



Illinois State Board of Education

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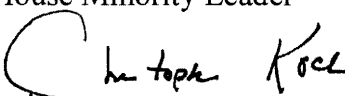
Gery J. Chico
Chairman

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

DATE: May 28, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable John J. Cullerton, Senate President
The Honorable Christine Radogno, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Michael J. Madigan, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Jim Durkin, House Minority Leader

FROM: Christopher A. Koch, Ed. D. 
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: Illinois Task Force on Civic Education Report

The Illinois Task Force on Civic Education Report delineates findings and recommendations pursuant to Public Act 98-0301. The Illinois Task Force on Civic Education explains that responsible citizens are informed and thoughtful, participate in their communities, act politically, and have moral and civic virtues. Included in the report are findings on civic education in Illinois, civic education in other jurisdictions, and best practices in civic education.

Specific recommendations included in the report are:

- require a civic education in the high school;
- revise Illinois Social Studies Standards;
- require a service learning project in middle and high school;
- align licensure and certification requirements for pre-service teachers with best practices;
- provide access to professional development aligned to best practices;
- involve students in the election process; and
- extend the task force to gather public input through public hearings.

This report is transmitted on behalf of the Chair of the Task Force, Shawn Healy, Civic Learning and Engagement Scholar for the Robert R. McCormick Foundation. For additional copies of this report or for more specific information, please contact Sarah McCusker at 217/524-4832 or smccuske@isbe.net.

cc: The Honorable Pat Quinn, Governor
Tim Maples, Clerk of the House
Tim Anderson, Secretary of the State
Legislative Research Unit
State Government Report Center



Illinois State Board of Education

Gery J. Chico, Chairman
Dr. Christopher Koch, State Superintendent

Illinois Task Force on Civic Education

Report

Prepared by

The Members of the Illinois Task Force on Civic Education

Submitted to the Governor and the Illinois General Assembly

Submitted pursuant to PA 98-0301

May 2014

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Illinois State Board of Education

Illinois Task Force on Civic Education

Report

Submitted to the Governor and the Illinois General Assembly

May 2014

This report of the Illinois Task Force on Civic Education (the Task Force) is respectfully submitted to the Governor and the Illinois General Assembly.

Background

Public Act 98-0301 required that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) establish the Illinois Task Force on Civic Education. The Public Act charges the Task Force with the following tasks:

1. To analyze the current state of civic education in this state.
2. To analyze current civic education laws in other jurisdictions, both mandated and permissive.
3. To identify best practices in civic education in other jurisdictions.
4. To make recommendations to the General Assembly focused on substantially increasing civic literacy and the capacity of youth to obtain the requisite knowledge, skills, and practices to be civically informed members of the public.
5. To make funding recommendations if the Task Force's recommendations would require a fiscal commitment.

As required by the Public Act, the Task Force includes legislators as well as representatives of diverse stakeholder groups. The full Task Force membership is given in Appendix A. The Task Force held four monthly meetings from February through May 2014. The final approved minutes from the four meetings are included in Appendix B. The Task Force consulted the available research and policy on civic education to inform their work and compiled a resource list (included in Appendix C), organized around the first three tasks of their charge. Citations within this report refer to this resource list.

The Task Force elected Shawn Healy, civic learning and engagement scholar for the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, to serve as chairperson. The Midwest Comprehensive Center, a federally funded regional comprehensive center operated by American Institutes for Research, provided technical assistance to ISBE and the chairperson in planning, facilitating, and documenting the work of the Task Force.

Findings on the Current State of Civic Education

The Task Force developed a shared definition of civic education and investigated the research on the value of civic education. In addition, the Task Force divided into three Work Groups, one for each of the first three tasks of the legislative charge (to analyze the current state of civic education in Illinois, to analyze civic education policy in other jurisdictions, and to identify best practices).

Defining Civic Education

The Task Force agreed upon the following statement of the goal of civic education and definition of responsible citizens, adapted from the *Civic Mission of Schools* report (Carnegie Corporation of New York & the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning Engagement, 2003):

The goal of civic education should be to help all young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives. Effective civic education is interdisciplinary.

Responsible citizens include individuals who

- ***Are informed and thoughtful.*** They have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy; have and understand the importance of news literacy; have an understanding and awareness of issues impacting their communities; have a capacity to think critically; and have a willingness to enter into dialogue with others about different points of view and to respect diverse perspectives.
- ***Participate in their communities.*** They belong to and contribute to groups in civil society that offer opportunities for Americans to participate in public service, work together to overcome problems, and explore an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs.
- ***Act politically.*** They have the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to participate effectively in the political process—for instance, by organizing people to address social issues, solving problems, exercising news literacy, petitioning and protesting to influence public policy, and voting.
- ***Have moral and civic virtues.*** They are concerned for the rights and welfare of others, are socially responsible, are willing to listen to alternative perspectives, understand their capacity to make a difference, and are ready to contribute personally to civic and political causes. They strike a reasonable balance between their own interests and the common good. They recognize the importance of and practice civic duties such as voting and respecting the rule of law.

The Case for Civic Education

Task Force member Maryam Judar, executive director of the Citizen Advocacy Center, gave a presentation on the value and importance of civic education at the March 2014 meeting of the Task Force. Ms. Judar drew primarily from *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* by the Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at

the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools (Annenberg, 2011) as a framework for discussing the importance of civic education. What follows is a summary of Ms. Judar’s remarks, which the Task Force has adopted as the rationale for improving civic education in the state.

A healthy democracy demands active, informed, and effective civic engagement by its public. When the newly formed United States of America adopted the radical political system of a democratic republic, Thomas Jefferson recognized and espoused the need for a responsible citizenry educated through tax-financed public schools. Yet, forty years ago, at a time when Americans began to feel greater skepticism about their governments in the wake of Watergate, war, and other challenges facing the nation, civic education and its concomitant emphasis on civic responsibility began its slow decline in our public schools. In an effort to compete globally, states across the nation focused their public school policies on the emphasis of literacy, mathematics, and science, which continues to this day, at the expense of government and civics classes. The curricula that cover these topics have been reduced to rote memorization crammed into but a few weeks of learning.

But civic learning is indispensable to preserving our system of self-government. The integrity and health of American democracy depends on the active, informed, and effective participation of Americans, whether through voting, campaigning for office, or monitoring their government’s activities. Voting is but one marker of civic engagement. Civic education in a democracy should demand more from our youth than the call to register to vote when they come of age, to use their power of the vote on election day, or to recite the three branches of government. Civic learning propels one to exercise their civic duty, such as through volunteering for political campaigns, contacting their elected representatives, engaging in protest, or petitioning their government.

The benefits of civic learning are many. The *Guardian of Democracy* report cites five: (1) promoting civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions to participate; (2) achieving civic equality; (3) building twenty-first century competencies; (4) improving school climate; and (5) reducing the dropout rate.

Civic learning translates into civic action. Civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions are strongly linked to civic participation. For example, a study of young Americans after the 2012 presidential election revealed that those who had high-quality school-based civic learning experiences were more likely to vote, form political opinions, and be informed about election issues (Center for Information Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2013a).

Moreover, there exists a strong relationship between the civic health and the economic health of communities. For example, communities with high rates of volunteerism weathered the recent recession better than those with lower rates, exhibiting significantly lower unemployment levels (National Conference on Citizenship, 2011).

Civic learning should be a part of each student’s education. The *Guardian of Democracy* report offers these unsatisfactory statistics: “African-American and Hispanic students are twice as likely as their white counterparts to score below proficient on national civics assessments”; “eligible minorities vote at about two-thirds the rate of their white counterparts”; and “families that make above \$75,000 per year are twice as likely to vote (and six times as likely to be

politically active) as families that make less than \$15,000 per year” (Annenberg, 2011, p. 15). The good news is that the research shows that civic learning promotes civic equality, meaning that poor, minority, urban or rural students perform considerably higher for having received civic learning than their peers. In fact, comprehensive civic education that aims to reach all public school students would likely decrease the “civic achievement gap” evidenced by the research (Levinson, 2012; Sporte & Kahne, 2007).

Civic learning also develops workforce skills valued by employers. The *Guardian of Democracy* report states that corporate leaders and teachers have identified and agree on at least these four competencies that civic learning may improve: “knowledge of economic and political processes; skill in understanding presentations in a range of media; the ability to work cooperatively with others, especially those from diverse backgrounds; [and] positive attitudes about working hard, obeying the law and engaging in discussion that leads to innovative and effective civic action in the community” (Annenberg, 2011, pp. 20–22). Factual knowledge alone does not create these competencies. In addition to traditional teaching methods, effective civic learning demands hands-on, active learning. It also demands that controversial subjects be discussed at school. Controversial subjects create an opportunity to promote civil discourse and respect for those with differing opinions. Active civic learning promotes civic outcomes as well as twenty-first century skills, including critical thinking and news literacy (see also Torney-Purta & Wilkenfeld 2009).

According to the *Guardian of Democracy* report, school climate also benefits from civic learning: “schools with civic learning programs are more likely to be ‘safe, inclusive, and respectful’” (Annenberg, 2011, p. 23). School climate includes actual educational experiences that students may receive as well as school ethics and norms. Schools with a positive climate promote those values and expectations that foster a sense of cohesion in the school as a community that exists within a larger community. Implicit in a positive school climate are positive relationships between the school and that larger community in which the school is situated, into which those norms, values, and expectations apply. Further, by engaging in active civic education curricula, students are better equipped to recognize their own stake in their school’s success (see also Flanagan, 2013; National School Climate Council, 2007).

Civic learning also benefits the retention of students: According to the *Guardian of Democracy* report, “81% of high school dropouts said they would have been less likely to do so if there were more opportunities for experiential learning” (Annenberg, 2011, pp. 24–25). Although the dropout rate cannot be tied only to the lack of civic learning, it is clear that students unchallenged by classes they deem boring or irrelevant to their lives, or those in a negative school climate that hampers their learning, may have a change of heart if effective civic learning stimulates students with activities that have relevance to their lives. Retention rates also benefit from the positive school climate that active civic learning creates. When students feel connected rather than isolated from the broader community, the relevancy of their learning becomes more apparent. The greater sense of self-efficacy students obtain from high-quality learning also contributes to lower dropout rates (see also Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006).

