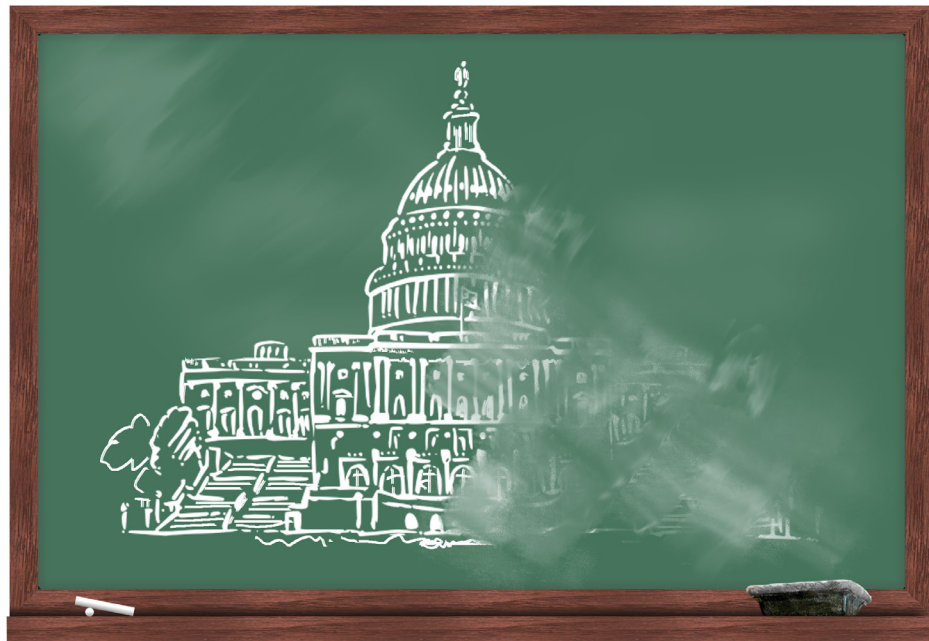


# EDUCATING CITIZENS

*A City Club report on improving civics education in Portland's high schools*



## City Club *of* Portland

*City Club of Portland Bulletin, Vol. 95, No. 1, June 1, 2012*

*City Club members will vote on this report on Friday, June 1, 2012. Until the membership votes, City Club of Portland does not have an official position on this report. The outcome of the vote will be reported in the City Club of Portland Bulletin dated June 15, 2012 and online at [www.pdxcityclub.org](http://www.pdxcityclub.org).*

# City Club *of* Portland

The mission of City Club is to inform its members and the community in public matters and to arouse in them a realization of the obligations of citizenship.

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Copies of this report are available online at [www.pdxcityclub.org](http://www.pdxcityclub.org).

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Report designed by Designpony.

**City Club of Portland**  
901 SW Washington St.  
Portland OR 97205

503-228-7231 p  
503-228-8840 f

[info@pdxcityclub.org](mailto:info@pdxcityclub.org)  
[www.pdxcityclub.org](http://www.pdxcityclub.org)



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We live in a world of powerful interest groups. We need people who can think about the common good. We live in a world with a torrent of print, media, and electronic information. We need people who can think critically. We live in a world where individuals choose the news that will reinforce their views. We need people who listen to many sides of an issue before making up their minds. We live in a world of harsh rhetoric. We need people who will practice civil discourse. We need these things because the issues that our democracy faces are difficult and complex.

If the price of democracy is an educated citizenry, then education for citizenship requires leadership and clear goals. At the moment, civics education is pushed aside by

**If the price of democracy is an educated citizenry, then education for citizenship requires leadership and clear goals.**

other education priorities at the federal, state and local level. Improving graduation rates, and preparing for college and careers, dominate policy. When mentioned, civics education gets an empty endorsement, with little follow through.

Civics education is a major responsibility of schools – at one time, it was the principal responsibility – but schools need not, cannot, and should not perform that responsibility alone. The essential features of citizenship are a standing invitation for the community to help in creating successful citizenship programs.

Your committee was charged with examining how civics is taught in Portland Public School District high schools and reporting on the degree to which these schools prepare youth for a life of active citizenship. Your committee interviewed administrators, teachers, students, school board members and academic experts about current programs and best practices. We also studied the extensive literature of civic engagement in other communities as well as federal legislation and programs aimed at primary and secondary education. What we found is a need for change that elevates civics education in the priorities of Portland Public Schools.

## **YOUR COMMITTEE REACHED THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS:**

### **1. Democracy requires citizenship, and citizenship requires social studies.**

Democracy requires citizenship – the *knowledge* of history and how government works, the *critical thinking skills* to develop informed opinions about public issues, and the *disposition* to become actively engaged in public affairs. Social studies, more than any other subject, provides students with the preparation for citizenship.

### **2. Social studies is not a priority in the Portland Public School District.**

Social studies has been crowded out by other educational goals and budget cuts, and is in danger of being further and permanently marginalized. Although individual social studies teachers often are doing a stellar job, the District lacks leadership personnel to guide, coordinate, and oversee social studies instruction.

### **3. State expectations for citizenship have been lost in the shuffle.**

The state has an important role to play in civics education by establishing standards and providing support and professional development opportunities for teachers. Civics, however, is last in line among the subjects of state attention. State history and civics standards are strong in critical thinking skills, but weak in the knowledge, collaboration skills and civic disposition elements of citizenship.

### **4. There are proven methods to help high school students become good citizens.**

Parents and teachers are the most influential adults in determining whether a student becomes an engaged citizen. Peer groups and social media also strongly influence students and can be used to engage students in citizenship experiences. Technology has the potential to enhance and transform civics learning. The most successful citizenship experiences are relevant to the student's life, actively engage the student, and offer the possibility of making a difference in the world.

### **5. Education for citizenship needs leadership, organization and help.**

There are excellent classes and community programs for citizenship in Portland Public Schools, but they are not available in all high schools and to all students. There need to be more and better opportunities

to experience citizenship. Schools cannot do the job alone. Partnerships between schools and the community are needed to provide more and better experiences. Many members of the public would like to volunteer, but the District is not organized and staffed to facilitate such assistance. Community resources for citizenship education in the District are uncoordinated and unevenly distributed. Existing classes and programs for citizenship barely touch the need of Portland's students, or exploit the potential of the Portland community.

## **BASED UPON THESE CONCLUSIONS, YOUR COMMITTEE HAS MADE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:**

TO THE PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT:

### **1. Make preparation for citizenship a priority.**

The District's leadership should make preparation for citizenship a priority on a par with high school graduation, preparation for employment, and higher education. The board, superintendent and principals should frequently and emphatically state that preparation for citizenship is a district priority, and principals should regularly discuss citizenship as an independent goal with teachers.

### **2. Conduct a program audit of K-12 social studies.**

The District should conduct and publish a program audit of K-12 social studies. The audit should examine the promotion of civic values as well as knowledge and skills, and the distribution of opportunities for students to participate in meaningful civic activities in both the school and the community. The audit should identify those present and potential experiences which will provide the most opportunities for the most students.

### **3. Provide professional development for teachers in proven civic practices.**

The District should train teachers in the proven practices for civics education, in the use of technology to enhance civic knowledge, skills and disposition, and in the development of community partnerships.

### **4. Become a welcoming partner.**

The District should remove barriers and develop practices that encourage responsible individuals and organizations to partner with schools in their civics

education mission. The Board of Education should receive an annual report of partnership and volunteer activities.

TO THE OREGON LEGISLATURE AND OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:

### **5. Recommit to citizenship.**

The Oregon Legislative Assembly should hold oversight hearings, or hearings on such legislation as may be introduced, relating to standards and method of instruction for social studies in public schools. At the hearings, the Oregon Department of Education should explain how its standards, programs and materials comply with existing Oregon statutes and will implement the Essential Skill of Citizenship.

TO ALL PORTLAND AREA CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS:

### **6. Recognize citizenship by youth and school-community partnerships.**

The City Club of Portland should devote at least one program each year to the subject of youth citizenship and establish awards for outstanding youth citizenship and school-community civic partnerships. Other civic organizations in the Portland metropolitan area should establish similar programs.

TO ALL PORTLAND AREA GOVERNMENTS:

### **7. Include youth on boards and committees.**

The Portland offices of national and state agencies, Metro, Multnomah County, the City of Portland, and each neighborhood association in Portland should include at least one student as a voting member of commissions, advisory boards and study committees charged with issues of concern to youth.

TO PORTLAND AREA CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, FOUNDATIONS, BUSINESSES AND ALL PORTLAND AREA SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

### **8. Implement a civic engagement partnership pilot project.**

Portland area school districts, City Club of Portland, Classroom Law Project, Multnomah Bar Foundation, Multnomah Youth Commission, Rotary and other civic organizations, including foundations, should develop a privately-funded pilot program to encourage citizenship among high school youth through partnerships between schools and the community. The

project would support three positions: (a) a central coordinator to develop and match civic engagement opportunities in the metropolitan area with interested students from any school in the metropolitan area, and (b) one high school coordinator in each of two pilot high schools. The high school coordinator would facilitate the creation and support of civics activities for teachers and students. The pilot schools should demonstrate administrator and teacher enthusiasm for the effort, and represent communities with relatively few local human and financial resources.

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Some of the conclusions and recommendations in this report may seem obvious or confirm opinions about high school students and education that readers already hold. If so, then the value of the report will be to assure those readers that their views are based on evidence. Your committee would be surprised, however, if many readers were aware of the seriousness of the present crisis in civics education.

Given the systemic nature of the problems of civics education, your committee also would be surprised if its recommendations are not applicable to school districts other than the Portland Public School District – in the Portland metropolitan area, in Oregon, and beyond. Your committee hopes that its labors will be of use to all persons who hope that today's youth will build a better society, nation and world than the ones they are inheriting.



# PART I: INTRODUCTION

## 1. The importance of an educated citizenry: democracy and social studies

From the earliest days of Western civilization, schools have been celebrated for their ability to produce good citizens. Plato's Republic depicted schooling primarily as the means to cultivate the right kinds of

**For America's founders...the crucial mission of schools was to form good citizens.**

attitudes and a proper attachment to the state. For America's founders – including Thomas Jefferson, Noah Webster and Benjamin Rush – the crucial mission of schools was to form good citizens.

In Rush's telling phrase, the first purpose of schools was to mold "republican machines" who would support and defend their new nation.<sup>1</sup>

The American Revolution established the principle of popular sovereignty. While that principle solved the problem of governmental legitimacy, the nation's founders realized that it created a problem of competency. In a democracy, the people themselves need to understand how government works and be actively engaged in the responsibilities of citizenship.

The government of Oregon goes beyond the republican model of the Framers. Oregonians practice elements of direct democracy. Under the Oregon constitution, a simple majority of voters can change the state constitution, pass laws, limit taxes and remove state officials. These constitutional and legislative powers are substantial. In Oregon, of all places, it is therefore critical that citizens be educated in self-government.

Citizenship is in the news of late, and the news is not good. A 2010 national civics education assessment reported that only 27 percent of fourth-graders, 22 percent of eighth-graders, and 24 percent of youth who were enrolled in high school were "proficient" in civics understanding. Only one in four students nationally, therefore, possesses "the knowledge and skills of democratic citizenship and government" as they enter the adult world.<sup>2</sup> Oregon provides no exception to this woeful performance. A 2006 study of Oregon's graduating seniors found that only 22 percent

could identify the state's two United States Senators, and 23 percent thought that Governor Kulongoski was representing them in Congress.<sup>3</sup>

Young adults today are less likely to vote and less interested in public issues than older Americans and than their counterparts 50 years ago. In the November 2008 presidential election, a year of record voter participation, only one-half of all potential voters under 30 cast a ballot.<sup>4</sup>

These statistics lead us to social studies\* as the training ground for citizenship.<sup>†</sup> Social studies includes the study of the communities in which a person lives, their history and geography, how decisions affecting communities are made by governments, visions of the ideal society and the values they express, and the opportunities and need for individuals to participate in civic life. The overt aim of social studies is the promotion of civic competence – "the knowledge, intellectual processes, and democratic dispositions required to be active and engaged participants in public life."<sup>5</sup>

Your committee concurs that we cannot raise citizens without classes in social studies – particularly U.S. history and government. In providing high-quality instruction and experiences for students in social studies, we are preparing students for citizenship.

