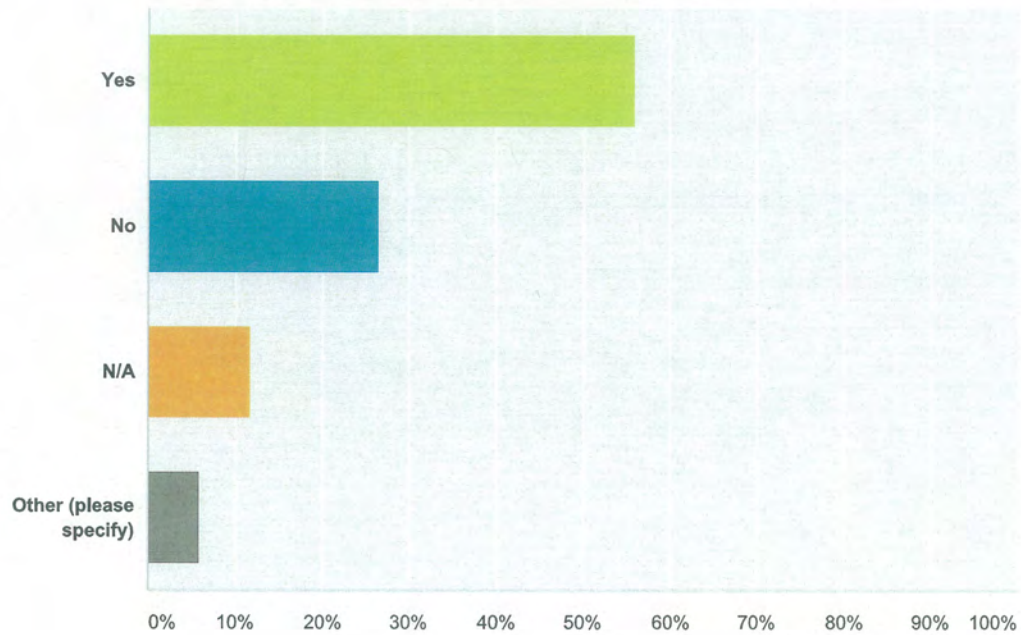


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	38.24%	13
No	38.24%	13
N/A	11.76%	4
Other (please specify)	11.76%	4
Total		34

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	We have various electives which include components but not Civics as a stand alone course.	12/29/2016 10:08 AM
2	Incorporated as part of other courses.	12/22/2016 9:27 AM
3	US history in 8th grade and again in 10th are both required courses	12/22/2016 8:26 AM
4	Required Standards	12/21/2016 2:35 PM

Q5 Is civics/American democracy/citizenship incorporated as part of another course in grades 6-12?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	55.88%	19
No	26.47%	9
N/A	11.76%	4
Other (please specify)	5.88%	2
Total		34

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	US HISTORY	1/3/2017 1:32 PM
2	Teen Leadership	12/21/2016 5:39 PM

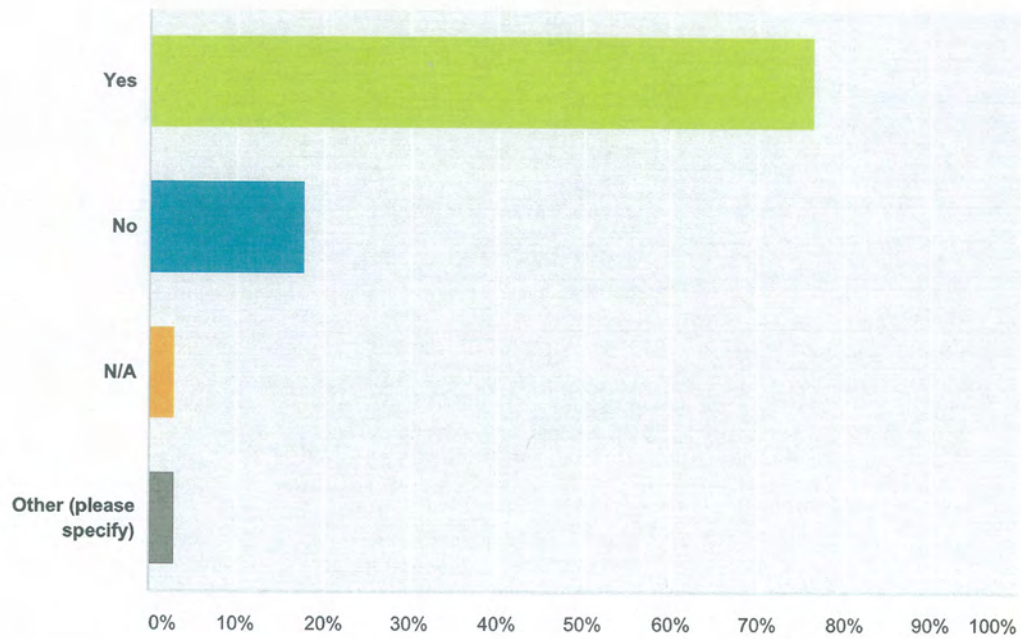
Q6 If you answered Yes to question #5, what course(s)?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 13

#	Responses	Date
1	US History	1/3/2017 1:32 PM
2	Several, civics, American democracy, and citizenship can and are integrated into all types of courses. We are Americans and we want our students to learn about and be contributing citizens.	1/3/2017 12:52 PM
3	US History and other electives	12/30/2016 8:57 AM
4	US History, Am. Government, Current Events and Issues, We the People,	12/29/2016 10:08 AM
5	US History (twice)	12/26/2016 7:52 PM
6	High School Correspondence Course/CloseUp	12/23/2016 8:36 AM
7	US History & Alaska History	12/22/2016 3:01 PM
8	American Government	12/22/2016 3:01 PM
9	Grade 6 Western Hemisphere: stewardship with environment; Grade 7 Eastern Hemisphere: 21st Century Skills; Grade 8 U.S. History: Founding documents; Grade 10 World History: Politics, world religions, cultural acceptance; Grade 11 U.S. History: Foundations and Supreme Court; Grade 12 AK History and U.S. Government: constitutional convention and duties of citizenship	12/22/2016 2:07 PM
10	US Government	12/22/2016 1:48 PM
11	U.S. Government	12/22/2016 11:04 AM
12	US History, Governement, Alaska History	12/22/2016 9:59 AM
13	History/Social Studies	12/22/2016 9:27 AM
14	US History 8th and 10th grades; also offer an HS Govt elective	12/22/2016 8:26 AM
15	Current Events	12/21/2016 8:42 PM
16	Social Studies	12/21/2016 8:06 PM
17	Several courses. It comes up frequently.	12/21/2016 6:39 PM
18	Civics	12/21/2016 5:39 PM
19	U.S. History	12/21/2016 5:11 PM
20	NA	12/21/2016 2:35 PM
21	Current world problems	12/21/2016 2:10 PM

Q7 Does your school district have a specific course or unit of a course where Alaska and local government are taught?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	76.47%	26
No	17.65%	6
N/A	2.94%	1
Other (please specify)	2.94%	1
Total		34

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Required Standards	12/21/2016 2:35 PM