The founding fathers embraced democracy because they valued liberty and equality. Because these values evanesce in the absence of an active, informed, and effective public, civic education is a crucial thread in the fabric of democracy. Civic education and ensuing civic participation strengthen the other aspects of our nation that make America a coveted destination, because this

thread pierces through virtually every issue that makes America unique. Our country, including the State of Illinois, depends on a healthy democracy to enable self-realization.

Civic Education in Illinois

In order to graduate from high school in Illinois, students must complete two credits of social studies, one of which must be a course in U.S. history *or* a combination of U.S. history and American government (105 ILCS 5/27-22). Schools must teach “patriotism and principles of representative government,” including the American Declaration of Independence, United States and Illinois constitutions, and the proper use and display of the U.S. flag (105 ILCS 5/27-3). Moreover, Illinois Learning Standards for Social Studies (ISBE, 1997) include State Goal 14, which requires “understand(ing) of political systems, with an emphasis on the United States” from early elementary to late high school.

For the past decade, the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition (ICMC) has worked to restore a core purpose of education to prepare America’s youngest citizens to be informed and active participants in our democracy. Illinois high school students deserve enhanced opportunities to learn and practice civic engagement behaviors, and the ICMC has created a process by which high schools affirm their commitment to civic learning by seeking recognition as a Democracy School.

Illinois Democracy Schools embrace their mission to provide high-quality civic learning opportunities for all students. Their leadership emphasizes civic learning through development of professional faculty and staff capacity, and proven civic learning practices are woven throughout the formal curriculum. Democracy Schools foster a school climate that nurtures and models civic dispositions and build reciprocal relationships within the surrounding community. Since 2006, the ICMC has recognized 22 high schools throughout Illinois as Democracy Schools and integrated them into a growing network of schools that exemplify their historic civic mission.

Illinois also boasts a strong contingent of community organizations who support schools’ civic learning programs. Exemplary organizations include the Barat Educational Foundation, Chicago Metro History Education Center, Citizen Advocacy Center, Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago, Dirksen Congressional Center, Facing History and Ourselves, Illinois Humanities Council, Illinois State Bar Association, Illinois We the People, Illinois YMCA Youth & Government, Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement at the University of Illinois—Chicago, Institute of Politics at the University of Chicago, Joyce Foundation, League of Women Voters of Illinois, MacArthur Foundation, Mikva Challenge, News Literacy Project, Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University, Robert R. McCormick Foundation, and the Spencer Foundation.

The Task Force presents the following findings on the current state of civic education in Illinois:

1. In Illinois, civic education focuses heavily on learning facts and often ignores teaching skills and engagement. A focus on rote memorization leaves less opportunity for discussion and debate in the classroom. The Common Core State Standards will influence the way that civics education is taught.

2. The lack of a formal civic assessment requirement in Illinois creates little incentive for principals or superintendents to improve the quality of civic education.
3. Removing civics courses from the curriculum (because of budget cuts, lack of assessment, and other factors) implies to students that civic engagement is not important.
4. Although the state does not explicitly require a civics course, individual districts or schools may require such a course. The precise percentage of high schools that require a civics course is not known. The Task Force reviewed the course requirements of a random sample of high schools and found that only six in 10 of the sampled high schools require students to take a civics or American government course.
5. The lack of a civic education or engagement requirement in Illinois creates little incentive for principals to provide professional development opportunities related to civic education.
6. Teachers lack the professional development opportunities necessary to model civic engagement.
7. The trend in Illinois, in line with the national trend, has been a decline in emphasis on civic education.

Civic Education Laws in Other Jurisdictions

The Task Force reviewed the civic education policies and initiatives in other jurisdictions by consulting state-by-state scans and other policy research (see Appendix C for a complete list of resources consulted). The Task Force presents the following findings on civic education laws in other jurisdictions:

1. Generally, there are three models for civic education:
 - a. Requiring a course in civics. This is the most common requirement, with a notable system in place in Hawaii.
 - b. Requiring a course in civics with a high-stakes assessment at the end of the course. An example of this system is the requirement in Florida.
 - c. Requiring a course in civics that includes a project-based learning style assessment. An example of this system is the requirement in Tennessee.
2. Illinois is one of only 10 states that do not require a civics or American government course for graduation.¹
3. Eight states have mandatory assessments in civic education.²

¹ The 10 states that do not explicitly require a civics or American government course are Alaska, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington (Center for Information Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2012).

² The eight states that have statewide, standardized tests specifically in civics or American government are California, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia (Center for Information Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2012).

4. Twenty states have education standards related to service learning, civic engagement, or civic education.³
5. States nationwide face political hurdles to funding civic education requirements.
6. Skills taught in civic education courses align well with Common Core State Standards.
7. Nationally, the trend has been a decrease in emphasis on civic education; in recent years, however, many states have created task forces to examine civic education.

Best Practices in Civic Education

The Task Force reviewed standards and guidance documents developed by respected national organizations and research on effective civic education policies and practices (see Appendix C for a complete list of resources consulted). The Task Force conceptualized “best practices” in civic education to mean the effective on-the-ground effective (such as high-quality classroom-level instruction) and the school, district, and state policies that support effective local practice.

The Task Force presents the following findings on best practices in civic education in other jurisdictions:

1. The *Guardian of Democracy* report (Annenberg, 2011) establishes that effective civic education has the following qualities:
 - a. Provides instruction in government, history, law, and democracy.
 - b. Incorporates into the classroom the discussion of current local, national, and international events, particularly those that young people view as important for their lives.
 - c. Designs and implements programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn by performing community service that links with the formal curriculum and classroom instruction.
 - d. Offers extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities.
 - e. Encourages students’ participation in school governance.
 - f. Encourages students’ participation in simulation of democratic processes and procedures.
2. High-quality standards for civic education transcend civic knowledge and address civic skills, including news literacy and civic dispositions.
3. Civic learning standards are not enough to ensure adequate civic learning.
4. Service learning is incorporated into effective civic education, and high-quality standards for service learning are defined by the National Youth Leadership Council (2008).
5. States that the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) recognizes as having high-quality civic education and engagement programs include a project-based curriculum element.

³ For the listing of states with these standards, see Center for Information Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (2012).

6. A standalone civic education course supports effective civic education.
7. Accessible professional development is critical for effective civic education. Inservice and preservice teachers need to have access to professional development aligned with best practices in civic education.

Recommendations From the Illinois Task Force on Civic Education

In the United States we are beneficiaries of a stable democracy. Our founding fathers brought forth here a government of and by the people. The virtues of a stable democracy do not magically grace nations. The results of the recent “Arab Spring” assure us that even when people revolt and desire a democracy it often does not come. Egypt, after its overthrow of a decades-long dictator, is now governed by its military. Robust democratic activity is not an innate human characteristic. Functioning democracy depends on knowledge, learned behavior, and civic grit. If it is not valued and fought for, there is no mystic cavalry that will bring it. We are responsible for the continued embrace and strengthening of this democracy that has been a beacon light of liberty globally.

Yet in recent years, civic learning in U.S. schools has been marginalized, and two thirds of twelfth graders scored below proficient on the last national civics assessment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Recent research has documented that Chicago is the most corrupt city in America and Illinois is third most corrupt among the 50 states (Simpson, Nowlan, Gradel, Zmuda, & Sterrett, 2012). It is little wonder, then, that Illinois is found to be one of the few states in America that does not require its students to take a civics course. You can graduate from this state’s largest school district, in the heart of the nation’s most corrupt city, and never have taken a course that explains to you how a government works—or what it is. Here is an open invitation for corruption to prosper.

It is therefore the recommendation of this Task Force that the General Assembly provide to all the students of this state the education they need to help preserve our democracy and to learn to be active citizens in it by seriously responding to the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Civics Course Requirement

Illinois should require a standalone civic education course at the high school level that comports with the definition of civic education given in this report. Course content should transcend a simple focus on government institutions and include participatory civic learning practices like current and controversial issues discussions, service learning, and simulations of democratic processes.

Recommendation 2: Revisions of Illinois’s Social Studies Standards

Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science (K–12) should be revised to address skills—including news literacy—in addition to content. The Task Force recommends that the *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards* (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013) be consulted as guidance for the revision of the state’s social studies standards. Civic learning experts and advocates should be included in the revision process. In addition, the Task Force wishes to emphasize that, although the state should adopt better

standards, districts, schools, and classroom teachers should retain control over the local curriculum.

Recommendation 3: Project-Based/Service Learning Requirement

Illinois should require that students conduct a service learning project by the completion of eighth grade and again by the completion of twelfth grade. Implementation and evaluation of these service projects is the responsibility of individual school districts. Projects must have concrete links to the formal curriculum, however.

Recommendation 4: Licensure and Certification of Teachers of Civics

Illinois should ensure that licensure and certification requirements for preservice teachers of all disciplines and grades be aligned with best practices in civic education, including direct instruction, current and controversial issues discussions, service learning, and simulations.

Recommendation 5: Professional Development

Illinois should ensure that inservice educators have access to professional development aligned with best practices in civic education. The Illinois General Assembly should seek an efficient and effective method of providing professional development for teachers of civic content and skills.

Recommendation 6: Student Involvement in Elections

Illinois should take measures to make democratic processes more accessible through reforms to voter registration and election administration laws. The state has made promising progress in this area through the adoption of Suffrage at 17 (Public Act 98-51) and allowing high school students to serve as election judges (10 ILCS 5/13-4). Public schools should teach about elections, provide access for eligible students to register to vote, and encourage students to vote on election day. In order to boost youth voter registration and turnout, the state should consider allowing students to preregister at 16 when obtaining driver's licenses and also allow same-day registration at polling places.

Recommendation 7: Extension of Task Force Service

The Task Force has requested an extension of the Task Force's service, from May 31, 2014, to December 31, 2014, to allow time to gather public input from key stakeholders via hearings held throughout Illinois and electronic submissions.