The fate of civics education depends on public opinion about public schools, and how such opinion is translated into education policy. Hardly anyone is without an opinion about schools. Parents want their hopes realized. Teachers want professional fulfillment. Taxpayers want their money's worth. Businesses want their skilled workers.

In the midst of these adult aspirations, students have their own goals. Some want to learn English to succeed in their new country. Some want a safe and nurturing environment where they can count on a nutritious meal. Some want challenging courses so they can get into college. Some are bored, and want to drop out of

\* "Social studies" in this report refers both to the primary education class that goes by that name and the secondary education classes that study the history, characteristics and government of society. The Oregon Department of Education uses the term "social sciences." The terms are roughly synonymous.

† "Citizenship" in this report means being an active and productive member of the society in which one lives. It does not mean the process of becoming or status of being a United States citizen.

school and perhaps get a job. And some just want to be left alone.

But time does not stop, even for the young. High school is the last time an individual is required to attend school. *Public* high school is the last chance for society

**As students move on from high school, will these future citizens have the civic knowledge, skills, and disposition necessary to preserve and strengthen our democracy?**

to systematically influence its future citizens. As students move on from high school, will they have the civic knowledge, skills, and disposition necessary to preserve and strengthen our democracy?

## **2. Study charge and objectives**

The City Club of Portland, founded on the belief that citizenship is essential to the community, asked your committee to examine “the degree to which Portland high schools prepare and encourage all students to engage in an active civic life as adults.”\*

City Club has published over 100 reports concerned with education, dating back to the 1920s. Most of the studies have been about school funding and governance, many of those in response to ballot measures. This study is among the first to address explicitly what students learn and how they are taught.†

City Club directed your committee to look at two areas of social studies – American history and civics. The study charge asked us to examine what is being taught (content), the options available to teachers to present the material (methods), and whether civics as taught is likely to lead to engaged citizens when students

\* The study charge asked your committee to look at the Portland Public School District (“District”) specifically. Unless otherwise noted, all references to “Portland Public Schools” in the report are to the District. Your committee believes that many of its findings and conclusions have a broader application, however, and at least one of its recommendations – the pilot program – is intended to benefit all school districts in the Portland area. See Part VI.8 of this report.

† The most recent comprehensive report related to education is “Writing a New Chapter: A City Club Report on School Funding” (2007). That report, like this one, points to several of the negative unintended consequences of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act.

become adults (disposition to be civically engaged). City Club also charged your committee with reporting what it found valuable that should be preserved and increased, and what it found deficient that should be corrected and improved.

Your committee was composed of City Club members who have an interest and experience in public education. Some are former social studies teachers, others are mentors in schools, and some are graduates of the Portland public school system. All are deeply interested and concerned with the future of today’s youth.

Your committee had a chance to interview administrators, teachers, students, school board members, civic organization leaders and academic experts about current programs and best practices. We made site visits to schools and observed civics instruction. We examined government rules, professional publications, and instructional materials relating to high school history and civics, and read extensively the literature about civic engagement and programs in other communities aimed at promoting civic engagement.

Your committee discussed many times what “citizenship” means. We always came back to three things:

1. Knowledge of American history, government and society;
2. Skills of critical thinking and effective collaboration; and
3. Disposition to act on public issues where the interest of the individual and the common good must be balanced.

Citizenship, then – *active* citizenship – involves a combination of knowledge, skills, and civic disposition. We list these attributes here to show where we came out, so readers have a lamp to guide them going into the report.‡

**Citizenship, then – active citizenship – involves a combination of knowledge, skills, and civic disposition.**

‡ These elements are very similar to the “components” of citizenship identified and measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (“NAEP”): “civic knowledge,” “intellectual skills” and “civic dispositions.” (See <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/civics/whatmeasure.asp>.)



## PART II: BACKGROUND

### 1. The public schools of Portland

The Portland Public School District (“District”), with 47,000 students in 81 schools, is Oregon’s largest and most complex school district. Although four other school districts serve students living within Portland, this report focuses on the District.

The District’s schools are diverse, with 44 percent of the students having minority backgrounds: Hispanic (16 percent), African American (12 percent), Asian (9 percent), and other backgrounds (7 percent). The District’s students speak 94 languages. Just under one-half of the students are from families with low income, making these students eligible for free or reduced-cost meals. One in seven students receives special education services, and these students are usually in regular classrooms.

The District has a teaching staff of 2,828 with an average of 14 years teaching experience. Two-thirds of teachers hold a masters degree.

The budget of the District has been a continuing problem with declining state support and increasing costs. The 2011-2012 budget of \$467 million has a shortfall of \$27 million, which threatened cutbacks in central staff, non-core programs and teacher lay-offs.<sup>6</sup> The State provides approximately three-fourths of the revenue for the District with 13 percent from local property taxes and 15 percent from miscellaneous sources.

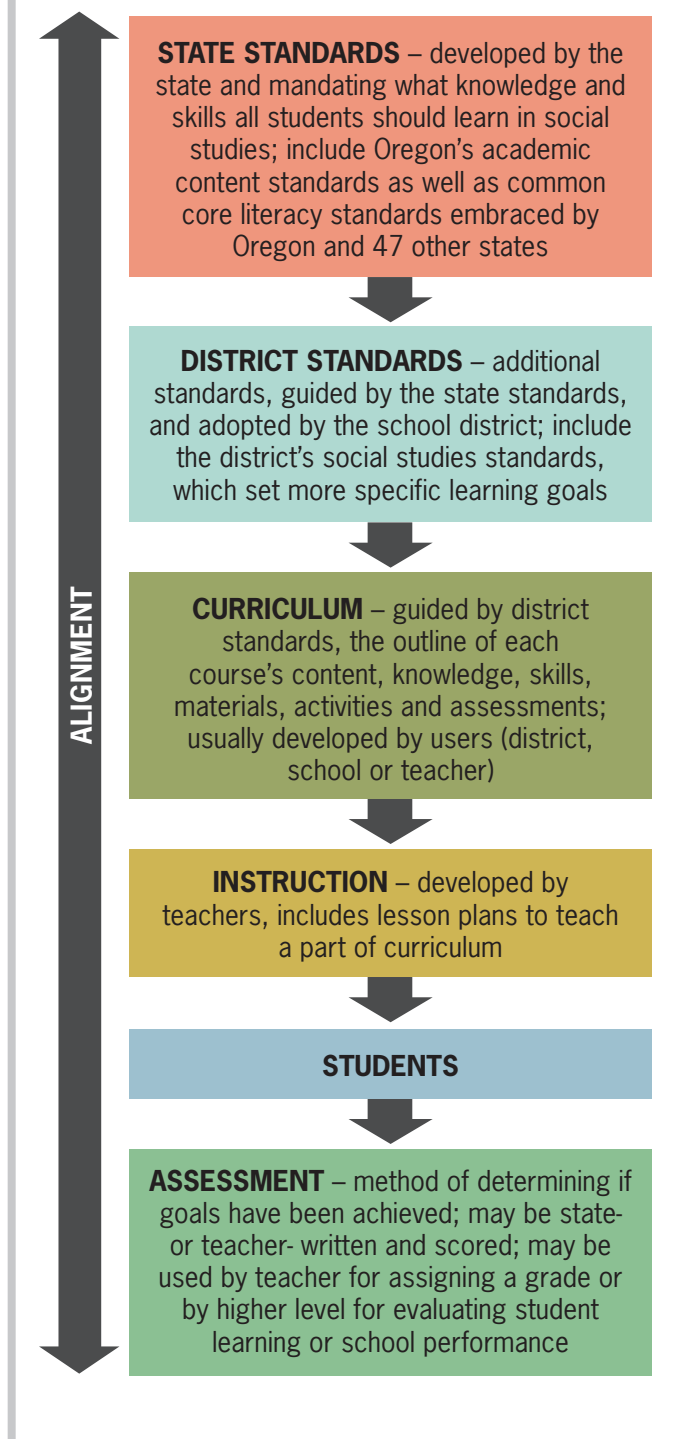
One of the major problems of the District has been a low graduation rate of 62 percent, compared to a minimum state graduation rate goal of 65 percent.<sup>7</sup>

### 2. The vocabulary of civics education

In order to understand education – whether for citizenship or some other outcome – it is important to understand five terms that educators use:

1. “Standards” - the goals we have for students;
2. “Curriculum” - a course of study that will accomplish those goals;
3. “Instruction” - the manner in which the curriculum is taught;
4. “Assessment” - the way we determine if goals have been met; and

**Figure 1: ALIGNMENT: FROM STANDARDS THROUGH ASSESSMENT**



5. “Alignment” - the linking of standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The relationship between these terms and what happens to students in the classroom can be seen in Figure 1.

The word “assessment” in education includes but is not limited to “testing.” Although the word is loosely used, “testing” generally refers to assessments that are done on paper or at a computer screen, and many “tests,” because they are easier to grade and report, ask questions that have right and wrong answers. Testing, in this sense, is the most widespread and recognized form of assessment. Not all assessment, however, involves testing. The assessment of papers, portfolios and projects to measure understanding, skills and dispositions involves the application of judgment quite removed from marking answers right or wrong. The distinction between “assessment” and “testing” figures in your committee’s recommendations.\*

### 3. The laws of civics education

#### a. National incentives

Education in the United States traditionally has been the preserve of the states. The U.S. Constitution does not give the federal government power to regulate education expressly. It does give the federal government power to provide for the general welfare, however, which has been interpreted by courts to include the power to spend and impose conditions on the recipient of funds.<sup>8</sup> The strings attached to federal education moneys are the greatest national influence on state and local education priorities. As will be discussed later in this report,<sup>†</sup> they have had a significant impact on the degree to which Oregon educators focus on the preparation of students to become active citizens.

#### b. State mandates

Education mandates can be found in the constitution, statutes and administrative rules of Oregon. The Oregon Constitution mentions education but not education for citizenship. The constitution requires the Legislature to “provide by law for the establishment of a uniform and general system of Common schools, [and] appropriate in each biennium a sum of money sufficient to ensure that the state’s system of public education meets quality goals established by law.”<sup>9</sup> The Oregon Supreme Court decided recently that these clauses do not require the state legislature to fund public schools at a determined level.<sup>10</sup>

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\* See “Assessing citizenship: more to be gained from program review than high-stakes testing” (part III.4) of this report.

† See “The pursuit of other goals: civics on the sidelines,” in part III.1 of this report.

Oregon statutes do address education for active citizenship,<sup>11</sup> and can be divided between statutes that encourage and those that require action. The former encourage observance of History of Oregon Week and Oregon Civics Day.<sup>12</sup> The latter provide a yardstick against which to measure education.

Among the mandatory statutes, two stand out:

1. *Content standards.* In ORS 329.025, the Legislature declares its intention to maintain a public school system that has “rigorous academic content standards” and enables students to “function successfully in a constitutional republic, a participatory democracy and a multi-educational nation and world.” To fulfill those goals, the State Board of Education (“State Board”) must adopt “rigorous academic content standards” in a variety of subjects including history and civics, and school districts must offer students instruction in history and civics that meets those standards. “Content standards” include both knowledge and skills.

2. *Character instruction.* In ORS 336.067(1), the Legislature directs public schools to give “special emphasis” to instruction in:

“honesty, morality, courtesy, obedience to law; respect for the national flag, the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Oregon; other lessons that tend to promote and develop an upright and desirable citizenry; [and] respect for all humans, regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, sex or disability.”