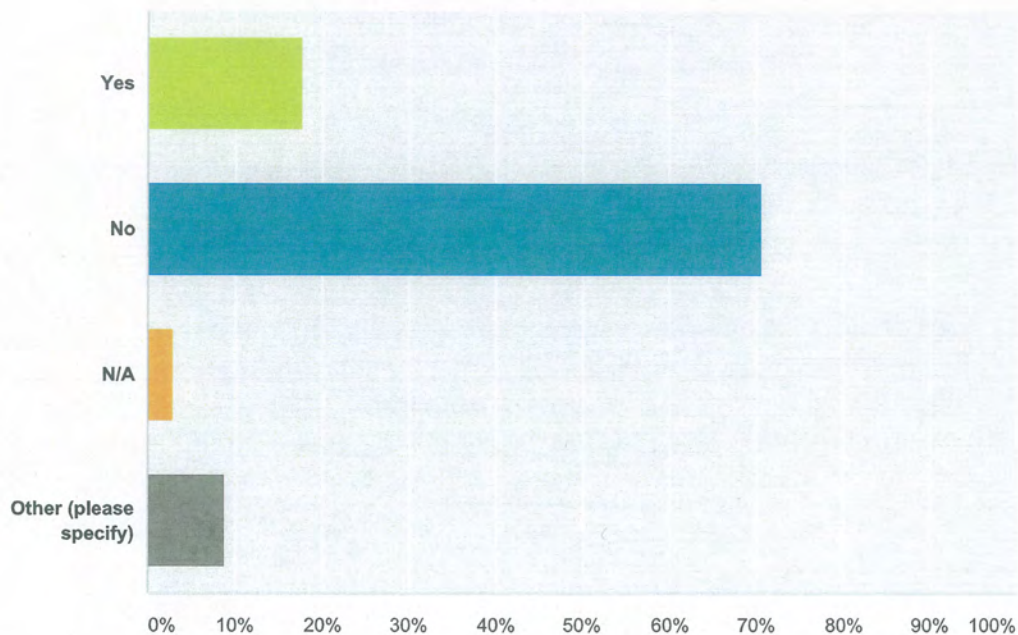
Q8 If you answered Yes to question #7, what course(s)?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 7

#	Responses	Date
1	Alaska History	1/4/2017 1:56 PM
2	Alaska Studies	1/3/2017 3:43 PM
3	Alaska History	1/3/2017 1:32 PM
4	Alaska History and American Government	1/3/2017 1:02 PM
5	Alaska Studies and Student Leadership/Government	1/3/2017 12:52 PM
6	It's standards based - not a class	1/2/2017 10:35 AM
7	K-1: Self, Home, School, and Neighborhood With Connections to Larger Spheres. Grade 2: Anchorage Past & Present Grade 3: Alaska (Geography & History;) High School required course: Alaska Studies	12/30/2016 8:57 AM
8	Alaska Studies is required for graduation	12/29/2016 10:08 AM
9	Alaska History	12/26/2016 7:52 PM
10	Alaska History	12/23/2016 8:36 AM
11	Social Studies	12/22/2016 4:00 PM
12	Alaska History	12/22/2016 3:01 PM
13	Alaska History	12/22/2016 3:01 PM
14	Grade 4 Social Studies focuses on local government and Alaska History teaches the Alaskan Constitution, U.S. Government covers local, state, and national	12/22/2016 2:07 PM
15	Alaska History	12/22/2016 1:48 PM
16	Alaska History	12/22/2016 9:59 AM
17	ANILCA	12/22/2016 9:24 AM
18	AK History	12/22/2016 8:26 AM
19	Alaska Studies	12/22/2016 7:43 AM
20	Alaska History	12/21/2016 8:42 PM
21	AK history	12/21/2016 6:39 PM
22	Tribal Government	12/21/2016 5:39 PM
23	Alaska history	12/21/2016 5:39 PM
24	Alaska / Inupiaq studies	12/21/2016 5:11 PM
25	Alaskan History	12/21/2016 2:43 PM
26	NA	12/21/2016 2:35 PM
27	Alaska history	12/21/2016 2:10 PM

Q9 Does your district have a law-related education course?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 0

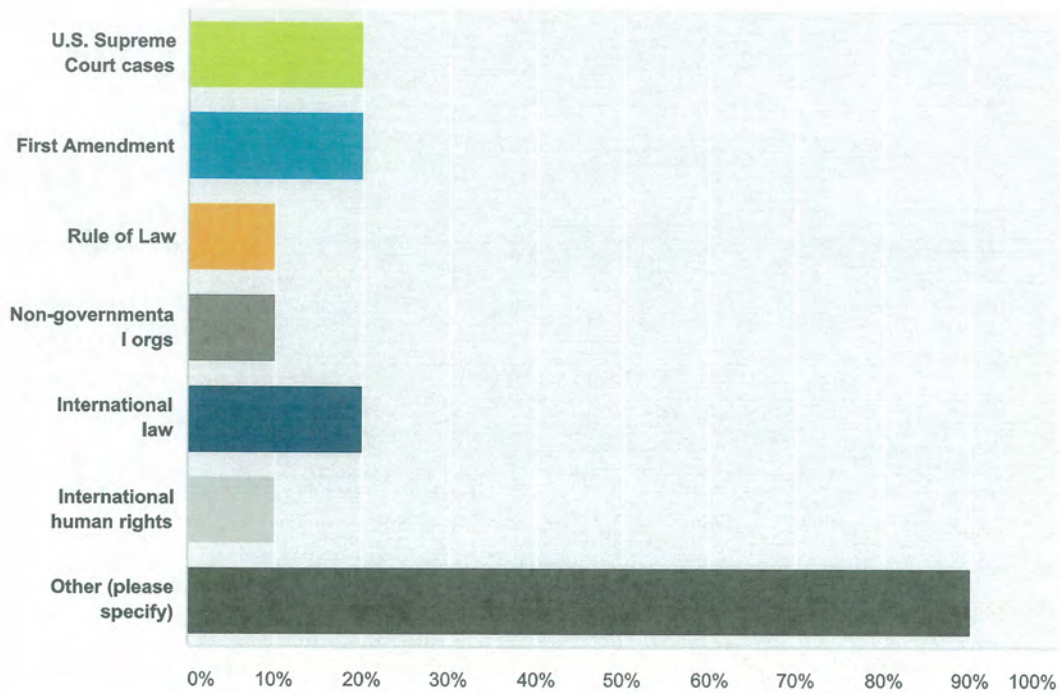


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	17.65%	6
No	70.59%	24
N/A	2.94%	1
Other (please specify)	8.82%	3
Total		34

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	CIVICS/Government	1/3/2017 1:32 PM
2	integrated into the American Gov. course	1/3/2017 1:02 PM
3	I'm not sure what you're specifically asking	1/3/2017 12:52 PM

Q10 If you answered Yes to question #9, which course(s):