Appendix A

Task Force Members

Chicago Teachers Union

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Appendix B

Task Force Meeting Minutes

- Minutes of Task Force Meeting on February 21, 2014
- Minutes of Task Force Meeting on March 31, 2014
- Minutes of Task Force Meeting on April 24, 2014
- Minutes of Task Force Meeting on May 8, 2014

Illinois Task Force on Civic Education

Meeting Minutes as Approved by Task Force

February 21, 2014, 1:00–4:30 p.m.

- Illinois State Board of Education, V-TEL Room (Third Floor)
100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois
- Illinois State Board of Education, V-TEL Room
100 West Randolph, Suite 14-300, Chicago, Illinois
- Conference Line Provided

Attendance

Task Force Members

Senator Tom Cullerton
Dustin Day
Shawn Healy
Maryam Judar
Larry Pahl
Howard Phillips
David Porter
Darren Reisberg
Pankaj Sharma

Representing Task Force Members

Kim Brondyke, on behalf of Representative Michael Connelly

Guests

Former Attorney General Jim Ryan
Jaime Sanchez, Jr., guest of Darren Reisberg

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Staff

Amanda Elliot
Sarah McCusker
Sarah Otego
Dora Welker

Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC) Staff

Laura Checovich
Nick Pinchok
Sara Wraight

Meeting Objectives

- To gain familiarity with the Task Force members and the Task Force charge.

- To establish norms and processes for working together and making decisions.
- To launch Work Groups responsible for responding to the specific inquiries contained in the Task Force charge.

Welcome and Introductions

The first meeting of the Illinois Task Force on Civic Education began shortly after 1:00 p.m. Participants joined the meeting from ISBE offices in Springfield and Chicago as well as on the phone. Sarah McCusker, Principal Consultant within the Division of College and Career Readiness at ISBE welcomed participants and introduced Task Force facilitator Sara Wraight. Ms. Wraight asked participants to introduce themselves and to comment on their most memorable civic education experience. A wide variety of educational experiences were shared, setting the stage for the work to come.

The Task Force Charge

Ms. McCusker reported that the charge of the Task Force, from Public Act 098-0301, is as follows:

1. To analyze the current state of civic education in this state.
2. To analyze current civic education laws in other jurisdictions, both mandated and permissive.
3. To identify best practices in civic education in other jurisdictions.
4. To make recommendations to the General Assembly focused on substantially increasing civic literacy and the capacity of youth to obtain the requisite knowledge, skills, and practices to be civically informed members of the public.
5. To make funding recommendations if the Task Force's recommendations would require a fiscal commitment.

Ms. McCusker reminded Task Force members that their timeline is short. The recommendations are due back to the General Assembly by May 31, 2014. Ms. Elliot responded to questions about whether the deadline could be extended by stating that this was a possibility, and that the Task Force could include in its final report a recommendation that the group be given additional time.

Former Attorney General Jim Ryan, a guest of the Task Force, asserted that the best way to improve the state and the quality of government we have is to improve the quality of civic education, and that we need civic-minded people to make critical decisions in our government.

Norms and Processes

Ms. Wraight then went over the norms and processes for how the Task Force will work together.

She proposed the following norms:

- Treat each other with respect.
- Listen to understand.

- Ask questions when in doubt.
- Be concise when speaking, and encourage others to participate.
- Stay tuned in and on task.
- Use our time wisely, starting and ending the meeting on time.

Task Force member Larry Pahl added that it is important that the Task Force be a place where free and passionate discussion is allowed and encouraged. There was general agreement on this suggestion from the Task Force members. Ms. Wraight indicated that an additional norm around encouraging open, candid discussion would be added.

Ms. Wraight explained that the Task Force will meet as a full Task Force for a half-day meeting once in February, once in March, and once in April. The dates, times, and locations of the March and April meetings have yet to be scheduled.

Ms. Wraight proposed that the Task Force operate by first splitting into work groups that address the first three charges in the Public Act. Work Group 1 will analyze the current state of civic education in Illinois. Work Group 2 will analyze the current civic education laws in other states. Work Group 3 will identify best practices in civic education across the country. The work groups will have until the end of the March meeting to develop preliminary findings to share with the full Task Force. The full Task Force then will deliberate on the findings and determine which findings will be included in the Task Force report. These findings also will inform the recommendations that the Task Force will make in response to the last two charges of the Public Act. Work groups may and are encouraged to meet outside of the Task Force's meeting times to accomplish the goals of their group. The full Task Force will begin to address charges 4 and 5 of the Public Act at the end of the March meeting, concluding their work at the April meeting.

Task Force members expressed some concern at the short timeline of the process. The group agreed that it is important for everyone to come prepared to meetings by reading background information and meeting outside of the Task Force meetings.

The Task Force engaged in a brief discussion about the value of state standards and required assessments. Ms. McCusker provided some background about Illinois's involvement in the development of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards. Mr. Healy commented on the fact that Illinois does not currently assess civics or social studies. He noted that a report on the National Assessment on Education Progress (NAEP) civics test is included in the resource list, although this information is not disaggregated by state.

The Task Force engaged in further discussion about the apparent gaps or uneven quality of civic education in the current system. Mr. Pahl asserted that the Task Force should consider recommending a civics graduation requirement to help fill those gaps. Mr. Phillips inquired as to how our recommendations might fit into Illinois's current standards, assessment, and accountability structure. He asserted that the Task Force should recommend that specific legislation be passed. Ms. Wraight explained that the Task Force could decide to make such a recommendation.

The Task Force then discussed the extent to which it should be concerned with funding and burden when making recommendations. Mr. Ryan suggested that some options may require limited funding, such as supporting pilots. Mr. Day asked the Task Force to consider that the charge is to make recommendations for what its members believe should be in place. He asserted that even though we are in a challenging fiscal environment, our task is to recommend what we think is best for students.

Mr. Porter inquired as to whether there is any information on how the mandates currently impact Illinois schools and districts, as this information might be useful to keep in mind when making recommendations for any new mandates. Ms. Elliott indicated that there was a task force that addressed this issue and she would share that report, which shows all the mandates that are currently in effect.

Mr. Pahl commented that funding may not even be a concern because some of the recommendations that come out of the Task Force may not have a net cost. Mr. Day echoed this sentiment, citing the example that a change in local practice (what is taught or how it is taught) may not cost a district any more than its current practices.

Ms. Wraight indicated that the resource list provided to Task Force members contains resources to help the work groups address their specific charge. Task Force members Ms. Judar and Mr. Healy suggested that the following resources be added to the resource list:

- Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. (2013). *All together now: Collaboration and innovation for youth engagement: The report of the Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge*. Medford, MA: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/CIRCLE-youthvoting-individualPages.pdf>
- National Conference on Citizenship. (2010). *A civic nation: Executive summary of America's first civic health assessment*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.ncoc.net/CHAExecutiveSummary2010>
- National Conference on Citizenship. (2010). *Chicago civic health index 2010*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.ncoc.net/ChicagoCHI2010>
- National Conference on Citizenship. (2010). *Illinois civic health index 2010*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.ncoc.net/ilchi2010>
- National Conference on Citizenship. (2012). *2012 Illinois civic health index*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://ncoc.net/ILCHI2012>

Ms. Wraight indicated that the resource list would be updated to include these additional resources.

Mr. Reisberg inquired about the history behind the Public Act and whether there was proposed legislation that was not passed that prompted the formation of the Task Force. Several individuals with knowledge of the history indicated that they did not believe this was the case. Mr. Healy indicated that the Civic Education Enhancement Act was passed a few years ago. It

institutionalized the “democracy coalition” process through the regional offices of education and provided that the state would fund districts to complete the process. Mr. Healy also indicated that this never took effect because it was zero funded. Ms. McCusker reminded the Task Force members that information on current Illinois policies was included in the resource list.

Ms. Wraight then led the Task Force in a discussion about “fist to five,” the consensus-seeking method that will be used by the group. When the Task Force comes to an issue that needs consensus, Ms. Wraight will ask the group to raise their hands to indicate their level of support. Five fingers open meaning that the member fully supports the measure at hand and a closed fist meaning that the member is fully opposed. One finger raised would mean that the member is opposed to the measure but will not stop the group from acting. This method will be used as a way to determine how close the group is to consensus on a particular issue.

Work Group Time

After the “fist to five” discussion, the Task Force members divided into their working groups. The following groups were formed.

Group 1: Illinois Civic Education (supported by Sarah McCusker)

Dustin Day

Maryam Judar

Howard Phillips

Former Attorney General Jim Ryan

Group 2: National Landscape (supported by Laura Checovich)

Larry Pahl

Darren Reisberg

Jamie Sanchez Jr., guest of Darren Reisberg

Group 3: Best Practices (supported by Sarah Otego and Sara Wraight)

Kim Brondyke, on behalf of Representative Deb Conroy

Shawn Healy

David Porter

Pankaj Sharma

Senator Cullerton had to leave the Task Force meeting. He requested that the notes be sent to him so he could be informed of progress made and any next steps.

After a break, the work groups met for approximately one hour.

The objectives for the work group meetings are as follows:

- Review foundational resources related to the charge, and summarize initial reactions.
- Determine what additional information is needed (from the work groups or other sources) to accomplish the work group goal.
- Identify next steps for how to accomplish the work group goal.

The work groups were given copies of resources, guiding questions, and a note-taking template.

Work Group Report Out and Discussion

After an hour, the full Task Force came back together. Each work group was asked to report out on their initial reactions to the information provided, what they will need in order to accomplish their work, and their plans for moving forward.

Work Group 1: Illinois Civic Education

Mr. Day reported for Work Group 1. Based on their initial review of the information provided, the group members found that the requirements for civic education appeared to be vague. They thought that the lack of specificity may explain the uneven quality of civic education across the state, which many Task Force members had noted in their earlier observations. However, the group did agree that the vague requirements offer flexibility to smaller schools that may lack the resources to meet certain state requirements. The group would like to see new requirements that are interdisciplinary and involve students being hands-on and completing service hours. The group also suggested that the team recommend compliance checks on the requirements that already exist. These suggestions could be considered by the Task Force when working to address charge 4.