To assist schools in teaching these character traits, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction must prepare an outline of suggestions for accomplishing them and “incorporate the outline in the course of study for all public schools.”<sup>13</sup>

History, civics, and citizenship continue in the administrative rules of the Oregon Department of Education (“Department”).<sup>14</sup> To receive a high school diploma, a student must earn at least three units of credit (the equivalent of three full-year courses) in “Social Sciences,” a category that includes but is not limited to history and civics.<sup>15</sup> A student must also demonstrate proficiency in “Essential Skills” adopted by the State Board as diploma requirements, a category that may eventually, but does not yet, include the “essential skill” of “[demonstrating] civic and community engagement.”<sup>16</sup>

A careful reading of these requirements reveals that the State does not require a student to take any specific course in American history or government in order to graduate from high school.

**...nearly all Portland students who graduate will have taken two semesters of modern American history and one semester of civics or American government, as well as one year of modern world history and one semester of economics.**

However, the combination of state content standards for American history and civics\* and the courses actually offered by high schools in the District means that nearly all Portland students who graduate will have taken two semesters of

modern American history and one semester of civics or American government, as well as one year of modern world history and one semester of economics.

#### 4. The schools of thought in civics education

Classical Athens had schools of philosophy. Social studies has schools of pedagogy.

The term “social studies” traces to the early 20th century, when Progressive Era reformers argued for the integrated teaching of history, civics and geography. That integration can be seen in elementary education today, but was never accepted in higher grades. Social studies in elementary schools usually is taught by the same teacher who teaches math, reading, writing and science. Social studies in middle schools is often included in a humanities class combining social studies and language arts, and may be taught by a teacher with a teaching license in elementary education or English. Social studies in high schools disappears as a single subject, but reappears in courses such as American history, civics or government, and economics. High school social studies teachers are licensed in social studies.

How to teach social studies is one issue. Since the 1940s, the “*expanding communities*” model has been widely used in elementary schools. This model teaches content in a series of concentric circles, beginning with

\* The state standards are discussed more fully in part III.2 of this report.

the student and progressing outwards through family, school, neighborhood, and ultimately the world.<sup>17</sup> In the 1980s, the “*core knowledge*” model came into vogue.<sup>18</sup> Where the expanding communities approach emphasizes connections with local and global communities, the core knowledge approach identifies a body of information every educated American should know. Core knowledge relies heavily on European and U.S. history and culture, democratic principles, geography and works of literature that amplify the human experience. Pedagogical and political disagreements about these models sometimes make curriculum and materials selection contentious.

What to teach in social studies is another issue. Some educators support a multicultural approach to social studies. Others argue that “the mission of public schools is to instill in children our shared, not our separate, cultures.”<sup>19</sup> These culture wars over content are factually but not logically linked to yet another argument, whether the purpose of social studies is to instill skills or content.<sup>20</sup> In short, there is great debate over the content, methods and goals of social studies instruction.

#### 5. The practice of civics education in Portland

The District has standards for each of its social studies courses. Before the 2012-13 school year, the District’s standards will need to align with new state standards adopted in 2011, as well as the Common Core State Standards adopted in 2010, which are literacy-oriented and not specific to social studies. The District’s standards are couched in terms of critical thinking skills – “critique,” “analyze,” “evaluate.” Synthesis of information is essential; regurgitation of facts is not sufficient. Knowledge expectations are much more evident in the District’s standards than they are in the state standards. As with the state, however, the District has no standards for collaboration skills, and no standards for civic disposition.<sup>†</sup>

The District has published curriculum guides for all required social studies courses. The guides offer one way to address all standards using district-adopted materials, district-supported instructional strategies and district assessments. History and civics teachers in Portland’s high schools have great autonomy in the strategies and materials they use to achieve the District’s standards – so much so, that your committee concluded that teachers essentially have complete control for developing the instructional program.

<sup>†</sup> See part III.2.d of this report.

The year-long, high school U.S. history course, which covers the period from the post-Civil War Reconstruction Era to the present day, uses the text book, *History Alive! Pursuing American Ideals*. Students are asked to answer one “essential question” framed by the text book: “How has the United States of America lived up to the five fundamental promises of the Declaration of Independence (equality, rights, liberty, opportunity, democracy)?”<sup>21</sup> The District’s curriculum guide for the

**The District’s curriculum guide and adopted textbook for civics instruction are generally inferior to those for history instruction.**

course provides a complete and thorough blueprint for the teacher. It closely tracks the textbook, provides plenty of content following both chronological and thematic developments,

and aligns standards with textbook chapters. The curriculum guide has ample references to other resources and source documents. It is weak, however, on summative assessment of student learning, relying on a final writing assignment that asks students to answer the course’s essential question. Of special note, it does not provide strategies for encouraging civic engagement.

The one-semester course in U.S. government uses *Magruder’s American Government* as its textbook. The textbook and accompanying curriculum guide both follow the traditional “how a bill becomes a law” approach. While there are placeholders in the guide for supplemental resources and expanded learning opportunities, most of them are blank. The civic responsibility section in the guide is not particularly challenging, asking such questions as “How can voting be important?” and listing outcomes such as “The student will be able to figure out where and how to register to vote.” There are no strategies for engaging the student in the community and making a difference. A teacher who relies on the textbook and curriculum guide to provide an exciting course will be disappointed. The District’s curriculum guide and adopted textbook for civics instruction are generally inferior to those for history instruction.

There are a variety of options through which students can earn the required U.S. history and government credits in lieu of these basic courses. These include Advanced Placement classes, for which students can earn college credits, International Baccalaureate classes, Project Citizen classes, and others. These offerings are inequitably distributed across the District.



## PART III: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

### 1. The pursuit of other goals: civics on the sidelines

The District supports social studies in principle, but its priorities lie elsewhere in practice. If social studies were a child, it would be wards of the state. “Civics,” in the words of one witness, “is not on anybody’s radar.”<sup>22</sup> No one your committee interviewed is “against” social studies. The problem is that no one in a leadership position is really “for” social studies. There are many good reasons for this, but in your committee’s opinion all of the reasons together do not amount to a justification

No one your committee interviewed is “against” social studies. The problem is that no one in a leadership position is really “for” social studies.

#### a. The effect of mandates in other areas

##### i. The No Child Left Behind Act

The educator Diane Ravitch has labeled it “the Death Star,” calling it “the single worst piece of education legislation ever.” The No Child Left Behind Act, to which she was referring, “now drives all aspects of education.”<sup>23</sup>

“No Child Left Behind” (“NCLB”) is the name given to the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. NCLB was passed with overwhelming bi-partisan support in Congress, a cheerleading President, acclaim by educators and support from a business community looking for testing and accountability. NCLB tied accountability to the receipt of Title I moneys, which provide financial assistance to education agencies to improve educational opportunities for low-income students.

To assess performance, all states must select proficiency tests and administer those tests at grades 3 through 8 and in high school in certain “core” subjects. Reading, writing and mathematics began to be tested in 2002. Science was added in 2007. Social studies and civics were designated for eventual inclusion, but have not made it on the list, and may never make it on the list as

a result of changes NCLB itself is undergoing.

The goal of NCLB is to have 100 percent of the elementary and secondary students in the nation be proficient in reading, writing and mathematics by 2014.

To meet this goal, schools and districts are expected to make “adequate yearly progress” in tested subjects. Test scores under NCLB must be reported separately for specific subgroups of students, using categories that include race, ethnicity, low-income status, and limited English ability, for each school and school district. A school is considered not to be achieving progress if any one of the designated subgroups of students does not progress. Thus a school may have progress overall, but be judged a “failing” school if even one subgroup does not meet the benchmark.

If a school continues to fail to meet improvement goals, a series of increasing sanctions apply. In the first year the school is put on notice. In the second, students are allowed to transfer to another school. By the third year, students must be offered free tutoring after school. In the fourth year, “corrective action” is required including curriculum changes, staff changes and/or longer school days. By the fifth year, a failing school can be “restructured,” which may mean replacing the principal and teachers or by putting the school under municipal, state or private control.

NCLB began collapsing from the weight of its mechanical expectations almost from the start. Because of the number of student categories and inexorable annual raising of the bar in all subjects, the number of schools and school systems considered “failing” has increased exponentially. Massachusetts, generally considered to have the strongest system of public schools in the country, is on track to have 80 percent “failing” schools by 2014.

School labels aside, the use of high-stakes tests by NCLB has not improved education significantly, even in the subjects being tested.<sup>24</sup> Some states have lowered standards so more students will pass. “The gains in test scores ... were typically the result of teaching test-taking skills and strategies, rather than broadening and deepening [students’] knowledge of the world and their ability to understand what they have learned.”<sup>25</sup>

Human nature being what it is, high-stakes testing is almost guaranteed to divert resources and attention to the tested areas. As our witnesses told us: “You get



what you measure.”<sup>26</sup> “What is tested is taught.” “If it’s not tested, it’s not taught.”<sup>27</sup>

Statements such as these could be interpreted to mean that if one aspect of a subject is tested and another is not, the former will be taught. What your committee heard, however, is far more serious. In the elementary and middle school grades – where social studies is taught by the same teacher as mathematics, English and science – social studies is taught less, or simply not taught at all. According to one witness, in one district outside Portland, middle school social studies instruction has been cut from a full year to one semester in response to budget constraints and its relative unimportance to school accountability.<sup>28</sup>

According to Gayle Thieman at Portland State University, of 752 Oregon teachers completing an on-line survey, 69 percent of elementary teachers reported instructional time for social studies had decreased as a result of mandated testing in other content areas. Thirty-four percent of middle school teachers and 26 percent of high school teachers reported decreases in instructional time for social studies. These figures are similar to national trends. In Oregon, elementary teachers devote 2.8 hours a week to social studies as opposed to 3.4 hours nationally. While 46 percent teach social studies at a particular time of day, 13 percent teach social studies rarely or only when instructional time is left over from other subjects.<sup>29</sup> One fourth-grade teacher from a district outside Portland told us that social studies does not get taught in her classroom until February, after the state testing deadline passes.<sup>30</sup> Your committee did not have the time or resources to gather similar data for the District itself. An analysis of social studies instructional time in the lower grades is clearly warranted, however. In education, as in physics, measurement has changed reality.

Since the enactment of NCLB, 44 percent of districts surveyed nationally have reduced time for social studies. That percentage rose to 51 percent in districts with ‘failing schools.’<sup>31</sup>

The merits of NCLB for reading, writing, math and science are at least debatable. The merits cannot be debated in social studies. School districts have directed time and resources into the NCLB-tested subjects – and taken the time and resources away from social studies. Although high school social studies is still required in the District and state, it too is affected by NCLB in several ways. Students arriving from lower grades

have less background knowledge in history. Students in upper grades who must meet reading and writing standards receive less social studies instruction.\* According to many of our witnesses, the emphasis and publicity around NCLB had a profoundly deleterious effect on social studies instruction.<sup>32</sup>

## **ii. The Oregon Education Investment Board & achievement compacts**

In 2011 the Oregon legislature established the Oregon Education Investment Board (“OEIB”)<sup>33</sup> and in the following year provided it with the authority to establish and implement “achievement compacts” with the state’s K-12 school districts, education service districts, community college districts and public universities, in order to “focus funding and strategies at the state and local level on the achievement of... statewide education goals.”<sup>34</sup>

OEIB’s newly mandated achievement compacts fulfill a system-wide accountability framework required by the federal government in order to obtain a NCLB waiver, ensuring that education outcomes are not only established, but that yearly progress is tracked. An NCLB waiver promises to allow greater flexibility, fewer sanctions, and some form of teacher evaluation, while expanding accountability to all schools, not just those with large low-income populations.

Although districts and individual school progress will be evaluated based upon the achievement compacts, failure to meet annual goals will not result in lost federal and/or state funding. Instead, the achievement compacts are meant to act as a barometer, helping OEIB and the state make informed decisions with regard to funding, technical support and/or sharing best practices from successful Oregon districts to ensure that all schools are given the opportunity to succeed.

Success will be measured in part by the ability of district schools to improve the civic knowledge, skills, and disposition previously discussed in this report. According to the legislation, a successful school:

- “Provides students an educational background to the end that they will function successfully in a constitutional republic, a participatory democracy and a multicultural nation and world;

\* See the discussion of the common core reading standard for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, part III.2.c.