Answered: 10 Skipped: 24

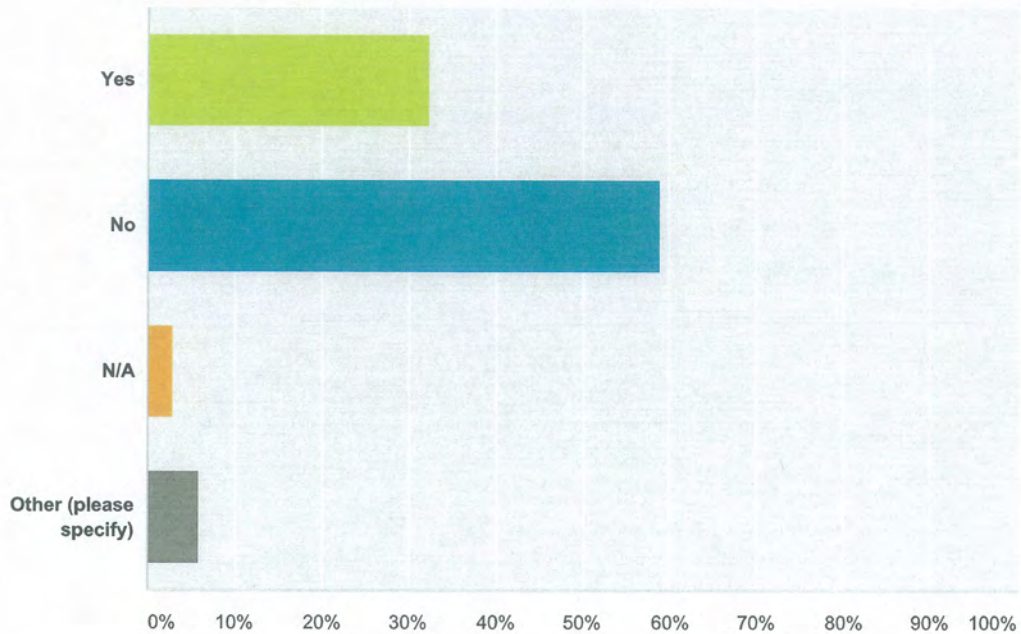


Answer Choices	Responses
U.S. Supreme Court cases	20.00% 2
First Amendment	20.00% 2
Rule of Law	10.00% 1
Non-governmental orgs	10.00% 1
International law	20.00% 2
International human rights	10.00% 1
Other (please specify)	90.00% 9
Total Respondents: 10	

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Civics and Government	1/4/2017 1:56 PM
2	Government	1/3/2017 1:32 PM
3	Many of these are touched on to varying degrees	1/3/2017 12:52 PM
4	Criminology, Anchorage Youth Court (bar exam courses)	12/30/2016 8:57 AM
5	American Legal Systems, We the People	12/29/2016 10:08 AM
6	Law Related Studies	12/22/2016 2:07 PM
7	Government at the HS level is an elective	12/22/2016 8:26 AM
8	Criminal Justice	12/22/2016 7:43 AM

Q11 Does your district have a character education program that includes a civic education component?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 0

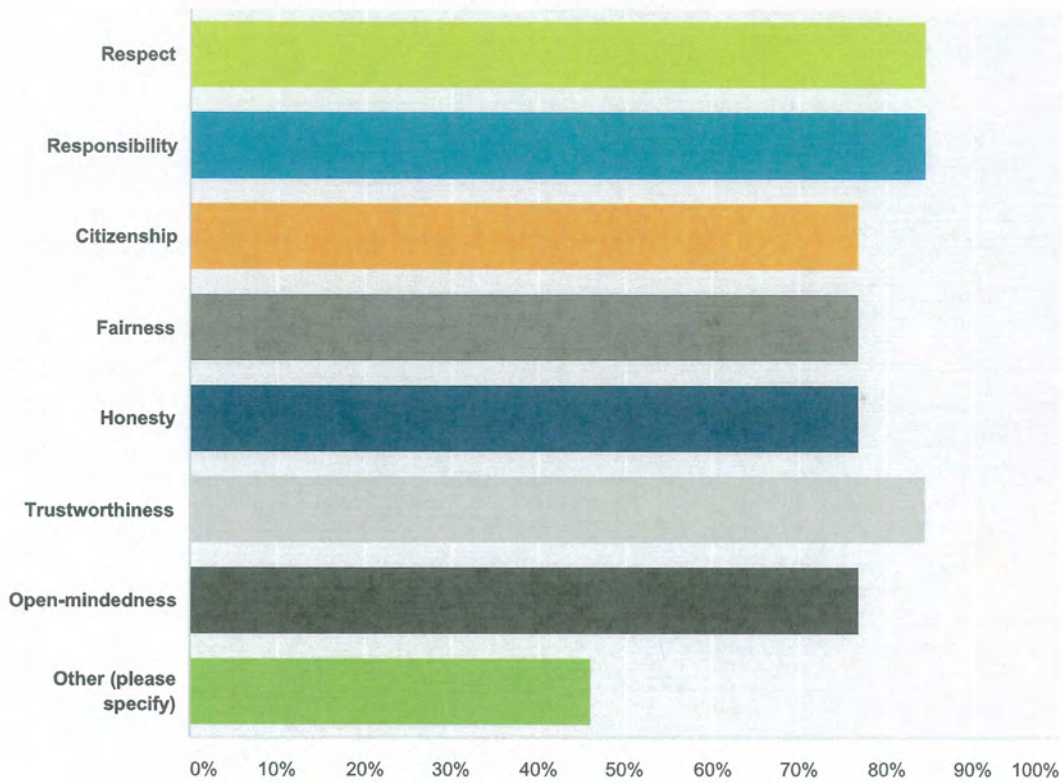


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	32.35%	11
No	58.82%	20
N/A	2.94%	1
Other (please specify)	5.88%	2
Total		34

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	We have components of civics education in our Advisory periods at middle and high school.	12/29/2016 10:08 AM
2	It is incorporated into an active student government that includes the entire student body and a district wide Positivew Behavior Support initiative that includes training of many of these topics. Our counselor also teaches lessons on these subjects at every grade level.	12/22/2016 9:59 AM

Q12 If you answered Yes to question 11, which topics are taught:

Answered: 13 Skipped: 21



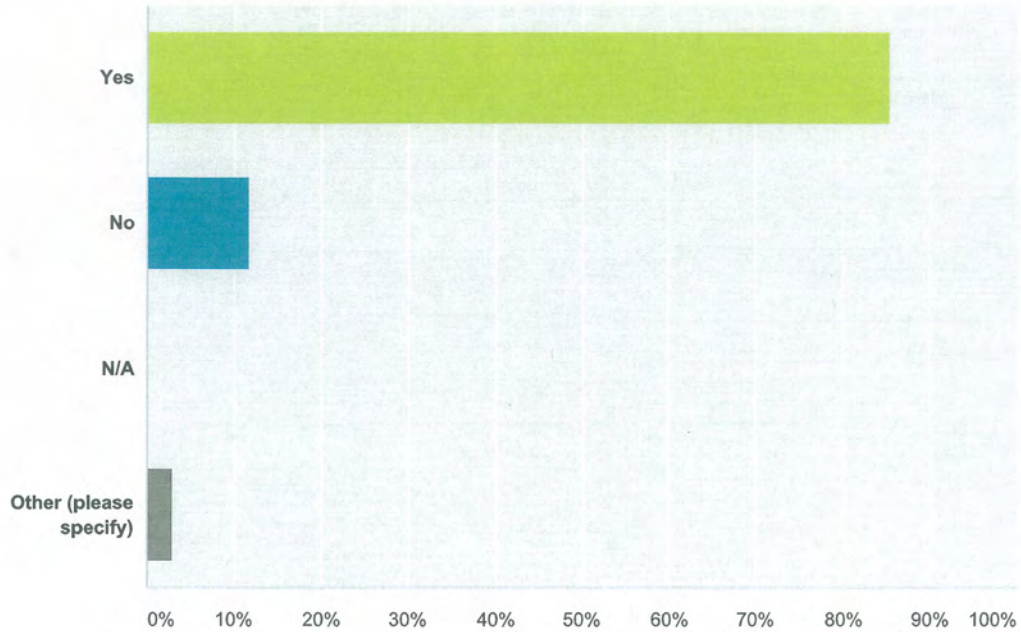
Answer Choices	Responses	
Respect	84.62%	11
Responsibility	84.62%	11
Citizenship	76.92%	10
Fairness	76.92%	10
Honesty	76.92%	10
Trustworthiness	84.62%	11
Open-mindedness	76.92%	10
Other (please specify)	46.15%	6
Total Respondents: 13		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Tenacity, Resiliency, Appreciation, Kindness, Safety	1/3/2017 12:52 PM
2	We have employability standards inwhich this is all hit.	1/2/2017 10:35 AM
3	Authority, Diversity, Freedom, Privacy, Property, Economics	12/30/2016 8:57 AM
4	Digital Citizenship, anti bullying, being a member of a community	12/29/2016 10:08 AM