Work Group 1 plans to meet via conference call to discuss these issues further before the next meeting. Members also plan to meet with one of the regional offices of education to discuss the possibility of surveying districts or conducting public hearings in order to get a broader perspective on the issues facing Illinois civic education. The group also will ask ISBE staff to review the state documentation on local course requirements to find schools with civics or government classes in order to learn the percentage of schools with stand-alone civics courses in the state.

Group 2: National Landscape

Mr. Reisberg reported for Work Group 2. The group members found it difficult to take in the landscape of national civic education standards in the time provided, and they plan to take time outside of the meeting to read more about policies and programs going on in other states. However, based upon its initial review of the materials provided, the group did note that states such as Tennessee appeared to have innovative programs that warranted further examination. Tennessee requires students to complete a performance assessment at least once in Grades 4–8 and again between Grades 9–12. The group felt that such a policy may be supported by the Task Force as a whole given earlier comments and concerns. The group also noted that many other states have more specific civic education requirements than Illinois. After the group identifies strong examples of statutory language, it plans to present those examples back to the large group.

Work Group 2 plans to meet again outside of the Task Force meetings to discuss exemplary examples of state requirements and the best definitions for civic education and civic engagement that are available.

Group 3: Best Practice

Ms. Wraight reported for Work Group 3. Group members had debated whether its charge was to review local- or state-level best practices and agreed that they should spend time examining both. The group plans to explore what knowledge, skills, and dispositions lead to civic engagement; what local practices help students acquire that knowledge, skills, and dispositions; and what state policies and practices support those effective local practices. The initial resources provided to the group, along with the additional resources suggested by Ms. Judar and Mr. Healy, contain research and recommendations that will be very useful for this group.

The group considered reaching out to exemplary districts to discuss what they are doing, although this may not be necessary given the literature that is available. The group requested that the Task Force define civic education and civic engagement. Group 2 members indicated that they were working on this, pulling from existing literature, and would share a working definition with the larger Task Force. Finally, the group indicated that there is a need to gather evidence as to why civic education is important, although its members were not sure whether this fell into the purview of a particular work group. Ms. Judar volunteered to develop a preliminary write-up that could be incorporated into the Task Force report.

Work Group 3 plans to meet for a follow-up call later this week.

Next Steps

Individual work groups will continue their work as agreed upon in their initial meeting. Task Force members will receive a survey to provide feedback on the first meeting and to indicate their preferences for the date and location of the next meeting. Meeting minutes and updated resources will be circulated.

Adjourn

The Task Force meeting adjourned shortly after 4:30 p.m.

Illinois Task Force on Civic Education

Meeting Minutes as Approved by Task Force

March 31, 2014, 1:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

- Illinois State Board of Education, V-TEL Room (Third Floor)
100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois
- Illinois State Board of Education, V-TEL Room
100 West Randolph, Suite 14-300, Chicago, Illinois
- Conference Line Provided

Attendance

Task Force Members

Dustin Day
Shawn Healy
Maryam Judar
Larry Pahl
David Porter
Pankaj Sharma

Representing Task Force Members

Kim Brondyke, on behalf of Representative Michael Connelly
Dillan Siegler, on behalf of Darren Riesberg

Guests

Phil Pogue, Volunteer, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum Oral History

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Staff

Sarah McCusker
Sarah Ogeto

Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC) Staff

Laura Checovich
Sara Wraight

Meeting Objectives

- To gain familiarity with the format of the final report that will communicate the task force’s findings and recommendations
- To discuss the rationale for improving civic education
- To share and discuss findings from the review of resources on Illinois civic education, the national landscape of civic education, and best practices in civic education
- To recommend strategies for improving civic literacy and capacity in Illinois youth

Welcome, Introductions, and Approval of Minutes

The second meeting of the Illinois Task Force on Civic Education began shortly after 1 p.m. on March 31, 2014. Participants joined the meeting from ISBE offices in Springfield and Chicago as well as on the phone. Sarah McCusker, Principal Consultant within the Division of College and Career Readiness at ISBE, welcomed participants and introduced Task Force facilitator Sara Wraight.

Overview of Task Force Report Outline

Ms. Wraight reviewed the suggested outline for the task force’s final report to the general assembly. She reported that several previous Illinois task force reports had been reviewed as a model for this outline, but that if Task Force members had any suggestions or concerns they could be addressed. The proposed outline included the following components:

- Background—Explains the purpose and charge of the Task Force
- Findings—Presents the Task Force’s findings on the state of civic education per the specific inquiries in the Task Force charge
- Recommendations—Presents the Task Force’s formal recommendation of action to the legislature along with any related funding recommendations
- Appendices—Includes the rest of documents relevant to the Task Force: meeting minutes, participant list, and other notes

Task Force members will have an opportunity to review the draft of the report and recommend changes before the report is submitted in May to the legislature.

Presentation and Discussion: Why Civic Education Matters

Ms. Judar presented to the Task Force a review of the Task Force resource *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* (The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 2011) as a framework for discussing the importance of civic education. The report includes five major reasons why civic education is important:

- It promotes civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
- It promotes civic equality.

- It builds 21st century competencies.
- It improves school climate.
- It reduces the dropout rate.

Ms. Judar elaborated on each of these reasons, citing the *Guardian of Democracy* report.

Promoting Civic Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions. Civic education increases participation in civic behaviors such as voting. Students who are taught civic engagement skills are also more likely to engage in political discussions and participate in discussions with their elected representatives.

Promoting Civic Equality. Especially important in the finding that civic education improves civic engagement is that high-quality courses can improve engagement in subgroups that historically have not been as engaged. Research suggests that minority students with access to civic education realize significant gains in civic engagement.

Building 21st Century Competencies. Employers value employees with civic competencies including:

- Knowledge of economic and political processes
- The ability to present information in a range of media
- The ability to work cooperatively and with diverse groups
- A positive attitude toward hard work, obeying the law, and creating change in the community

Because Illinois’ civic education standards now favor fact-based civic education curricula, students may not be learning all of these competencies.

Improving School Climate. Schools with high civic learning standards are usually safe and respectful educational environments. Teaching civic engagement can affect a school’s ethics and norms and many times creates a sense of cohesion and community. Civic education also teaches students skills to foster positive relationships with outside community members and engages students in dialogues about controversial issues.

Reducing the Dropout Rate. Approximately 81 percent of high school dropouts report that opportunities for experiential learning may have changed their choice to leave school. Civic education and service learning projects are often used to provide students with experiential learning opportunities. Civic education also leads to improved school climate, which is regularly linked with decreased dropout rates.

Following Ms. Judar’s presentation, Mr. Healy requested that “Civic education improves civic health” be added to the reasons why high-quality education is so important. Illinois is considered the third most corrupt state in the country and Illinois residents who are 18 to 35 years old vote at the third lowest rate in the country. There is considerable room for improvement in the civic health of the state.

Agreeing with Mr. Healy's remarks about civic health, Mr. Day recounted how he had polled students about their trust in the government. He reported that they had overwhelmingly told him they did not trust their elected officials and that he need only "turn on the news" to understand why. Supporting this unscientific poll is the fact that Illinois is counted among the bottom 10 states in the country for community engagement and trust in government.

After Ms. Judar completed her presentation, Mr. Healy presented more information about the *Guardian of Democracy* report and explained why it is considered a seminal work. He detailed how the Carnegie Foundation called for the creation of the report as a follow-up to a 2003 report, the *Civic Mission of Schools*, published by the Carnegie Foundation and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). That report presented six practices to promote civic learning. The *Guardian* work was undertaken to review the new research that had taken place in the years since. It addresses improvements that were made to the six suggested practices and new research on the importance of civic education to communities.

Following Mr. Healy's remarks, the Task Force changed focus and discussed the possibility of extending its working time to allow more time for research and crafting of recommendations, as well as for holding public hearings on the potential impact of a civic education requirement.

The Task Force agreed it would like to extend its working time, if possible, and charged ISBE representative Sarah McCusker with initiating the appropriate inquiries. Ms. Judar noted that she had previously heard of task forces whose times were extended beyond the original charge.

Mr. Healy stressed the importance of receiving an extension to facilitate participation of the public as well as Task Force appointees who had not yet attended a meeting. He argued that for the report to hold maximum weight, there must be clear evidence that a wide range of stakeholders were consulted. Ms. Judar reminded the Task Force that it was also important to include the opinions of students in any deliberations that occurred.

However, in the face of the current timeline, Task Force members agreed it was important to create an interim version of the legislative report to meet the mandated deadline.

Comments From Public Participants

Phil Pogue spoke to the task force through his role as director of educational activities at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Mr. Pogue informed the group that he has been involved with the library's effort to collect and document an oral history of Illinois' school reorganizations. The project will be made available to the public on April 30, 2014. The oral history will include a number of interviews concerning Illinois' political leaders and major political movements about education issues. He suggested that those sections might be of particular interest to the Task Force.

Mr. Healy asked Mr. Pogue about his concerns specific to civic engagement and education. Mr. Pogue replied that his largest concerns were about the decline of newspapers and magazines as sources of news and civic engagement. Mr. Pogue provided www.oralhistory.illinois.gov as a URL for accessing the oral history project.

Work Group Meetings

After public comments, Task Force members divided into the same work groups they formed at the February meeting to meet briefly and finalize their proposed findings. The composition of the work groups for this meeting was as follows:

Group 1: Illinois Civic Education (supported by Sarah McCusker)

Dustin Day

Maryam Judar

Group 2: National Landscape (supported by Laura Checovich)

Larry Pahl

Kim Brondyke

Group 3: Best Practices (supported by Sara Wraight)

Shawn Healy

David Porter

Election of Task Force Chair and Approval of February Minutes

Upon returning to the whole group, a quorum was present and the Task Force took up official business before returning to the agenda.

After taking roll, the Task Force began by fulfilling its statutory requirement to elect a chair. Mr. Pahl nominated Mr. Healy for the position. Mr. Day, hearing no other nominations, moved to elect Mr. Healy as chair and was seconded by Mr. Porter. Mr. Healy was elected unanimously. Mr. Healy, Ms. Judar, Mr. Pahl, Mr. Sharma, Mr. Day, Ms. Brondyke, and Mr. Porter were in attendance.