- Provides students with the knowledge and skills that will provide the opportunities to succeed in the world of work, as members of families and as citizens;
- Provides students with the knowledge and skills to take responsibility for their decisions and choices.”

No one concerned about social studies, however, should take comfort from these words. As of May 2012, the waiver has not yet been granted, and if it is granted it will still have testing goals in reading and math and continue to emphasize preparation for job readiness and higher education.

It is too early to tell if and how Oregon’s new achievement compacts, as mandated, executed, and moni-

Considering the new achievement compact goals surrounding graduation rates and test scores in math and reading, one can safely argue that civics, although eloquently regarded is not a central focus for OEIB or the state’s new achievement compacts.

tored by OEIB, will have a positive or negative effect on the future of civics education in Oregon. Considering the new achievement compact goals surrounding graduation rates and test scores in math and reading, one can safely argue that civics, although eloquently regard-

ed (ORS 329.025) is not a central focus for OEIB or the state’s new achievement compacts.

### **b. The effect of a lagging economy**

A second reason for the decline in attention to social studies is the economy – both as a focus, and as a source of funding.

For the last decade, competition from China and other parts of the world has created the fear that the United States will lose its economic advantage, jobs and standard of living. The recent recession has led to high unemployment and has left many Americans worried about how to make ends meet. In such a climate, job skills, not citizenship skills, appear to be the most important focus of education. As one witness stated, “The language today is economic in nature. Citizenship has dropped off in an alarming way.”<sup>35</sup>

Funding for education also has hurt social studies. Since the passage of Ballot Measure 5 in 1990, the majority of funds for local schools in Oregon have come from the state. State revenue depends on the income tax, which varies widely depending on economic conditions. Since 2008 Oregon’s income tax revenue has declined, with serious consequences for education. As one witness stated: “Our schools have had significant financial cutbacks. I’ve been in Oregon since 1974, and I’ve never seen reductions of a similar scale – the numbers of students in a classroom, the numbers of courses eliminated.”<sup>36</sup>

Funding cutbacks have reduced support for teachers generally. “Generally” in this context, however, does not mean “equally.” English, mathematics, science, and social studies are all core content areas under state and federal law. The District currently employs 30 “achievement coordinators” who focus on the core instructional areas. It employs none for social studies.<sup>37</sup> These allocation decisions are not just a reflection of “hard times.” They represent a conscious choice by the District to sacrifice the integrity of its social studies program in pursuit of other objectives. Right now, in the words of one veteran, there is “no one at the central office to bring the social studies program together.”<sup>38</sup>

The picture at the building level is the same. The social studies teachers we interviewed feel the impact of the economy in several ways. Professional growth opportunities are reduced by budget cuts and limited to NCLB-related topics.<sup>39</sup> A District spokesperson commented that while teachers may choose to use District funds for professional development related to “improving their practice..., at this time professional development is not centered on social studies.” Asked whether the District supported their efforts in the classroom, one panel of social studies teachers burst out laughing.

Novice teachers and their students suffer the most under this circumstance, with high school history and civics teachers at a special disadvantage. The Oregon Education Association recommends three years of mentoring for new teachers and a plan of assistance for struggling teachers, pointing to research showing that experienced teachers are better teachers.<sup>40</sup> The social studies teachers we interviewed unanimously agreed, voicing their desire for more and meaningful professional growth opportunities that would help them strengthen their instructional practice.<sup>41</sup> But not only are professional development topics constrained

by high stakes concerns, the number of days and hours allotted and paid for have been significantly reduced. Professional growth days have been cut, teachers must pay their own way for optional training, and substitute teachers are less available for those teacher absences.

Education has been hit hard by recessionary budget cuts as districts pare the “fat” in an effort to increase efficiency and meet demands for accountability and improved student test performance in job-related skill sets. Students and teachers bear the brunt of the new

Students and teachers bear the brunt of the new priorities, enduring larger class size, few or no field trips for experiential learning, reduced Teachers on Special Assignment to provide instructional support, and the loss of social studies curriculum personnel who provided leadership and oversight.

priorities, enduring larger class size, few or no field trips for experiential learning, reduced Teachers on Special Assignment to provide instructional support, and the loss of social studies curriculum personnel who provided leadership and oversight.<sup>42</sup> Teachers have less support and time to collaborate and develop engaging lessons, less time to

incorporate new ideas and approaches that align with new standards. The teachers we interviewed lament lost opportunities to use more classroom volunteers, sponsor a Mock Trial program, plan trips and share ideas with colleagues.<sup>43</sup> In these tough economic times and steered by the high stakes of current school reform thinking, preparation for citizenship has all but fallen off the radar.

### c. The effect of lack of leadership

Crucially, there is no leadership or program accountability for social studies within the District that would permit administrators to know how social studies teachers in Portland high schools are actually teaching. The District states that classroom teachers are responsible for delivery of social studies content to students, while principals are responsible for ensuring that teachers are teaching to social studies standards. In reality, “every school does what they want....There is no reporting...no proof or evidence. [There is] only a

textbook adoption.”<sup>44</sup> As one high school social studies teacher put it, speaking of the school District in general, “They really don’t know what I do.”

The curriculum guides states that assessments shall be consistent across the District, but there is no one at the District level to assure that such assessment occurs. Teachers simply use their professional expertise to assess the student’s mastery of the state standards and assign grades accordingly.

For the above reasons, it is your committee’s impression that social studies classes in all grades receive scant attention from educational leaders. It is your committee’s further impression that no greater leadership attention is given to *citizenship* – the ultimate goal of social studies. State education reform is focused on “readiness for employment and post-high school education.”<sup>45</sup> The need for higher education, contrary to earlier times, is explained in terms of better jobs, not better citizenship.<sup>46</sup> The Portland School Board’s priorities are “not curriculum, but balancing the budget and equity.”<sup>47</sup> The Superintendent did not mention social studies or preparation for citizenship among her priorities when we interviewed her.<sup>48</sup> As a result, in the District “preparation for citizenship and democracy are not part of the language.”<sup>49</sup> As one witness stated, “Civics has no hope of being in the center of the target. It is not even *on* the target.”<sup>50</sup>

Your committee would like to remind the District – not as criticism but as exhortation – of the District’s own mission statement for Social Studies:

“The interconnected nature and fragility of the world make in-depth, relevant social studies instruction essential... The mission of social studies in Portland Public Schools is to provide *all* students with academic and authentic learning opportunities that both: ignite their *passions for learning*, and also enhance their *abilities and motivations to contribute as citizens* in their communities – from the school community to the neighborhood city, state, national, and global communities. “

Your committee cannot improve on this mission statement. In terms of their concision and deep understanding of what social studies can and should do for youth, these words are the Gettysburg Address of social studies. Having spoken eloquently, the District needs only to live up to its ideals.



## 2. State leadership: a study in ambiguity

In 1922, Oregon's State Manual of the Course of Study for the Elementary Schools identified responsible citizenship, along with an understanding of Oregon's pioneer history, as the primary goal of the public school. Reading, spelling, arithmetic, moral truths, and agriculture were mentioned as additional subjects.<sup>51</sup> Today, the state priorities are readiness for career and higher education.

In a well-functioning educational system, state standards and initiatives provide an internally consistent and supportive message. Today, the state message about social studies is inconsistent and profoundly ambiguous.

### **a. The evolution of state graduation requirements and the schedule for requiring essential skill proficiencies**

State graduation standards reveal where the state's priorities lie. It is not social studies. In the five years between 2009 and 2014, graduation requirements for English, math and science will increase, but not for social studies.

State plans for requiring "essential skills" proficiency also reveal where the state's priorities lie. It is not social studies. The state Board has identified seven "essential skills" it says are crucial to the future success of students. The dates by which students must demonstrate proficiency in those skills to receive a diploma have been phased. The skills relating to social studies are last in line:

Read and comprehend a variety of texts	2012
Write clearly and accurately	2013
Apply mathematics in a variety of settings	2014
Think critically and analytically	no date
Use technology to learn, live and work	no date
Demonstrate civic and community engagement	no date
Demonstrate global literacy	no date
Demonstrate personal management and teamwork skills	no date

### **b. The plan for implementing "common core" standards**

State plans for adopting common core standards reveal where the state's priorities lie. It is not social studies.

Oregon and 47 other states have adopted what they call "Common Core State Standards" – state standards, for core subjects that are common among the participating states. In October 2010, the Oregon Board of Education adopted two sets of common core standards to replace the Oregon academic content standards in their field.

The two new fields are "Mathematics" and "English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects." In furtherance of its new standard for "Literacy in History/Social Studies," the Oregon State Board of Education has adopted reading and writing standards for social studies students in high school. One standard involves the ability to: "Analyze...how key sentences, paragraphs and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole..." Another standard involves how to "read and comprehend history/social studies texts [in a designated 'complexity band'] independently and proficiently."<sup>\*</sup>

A reader of the new, Common Core State Standards could be forgiven for believing that social studies is becoming a means to an end, where the end is literacy, and the means are the texts and essays of history and government. If that ever happens, then the original purpose of public schools will have been turned upside down. Your committee believes strongly that it should not be allowed to happen. The integrity of social studies must be protected against those who would use the classes to make a teacher, a school district, or a state look better on a national reading assessment.

In its graduation requirements, essential skill proficiencies, and Common Core State standards, Oregon is consistently putting social studies at the end of the line. This assumes social studies is even *in* line, since nowhere does the Oregon Department of Education commit to even a tentative date for focusing on social studies.

Under the best scenario, if it has taken nearly a decade to implement NCLB standards and assessments for reading, writing, mathematics and science, it may take another decade to do the same for history and civics.

<sup>\*</sup> A pamphlet explaining the new standards states that "Oregon will continue to assess....social science using the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills....until a [Common Core State Standard is] developed for [social science]." The pamphlet does not disclose that OAKS is voluntary, and last year was used to assess only 4 percent of the students in the state in social studies.

By that time, two entire generations of students will have passed through a “system of public schools” established to produce citizens of Oregon.

Under the worst scenario, Oregon will follow the herd of states that come in from the pasture to feed at the federal trough. As funds dry up or accountability standards are changed again, neither the Federal Government nor Oregon will get to the subjects that train youth for citizenship. Then the institutionalized priority of reading, writing, mathematics and science, over social studies and civics, will be preserved by inertia. For social studies and civics, that “angle of repose” will be devastating.

### **c. Compliance with legislation requiring rigorous academic content standards**

In 2011, the Legislature required the Oregon Department of Education to develop “rigorous academic content standards” for high school American history and civics.<sup>52</sup> Your committee examined these state standards with an eye to the elements of citizenship – knowledge, skills and civic disposition.

The complete core and high school state standards for U.S. History and for Civics and Government are listed in Appendix A. To give the reader a sense of the history standards, here are the first standard for “Historical Knowledge” (HS.1) and the first standard for “Historical Thinking” (HS.10). A high school student should be able to:

“HS.1. Evaluate continuity and change over the course of ... United States history.”

“HS.10. Evaluate a historical source for point of view and historical context.”

To give a sense of the civics standards, here are the first standard for “Civics and Government” (HS.24) and the first standard for “Social Science Analysis” (HS.25). A high school student should be able to:

“HS.24. Analyze and critique the impact of constitutional amendments.

HS.25. Define and clarify an issue so that its dimensions are well understood.”

These standards are representative of most of the standards, and are noteworthy in four respects:

First, the standards are written extremely broadly. They give little direction to a district seeking to build curriculum.

Second, the standards are incomplete. They are primarily standards for *critical thinking skills*. They are weak on the things a student should know.