5	Taught in all courses	12/21/2016 6:39 PM
6	Habits of Mind, Growth Mindset, Fish Principals, etc.	12/21/2016 2:35 PM

Q13 1. Does your district include current issues or current events in any social studies course?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 0

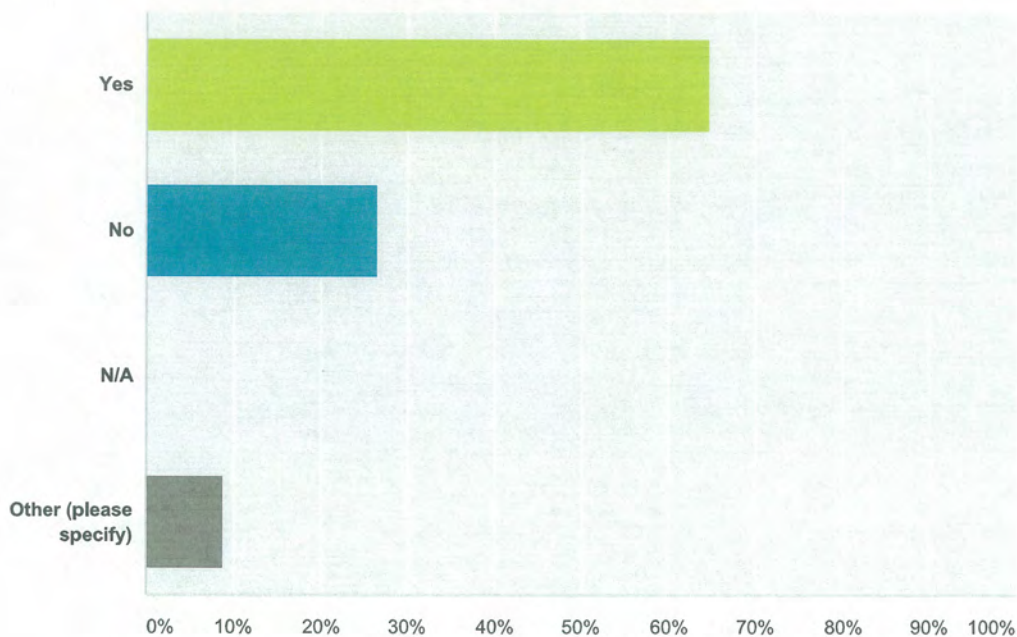


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	85.29%	29
No	11.76%	4
N/A	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	2.94%	1
Total		34

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Not as a district. Some teachers incorporate it.	12/21/2016 3:01 PM

Q14 Are civic education projects or simulations part of your social studies curriculum?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 0

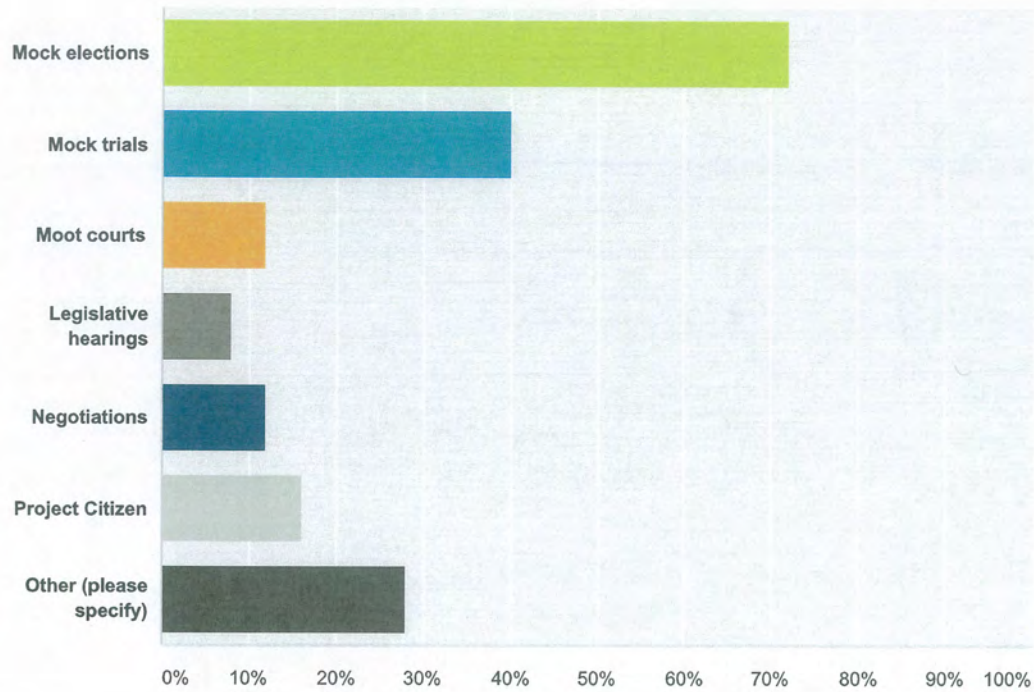


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	64.71%	22
No	26.47%	9
N/A	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	8.82%	3
Total		34

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Not certain	12/21/2016 5:11 PM
2	Not as a district, but some teachers do so.	12/21/2016 3:01 PM
3	Required Standards	12/21/2016 2:35 PM

Q15 If you answered Yes to question #14, what types of projects:

