



Minnesota Voluntary Civic Education Self-Assessment Grades 9-12

"Knowledge of our system of governance and our rights and responsibilities as citizens is not passed along through the gene pool. Each generation of Americans must be taught these basics. Families and parents have a key role to play, yet our schools remain the one universal experience we all have to gain civic knowledge and skills. That is the civic mission of schools."
The Honorable Sandra Day O'Connor

"Civic education" describes efforts to prepare students for effective, principled citizenship. Civic education can include instruction in history and government, civics lessons on the rights and duties of citizens in a democracy, discussion of current events, service-learning, mock trials and elections, character education and other approaches. Civic education can also take place through student government, extracurricular and co-curricular activities, and by involving students in school, district and community decision making." Education Commission of the States

Purpose of this voluntary civic education self assessment

The founders of American public education intended for curricula to serve a distinctly civic purpose. We must ensure all students receive the civic knowledge and skills necessary for informed and engaged participation in our democracy. How civics is taught matters a great deal. Through this voluntary assessment of civic education in Minnesota schools, we hope to aid in the evaluation of civic education curriculum and extracurricular activities so that schools can develop steps to take to improve the civic education of their students.

The items in this assessment are designed to provide details about civic education in our schools, with specific attention given to the six proven practices that constitute a well-rounded and high-quality civic education experience. The publication "Guidebook: Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning " details what these practices entail and the research demonstrating the advantages of each. https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Six-proven-practices-update_r2.pdf

The civics content and skills sections are taken directly from the Minnesota Standards in Social Studies.

PART ONE

How does your school stack up? Is your school providing high-quality civic education for your students?

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| I am a (choose all that apply) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Administrator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Curriculum Coordinator/Director |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | District Official |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | School Board Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (student, parent, community member, etc.) |

COURSES

Required Course(s). At what grade are courses in civics, government, or citizenship REQUIRED? What is the course length?

| Grade 9 | Grade 10 | Grade 11 | Grade 12 | Course Length |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Year-long course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Semester course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trimester course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Two trimester course |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No course in civics, government, or citizenship grades 9-12 is required. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Students are allowed to test out of required civics/government course. |

Courses offered. At what grade level(s) are courses in civics or government OFFERED in the school you are reviewing? Check all that apply, complete as many grade levels as needed.

| Grade 9 | Grade 10 | Grade 11 | Grade 12 | Description of Course |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Year-long course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Semester course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trimester course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Two trimester course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Year-long Advanced Placement, honors, or International Baccalaureate course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Semester course Advanced Placement, honors, or International Baccalaureate course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trimester course Advanced Placement, honors, or International Baccalaureate course |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Two trimester course Advanced Placement, honors, or International Baccalaureate course |

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|--|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| | | | | Year-long elective course |
| | | | | Semester elective course |
| | | | | Trimester elective course |
| | | | | Two trimester elective course |

Integrated Courses

Is formal education in US Government, Civics, Citizenship incorporated into the curriculum of another course? Is it a required course?

| Yes | No | Grade Level | 1 credit | .5 credit | Name of Course | Required? |
|-----|----|-------------|----------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
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EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS

Civic learning takes place through broad range of activities--some in formal classrooms settings and some in more informal settings, both within and outside of schools. Does the school offer extracurricular programs that support civic education? Please check all offered.

| Extracurricular/Community Opportunities (room to add) | Not offered | Offered with low participation | Offered with moderate participation | Offered with high participation | I don't know/does not apply |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Student Council/Student Government | | | | | |
| School Newspaper Organization | | | | | |
| Service Learning (with civic outcomes) | | | | | |
| Model United Nations | | | | | |
| Mock Trial | | | | | |
| Kids Voting | | | | | |
| Project Citizen | | | | | |
| We the People | | | | | |
| Public Achievement | | | | | |
| Boys/Girls State | | | | | |
| Human Rights Groups | | | | | |
| YMCA Youth In Government | | | | | |
| 4-H Citizenship Programs | | | | | |
| Explorer Scouts | | | | | |
| Charity Groups | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | |

PART TWO

BUILDING CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

Listed below are the anchor standards for the new civics and government standards in the Social Studies Standards. Each standard has benchmarks that are required and are designed to be taught in 2-3 class periods. For more detail on content required, see Minnesota Department of Education Civic and Government Benchmarks in the Social Studies Standards, <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/StanCurri/K-12AcademicStandards/index.htm>

Estimate to what extent the content reflected in these standards is taught in civics, government, citizenship courses:

| Civics and Government Content | | Very significantly | Significantly | Somewhat | Not at all |
|---|---|--------------------|---------------|----------|------------|
| Civic Values and Principles of Democracy | The United States is based on democratic values and principles that include liberty, individual rights, justice, equality, the rule of law, limited government, common good, popular sovereignty, majority rule and minority rights. | | | | |
| Rights and Responsibilities | Individuals in a republic have rights, duties and responsibilities. | | | | |
| | Citizenship and its rights and duties are established by law. | | | | |
| Governmental Institutions & Political Processes | The United States government has specific functions that are determined by the way that power is delegated and controlled among various bodies: the three levels (federal, state, local) and the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of government. | | | | |
| | The primary purposes of rules and laws within the United States constitutional government are to protect individual rights, promote the general welfare and provide order. | | | | |
| | Public policy is shaped by governmental and non-governmental institutions and | | | | |