As his first order of business as chair, Chair Healy called for the Task Force to approve the previous meeting's minutes. Mr. Day moved to approve the minutes and was seconded by Ms. Judar. The motion passed unanimously.

The Task Force then moved back into the regular agenda and began with the reporting out of the work groups.

Work Group Report Out

The work groups reported their findings to the full Task Force for consideration of inclusion in the final report. A summary of each group's findings is below.

Work Group 1

- Findings on the state of civic education in Illinois:
 - In Illinois, civic education focuses heavily on learning facts and often ignores teaching skills and engagement.

- A focus on rote memorization leaves less opportunity for discussion and debate in the classroom.
- Common Core State Standards will influence the way that civics education is taught.
- Teachers lack the professional development opportunities necessary to model civic engagement.
- The lack of a civic education or engagement requirement in Illinois creates little incentive for principals to provide professional development opportunities.
- The lack of a formal assessment requirement in Illinois creates little incentive for principals or superintendents to improve the quality of civic education.
- Removing civic education courses from the curriculum (due to budget cuts, lack of assessment, and other factors) implies to students that civic engagement is not important.
- Additional comments:
 - Looking ahead to the development of recommendations, Work Group 1 advocated requesting funding to support professional development for civics teachers.

Work Group 2

- Findings on the national landscape of civic education:
 - There are 20 states with education standards related to service learning, civic engagement, or civic education.
 - There are only eight states with mandatory assessments in civic education.
 - Illinois is one of only 10 states that do not require a civics or American government course.
 - States that CIRCLE recognizes as having high-quality civic education and engagement programs include a project-based curriculum element.
 - Generally, there are three models for civics education:
 - Requiring a course in civics. This is the most common requirement, with a notable system in place in Hawaii.
 - Requiring a course in civics with a high-stakes assessment at the end of the course. An example of this system is the requirement in Florida
 - Requiring a course in civics that includes a project-based learning style assessment. An example of this system is the requirement in Tennessee.
 - States nationwide face political hurdles to fund these requirements.
 - Accessible professional development is key to implementing high-quality civic education.
 - Skills taught in civic education courses align well with Common Core requirements.

- Additional comments:
 - Anticipating the development of recommendations, Work Group 2 asserted that any recommendation for a project-based learning assessment such as that in Tennessee could call for local evaluation of the projects to limit the need for additional funding.

Work Group 3

- Work Group 3 acknowledged that its findings for best practices in other jurisdictions form the basis for possible recommendations to improve civic learning in Illinois. The findings were as follows:
 - Work Group 3 cited the six practices in the *Guardian of Democracy* report as best practices in civic education. Effective civic education has the following qualities:
 - Provides instruction in government, history, law, and democracy
 - Incorporates into the classroom discussion of current local, national, and international events, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives
 - Designs and implements programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn by performing community service that links with the formal curriculum and classroom instruction
 - Offers extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities
 - Encourages students' participation in school governance
 - Encourages students' participation in simulation of democratic processes and procedures
 - High-quality standards for civic education include skills, not just content. They also include news literacy.
 - Service learning should be included as part of a standard civic education. High-quality standards for service learning are defined by Youth Service America.
 - A stand-alone civic education course should be required at the high school level.
 - Inservice educators should have access to professional development aligned with best practices in civic education.
 - Preservice teachers should have access to professional development aligned with best practices in civic education.

Full Task Force Discussion: Possible Recommendations

After hearing the findings of each individual work group, Mr. Healy convened the Task Force to discuss possible recommendations to be included in the final report. Some common recommendations that rose out of the work group reports included increasing professional development opportunities, linking the standards with assessments, and engaging students in civics at a younger age.

Ms. Judar suggested that group members keep in mind, as they consider recommendations, the recently developed *College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework* (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013). It could be a resource when considering standards and practices for Illinois.

The full Task Force discussed a number of other issues, concerns, and recommendations. Those topics and conversations are summarized below.

Better Qualified Teachers

The Task Force discussed its concerns about teacher licensure for civics education and what can be done to guarantee that teachers are qualified to teach civics. Ms. Judar and Mr. Day reminded the Task Force that teachers can receive “highly qualified” marks for social science teaching certificates, but that they still may not be well qualified to teach about civic engagement.

Define Civic Learning

The Task Force agreed that there needed to be a formal definition to delineate the differences among civic education, civic engagement, and service learning. Mr. Porter suggested that this definition could also include details about the ways that news consumption and government involvement influence civic literacy. The Task Force agreed to consider the definition provided in the *College, Career and Civic Life Framework (C3)*. Ms. Siegler offered to work with Mr. Reisberg to develop a definition that would encompass civic education, engagement, and participation. Mr. Healy requested that Task Force members take time before the next meeting to develop their own definitions to compare with the one that Ms. Siegler and Mr. Reisberg offered.

Mr. Healy suggested that Task Force members entertain a definition of civic engagement that includes everything from consumerism to volunteering but also includes the basics of voting and campaigning. Mr. Pahl also recommended that members review Dr. Michael Delli Carpini’s definition of civic engagement, which can be found in the Massachusetts Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning’s report, *Renewing the Social Contract*.

Best Practice

The Task Force discussed what standards it expects students to meet after they receive a high-quality civic education and noted that many hallmarks of a good civic education are not linked with academic work. Mr. Porter suggested that a good civic education requires an understanding of events and politics, in addition to an understanding about government functions, and that civic education should teach students habits for participating in their community. Task Force members agreed with Mr. Porter but had different ideas about how to achieve civic engagement. Mr. Healy suggested reviewing the information on the six practices in the *Guardians of Democracy* report, noting that different practices would yield different academic and social results.

Mr. Pahl requested that Task Force members consider the research of Mr. Walter Parker on the effects of service learning on civic education retention in their consideration of best practices.

High School Is Too Late

Mr. Day reminded the Task Force that there is research to show that students have developed an identity within a community by age 13. He stressed that if the Task Force aims to instill in students better civic habits, students need to be introduced to civic learning before high school. Mr. Porter added that students could be exposed to civic habits and civic engagement as early as kindergarten if given age-appropriate activities. Mr. Porter also stated that many lessons necessary for a high-quality civics education program already are being taught, but that they should be realigned into an autonomous course.

Mr. Healy later suggested that implementing standards might not be enough to change the teaching of civics before high school. Ms. Siegler reminded Task Force members that the Illinois Five Essentials survey showed that engaging students during their freshman year affected their likelihood to graduate. She also noted that the academic and social needs of students are different during the K–8, 9–12, and 12+ years of their education.

Mr. Day submitted that the lack of funding for civic education has worsened the widening gap between K–12 and higher education curriculums. He also proposed that this gap might be influenced by some schools' resistance to changes recommended in the Common Core. Chair Healy added that the Common Core has the opportunity to greatly influence civics education through its required reading of the Declaration of Independence, Preamble to the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Lincoln's second inaugural address.

School Climate

Ms. Judar urged the Task Force to make recommendations to improve schools' civic education practices. She suggested that the strongest argument to be made for these changes is to show how engaging students in civic activities improves school climate. Mr. Day reminded the group that research shows people become involved in their communities for three reasons: because they are asked to, because they can, and because they care. He went on to say that technology has positive and negative effects on civic engagement.

Mr. Pahl suggested that the Task Force read the report of the Massachusetts Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning, which suggests that students should be rewarded for exemplary civic engagement. Mr. Day went on to agree that students should be rewarded for their community engagement.

Training and Professional Development

Mr. Healy asked Task Force members what they believed higher education's role should be in preparing preservice teachers to teach civic engagement. He also noted that in some parts of Illinois there were many opportunities for teachers to be involved in professional development, but that those opportunities were nonexistent in other areas.

He further asked how the state could use its public college network to provide professional development opportunities to inservice teachers. Mr. Day responded by offering to invite teacher professional development experts to share their insights on the issue with the group.

Next Steps

Before the next Task Force meeting, members will consider what definition they would like to use for civic engagement and education. They should also take time to become familiar with the findings of each work group to facilitate a full discussion at the next meeting. Some members also agreed to further tasks:

- Ms. Seigler volunteered to work with Mr. Riesberg on a definition of civic engagement and education that could serve as a starting point for further discussion.
- Mr. Day volunteered to reach out to an expert in curriculum and instruction methods from the University of Illinois at Springfield. The Task Force could consult this person on the best ways to offer professional development to inservice and preservice teachers.

The Task Force discussed potential dates for the next meeting, including April 17, 24, 25, and 28, 2014. Task Force members were asked to respond to the poll sent out after the meeting.

In addition, as discussed previously, Ms. McCusker will follow up with ISBE's government relations staff regarding the possibility of requesting an extension of the deadline for the final report.

Adjourn

The Task Force meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Illinois Task Force on Civic Education

Meeting Minutes as Approved by Task Force

April 15, 2014, 1:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

- Illinois State Board of Education, V-TEL Room (Third Floor)
100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois
- Illinois State Board of Education, V-TEL Room
100 West Randolph, Suite 14-300, Chicago, Illinois
- Conference Line Provided

Attendance

Task Force Members

Dustin Day
Shawn Healy
Maryam Judar
Larry Pahl
Howard Phillips
David Porter
Pankaj Sharma

Representing Task Force Members

Lynn Bila, on behalf of Representative Ron Sandack
Jeremy Custer, on behalf of Senator Thomas Cullerton and Representative Deborah Conroy
Dillan Siegler, on behalf of Darren Riesberg

Guests

Former Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Staff

Amanda Elliott
Jason Helfer
Sarah McCusker
Dora Welker

Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC) Staff

Laura Checovich
Sara Wraight

Meeting Objectives

- To gain familiarity with the content and pedagogical requirements for the preservice preparation of teachers of social studies specific to civic learning
- To establish consensus on findings on the current state of civic education (in Illinois and other jurisdictions) and best practices
- To establish consensus on recommendations for improving civic literacy and capacity of Illinois youth
- To establish consensus on any funding recommendations

Welcome, Introductions, and Approval of Minutes

Mr. Healy, the chair of the Task Force, called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m. and began with a review of the day’s agenda. He then called for approval of the minutes.