Answered: 25 Skipped: 9

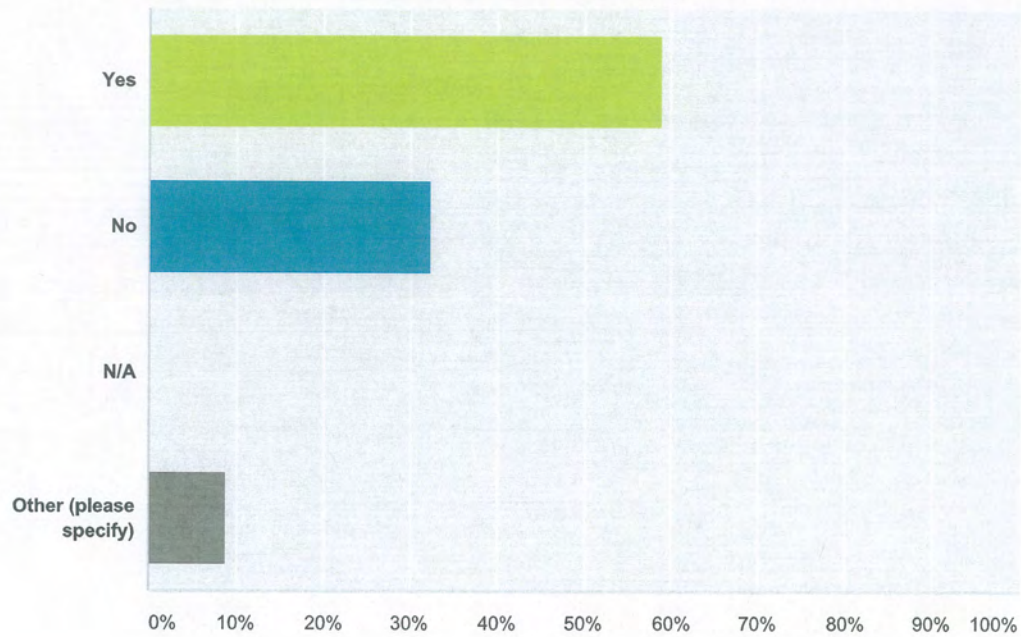


Answer Choices	Responses	
Mock elections	72.00%	18
Mock trials	40.00%	10
Moot courts	12.00%	3
Legislative hearings	8.00%	2
Negotiations	12.00%	3
Project Citizen	16.00%	4
Other (please specify)	28.00%	7
Total Respondents: 25		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Community Civic Engagement projects; Youth Court	1/4/2017 1:56 PM
2	Relevant, meaningful projects developed by students	1/3/2017 12:52 PM
3	etc...	1/2/2017 10:35 AM
4	Model UN, We the People, Candidate Forums during elections	12/29/2016 10:08 AM
5	History Day	12/22/2016 9:59 AM
6	Guest speakers with historic artifacts.	12/21/2016 3:01 PM
7	Real Life and Simulation Projects	12/21/2016 2:35 PM

Q16 Is your school district involved in co-curricular or extracurricular civic education programs?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 0

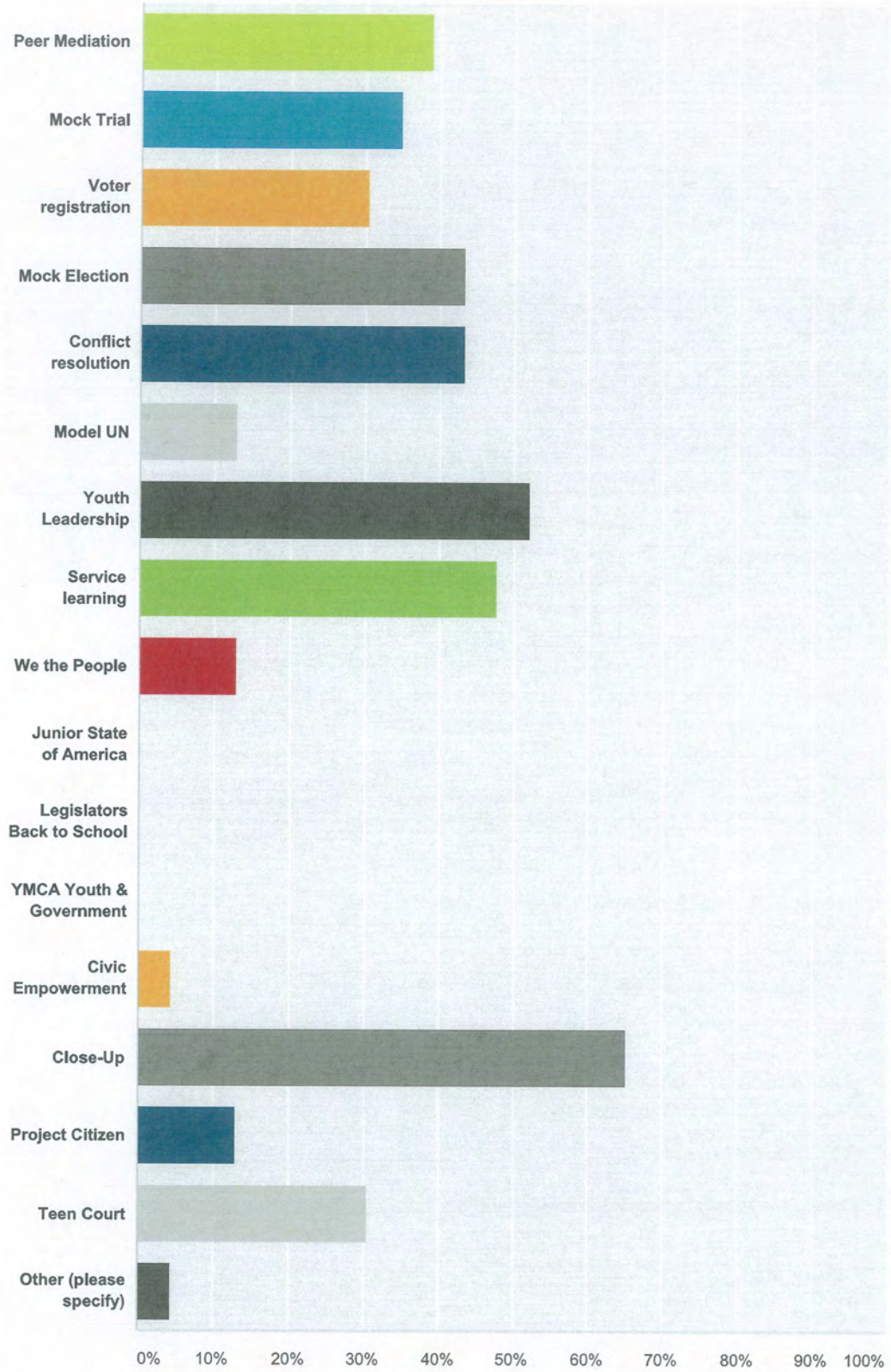


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	58.82%	20
No	32.35%	11
N/A	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	8.82%	3
Total		34

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	CloseUp Washington DC	12/23/2016 8:36 AM
2	Student government	12/21/2016 5:11 PM
3	Required Standards	12/21/2016 2:35 PM

**Q17 If you answered Yes to question #16,
which if any of the following extra-
curricular activities:**

Answered: 23 Skipped: 11



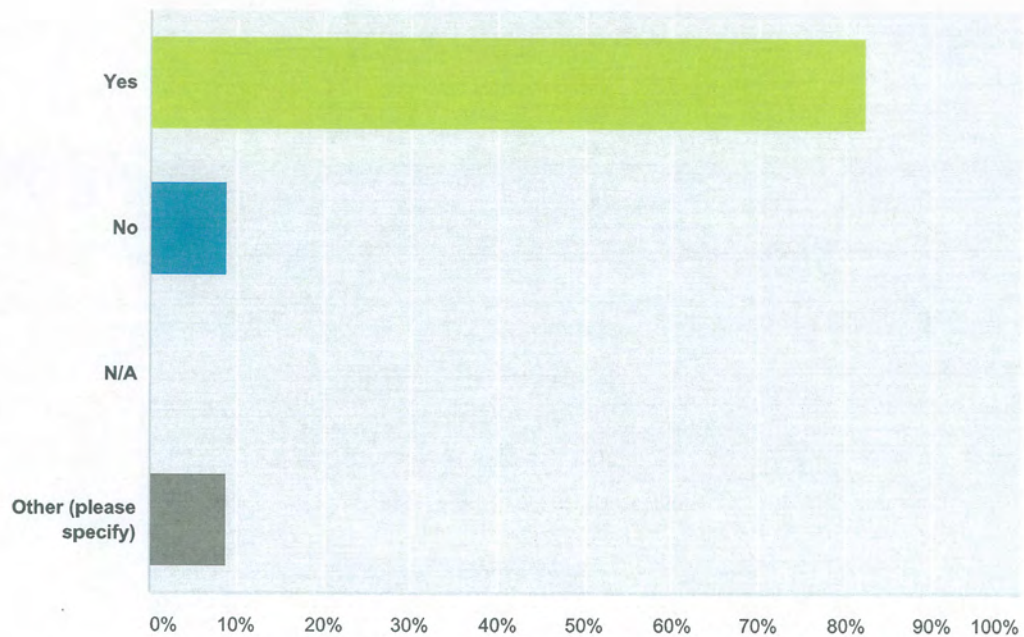
Answer Choices	Responses	
Peer Mediation	39.13%	9
Mock Trial	34.78%	8