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| | political processes. | | | | |
| | Free and fair elections are key elements of the United States political system. | | | | |
| Relationships of the United States to Other Nations and Organizations | The United States establishes and maintains relationships and interacts with indigenous nations and other sovereign nations, and plays a key role in world affairs. | | | | |
| | International political and economic institutions influence world affairs and United States foreign policy. | | | | |
| | Governments are based on different political philosophies and purposes; governments establish and maintain relationships with varied types of other governments. | | | | |

BUILDING CIVIC SKILLS Listed below are the civic skills anchor standards for the new civics and government standards in the Social Studies Standards. For more detail on content required, see Minnesota Department of Education Civic and Government Benchmarks, <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/StanCurri/K-12AcademicStandards/index.htm>. Estimate to what extent civics skills are taught in civics, government, citizenship courses and extracurricular activities.

| Civic Skills | Very Significantly | Significantly | Somewhat | Not at all |
|---|--------------------|---------------|----------|------------|
| Students learn skills that enable people to monitor and influence state, local and national affairs. <i>For example:</i> Working with others; conducting civil conversations; articulating ideas and interests; negotiating differences and managing conflict with people or groups who have different perspectives; using parliamentary procedures; building consensus. | | | | |
| Students learn skills necessary to participate in the election process, including registering to vote, identifying and evaluating candidates and issues, and casting a ballot. | | | | |

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| Students learn skills for evaluating sources of information and various forms of political persuasion for validity, accuracy, ideology, emotional appeals, bias and prejudice. | | | | |
| Students learn skills needed to examine a public policy issue by defining the problem, developing alternative courses of action, evaluating the consequences of each alternative, selecting a course of action, and designing a plan to implement the action and resolve the problem. | | | | |

BUILDING CIVIC DISPOSITIONS Civic education promotes dispositions that support responsible civic participation and political engagement. To what extent are the following dispositions supported and developed?

| Civic Disposition | Very Significantly | Significantly | Somewhat | Not at all |
|--|--------------------|---------------|----------|------------|
| Concern for others' rights and welfare, fairness | | | | |
| Reasonable level of trust in government institutions | | | | |
| Sense of public duty | | | | |
| Support for American political system | | | | |
| Commitment to protecting the civil liberties of people with different viewpoints | | | | |
| Self efficacy, sense that one's own actions can make a difference | | | | |
| Importance of informed voting | | | | |
| Importance of participating in community affairs | | | | |
| Openness to respectfully discussing controversial public issues outside of the classroom | | | | |
| Sense of patriotism, pride, respect for nation, loyalty to our country | | | | |
| Respect for obeying rules and laws | | | | |
| Commitment to social and political activism | | | | |
| Willingness to run for elected office | | | | |
| Curiosity about public problems | | | | |
| Commitment to working towards solutions to public problems. | | | | |

CIVIC EDUCATION STRATEGIES

Meaningful learning of civic-related knowledge and skills in high-quality civic education is best accomplished through the use of engaging civic education methods and engaging classroom programs. Review the use of the following:

| Strategy | Used often | Used sometimes | Used rarely | Never used |
|--|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| Debate, deliberate controversial political issues (e.g. Deliberating in a Democracy) | | | | |
| Role-plays and simulations of democratic processes | | | | |
| Mock trials and mock legislative hearings (e.g. We the People) | | | | |
| Mock voting (e.g. Kids Voting) | | | | |
| Communicate with elected officials, letters, telephone calls, emails | | | | |
| Discuss current events, examine multiple perspectives | | | | |
| Watch content related video (television news, movies, web video) | | | | |
| Discuss content related video | | | | |
| Write reports and longer answers to questions (more than a paragraph) | | | | |
| Read materials that supplement textbooks | | | | |
| Read textbook and discuss | | | | |
| Use of outside resources (e.g. speakers, programs, materials, Street Law) | | | | |
| Read and discuss newspaper, magazine, online articles | | | | |
| Use cross curriculum strategies (literature, speech, writing) | | | | |
| Experiential Learning (field trips, etc.) | | | | |
| Cooperative Learning | | | | |
| Civic Engagement (e.g. Project Citizen, Public Achievement) | | | | |
| Service Learning related to civics and government, public problem solving | | | | |

SCHOOL CIVIC EDUCATION CLIMATE This section looks at the overall culture of the school, not the specific instruction the students receive.

| Indicators of Strong Civic Education Climate | Very Significantly | Significantly | Somewhat | Not at all |
|---|--------------------|---------------|----------|------------|
| Does your school provide an environment that supports students' civic development? Is civic education incorporated into all areas of school activity? | | | | |
| Is the civic education purpose of your school included in the school's mission statement and | | | | |

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| shared with the students and the public? | | | | |
| Do students have meaningful opportunities to participate in planning around the school? | | | | |
| Does the school provide opportunities for teachers and students to collaborate and is collaboration thoughtful and respectful? | | | | |
| Are discussions of difficult issues respectful and encouraged? Do students feel their voices are heard? Do they feel free to disagree? Are multiple perspectives on issues considered? | | | | |
| Are effective partnerships with community-based organizations encouraged and supported? | | | | |
| Do diverse students enjoy working together on school activities; are strong bonds developed; is the importance of understanding and cooperation valued? | | | | |
| Do parents, school leaders, community leaders express support for strong civic education? | | | | |
| Are student experiences in student government authentic and do they support civic skills development? Do students participate in rules development, activity planning, problem solving? | | | | |

THANK YOU!

For more information on this assessment, contact jbloom@teachingcivics.org; Learning Law and Democracy Foundation, 2395 University Ave. W., Suite 220, St. Paul, MN 55114.