The total *knowledge* of American history between the end of Reconstruction and the present day (1877 to the present) that the 2011 state standards for American history expressly expect a student to learn is: 15 concepts (“populism, progressivism, isolationism, imperialism, communism, environmentalism, liberalism, fundamentalism, racism, ageism, classism, conservatism, cultural diversity, feminism and sustainability”); and the contributions of two groups of people (“American Indian tribes and bands” and “the American labor movement”). See Appendix A. The standards contain no time line of events. They require knowledge of communism but no knowledge of capitalism. They select two groups for study – American Indians and the labor movement – when many other groups might just as well qualify.<sup>53</sup>

**The total *knowledge* of American history between the end of Reconstruction and the present day (1877 to the present) that the 2011 state standards for American history expressly expect a student to learn is: 15 concepts and the contributions of two groups of people.**

Third, the standards do not address other aspects of citizenship. The standards include no goals to develop collaboration skills, and no goals to encourage civic disposition.

Fourth, Oregon’s 2011 Social Studies standards incorporate the Common Curriculum Goals for Reading/Language Arts in the Social Studies. Your committee interprets this emphasis on literacy as a harbinger of continued dilution of civics education.

### **d. Compliance with legislation requiring special emphasis in teaching traits of character**

As noted above, the Legislature, in ORS 336.067(1), requires all public schools to give “special emphasis” to instruction in (a) respect for the nation, its laws



and symbols, (b) respect for others regardless of characteristics that historically have been the basis for discrimination, and (c) other traits, including honesty and morality, that will “promote and develop an upright and desirable citizenry.”

Viewed through the lens of the elements of citizenship, this is a civic disposition statute. It directs schools to cultivate civic virtue. There is much sense in this, for where a civic disposition exists, knowledge and skills can be added. Where a civic disposition is dead, knowledge and skills are wasted. Despite this statute, state standards for civics barely mention civic disposition.

ORS 336.067(1) also requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to prepare a list of suggestions for accomplishing the traits of civic virtue, and incorporate the suggestions “in the course of study for all public schools.” Your committee found no evidence that the list or the incorporation have been done, or that the State has taken any regular leadership position with respect to citizenship-as-civic-disposition.

#### **e. Attention to recommendations of previous studies of social studies**

In 2007, the Legislature appointed a task force to study and make recommendations for the improvement of civics education in K-12 public schools. The task force submitted its recommendations in 2008. The recommendations, in simplified language, included these:

1. Find out what is being taught and how it is being taught in Oregon classrooms.
2. Support the professional development of teachers in content and pedagogy.
3. Use community organizations and government officials to coach and mentor teachers.
4. Provide and support adequate instructional time for civics.
5. Regularly evaluate standards and alignment.
6. Develop measures of program effectiveness in civics education.
7. Develop measures of student achievement in civics education.
8. Develop school-community partnerships for material and instruction resources.

9. Begin assessing the “Essential Skill” of “civic and community engagement” in 2010.<sup>54</sup>

Your committee, which has arrived at similar recommendations independently, found no evidence that either the Legislature or State Board followed up on any of these recommendations made four years ago, except for the revision of standards.

In summary, state educators have focused so strongly on critical thinking skills that they have under-emphasized the other elements that make a citizen. Education is not a matter of either teaching knowledge or teaching critical thinking skills. It is a matter of teaching both knowledge and skills. And social studies education is not just teaching knowledge and skills. It should also consciously foster, wherever possible, the civic disposition to engage in society, to preserve and promote that which is good and to work to change that which needs improvement.

**[S]ocial studies education is not just teaching knowledge and skills. It should also consciously foster, wherever possible, the civic disposition to engage in society, to preserve and promote that which is good and to work to change that which needs improvement.**

#### **3. Assessing citizenship: more to be gained from program audit than high-stakes testing**

Assessing a student’s progress is the classroom teacher’s job. The question of the day, however, is whether Portland high school students should be regularly assessed for citizenship by a person or agency other than the classroom teacher, for example, by the school district or the state.

The prospect of district-wide or statewide testing is appealing. Such testing would provide valuable information for parents, the public and policy makers in addition to the teacher to measure progress and regress in civics education. Testing in social studies would be one way to balance the scales with NCLB-tested subjects like mathematics and reading. It would put social studies back in the limelight.

A state-level test is available, but its use by a local school district is optional. Portland does not use it. In



**Figure 2:**  
**FIVE COMMON ELEMENTS OF A SCHOOL THAT PROMOTES CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

**1. LEADERSHIP VISION:**

A vision for the importance of civic learning and shared leadership to see it through.

**2. PROVEN PRACTICES:**

A strategically designed curriculum that incorporates effective approaches to civic learning, including instruction in government, history and law; guided discussions of current and controversial issues; simulations of democratic processes and procedures; service-learning or community service connected to the curriculum; student involvement in student governance; and extracurricular activities that encourage civic skills and dispositions.<sup>†</sup>

**3. PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS:**

Hiring practices, performance reviews and professional development that asserts and supports the importance of effective civic learning.

**4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:**

Opportunities to involve the community in the school and the school in the community.

**5. SCHOOL CLIMATE:**

A school climate that nurtures and models civic dispositions such as personal responsibility, student engagement in decision making, and mutual respect and tolerance.

fact, only four percent of students in Oregon's grades 3, 8 and high school take the test each year.\*

Your committee decided against recommending a district-wide or statewide testing of citizenship or social studies, for these reasons:

1. Developing and conducting tests is expensive. At a time when the District may lose 110 teaching positions, your committee does not believe resources should be committed to further assessment.

2. The opportunity costs of testing are high. In an already short school year, the time spent in testing and preparing for testing is better spent on instruction.

\* Every state under NCLB is permitted to commission its own assessment to measure student progress against its published standards. Oregon's test is called the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills ("OAKS"). When an OAKS social studies test was developed in 1998 for use in grades 5, 8 and high school, it was rejected by stakeholders and took four years to revise. The present 2002 test is online, and tests critical thinking – bringing together and evaluating information rather than asking fact questions or assessing civic disposition.

<sup>†</sup> Note the high correlation between these specific recommendations and the six proven practices for promoting civic engagement recommended by the Carnegie Corporation and the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Enjoyment (CIRCLE).

Source: Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, *No Excuses: Eleven Schools and Districts that Make Preparing Students for Citizenship a Priority, and How Others Can Do It, Too* (2010).

3. High-stakes testing can distort learning as the focus of the classroom experience becomes directed towards success on the standardized test.

4. Ironically, we already know what a District or state assessment would conclude. The judgment will be that too many students are unprepared for a life of active citizenship.

While your committee does not recommend standardized tests of civics education, we do recommend that the District conduct a program audit of social studies, grades K-12. Good information is the first step in making positive changes. The audit should include a survey of what knowledge and skills are being taught, how they are being taught, and how learning is being assessed by teachers. The audit should examine the impact of the state's Common Core Curriculum Goals on the teaching of social studies academic content.

The audit should examine the promotion of civic values and opportunities for students to participate in meaningful civic activities in the school and in the community and the distribution of those opportunities



**Figure 3:**  
**SIX PROVEN PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

**1. INSTRUCTION:**

Provide instruction in government, history, law and democracy.

**2. CURRENT EVENTS:**

Incorporate discussion of current events into the classroom, particularly those events that young people view as important to their lives.

**3. COMMUNITY SERVICE:**

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:**

Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities.

**5. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE:**

Encourage students' participation in school governance.

**6. SIMULATIONS AND  
REAL WORLD INVOLVEMENT:**

Encourage students to participate in simulations of democratic processes and procedures (Model UN, Constitution Project, Mock Trials).

across the District. Finally, the audit should identify those experiences which will provide the most opportunities for the most students.

**4. Proven methods for civics education:  
citizenship as fulfillment**

If state standards fail to express the ends of citizenship, educators at all levels should have confidence about the means of achieving it. Your committee was impressed by two recent studies that looked at successful models of civics education and isolated the reasons for success. Although there is some overlap, one study is addressed essentially to education leaders, the other to practitioners.

A 2010 research study funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation examined 11 high schools across the nation known for their civics programs. Using these case studies, the researchers identified no-cost, positive ways that other schools could have the same results. The researchers distilled these into five common elements shown in Figure 2.

It was noteworthy to our committee that leadership vision, proven practices, professional expectations, community involvement and school climate are the common elements identified by this study, since

Sources: Carnegie Corporation and Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Enjoyment, *The Civic Mission of Schools* (2003); Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, *Guardian of Democracy* (2011).

these emerged as prominent and recurring themes in our own research.\*

In 2003 and 2011, the Carnegie Corporation and Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Enjoyment at Tufts University ("CIRCLE") conducted a nationwide review of instructional methods for civics. The Carnegie group concluded that schools are the best venue for civics education, but teachers are not the only effective educators. The 2003 study identified "Six Promising Approaches to Civic Education." With the benefit of eight years' experience and further research, the 2011 study was able to call them "proven" methods for civics education. Your committee and the professionals we interviewed concur that these are worthy of being called the "best practices" for civics education. See Figure 3.

**a. What inspires students to be civically engaged**

As part of its investigations, your committee asked every student and teacher what they thought inspired

\* Although teacher assessment is part of the Gates Foundation recommendations, City Club's study charge directed your committee not assess teacher performance in this study.

youth to become civically engaged. We were, in effect, using our Portland witnesses to test the validity of the Carnegie studies. What our witnesses told us was powerfully consistent and completely corroborated those studies.

**Civic interest of a respected adult.** Over and over, your committee heard and read stories of the importance of an adult in quickening a young person's interest in civic affairs. Active citizenship rarely happens without such a figure. Ideally it is a parent, because "education begins at home."<sup>55</sup> Studies in fact show that parents are the most influential factor for influencing the development of civic habits.<sup>56</sup>

The inspirational adult can also be a teacher, however. Several witnesses spoke of inspiring teachers in their lives.<sup>57</sup> The adult can also be a mentor, if the mentor is chosen carefully and stays with the youth. If a mentor backs out, a student can be left in worse shape than before.<sup>58</sup>

**Relevance.** "Make it relevant!" This point was made by every witness who spoke on the subject, no matter what their political persuasion: "Make it real."<sup>59</sup> "Find something they care about."<sup>60</sup> "To instill citizenship in kids, you need a curriculum that touches on something they can relate to in their lives." "The program must have real world application." "Kids need to see how what they're learning matters." "The subject, above all, must be authentic." "It can't be an exercise." "Kids are cynical about the dog and pony show." "You must take the program into the world."<sup>61</sup>

**Action.** High school students will sit for a while, but they would rather be doing something with their friends. "Kids love to do things with friends, in groups." The ideal citizenship program is "something that puts their creative side to work – an activity, not a lecture." "The best experiences are those outside the classroom," where students have "autonomy and choice." "Kids love to participate." If your goal is citizenship, "project-based learning is best."<sup>62</sup>

**Results.** The importance of results drew some of the most poignant testimony received by your committee. One witness panel featured a teacher from Lincoln High School who is involved with students in the school's Constitution class and a teacher from Roosevelt High School who mentors students who take the standard civics classes. We felt as if we were hearing from different worlds. The Lincoln teacher described students who

"love to participate in the world," "love to make a difference" and "are interested to know more." The Roosevelt teacher described students who "are being taught in the image of the rich – people who do not look, talk or think like them," who "lack confidence," who "feel disenfranchised," who "don't understand that they have the freedom to explore," who "still need to learn that it's okay to ask questions," and, most telling, who "don't really believe that they can be agents of change." Both teachers emphasized that it is crucial, in teaching citizenship through action, that a student be able "to see that he or she can actually make a difference."<sup>63</sup>

Listening to this testimony, your committee came away thinking, not that young people today are uninterested in being citizens, but rather, that citizenship would fulfill some of their deepest yearnings for meaning and confidence.

**Listening to this testimony, your committee came away thinking, not that young people today are uninterested in being citizens, but rather, that citizenship would fulfill some of their deepest yearnings for meaning and confidence.**

## **b. How students today think**

As part of its research, your committee examined not only what students and educators believed would most encourage young people to become active citizens, but also how current forms of relating, communicating and acting might potentially predispose youth to an active civic life. Here, your committee found both challenges and opportunities.