Voter registration	30.43%	7
Mock Election	43.48%	10
Conflict resolution	43.48%	10
Model UN	13.04%	3
Youth Leadership	52.17%	12
Service learning	47.83%	11
We the People	13.04%	3
Junior State of America	0.00%	0
Legislators Back to School	0.00%	0
YMCA Youth & Government	0.00%	0
Civic Empowerment	4.35%	1
Close-Up	65.22%	15
Project Citizen	13.04%	3
Teen Court	30.43%	7
Other (please specify)	4.35%	1
Total Respondents: 23		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Associated Student Body-student government	1/3/2017 1:02 PM

Q18 Are your students involved in their own school governance?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 0

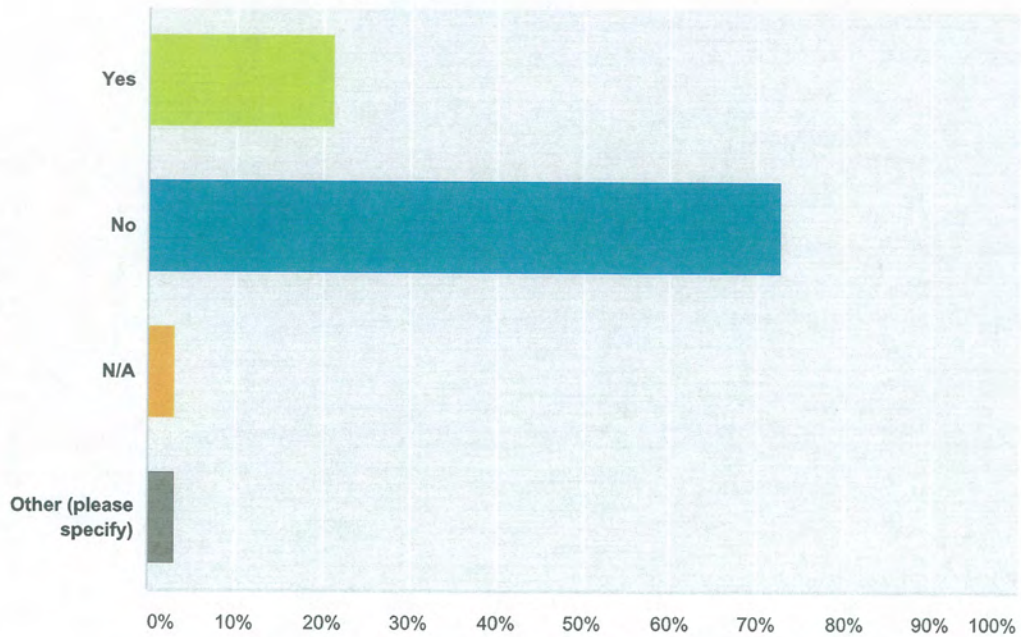


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	82.35%	28
No	8.82%	3
N/A	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	8.82%	3
Total		34

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	student government in schools, Student Advisory board districtwide (secondary) and ASOG	12/30/2016 8:57 AM
2	student interest determines when students get involved	12/22/2016 3:01 PM
3	Some	12/21/2016 5:39 PM

Q19 Has your school district offered any in-service workshops on civic education?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 1

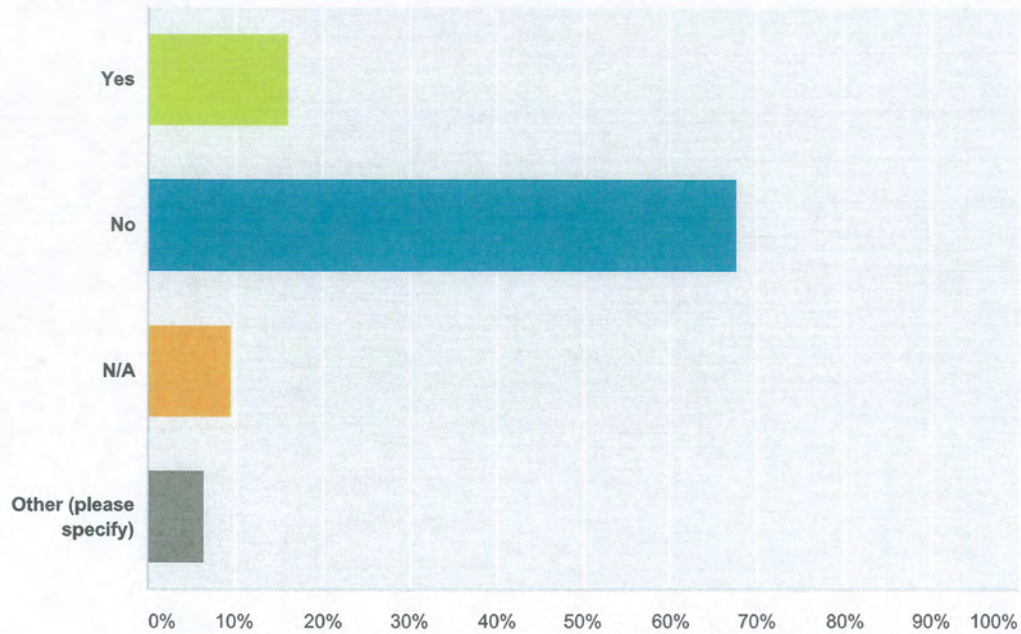


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	21.21%	7
No	72.73%	24
N/A	3.03%	1
Other (please specify)	3.03%	1
Total		33

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Integrated with other training content areas	12/21/2016 2:35 PM

Q20 Do you have a civic education course, program or unit that you think is exemplary?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 3

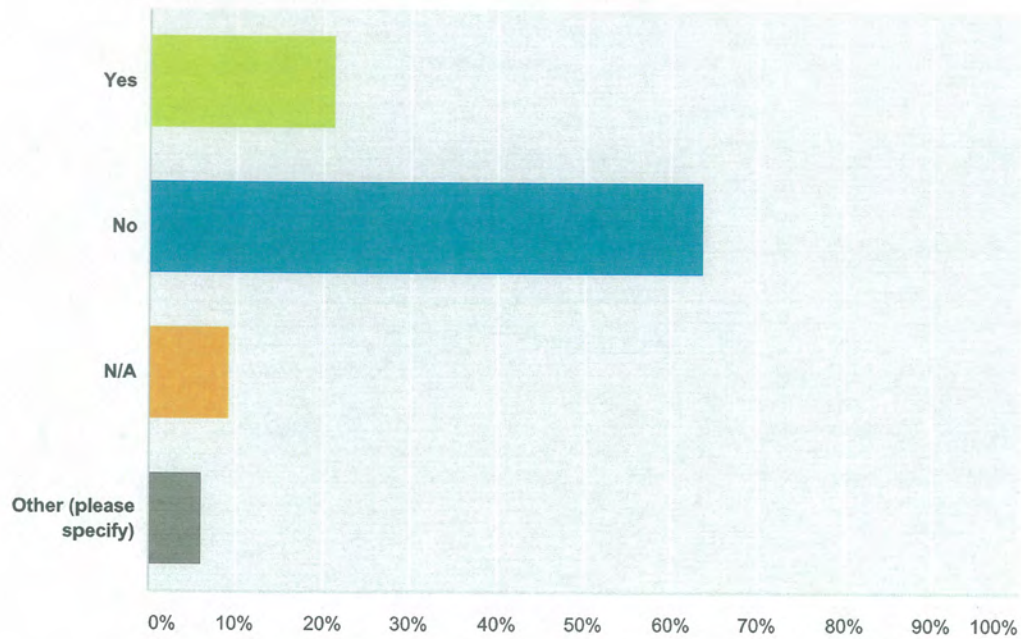


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	16.13%	5
No	67.74%	21
N/A	9.68%	3
Other (please specify)	6.45%	2
Total		31