Mr. Porter requested a revision to the minutes, asking that his comments on the necessity of high-quality civic education (page 9) be clarified. The revision will reflect his belief that there is a distinction to be made between high-quality civic education and high-quality civic engagement.

Ms. Judar also asked for revisions. She requested that her comment (page 5) that civic education “sometimes” ignores teaching skills and engagement be changed to “often” ignores. She also requested that her comment that Common Core State Standards “may” influence civic education be revised to “will” influence. Finally, she requested that the words “as soon as possible” be removed from her comment (page 9) about school climate.

The committee voted to approve the amended minutes after a motion by Mr. Phillips and a second from Mr. Day.

Comments From Public Participants

Mr. Ryan spoke to the Task Force as a public participant, reminding members of his comments during the first Task Force meeting. In his experience, high school and undergraduate students do not know enough about their government. He added that he believes improved civic education in schools could help address problems of governmental corruption in Illinois. In his opinion, the long-term solution to the corruption problem is to create citizens who are civically aware and can “see beyond the 30-second sound bite.” He added that it was important for the state of democracy that public education place as much value on civic education as it places on the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

Mr. Pahl thanked Mr. Ryan for his comments and added that he was inspired by Mr. Ryan’s commitment to bettering civic education in Illinois.

Discussion: Possible Extension of Deadline for Report

The Task Force members discussed the opportunity to request a deadline extension on their work. Mr. Healy suggested that because the Task Force was not convened until February 21,

2014, the general assembly would be amenable to the change. An extension would also give the Task Force the opportunity to hold public hearings throughout the summer, allowing more of the state's civic education stakeholders to be heard. Mr. Healy then thanked Ms. Elliott for joining the Task Force again and further explaining the deadline extension options.

Ms. Elliott, ISBE's liaison to the General Assembly, updated the Task Force on her discussions with her counterparts regarding an extension for the Task Force. Representative Conroy, the original author of the bill creating the Task Force, agreed to sponsor an amendment to extend the deadline until December 31, 2014. She reminded the members that there was no reason that the report could not be submitted before the deadline and that the Task Force should be mindful of the General Assembly's holiday schedule.

Ms. Elliott confirmed that appointment delays similar to the ones experienced by this Task Force are not uncommon and that extensions are granted fairly regularly. Ms. Elliott's counterpart in the General Assembly will file the amendment from Representative Conroy. There will then be a House committee hearing and vote, then a Senate committee hearing and vote, floor hearings and votes in both houses, and finally the amendment will go on to the governor. Ms. Elliott mentioned that despite recent pushback from certain members of the General Assembly to the idea of Task Forces there should be no problems.

Mr. Day and Mr. Pahl asked that Ms. Elliott keep them informed of the dates of each of the votes and hearings. Mr. Healy inquired what would happen if the Governor's office delayed in signing the amendment. Ms. Elliott explained that although she has been in contact with the Governor's office, and they are aware of the rush on the amendment, there is a risk that it could be delayed. The current legislation contains a repealer for May 31, 2015, meaning that the Task Force will exist until then. However, the amendment is needed in order to allow the Task Force to delay submission of its report beyond May 31, 2014.

The Task Force members had an extended discussion on the implications of the various deadlines and amendment outcomes. Mr. Phillips stated that it was important not to overextend the length of time for the Task Force's work. Mr. Porter reminded the group that the longer the delay for submission of the report, the longer the delay for any potential implementation of the suggestions. Mr. Day and Mr. Healy maintained that a later deadline was necessary in order to make sure that the report and suggestions carried weight with the General Assembly. Mr. Pahl and Ms. Judar indicated that they felt that the Task Force has enough information to create a report now. Ms. Judar suggested that the Task Force continue with its current plan and create an interim report. If an extension is granted, the document could be used to garner reaction during the summer's public hearings.

Mr. Healy summed up the discussion: The Task Force will pursue an extension of its work to December 31, 2014, and aim to deliver a report by May 31, 2014. Ms. Elliott will provide the Task Force with updates on the status of the extension, which will inform whether the report is submitted by May 31, 2014, or not.

Comments From Outside Participants

Ms. McCusker introduced the speaker for the next part of the meeting, Dr. Jason Helfer, Assistant Superintendent for Teacher and Leader Effectiveness for ISBE. Dr. Helfer was asked to discuss whether teacher licenses for civics teachers would or could have different requirements than social studies licenses. Dr. Helfer replied that because current social studies licenses require a teacher to have a college major in history, geography, civics, economics, sociology, or psychology, civics is included in the current license. He also mentioned that ISBE is beginning its review process of licensure requirements across many areas. The Task Force is well suited at this point in time to be involved in the review.

Mr. Day asked Dr. Helfer for more information about the current social studies license. Dr. Helfer responded that teachers are often able to teach civics because civics, at the college level, is often categorized under a subject such as political science or history. There are different requirements for the license at middle and high school levels.

Mr. Healy asked if it were possible for the Task Force to foster better pedagogy by offering inservice teachers professional development or by altering the training of preservice teachers. Dr. Helfer reiterated that the best way to be involved was to participate in the upcoming review of the social studies license. He also suggested locating the best training and professional development programs in the country and creating a sort of clearinghouse to be used by Illinois teachers. He reminded the Task Force members that ISBE offers many opportunities for members of the public to provide substantive feedback on its plans but that ISBE requires attending meetings in person. Dr. Helfer also suggested that the Task Force create opportunities for free, high-quality professional development by working with the Regional Offices of Education to provide training. Mr. Healy stressed the importance of creating these professional development opportunities but wondered where the resources would come from to create the training clearinghouse. Dr. Helfer encouraged the Task Force to begin its work with free resources in order to build awareness of the issue of civic education through grassroots efforts. Mr. Healy expressed doubts that it would be possible to create a free set of professional development tools.

Ms. Judar noted that starting a process of civic education reform in Illinois would be similar to the process in the Democracy School program, in which schools boost school climate by creating a network to support them. Dr. Helfer agreed that any reform would begin with school climate change. He again encouraged the Task Force to start with small changes in order to keep any suggestions from appearing to be coercion. Mr. Sharma said that because the average teacher is already faced with so many initiatives, a new initiative that was meant to become a priority would need to be funded.

Ms. Judar added that any funding recommendations made by the Task Force need to be made in the best interest of the students of Illinois. She reminded the group that the Democracy School program had previously received funding and that there may be an opportunity for the Task Force's recommendations to receive funding. Mr. Pahl added that a similar task force in California recommended that the state Department of Education create a "best practices clearinghouse" that would encourage better teaching of civics. Dr. Helfer encouraged this idea by repeating that any efforts should aim to stay away from being top-down requirements. He did

not believe that ISBE would be the best body to create such a clearinghouse because of the implications of a state-funded website.

Mr. Pahl asked what methods ISBE uses to influence how teachers are trained by Illinois universities. Dr. Helfer explained that ISBE works together with universities to learn their capacity. Ideally, the state and universities work together to build up new teacher training programs as they aim to meet state and national standards.

Presentation and Discussion: Key Definitions

Ms. Siegler presented two definitions for the Task Force to consider for inclusion in the final report to the General Assembly. She asked the Task Force to respond to the two definitions and discuss which they believed was a better working definition for the group. The first definition was adapted from that used by the National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement:

Civic education describes efforts to prepare students for effective, principled citizenship. Civic education can include instruction in history and government, civics lessons on the rights and duties of citizens in a democracy, discussion of current events, service learning, mock trials and elections, personal integrity, and school climate.

The second definition was adapted from the *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* report:

The goal of civic education should be to help all young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives.

Competent and responsible citizens...

- Are informed and thoughtful. They have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy; an understanding and awareness of issues impacting their communities; a capacity to think critically; and a willingness to enter into dialogue with others about different points of view and to respect diverse perspectives.
- Participate in their communities. They belong to and contribute to groups in civil society that offer opportunities for Americans to participate in public service; work together to overcome problems; and explore an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs.
- Act politically. They have the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to participate effectively in the political process—for instance, by organizing people to address social issues, solving problems, petitioning and protesting to influence public policy, and voting.
- Have moral and civic virtues. They are concerned for the rights and welfare of others, are socially responsible, are willing to listen to alternative perspectives, understand their capacity to make a difference,

and are ready to contribute personally to civic and political causes. They strike a reasonable balance between their own interests and the common good. They recognize the importance of and practice civic duties such as voting and respecting the rule of law.

There was overwhelming support from the Task Force members for the second definition. Mr. Phillips responded that he favored the second definition because it focused more on student action and participation. Ms. Judar noted that the first definition did not include the word “engagement,” a major issue that the Task Force has discussed. She added that she would like to amend the second definition to include news literacy because students must be able to understand the proliferation of news from different sources. Mr. Porter seconded Ms. Judar’s thoughts on the inclusion of news literacy as a civic education priority. He also suggested that the definition might be a bit overreaching in suggesting that a “good citizen” must meet all of the definition’s criteria. He suggested that the definition be amended to read that a good citizen be “capable” of the civic actions.

Ms. Siegler agreed that the definition may be overreaching. She suggested that the definition read “some characteristics of responsible and competent citizens include.” Mr. Pahl suggested that the definition reflect the idea of civic education informing college and career readiness. He suggested that by making the connection more obvious, it may be easier to show that the skills that make people civically engaged are the same that make people ready for college and career. Mr. Healy reminded the group that Ms. Judar’s earlier presentation, “The Case for Civic Education,” included this argument.

Mr. Healy ended the discussion by announcing that Ms. Siegler would share her edited version of the definition before the next meeting. The Task Force members agreed that they would move to adopt the amended definition at the next meeting.

Discussion: Findings on the State of Civic Education and Recommendations for Improving Civic Literacy and Capacity

The Task Force began by reviewing the draft findings and recommendations as compiled by Ms. Wraight. Ms. Wraight explained that the draft findings and recommendations in the handout were drawn from the meeting minutes and that they have not yet been voted on. She added that the document does not include significant funding recommendations because there was minimal discussion of funding during previous meetings.