High school youth are connected to each other as never before. They are members of a "word of mouth community," where "young people seem to pass the baton." Not only do they see each other in school, after school and on the weekends, but they are nearly constantly in touch with each other or capable of contacting each other, through social media at their computer and through their cell phones. They are, in a word, "media-saturated."<sup>64</sup>

Your committee believes that technology must be a central part of engaging youth in citizenship in the future. Youth are learning things and creating communities



through technology in ways an older generation can hardly fathom. In this development lies great risk, and great promise. The amount of information available on the internet essentially is infinite. All of it is presented to be the truth, but only some of it is. A person who chooses the internet as his source of information, therefore, requires search and judgment skills far greater than the youth who used to pull out a volume of the World Book Encyclopedia to read. At the same time, the amount of specific, relatively dependable, immediately available information on any subject to any person with internet access is deeply empowering.

Social media open up the possibility of communities for action as well. Whether it be fundraising to bring a warlord in Uganda to justice or an assembly to protest racial injustice, electronic communication can create communities that end the feeling of isolation and helplessness and help a young person believe in making a difference in history. That, too, is deeply empowering.

Youth today are also oriented to the present. They talk about what's happening this afternoon, or tomorrow, or this weekend. Some can be literate on current events, but their literacy rarely extends to what their elders would consider history or policy makers would call planning. "Students are aware of where they are now, but lack a context of how things were, or what they could be."<sup>65</sup>

This lack of context affects their civic experiences. Youth appear ready to participate more actively in the larger community, and indeed some high school programs require community service. The programs get students out in the field, but have mixed results in raising their consciousness about root causes. The best ones connect community experiences with the curriculum and have the goal of raising civic consciousness. However, while 62 percent of respondents in a 2006 survey of Oregon students volunteered more than once while in high school, only 13 percent had "worked to change a policy or law" at any level during the same period, leading to the report's conclusion that "volunteering does not translate to other forms of civic and political life."<sup>66</sup>

Youth today are "community-minded but not politically engaged....They volunteer, but they don't think they can change things. It doesn't occur to them that there is a policy link." Among those who do consider policy, there is "little faith in the political process, little sense that involvement will make any difference." This is a "weak link" in their education.<sup>67</sup>

## 5. School-community partnerships: leveraging citizenship

### a. Islands of excellence

Citizenship lends itself to partnerships between schools and the community. The very nature of citizenship is to be part of a larger world, so for the student the connection between school and the outside world is not only stimulating, but definitional to the idea of citizenship.

Bringing the community into the school is one way to achieve this connection. In the opinion of one principal, "everybody in a school should be volunteering." The community member could be a class assistant or a guest lecturer, an additional club adviser or a research resource. The community member, however, should be flexible and supportive. "You're more likely to have success if you add a volunteer to an existing class than if the person comes in with his own program." "You want to make it easy for the teachers." Diversity of volunteers helps, but "the more partners there are for students, the better."<sup>68</sup>

Taking the school out into the community leads to another set of civic experiences. Your committee heard of several successful partnerships in the Portland metropolitan area, where a student or groups of students work closely with an outside individual, company and agency to get involved in a public issue, learn its dimensions, understand its relevance, deliberate on a course of action, act successfully and reflect on the process. The scope and variety of such experiences in Portland is breathtaking, and evidence of the vibrant civic spirit of Portland. A list of examples is attached as Appendix B. However, the number of students served are small.

Wherever the civic encounter occurs, members of the community need to remember that the school is an indispensable part of the equation. There is no reason for a student to commit to a stranger. There can be good reason if the stranger is recommended by a teacher the student trusts. "Why would you work with a drop-in? You need scaffolding to get kids to buy in." "You need the teacher to guide the volunteer. The teacher knows the school environment, has relationships with kids, and can act as a mediator." If an educational program is proposed, the key roles in a large high school are the principal and the department chair, as well as a classroom teacher.<sup>69</sup>





### MISSION CITIZEN

At Lincoln High School, many students take the Constitution class as sophomores. In 2010, six alumni realized they had something to give: their knowledge and passion for civics. They started a program called “Mission Citizen,” which teaches immigrants how to pass the naturalization exam and become active citizens. Lincoln students prepare all the teaching materials, handle the publicity, and devote one night a week to teaching their own classes in public libraries and other public spaces. For the last three years – too young to vote themselves – Lincoln students have proudly watched as the adult graduates of their class have taken the oath of citizenship in the U.S. Courthouse.

If the teacher is needed not only for referral and advice, but for the program itself, the community must recognize how many demands are placed on a teacher’s time. Part of the reason why programs like Mock Trial and the “We The People” Constitution competition are so good is that adults are spending enormous numbers of hours working with students in low-ratio settings. Teachers who are involved with programs like these “are doing it completely outside the contract – on Saturdays, at night. You couldn’t do it within the contract.”<sup>70</sup> Your committee spoke with one teacher who handled a Mock Trial program entirely by herself. She finally had to drop it because she just didn’t have the time.<sup>71</sup>

Not all teachers are the same – just as all community members aren’t the same. “Some people are good at curriculum, others are good at community.” In the end, therefore, it comes down to the individual. “You want to have a cadre of people, but you have to have one person on staff who wants [a program], who says ‘This is my passion.’” “Without the right people on your faculty, and in your support, it will not happen.”<sup>72</sup>

### **b. Perceptions of the District as a difficult partner**

For all of the individual bright spots, a reputation hangs over the Portland Public School District that it is a “difficult partner.” The reputation is in the

community, and it exists among educators too. “You can see in the window, but you can’t get in the door.” Establishing a good connection between Portland schools and the community has been a “challenge.”<sup>73</sup> In separate interviews, the Chair of the school board, the Superintendent of the school district and the Chief Academic Officer all acknowledged that the District is not viewed as a “good partner” or easy to work with.<sup>42</sup>

Your committee spent time with these witnesses and in its own discussions, trying to figure out the reasons for the District’s reputation because it can affect the District’s ability to partner in citizenship projects. Possible contributing factors include: (a) limited resources; (b) pre-existing demands on time; (c) the tightness of the District’s schedule (“The schedule just drives everything. It’s like an airport. If one plane is late, there are delays the rest of the day.”<sup>75</sup>); (d) the unreasonableness of the request or proposal or the person making it; (e) bureaucratic obstacles such as the lack of a gateway contact. Your committee did not have the time or means to pursue the issue, but given its persistence, possible causes and potential harm, believes that it deserves attention at the Board level.

### **c. Serious inequalities**

Another challenge in the creation of programs for citizenship is the gross disparity of community resources in different parts of the District. “Inconsistency across the District is a big, big problem.”<sup>76</sup> Numerous witnesses mentioned the fact that in a funding crisis, schools in affluent communities can access community resources either to buy teaching positions back, or to bring in volunteers.

The problem of equity extends to students themselves as well. Low-income students often hold after school and weekend jobs. “The more actively engaged kids tend to be middle class, because they have to work less.” The home environment, which is the broth in which so many skills and attitudes are nurtured, also varies across economic strata.

The respected 2011 report on civics education, “Guardian of Democracy,” had this to say about civics and equity:

“If we accept the idea that education is a civil rights issue, then achieving excellence in civic learning for every child must be at the cornerstone of our efforts. Students in private schools or in wealthy public

school districts often receive civic learning – either from their schools or informally from their parents or communities – a benefit not afforded to millions of students from less privileged backgrounds ... True civic equality demands that all citizens have the knowledge and skills to make positive changes in their communities and in the nation at large.”<sup>77</sup>

#### **d. Lack of coordination among community civic programs**

A final issue your committee became aware of is the lack of coordination among community civic programs, and the communication gaps between students who wish to get involved and programs that might be a good match for them.

It makes sense to have a clearinghouse where persons and organizations in the metropolitan area who are willing to help in school or provide citizenship experiences outside of school can identify themselves, and be matched with interested teachers, classes and students.

Norm Smith of the Ford Family Foundation emphasized to your committee that every civic venture needs a “backbone organization,” something “permanent and reliable,” with “somebody who gets up in the morning and thinks about the project.”<sup>78</sup> In Chicago, that function has been fulfilled with great success by Mikva Challenge, a nonprofit organization established for the sole purpose of providing citizenship experiences for youth.

Mikva Challenge specifically works to develop civic leadership among underserved high school youth. Since 2000 the organization has trained over 20,000 young people through hands-on programs that promote a deeper understanding of elections, activism and policymaking. As part of the “Mikva process,” young people connect with both peers and and take action to become real political participants. Perhaps most importantly, the participating youth believe that they have the power, knowledge and skills to make their city a more just and equitable place.<sup>79</sup>

Portland lacks a comparable central nervous system working to stimulate interest and create opportunities for high school students to practice and come to love citizenship. The time may have come to create one.

#### **e. The potential of Portland**

Fortunately, an extraordinary resource exists that may help the District enhance the connections between its students and the broader community: the civic energy of Portland area adults. According to widely recognized measures of civic engagement, which include rates of volunteerism, attendance at public meetings, voting, group participation and charitable giving, Portland currently enjoys high rankings. When it comes to the percentage of adult residents who volunteer, Portland ranks second only to Minneapolis among the fifty most populous federally designated metropolitan areas.<sup>80</sup> In short, Portland is among the most civically engaged communities in the nation.

**Were the District to harness the energy of Portland's apparently willing volunteers, there might be no end to what this otherwise resource-constrained public institution might achieve.**

But Portland should avoid the temptation of resting on its laurels, as it is not at all clear whether the larger community is investing in the civic potential of its youth.

Although the window may not remain open long, the District currently possesses a unique opportunity to leverage the volunteer energy of adults to advance any number of possible objectives: from boosting student achievement to building community support for schools to expanding youth engagement opportunities. Were the District to harness the energy of Portland’s apparently willing volunteers, there might be no end to what this otherwise resource-constrained public institution might achieve.

#### **f. Partnerships: is the timing right?**

Given limited financial resources and competing school priorities, one might ask whether the time is right for cultivating community partnerships to promote better civics education. Based on its research and witness testimony, your committee’s response is an emphatic “yes.” Your committee found widespread support for innovative and more effective civic education and partnerships.

At the local level, expressions of support can be found in the very heart of the District’s Social Studies K-12 “belief” statement: “We believe that all students can achieve high standards when...parents and guardians

are included and encouraged to be part of the classroom and school community of learners...[and when]...the public is engaged in the District's effort to enhance student achievement."<sup>81</sup>

Local foundations appear willing to offer their support for enhanced civics education. In a panel interview conducted by your committee, the leaders of four Oregon foundations – the Miller Foundation, PGE Foundation, the Meyer Memorial Trust, and the Jubitz Family Foundation – were unanimous in their support. Comments included the following: "This needs to be a demand by the community and an absolute expectation." "There is a need to make civics education come alive." "There needs to be an expectation for civic involvement by every high school student as part of graduation requirements." "The City Club needs to wake up Portland with its research report."

Foundations in Oregon can and have played a key role in facilitating partnerships and coalitions of organizations, especially when it comes to engaging youth. An excellent example is the Oregon Community Foundation's Community 101 (C101). A classroom-based program receiving major support from the PGE Foundation, C101 provides students opportunities to bring about positive change in their communities through grant-making and volunteering. Used by teachers in high school classrooms throughout Oregon, C101 lends itself to instructional use in civic engagement, global literacy, critical thinking, public speaking, use of technology, and community involvement. Students learn creatively about their community and how to address problems. C101 also satisfies the Oregon Department of Education's new essential skills requirements for an Oregon diploma.

Many nonprofit organizations with civic engagement as an integral part of their mission are also passionate about the topic and may have either financial resources or volunteers to help develop programs recommended in this report. City Club itself is beginning to experiment with ways of making its mission – "[t]o inform its members and the community in public matters, and to arouse in them the realization of the obligations of citizenship" – more relevant to high school students. For example, City Club is convening a summit on June 1, 2012 to explore strategies for enhancing youth engagement.