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	CSD's Performance-based Standards in Civic and Government	1/4/2017 1:56 PM
2	Veterans Appreciation	12/21/2016 6:39 PM

Q21 Does your school district have a social studies supervisor?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 1

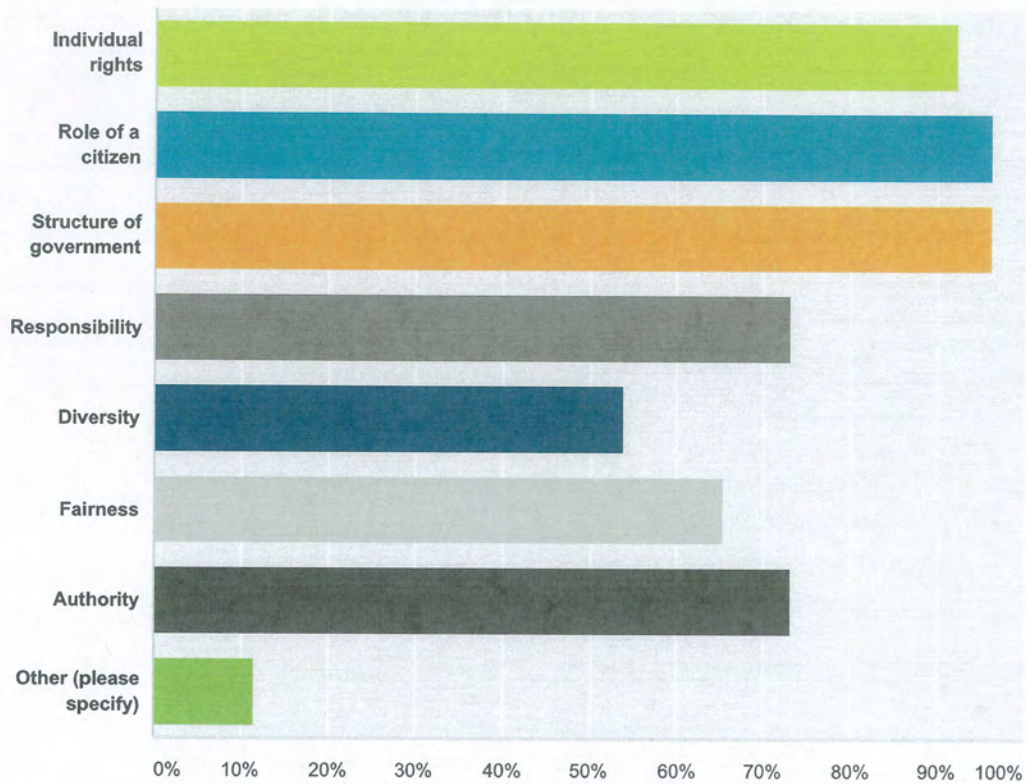


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	21.21% 7
No	63.64% 21
N/A	9.09% 3
Other (please specify)	6.06% 2
Total	33

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	due to budget cuts, we are down to 4 district office staff including the superintendent	12/21/2016 5:32 PM
2	We're lucky to have social studies teachers. The Director of Curriculum supervises all course content	12/21/2016 5:11 PM

Q22 Which of the following topics are included in the required or elective civics, American democracy or citizenship course or integrated in another course of study:

Answered: 26 Skipped: 8

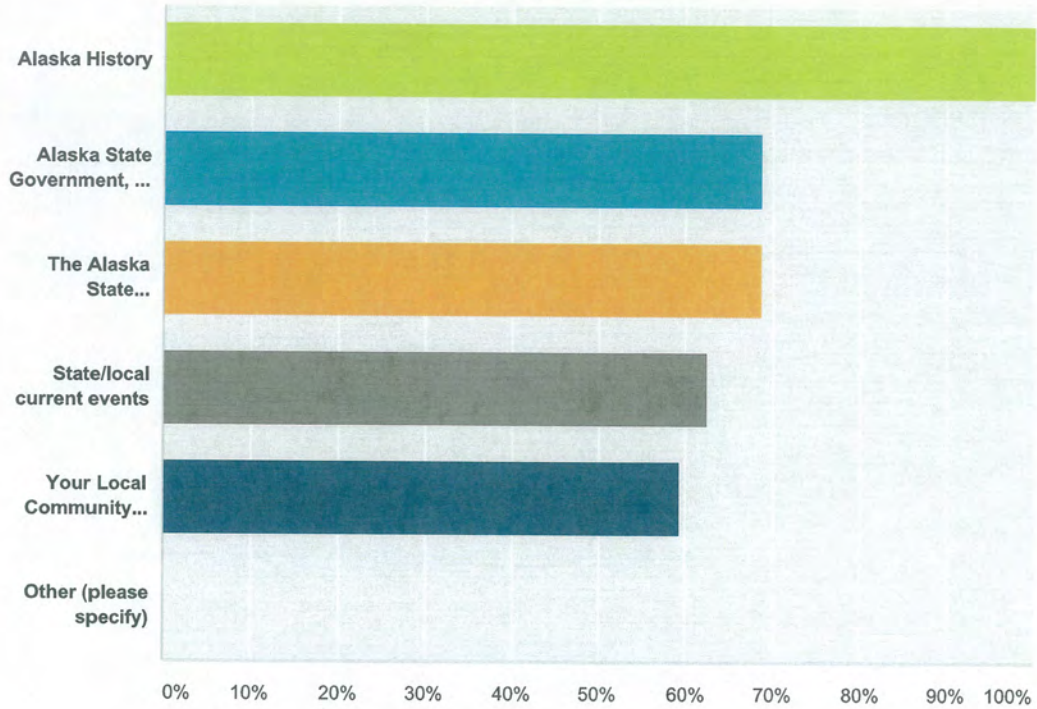


Answer Choices	Responses	
Individual rights	92.31%	24
Role of a citizen	96.15%	25
Structure of government	96.15%	25
Responsibility	73.08%	19
Diversity	53.85%	14
Fairness	65.38%	17
Authority	73.08%	19
Other (please specify)	11.54%	3
Total Respondents: 26		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	democratic process, Robert's Rules of Order	1/3/2017 12:52 PM
2	Free market system.	12/21/2016 6:39 PM
3	Dk	12/21/2016 2:10 PM

Q23 Does your district have a course or unit that include[s] information about the following topics? (check those that apply)