Mr. Healy began the review of the document by reminding the Task Force of the “fist to five” consensus-building method. Mr. Healy will consider consensus reached when the majority of members are able to show either a four or a five (indicating a high level of agreement) and no member shows a fist (which would indicate that they “can’t live with it”). This method will expose any areas needing more focus and work to reach an agreement. Mr. Day suggested that the Task Force, considering the meeting’s time constraints, not spend time reviewing the draft findings because these were largely taken from the Work Group reports. Mr. Pahl asked that one finding be added from the Work Group 2 report—that there is evidence of a national movement away from civic education requirements. Ms. Judar requested that there be a finding that this

trend is present in Illinois. After the Task Force agreed to these two changes, they moved on to reviewing the recommendations.

The following are the draft recommendations:

1. Illinois’s social studies standards (Grades K–12) should be revised to include skills in addition to content. This should include news literacy. (Work Group 3)
2. Illinois should require a stand-alone civic education course at the high school level. (Work Group 3)
3. Illinois should require that all students experience service learning. (Full Task Force Discussion, Work Group 3)
4. Illinois should reward students for exemplary civic engagement. (Full Task Force Discussion)
5. Any recommendation for a project-based learning assessment, such as that in Tennessee, could call for local evaluation of the projects to limit the need for additional funding. (Work Group 2)
6. Illinois should ensure that licensure and certification requirements for preservice teachers are aligned with best practices in civic education. (Full Task Force Discussion, Work Group 3)
7. Illinois should ensure that inservice educators have access to professional development aligned with best practices in civic education. (Work Group 1, Work Group 3)
8. Standards may not be enough to ensure adequate civic learning in Grades K–8. (Full Task Force Discussion)

Recommendation 1

Mr. Pahl suggested that the recommendation be amended to include a reference to the *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards*. Mr. Healy agreed, stating that the C3 Framework could be instrumental in redeveloping the Illinois state civics standards because its four-step process provides suggestions for kindergarten through high school. Ms. Wraight reminded the Task Force that the C3 Framework resource could be accessed through the resource list. Mr. Healy reminded the Task Force that the C3 Framework suggests changes to the social studies curriculum and is not specific to civics. Ms. Judar suggested that the interdisciplinary aspect of civics could be included here and that the word “interdisciplinary” should also be added to the Task Force’s definition of civic education. Mr. Healy agreed that civic learning should occur across the entire curriculum, especially social studies. However, Mr. Porter suggested that the recommendation include language noting that there would be local flexibility on how to implement the standards.

The Task Force voted (Custer, 5; Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Sharma, 5; Siegler, 5) to approve the recommendation with the addition of the C3 Framework as guidance and the acknowledgment of the importance of local curriculum flexibility. Ms. Bila declined to vote on any of the recommendations.

Recommendation 2

Ms. Judar inquired if any Task Force member was aware of if or when a previous Illinois civics requirement may have been taken out of the state requirements. Mr. Day replied that he believed the state's current government requirement took the place of the civics requirement. He then challenged the group, saying that the purpose of the Task Force was to approve a recommendation similar to this one.

Mr. Pahl inquired how this recommendation would affect districts that already have civics requirements. He wondered how specific the recommendation needed to be in order to ensure schools were teaching civic engagement, civic education, and government as separate themes. Mr. Porter agreed that many districts believe they are teaching civics by covering U.S. government or U.S. history. Mr. Sharma warned that many districts will see a new curriculum requirement in terms of what they will need to replace.

Mr. Custer offered his thoughts on how the civics recommendations would be interpreted by the districts. He worried that districts would feel dictated to by Springfield. He suggested that it might be easier to recommend that civics be taught across and incorporated into other courses. Mr. Pahl and Mr. Day pushed back saying that, although civics can be taught across other courses, it is important to “draw a line in the sand” and carve out specific time for civics. Mr. Healy reminded the group that Illinois does already require two credits of social studies for graduation. A civics requirement could be included within those two credits and does not necessarily need to be additional. He also reminded the group that the national average is three years of social studies.

Ms. Judar brought up that the Task Force had previously discussed recommending that civics instruction begin earlier, in middle school, which would introduce the topic in students' more formative years.

The Task Force voted (Custer, 5; Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 4; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler, 5) on the recommendation as worded.

Recommendation 3

Ms. Judar suggested that the recommendation include the words “connected to classroom content.” Mr. Day asked which grades this recommendation would apply to and a discussion ensued. Ms. Judar wrapped up the discussion by suggesting that the recommendation be changed to require a learning project once in middle school and once in high school.

Mr. Day reminded the Task Force members that different districts have different requirements and definitions for service learning and project-based learning. Mr. Healy informed the group that research suggests that hour-based service requirements are less effective than project-based service requirements.

Mr. Porter raised concerns that the recommendation did not include the word “community.” It is important to be clear that civic learning can happen both in the classroom and within the larger community.

The Task Force voted (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 4; Pahl, 4; Phillips, 5; Porter, 4; Siegler, 5) on the recommendation with the inclusion of the words “project-based/service learning in Grades 6–12.”

Recommendation 4

Mr. Pahl began the discussion by reminding the Task Force that a good way to encourage best practice for civic education is to reward students, teachers, and districts for doing good “civically engaged” work. Mr. Day seconded Mr. Pahl’s comments, saying that in his school he draws attention to students who participate and creates positive outcomes for them. Mr. Healy wondered who would be in charge of rewarding or recognizing the exemplary work, noting that in California the state Department of Education is charged with “recognizing students, teachers and districts who have completed exemplary work.” The Task Force agreed that this role would fall to ISBE.

The Task Force voted (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler, 5) on the recommendation as worded.

Recommendation 5

Mr. Pahl encouraged the Task Force to adopt this recommendation. Allowing local assessment makes the recommendations more feasible. Mr. Phillips suggested that the recommendation be amended to remove “such as in Tennessee.” The Task Force voted (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler, 4) to approve the recommendation as amended.

Recommendation 6

The Task Force did not discuss this recommendation. The vote to approve it was unanimous (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler, 5).

Recommendation 7

The Task Force did not discuss this recommendation. The vote to approve it was unanimous (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler,5).

Recommendation 8

The Task Force agreed that this recommendation should be moved to the findings section of the report. Mr. Healy added that the Task Force should encourage further investigation into the topic.

The Task Force voted unanimously via a voice vote to move this recommendation to the findings section.

Discussion: Funding Recommendations

The group reviewed the following draft funding recommendation:

- Illinois should provide funding to support professional development for civics teachers. (Work Group 1)

Mr. Healy began the discussion by asking members if they believed the report would be ignored if there was a funding recommendation made. Mr. Day responded that he believed the key word in a funding recommendation is “should.” The report is charged with recommending what the General Assembly “should” enact but not what they have to. Mr. Day believed that by including the word “should,” the Task Force’s work would not be wasted but that they could impress on the report’s audience that the success of the recommendations would be affected by the level of funding provided.

Mr. Pahl reminded the Task Force that there are states, such as Florida, that provide annual funding for professional development around civics. He also returned the group to Dr. Helfer’s suggestion that the Task Force work for a time to change the culture around civic education professional development before requesting funds from the state.

Ms. Judar suggested that the report strongly recommend that funding be appropriated, citing the state of civic distrust in Illinois. She also recommended that the funding recommendation not affect the adoption or implementation of the rest of the recommendations. Mr. Pahl also suggested language that would encourage the report’s audience to consider creating funding solutions for the recommendations. Mr. Porter inquired how a project such as a professional development clearinghouse would be funded if not through an appropriation. Ms. McCusker replied that ISBE often hosts resources from other sources on their website and that the same system could be possible for civic education.

Mr. Phillips suggested that the funding recommendation include language similar to: “The state of Illinois General Assembly shall seek an efficient and effective method of providing professional development for teachers of civic skills and content.” Ms. Judar seconded the language suggestion and added that more detail could be added about consideration of the funding that would need to be attached. Ms. Wraight suggested to the group that the May 31, 2014, interim report could include the language suggested by Mr. Phillips and that any subsequent reports could include more detail.

The Task Force unanimously voted to approve the funding recommendation as amended (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler, 5).

After the funding recommendation vote, Mr. Phillips asked the Task Force to reflect on its process and answer the question, “Have we done this right?” Ms. Judar stated that she believed that the Task Force had approached the report thoroughly. She added that she would like to confer with the Illinois Civic Blueprint to confirm. Mr. Healy seconded Ms. Judar’s opinion and added that he did not believe any major recommendations were missing from the report.

Mr. Day suggested that the Task Force consider adding comments about Illinois’s suffrage legislation for 17-year-olds, encouraging students to act as election monitors and other methods of engaging students in the voting process. Ms. Judar suggested that the task force recommend that schools be required to be polling places in order to encourage students’ exposure to the voting process. Mr. Day reminded the group that it can be very difficult for schools to function as polling places due to security concerns with the public entering the school building.

Recap and Next Steps

Mr. Healy suggested that the Task Force meet once more before the May 31, 2014, deadline to review a draft of the report and spend time working through wording the recommendations more exactly. Ms. Wraight informed the group that because of the short timeline, she expected that the first version of the report would be short on background and contextual detail.

Ms. Wraight offered to have a draft version of the report available for consideration by May 8, 2014. The Task Force agreed to aim for another meeting on that date.

Adjourn

The Task Force meeting adjourned shortly after 4:30 p.m.

Illinois Task Force on Civic Education

Meeting Minutes as Approved by Task Force

May 8, 2014, 1:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

- Illinois State Board of Education, V-TEL Room (Third Floor)
100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois
- Illinois State Board of Education, V-TEL Room
100 West Randolph, Suite 14-300, Chicago, Illinois
- Conference Line Provided

Attendance

Task Force Members

Shawn Healy
Dustin Day
Maryam Judar
Howard Phillips
Larry Pahl
David Porter

Representing Task Force Members

Dillan Siegler, on behalf of Darren Reisberg

Guests

Former Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Staff

Sarah McCusker
Dora Welker
Amanda Elliot

Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC) Staff

Laura Checovich
Rachel Trimble

Meeting Objective

- To review and revise the draft Task Force report

Welcome, Introductions, and Approval of Minutes

Mr. Healy, chair of the Illinois Task Force on Civic Education, called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. on May 8, 2014, and began with introductions and a review of the day's agenda. He then called for approval of the minutes.