The Multnomah Bar Association in the lead article in its quarterly newsletter, *The Multnomah Lawyer*, emphasized the work of its Foundation to promote civics education:

"When opinions are rooted in mistaken beliefs about how our justice and political systems work, the informed and civil debate to which we aspire becomes impossible...One of the obvious antidotes to ignorance is education. Deeper understanding promotes a deeper appreciation of the rule of law, access to justice and the independence of the judiciary and ensures better political decisions."<sup>82</sup>

The Multnomah Bar Association has a long tradition of supporting civic education and through its Foundation has been distributing small grants to local organizations committed to enhancing knowledge of our legal system.

**...a fundamental challenge remains: local leadership is required to mobilize and coordinate these multiple efforts strategically in the service of enhancing civics education and citizenship for all high school youth in our community.**

In short, there appear to be no shortage of willing institutions and organizations and volunteers prepared to improve civics education and engagement opportunities for young people. But a fundamental challenge remains: local leadership is required to mobilize and coordinate these multiple efforts strategically in the service of enhancing civics education and citizenship for all high school youth in our community.

## PART IV: CONCLUSIONS

### **1. Democracy requires citizenship, and citizenship requires social studies.**

Democracy requires citizenship – the *knowledge* of history and how government works, the *critical thinking skills* to develop informed opinions about public issues, and the *disposition* to become actively engaged in public affairs. Social studies, more than any other subject, provides students with the preparation for citizenship.

### **2. Social studies is not a priority in the Portland Public School District.**

Social studies has been crowded out by other educational goals and budget cuts, and is in danger of being further and permanently marginalized. Although individual social studies teachers often are doing a stellar job, the District lacks leadership personnel to guide, coordinate, and oversee social studies instruction.

### **3. State expectations for citizenship have been lost in the shuffle.**

The state has an important role to play in civics education by establishing standards and providing support and professional development opportunities for teachers. Civics, however, is last in line among the subjects of state attention. State history and civics standards are strong in critical thinking skills, but weak in the knowledge, collaboration skills and civic disposition elements of citizenship.

### **4. There are proven methods to help high school students become good citizens.**

Parents and teachers are the most influential adults in determining whether a student becomes an engaged citizen. Peer groups and social media also strongly influence students and can be used to engage students in citizenship experiences. Technology has the potential to enhance and transform civics learning. The most successful citizenship experiences are relevant to the student's life, actively engage the student, and offer the possibility of making a difference in the world.

### **5. Education for citizenship needs leadership, organization and help.**

There are excellent classes and community programs for citizenship in Portland Public Schools, but they are not available in all high schools and to all students. There need to be more and better opportunities to experience citizenship. Schools cannot do the job alone. Partnerships between schools and the community are needed to provide more and better experiences. Many members of the public would like to volunteer, but the District is not organized and staffed to facilitate such assistance. Community resources for citizenship education in the District are uncoordinated and unevenly distributed. Existing classes and programs for citizenship barely touch the need of Portland's students, or harness the potential of the Portland community.



## PART V: RECOMMENDATIONS

### TO THE PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT:

#### 1. Make preparation for citizenship a priority

The District's leadership should make preparation for citizenship a priority on a par with high school graduation, preparation for employment, and higher education. The board, superintendent and principals should frequently and emphatically state that preparation for citizenship is a District priority, and principals should regularly discuss citizenship as an independent goal with teachers.

#### 2. Conduct a program audit of K-12 social studies.

The District should conduct and publish a program audit of K-12 social studies. The audit should examine the promotion of civic values as well as knowledge and skills, and the distribution of opportunities for students to participate in meaningful civic activities in both the school and the community. The audit should identify those present and potential experiences that will provide the most opportunities for the most students.

#### 3. Provide professional development for teachers in proven civic practices.

The District should train teachers in the proven practices for civics education, in the use of technology to enhance civic knowledge, skills and disposition, and in the development of community partnerships.

#### 4. Become a more welcoming partner.

The District should remove barriers and develop practices that encourage responsible individuals and organizations to partner with schools in their civics education mission. The Board of Education should receive an annual report of partnership and volunteer activities.

### TO THE OREGON LEGISLATURE AND OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:

#### 5. Recommit to citizenship.

The Oregon Legislative Assembly should hold oversight hearings, or hearings on such legislation as may be introduced, relating to standards and method of instruction for social studies in public schools. At the hearings, the Oregon Department of Education should explain how its standards, programs and materials comply with existing Oregon statutes and will implement the Essential Skill of Citizenship.

### TO ALL PORTLAND AREA CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS:

#### 6. Recognize citizenship by youth and school-community partnerships.

The City Club of Portland should devote at least one program each year to the subject of youth citizenship and establish awards for outstanding youth citizenship and school-community civic partnerships. Other civic organizations in the Portland metropolitan area should establish similar programs.

### TO ALL PORTLAND AREA GOVERNMENTS:

#### 7. Include youth on boards and committees.

The Portland offices of national and state agencies, Metro, Multnomah County, the City of Portland, and each neighborhood association in Portland should include at least one student as a voting member of commissions, advisory boards and study committees charged with issues of concern to youth.



## PART V: RECOMMENDATIONS

### TO PORTLAND AREA CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, FOUNDATIONS, BUSINESSES AND ALL PORTLAND AREA SCHOOL DISTRICTS

#### **8. Implement a civic engagement partnership pilot project.**

Portland area school districts, City Club of Portland, Classroom Law Project, Multnomah Bar Foundation, Multnomah Youth Commission, Rotary and other civic organizations, including foundations, should develop a privately-funded pilot program to encourage citizenship among high school youth through partnerships between schools and the community. The project would support three positions: (a) a central coordinator to develop and match civic engagement opportunities in the metropolitan area with interested students from any school in the metropolitan area, and (b) one high school coordinator in each of two pilot high schools. The high school coordinator would facilitate the creation and support of civics activities for teachers and students. The pilot schools should demonstrate administrator and teacher enthusiasm for the effort, and represent communities with relatively few local human and financial resources.

*Respectfully submitted,*

Michael Achterman  
Jan Christensen  
Allison Deverman Vietor  
Roger Meyer  
Colleen Shoemaker  
Kurt Wehbring  
Donald Williams  
Stephen Griffith, Lead Writer  
James Gorter, Chair

Mark Knudsen, Research Adviser  
Merril Keane, Advocacy & Awareness Adviser  
Tony Iaccarino, Research & Policy Director

## WITNESSES

Jennifer Allen, Director of Programs, Oregon Humanities

Janet Bixby, Associate Dean and Professor of Education,  
Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and  
Counseling

Korinne Breen, Junior, Clackamas Middle College;  
Participant and Summer Intern, Global Citizen Corps,  
Mercy Corps

Ben Cannon, Education Policy Advisor, Office of Governor  
John Kitzhaber

Peyton Chapman, Principal, Lincoln High School, Portland  
Public Schools

Linda Christensen, Director, Oregon Writing Project, Lewis  
& Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling;  
Volunteer Teacher, Jefferson High School, Portland Public  
Schools

Caryn Connolly, Social Studies Teacher, Roberts High  
School, Salem-Keizer School District; Board Member,  
Oregon Education Association

Gil Corral, Program Officer, Global Citizen Corps, Mercy  
Corps

Marilyn Cover, Executive Director, Classroom Law Project

Jennessa Datema, Community 101 Coordinator, Oregon  
Community Foundation

Steve Davee, Science/Math Teacher and Technology / Doc-  
umentation Specialist; Opal Charter School and The Center  
for Children's Learning, Portland Children's Museum

Anna Deffebach, Student, Dartmouth College; Graduate,  
Lincoln High School, Portland Public Schools

Kate Dickson, President, Leadship Matters Inc.; Education  
Policy Adviser, Chalkboard Project; Former Deputy Super-  
intendent, Oregon Department of Education

Sarah Epstein, Social Studies Teacher, Roosevelt High  
School

Marc Fernandes, Youth Development Coordinator, Com-  
mission on Children, Families and Community, Mult-  
nomah County

Melissa Goff, Executive Director, Teaching & Learning,  
Portland Public Schools

Portia Hall, Social Studies Teacher; and Students, Constitu-  
tion Class, Franklin High School, Portland Public Schools

Betsy Hammond, Reporter, The Oregonian

Susan Harris MacKay, Director, Center for Children's  
Learning, Portland Children's Museum; Pedagogical  
Director, Opal Charter School and Opal Museum School

Amy Jensen, Teacher, Menlo Park Elementary School,  
David Douglas School District

Todd Jones, Teacher, West Linn High School; Policy  
Coordinator, Education Investment Project, Office of  
Governor John Kitzhaber

Al Jubitz, President, Jubitz Family Foundation

Ray Kennedy, Student, Trillium Charter School; Member,  
Multnomah Youth Commission

Bridgette Lang, Student, Jefferson High School; Member,  
Multnomah Youth Commission

Lars Larson, Broadcaster, The Lars Larson Show

Andrea Morgan, Social Studies Education Specialist,  
Oregon Department of Education

Melanie Morris, Social Studies Teacher, West Sylvan  
Middle School, Portland Public Schools

Carole Morse, President, PGE Foundation

Marc Moscato, Executive Director, Dill Pickle Club

Steve Novick, Policy Analyst, Oregon Health Insurance  
Exchange; Candidate, Portland City Council

Tess Novotny, Student, Franklin High School; Member,  
Multnomah Youth Commission

Carla Randall, Chief Academic Officer, Portland Public  
Schools

Bobbie Regan, Director, Portland School Board

Karen Rouse, Social Studies and Writing Teacher, West  
Sylvan Middle School, Portland Public Schools

Julie Schumann, Social Studies Teacher, Winterhaven  
School, Portland Public Schools

Carole Smith, Superintendent, Portland Public Schools

Norman Smith, President, Ford Family Foundation; Board  
Member, Chalkboard Project

Doug Stamm, CEO, Meyer Memorial Trust, Board Member,  
Chalkboard Project

Tim Swinehart, Social Studies Teacher, Constitution Class  
Instructor, Lincoln High School, Portland Public Schools

William Thompson, Teacher, Winterhaven School, Portland  
Public Schools

Gayle Thieman, Associate Professor, Graduate School  
of Education, Portland State University; Past President,  
National Council for Social Studies; Member, Oregon and  
Washington Councils for Social Studies

Kerry Tymchuk, Executive Director, Oregon Historical  
Society

Charlie Walker, Chair, Foundations for a Better Oregon;  
Vice Chair, Board of Directors, James F. and Marian L.  
Miller Foundation; Former Chair, Oregon Cultural Trust;  
Former President, Linfield College

Amie Wells, Senior Program Officer, Mercy Corps Global  
Citizen Corps, US Coordinator, Mercy Corps' Global Citi-  
zen Corps International

Amanda Whalen, Special Assistant to the Chief Academic  
Officer, Portland Public Schools

Beth Woods, Co-Chair, Opal Charter School; Board Mem-  
ber, Portland Children's Museum

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<sup>42</sup> Regarding field trips: interviews with Caryn Connolly and Todd Jones, Jan. 26, 2012. Regarding class size, workload, and impact on students: interviews with Andrea Morgan, Oct. 3, 2011, Janet Bixby, Oct. 6, 2011, Sarah Epstein, Nov. 17, Linda Christensen, Dec. 8, 2011, and Carla Randall, Dec. 12, 2011; Regarding TOSAs and district curriculum personnel: interviews with Bobbie Regan, Nov. 10, 2011, Julie Schumann, Nov. 17, 2011, and Linda Christensen, Dec. 8, 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Interviews with Melanie Morris, Nov. 10, 2011; Sarah Epstein, Nov. 17, 2011; and Linda Christensen, Dec. 8, 2011.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Marilyn Cover, Aug. 15, 2011.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Ben Cannon, Oct. 20, 2011.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Janet Bixby, Oct. 6, 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Bobbie Regan, Nov. 10, 2011.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Carole Smith, Oct. 13, 2011.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Janet Bixby, Oct. 6, 2011.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Betsy Hammond, Sept. 22, 2011.

<sup>51</sup> Oregon State Department of Education, *State Manual of the Course of Study for the Elementary Schools* (Salem: State Printing Department, 1922).

<sup>52</sup> ORS 329.025.