Answered: 32 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses
Alaska History	100.00% 32
Alaska State Government, the Legislature, Court System, and Governor	68.75% 22
The Alaska State Constitution	68.75% 22
State/local current events	62.50% 20
Your Local Community Government	59.38% 19
Other (please specify)	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 32	

#	Other (please specify)	Date
	There are no responses.	

Q24 There is some interest in adding a requirement that all Alaskan students must pass the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Naturalization Test in order to graduate from high school. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of such a requirement?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 2

#	Responses	Date
1	Strength: information is good to know; Weakness: there are other ways to gain the knowledge besides a test; also any students with special needs (ELL, SPED) may struggle with testing	1/4/2017 1:56 PM
2	Weaknesses: 1) The naturalization test is duplicative, as students already have to pass a course/demonstrate mastery of citizenship standards set out by the state of Alaska in order to graduate; 2) the work needed to document and administer the naturalization test would take away from existing citizenship curriculum and learning activities, as well as cost districts resources including but not limited to data systems and staff time; and 3) this would be yet another unfunded mandate (let alone an unnecessary unfunded mandate) on school districts that strips away local control of our curriculum and controls our expenditures of funds. Strengths: Could serve to unite various civics-related organizations (e.g., court system, education, legislature), as they work on/communication about a common goal.	1/3/2017 3:43 PM
3	I don't feel it is necessary or appropriate to use a naturalization/immigration test as a measurement to graduate from High School. I feel it could be a benefit for students to be aware of the test and possibly incorporate it into the classes taught, but I oppose using any one test as a measure to graduate.	1/3/2017 1:32 PM
4	I am against it. The high school exit exam we had for a while did not prove competency of material. The state government needs to let teachers do their job and stop micromanaging their content.	1/3/2017 1:02 PM
5	Passing a test doesn't make for a good citizen. A good citizen is one who is engaged and sees that government on all levels invites participation. A test is an easy way out and at best a "sound bite" for those who pass that type of Legislation. A better way would be to collaborate and build an educational system of meaningful civic engagement at all levels of government, which is much harder to do. Simple solutions are not often meaningful ones.	1/3/2017 12:52 PM
6	Just another hoop much like the HSGQE to be later repealed after in negatively impacts students.	1/2/2017 10:35 AM
7	They are often included in the course, but passage is not a requirement for course completion and shouldn't be. I think EVERY elected official (including me) should have to taken this test and have the results published in the newspaper!!!	12/30/2016 8:57 AM
8	I think a clear purpose would need to be identified with a clear goal. Is that test the best way to determine if our students are good citizens of this modern world? I think current issues like "fake news" and the role of the electoral college are critical for today's youth but the Naturalization Test doesn't necessarily get at those. In addition, issues around diversity, respect and tolerance have taken on nuances they didn't previously have. The question, "What makes a good citizen" isn't as clearly answered today, as our students have to decide issues around lawful dissent and the protection of the rights of the minority.	12/29/2016 10:08 AM
9	Not interested at all. We have enough mandates to deal with.	12/28/2016 1:45 PM
10	There will be teaching to the test - the material may not fit comfortably in any one course but may be placed in one, displacing something else. I do not know what is in the naturalization test , now or in the future. Giving our curriculum decisions over to an outside group who is dealing with a group that may have totally different needs and priorities does not appeal.	12/26/2016 7:52 PM
11	Not a requirement but an Endorsement and automatic scholarship to college or training program	12/23/2016 8:36 AM
12	We finally shed the HSGQE as a graduation requirement. Adding another requirement that special needs students could never pass is a disservice to them. Unless every aspect of it was fully-funded by the Legislature every year, it would be another unfunded mandate that we are trying to do away with. No strengths to adding yet another test to take away time in the classroom and student learning.	12/22/2016 3:01 PM
13	The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Naturalization test has a specific purpose. It should not be used as a way to keep students from graduation. One test should never have that type of power over years of preparation. What is on that one test does not make a student a better person, more marketable, or able to succeed in life.	12/22/2016 3:01 PM

14	While we agree that a fundamental knowledge of principles of American democracy, system of government, rights and responsibilities, history, geography, and symbols is important for every citizen, we do not see a benefit to creating an exit exam based on rote memorization of facts. The U.S. Citizenship test is used as a formative assessment in the required Civics course in the MSBSD, and all students are expected to pass the 100 question version of this test. That being said, it would not keep a student from graduating if they passed the course. Exit exams must be equitable, and include accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities or English Language Learners. It's just not as simple as giving the test to all students. Making this a graduation requirement does not ensure students will have the knowledge and skills to be informed, active citizens.	12/22/2016 2:07 PM
15	No; it would be a specific requirement of curriculum that is already embedded in our district. Reading proficiency and postsecondary success are more important.	12/22/2016 1:48 PM
16	What would be the purpose of this testing?	12/22/2016 12:09 PM
17	It is yet another unfunded mandate that would be inconsistently applied between districts. When our students are academically performing at 49th in the nation we should be focusing on the core curriculum instead of wasting time on dogmatic policies pushed by organizations like ALEC.	12/22/2016 11:04 AM
18	1. Tests fail to capture understanding 2. We just started easing off of tests at the request of the Alaskan voters, How will they feel about another test? 3. How is it being paid for? Another unfunded mandate in an era of fiscal contraction? 4. We already test for understanding, evaluation is used for growth, not as a consequence. It should be a ladder, not a hammer.	12/22/2016 9:59 AM
19	Strength: It would put a focus on citizenship. Weaknesses: it would add an additional fiscal burden to districts in developing curriculum, training teachers, allocating class time and implementing testing. It would also inequitably impact districts with fewer fiscal and personnel resources to implement this requirement.	12/22/2016 9:27 AM
20	I will need time to consider the pros and cons.	12/22/2016 9:24 AM
21	No. My reasons are too many to list on this small space	12/22/2016 8:26 AM
22	A one-time, required test will not produce better citizens. I would have thought we learned that the HSGQE did not guarantee a student was ready for college or careers. Why would this test ensure our students are better citizens? If possible, relevant opportunities for students must be formulated. A test won't make students participate or better understand how our government works. Appropriate modeling and availability for students by legislators would be much more effective.	12/22/2016 7:43 AM
23	No unfunded mandates.	12/21/2016 8:42 PM
24	No interest in this. It is just one more unfunded mandate.	12/21/2016 6:39 PM
25	Added regulations that serve no purpose.	12/21/2016 5:39 PM
26	I think it should be part of a class for a grade, not a graduation requirement	12/21/2016 5:39 PM
27	Unfunded mandate that will not change the low level of civic awareness in rural Alaska. It will be one more test on which Alaska Native students will not do well. Resources will be taken away from math and other courses.	12/21/2016 5:32 PM
28	No	12/21/2016 5:11 PM
29	I have given the citizenship test to students in my University of Alaska US History courses who have failed. The test is based on things taught in elementary school. It should be a minimum requirement, but kids should know so much more!	12/21/2016 3:01 PM
30	I can see benefits from this, but I also can see many disadvantages. I can see how in small remote areas where students haven't been exposed to many outside areas where they may not know how the rest of the world works, even in larger urban areas and how some students may experience a huge cultural shock. It would be interesting to see that we test them to see how they would score and maybe use this as a learning tool to help further educate our children before they get out of high school.	12/21/2016 2:43 PM
31	Another unfunded mandate	12/21/2016 2:35 PM
32	No more required tests, please.	12/21/2016 2:10 PM

Alaska
Legislative Task Force
On
Civics Education

FINAL
REPORT

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