<sup>53</sup> The absence of content from Oregon's 2003 history standards – the standards that immediately preceded the current 2011 history standards – was severely criticized in a national assessment of state history standards, in which Oregon's 2003 state history standards received an "F." See Sheldon Stern et al., *The State of State U.S. History Standards 2011* (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2011), pp. 123-25. Oregon's 2011 history standards have even less content than the 2003 standards.

<sup>54</sup> Susan Abravanel, et al., *Civics and Financial Education Task Force: Final Report and Recommendations* (Oregon Department of Education, 2008).

<sup>55</sup> Interviews with Bridgette Lang, Tess Novotny and Ray Kennedy, Oct. 27, 2011; and Kerry Tymchuk, Feb. 22, 2012.

<sup>56</sup> (Guardianship of Democracy)

<sup>57</sup> Interviews with Korinne Breen and Gil Corral, Aug. 29, 2011; Anna Deffebach and Betsy Hammond, Sept. 22, 2011; Peyton Chapman, Dec. 8, 2011; Carla Randall, Feb. 6, 2012; and Kerry Tymchuk, Feb. 22, 2012.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Jennifer Allen, Jan. 19, 2012.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Steve Novick, Dec. 15, 2011.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Lars Larson, Jan. 27, 2012.

<sup>61</sup> Interviews with Jennifer Allen, Jan. 19, 2012; Linda Christensen, Dec. 8, 2011; and Marc Moscato, Jan. 19, 2012.

<sup>62</sup> Interviews with Sarah Epstein, Tim Swinehart, and William Thompson, Nov. 17, 2011; and Marc Moscato, Jan. 19, 2012.

<sup>63</sup> Interviews with Sarah Epstein and Tim Swinehart, Nov. 17, 2011.

<sup>64</sup> Interviews with Jennifer Allen, Jan. 19, 2012; and Amie Wells, Aug. 29, 2011.

<sup>65</sup> Interviews with Kate Dickson, Dec. 15, 2011; and Jennifer Allen, Jan. 19, 2012.

<sup>66</sup> Classroom Law Project, Oregon Civics Survey (2006), p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Jennifer Allen, Jan. 19, 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Interviews with Peyton Chapman, Dec. 8, 2011; and Jennifer Allen, Jan. 19, 2011.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Peyton Chapman, Dec. 8, 2011; and Kate Dickson, Dec. 15, 2011.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Peyton Chapman, Dec. 8, 2011.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Sarah Epstein, Nov. 17, 2011.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Peyton Chapman, Dec. 8, 2011.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Janet Bixby, Oct. 6, 2011.

<sup>74</sup> Interviews with Carole Smith, Oct. 13, 2011, Bobbie Regan, Nov. 10, 2011; and Carla Randall, Dec. 12, 2012.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Janet Bixby, Oct. 6, 2011.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Sarah Epstein, Nov. 17, 2011.

<sup>77</sup> Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*. (2011), p. 13.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Norm Smith, Jan. 23, 2012.

<sup>79</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>80</sup> Corporation for National and Community Service and the National Conference of Citizenship, "Civic Life in America: Data on the Civic Health of the Nation," <http://civic.serve.gov/>; Greater Portland Pulse, <http://www.portlandpulse.org/topics/civic-engagement>.

<sup>81</sup> Portland Public Schools, "Social Studies K-12 Mission Statement," <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/departments/curriculum/1743.htm>.

<sup>82</sup> Peter Glade, "Invest in Civic Education," *Multnomah Lawyer*, 57 (December 2011).



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# APPENDIX A

## 2011 OREGON SOCIAL SCIENCES STANDARDS

### CORE STANDARDS FOR ALL GRADE LEVELS FOR HISTORY AND FOR CIVICS & GOVERNMENT

(Core Standards: The knowledge and skills expected of a prepared Oregon high school graduate.)

It is essential that these standards be addressed in contexts that promote Social Science Analysis, civic responsibility and engagement, understanding global relationships, enhanced communication, making connections between the past, present and future, and the ability to evaluate historical and contemporary issues.

#### History

1. Analyze and apply cause and effect relationships to a variety of historical issues, events and problems.
2. Analyze and apply change and continuity relationships to a variety of historical issues, events, and problems.
3. Construct, support, and refute interpretations of history using political, social, economic, and cultural perspectives by drawing from a variety of primary and secondary sources.
4. Interpret historical perspectives through personal, local, state, tribal, national, and global narratives.

...

#### Civics & Government

10. Examine the relationship between government and citizens to distinguish and evaluate the ways that civic participation occurs in local, state, tribal, national, and global communities.
11. Engage in informed and respectful deliberation of local, state, tribal, national, and global issues.
12. Analyze the structure and functions of political parties, interest groups, and the mass media and their affect on the political beliefs and behaviors of citizens.
13. Evaluate the contributions of early governments to the development of modern United States government.
14. Evaluate the various functions and processes of governments and their impact on societies and citizens, comparing and contrasting various government designs to evaluate how they serve their citizens.
15. Identify defining documents and speeches of United States government and the specific purpose and significance of each.
16. Examine the pluralistic realities of society (e.g., race, poverty, gender, and age), recognizing issues of equity, and evaluating need for change.

...

#### Social Science Analysis

25. Define and clarify an issue so that its dimensions are well understood.

26. Acquire, organize, analyze and evaluate information from primary and secondary sources.
27. Describe various perspectives on an event or issue and the reasoning behind them.
28. Analyze characteristics, causes, and consequences of an event, issue, problem or phenomenon.
29. Identify, compare, and evaluate outcomes, responses, or solutions; then reach an informed and supported conclusion.

## 2011 OREGON SOCIAL SCIENCES STANDARDS

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADE LEVEL STANDARDS FOR HISTORY AND FOR CIVICS & GOVERNMENT

(Grade Level Standards: Developmental knowledge and skills that will lead to successful acquisition of the knowledge and skills in the core standards.)

It is essential that these standards be addressed in contexts that promote Social Science Analysis, civic responsibility, understanding global relationships, enhanced communication, making connections between the past, present and future, and the ability to evaluate historical and contemporary issues.

#### [US History — Reconstruction to Present; World History — 20th & 21st Century]

##### Historical Knowledge

- H.S.1 Evaluate continuity and change over the course of world and United States history.
- H.S.2 Analyze the complexity and investigate causes and effects of significant events in world, U.S., and Oregon history.
- H.S.3 Explain the historical development and impact of major world religions and philosophies.
- H.S.4 Investigate the historical development and impact of major scientific and technological innovations; political thought, theory and actions; and art and literature on culture and thought.
- H.S.5 Examine and evaluate the origins of fundamental political debates and how conflict, compromise, and cooperation have shaped national unity and diversity in world, U.S., and Oregon history.
- H.S.6 Analyze ideas critical to the understanding of history, including, but not limited to: populism, progressivism, isolationism, imperialism, communism, environmentalism, liberalism, fundamentalism, racism, ageism, classism, conservatism, cultural diversity, feminism, and sustainability.
- H.S.7 Analyze the history, culture, tribal sovereignty, and historical and current issues of the American Indian tribes and bands in Oregon and the United States.



- H.S.8 Explain how the American labor movement influenced events and thinking in the United States and Oregon over time.
- H.S.9 Identify historical and current events, issues, and problems when national interests and global interest have been in conflict, and analyze the values and arguments on both sides of the conflict.

### Historical Thinking

- H.S.10 Evaluate an historical source for point of view and historical context.
- H.S.11 Gather and analyze historical information, including contradictory data, from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including sources located on the Internet, to support or reject hypotheses.
- H.S.12 Construct and defend a written historical argument using relevant primary and secondary sources as evidence.
- H.S.13 Differentiate between facts and historical interpretations, recognizing that a historian's narrative reflects his or her judgment about the significance of particular facts.

...

### Civics and Government

- H.S.24 Analyze and critique the impact of constitutional amendments.
- H.S.25 Describe elements of early governments (i.e., Greek, Roman, English, and others) that are visible in United States government structure.
- H.S.26 Define and compare/contrast United States republican government to direct democracy, socialism, communism, theocracy, oligarchy.
- H.S.27 Examine functions and process of United States government.
- H.S.28 Evaluate how governments interact at the local, state, tribal, national, and global levels.
- H.S.29 Examine the structures and functions of Oregon's state, county, local and regional governments.
- H.S.30 Analyze the roles and activities of political parties, interest groups and mass media and how they affect the beliefs and behaviors of local, state, and national constituencies.
- H.S.31 Describe United States foreign policy and evaluate its impact on the United States and other countries.
- H.S.32 Examine and evaluate documents and decisions related to the Constitution and Supreme Court decisions (e.g., Federalist Papers, Constitution, Marbury v. Madison, Bill of Rights, Constitutional amendments, Declaration of Independence).
- H.S.33 Explain the role of government in various current events.
- H.S.34 Explain the responsibilities of citizens (e.g., vote, pay taxes).

- H.S.35 Examine the pluralistic realities of society (e.g., race, poverty, gender, and age), recognizing issues of equity, and evaluating need for change.

...

### Social Science Analysis

- H.S.57 Define, research, and explain an event, issue, problem, or phenomenon and its significance to society.
- H.S.58 Gather, analyze, use, and document information from various sources, distinguishing facts, opinions, inferences, biases, stereotypes, and persuasive appeals.
- H.S.59 Demonstrate the skills and dispositions needed to be a critical consumer of information.
- H.S.60 Analyze an event, issue, problem, or phenomenon from varied or opposing perspectives or points of view.
- H.S.61 Analyze an event, issue, problem, or phenomenon, identifying characteristics, influences, causes, and both short- and long-term effects.
- H.S.62 Propose, compare, and judge multiple responses, alternatives, or solutions to issues or problems; then reach an informed, defensible, supported conclusion.
- H.S.63 Engage in informed and respectful deliberation and discussion of issues, events, and ideas.

## APPENDIX B

### MODEL PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS

The following represents just a partial list of the many organizations and programs that foster active citizenship among youth, both in Oregon and in other states.

#### **Portland and Oregon:**

- **Classroom Law Project**  
<http://www.classroomlaw.org/about/>
- **Community 101 – The Oregon Community Foundation and PGE Foundation**  
<http://www.oregoncf.org/connect/developing-leaders/community-101/community-101>
- **Global Citizen Corps – Mercy Corps**  
<http://www.globalcitizencorps.org>
- **The Multnomah Bar Foundation**  
<https://mbabar.org/Foundation/Grants.html>
- **Multnomah Youth Commission**  
<http://web.multco.us/ccfc/multnomah-youth-commission>
- **Portland State University and Jefferson High School Senior Inquiry**  
[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_hb3325/is\\_3\\_7/ai\\_n29051742/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3325/is_3_7/ai_n29051742/)
- **Reaching and Empowering All People (REAP)**  
<http://www.reapusa.org>
- **Youth Planning Program – Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, City of Portland**  
<http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=50268>

#### **Select programs from across the nation:**

- **Mikva Challenge (Chicago, Illinois)**  
<http://www.mickvachallenge.org>
- **The Arizona Republic and Phoenix Channel 12 News (Phoenix, Arizona)**  
<http://www.azcentral.com/artizonarepublic/opinions/articles/2011/11/11/20111111students-send-ideas-debate.html>
- **Centurion Program – The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce (Kansas City, Missouri)**  
<http://www.kansascity.com/2011/08/3057149/kc-chamber-selects-new-leadership.html>
- **Louisiana Commission on Civic Education**  
<http://kpel965.com/louisiana-legislative-youth-advisory-council-taking-applications/>
- **Glendale University City Government 101 – City of Glendale (Glendale, Arizona)**  
<http://www.glendaleaz.com/CommunityPartnerships/CivicEducation.cfm>
- **Generation Nation/Kids Voting -- Charlotte Observer (Charlotte, North Carolina)**  
<http://portal.kidsvoting.org/AboutUs/about.aspx>
- **Albion School District (Albion, New York)**  
<http://journal-register.com/local/x212307239/ALBION-SCHOOLS-District-receives-state-award-of-excellence/print>



City Club *of* Portland