Ms. Judar requested revisions to the minutes, asking that her comments on the financial recommendation be summarized rather than quoted because her recommendation was not meant to be a language suggestion. She also requested that her vote on Recommendation 2 be edited to reflect her vote of "4" rather than the "5" recorded. Finally, she requested that the word "school" be added to the summary of Dr. Helfer's comments to reflect that his comments were about school climate change.

The minutes were approved unanimously with the suggested revisions.

Mr. Day mentioned that while visiting the state capital last week, he heard comments from legislators indicating a negative opinion of task forces that suggest mandates. He also inquired about the timeline for the review of the Illinois social studies license that Dr. Helfer mentioned. Mr. Healy and Ms. McCusker will follow up with Dr. Helfer to learn more about the licensure review.

Comments From Public Participants

Mr. Jim Ryan spoke to the Task Force as public participant, reminding the group about the financial problems in Illinois. He added that although the financial state of the state might deter the Task Force from recommending an appropriation for civic education, there are funding opportunities for worthy programs. Because civics education is necessary to help students understand democracy and learn the qualities of a good citizen, Mr. Ryan said he believes that civic education qualifies as a worthy program.

Findings: Illinois High School Civics and Government Course Study

Mr. Healy shared his work on identifying high school civics and government courses. Referencing the Illinois Director of Educational Entities (2012–2013), his final survey included 5.7 percent of Illinois' 681 high schools. He searched that subset of schools for courses in government or civics, or both, by reviewing the schools' websites and calling directly.

He also found that 41 percent of high schools have no civics or government requirement in Illinois and that none of the high schools he surveyed required both civics and government courses. Consequently, Illinois falls well below the national average for civics or government graduation requirements.

Mr. Pahl thanked Mr. Healy for sharing his work, and Mr. Pahl added that he would be interested to see what differences exist between suburban and downstate schools. He also noted that he was glad that the Task Force now had statistical evidence for what each of the members had found anecdotally. Mr. Healy responded that in his survey he noticed that there appeared to be a higher

incidence of civics and government courses in the downstate schools. However, the data did not confirm that observation. He also added he feared that his findings might overstate the prevalence of civics requirements in the state.

Ms. Siegler suggested that finishing the survey could be a project that a University of Chicago student undertakes. Compiling a full set of data on civics and government requirements in Illinois could support broader work on the issue.

Update: Possible Extension of Deadline for Report

Ms. Elliot spoke briefly to the Task Force about the status of the request for an extension. She informed the group that although the request had been given a bill number (IL HB3951), no further action had been taken. Representative Deb Conroy will request that the bill be released from the Rules Committee and referred to House Education Committee. From there, the bill will move to the House floor for a vote and then follow a similar process in the Senate.

Mr. Healy inquired into Ms. Elliot's confidence that the bill would pass. Ms. Elliot responded that because the bill was not a high priority, anything could happen.

Discussion and Vote: Draft Introductory Sections and Findings

Mr. Healy explained that the remainder of the meeting would be spent reviewing the draft of the Task Force report to the General Assembly, beginning with the background section.

Ms. Judar and Ms. Siegler suggested adding information to the request for an extension and detailing how the Task Force intends to hold a series of public hearings to gather public feedback from stakeholders across the state.

Mr. Porter encouraged the Task Force to edit the report to remove any insinuation that it is not final or of high quality. He and Mr. Pahl agreed that by identifying the report as interim or "rushed," the work was left open to unnecessary scrutiny. The Task Force then briefly discussed whether an extension was necessary if there is consensus on the content of the report and its recommendations. Ms. Siegler reminded the group that the report should be clear that an extension is being requested for the work of the Task Force as a whole, not just for extended time to write a report. This differentiation makes it clear that the input garnered from public meetings could further strengthen the Task Force's recommendations.

Mr. Porter suggested finally that the request for an extension be moved to the recommendations section of the report. There was broad agreement among members that the request that the Task Force not be dissolved was better suited as a recommendation. Mr. Pahl and Mr. Day suggested that the recommendation state that while the Task Force has completed the report, more work is needed on the subject of civic education in Illinois. The Task Force agreed it was most important to delineate the goals the group aims to meet in the extended time.

Mr. Day added he believed that the General Assembly would be inclined to support such a recommendation because it promoted public input. Mr. Ryan agreed with Mr. Day that the

General Assembly would have a difficult time opposing extending the Task Force for the purpose of public hearings.

Mr. Phillips moved for the extension request to be transferred to the recommendations section. There were numerous seconds. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Task Force then began reviewing the findings section of the report draft. Ms. Judar requested that an additional reason be added to the case for civic education; that high civic engagement rates correlate with high employment rates. This finding appears in the National Conference on Citizenship and The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement report titled “Civic Health and Unemployment: Can Engagement Strengthen the Economy?” which Ms. Judar requested be added to the Task Force resource list. She stressed the importance of including information about the benefits of civic education to employment and the workforce.

Finally, Mr. Ryan brought up a concern that the findings section did not address the value of civic education to a diverse and multicultural society. The Task Force agreed that the issue of diversity was addressed in both the definition of civic education and the case for civic education sections of the report.

Discussion and Vote: Draft Recommendations

Mr. Healy prompted the Task Force to review and edit the recommendations section of the report. The Task Force agreed to suggest changes and vote on them using the Fist to Five method. There will be a vote on the final recommendations at the end of the discussion.

Mr. Pahl led off the review of the suggestions by recommending that the positions of Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 2 be reversed. He reasoned that Recommendation 2 was the preeminent recommendation of the Task Force and should thus lead the section.

Recommendation 1

Ms. Judar recommended that the language of this recommendation be aligned with the current nomenclature that the Illinois State Board of Education uses. Ms. Siegler suggested that the language of the recommendation be simplified overall.

Recommendation 2

Ms. Judar suggested that the recommendation include guidance on whether districts must include the civics requirement within their current two-credit social studies requirement or if it must be in addition to those two credits. Mr. Porter disagreed, saying that adding specifications about the requirements would add unnecessary restrictions that could hinder local school district control. Mr. Pahl agreed with Mr. Porter about specifying the role of the recommendation in the credit requirement but suggested that language be added about the course requiring a participatory or action-based portion. Ms. Judar suggested that the requirements of the course could be made clear by adding a clarification that the course must comport with the definition of civic education given earlier in the report.

The Task Force voted on the recommendation changes, including reversing their positions (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler, 5).

Recommendation 3

Mr. Healy pointed out to the group that the current wording of the recommendation could create a loophole if neither the middle school nor high school provided the requirement, each counting on the other to do so. Mr. Pahl and Ms. Judar suggested that the requirement exist at both the middle- and high-school level. Mr. Day suggested that the language read “by the completion of eighth grade and the completion of 12th grade” to account for any differences in grade structure between districts.

Mr. Porter then suggested that Recommendation 5 be combined into Recommendation 3 to streamline the recommendations . There was broad agreement among Task Force members.

The Task Force voted on the recommendation changes, including the combination and language additions (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler, 5).

Recommendation 4

Mr. Pahl began the discussion by recommending that the language specify that schools, districts, and teachers all be rewarded for exemplary work. Mr. Porter suggested to the group that the recommendation could be inappropriate as a recommendation to the legislature. He suggested that it would be more appropriate for the Illinois State Board of Education to take on this task. Ms. McCusker informed the Task Force that ISBE already has programs that recognize students and teachers doing exemplary work in social studies and that similar programs could be put in place for civics.

The Task Force voted to remove the recommendation from the report (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler, 5).

Recommendation 5

Recommendation 5 was combined with Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 6

Mr. Day suggested that the Task Force include specifics to make the recommendation more usable for preservice teachers. Mr. Healy suggested adding the words “direct instruction, current and controversial issue discussion, service learning, and simulations.”

The Task Force voted on the recommendation changes (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler, 5).

Recommendation 7

Ms. Judar suggested that this recommendation be qualified with the same list of activities as in Recommendation 6. Mr. Day disagreed, noting that requirements are different for preservice and inservice teachers and that a broad recommendation allows local districts to be more creative in their professional development opportunities. Mr. Day and Ms. Judar agreed that it was important to allow for local autonomy because civic education depends on the context of a community and its resources.

Ms. Siegler agreed that it was important to have local autonomy in this recommendation but cautioned that the Task Force be cognizant of grain size issues among the recommendations.

The Task Force voted on the recommendation remaining the same (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler, 5).

Recommendation 8

Mr. Porter suggested that Recommendation 8 be combined with Recommendation 7. Mr. Healy and Ms. Siegler agreed that Recommendation 8 was redundant and could be presented as supporting information for Recommendation 7.

The Task Force voted to combine Recommendation 8 into Recommendation 7 (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler, 5).

Recommendation 9

Mr. Healy proposed adding a ninth recommendation to address improving student engagement in voting and elections. He added that Illinois' "Suffrage at 17" law has already improved the youth vote with registered 17-year-olds voting at a higher rate than their adult counterparts.

Ms. Judar suggested that the recommendation propose that the state take measures to make democracy more accessible to young people through voting, preregistering (e.g., Motor Voter Act at 16 years old), same-day voter registration, encouraging students to vote, encouraging schools to ensure access to registration, and affirming the need to teach about elections.

Mr. Porter asked Mr. Healy whether he believed that this recommendation would actually encourage civic engagement. Mr. Healy responded that he did believe it would increase engagement and keep Illinois on the path it has already started down by allowing students to be election judges and "Suffrage at 17."

The Task Force voted to include this recommendation (Day, 5; Healy, 5; Judar, 5; Pahl, 5; Phillips, 5; Porter, 5; Siegler, 5).

Recommendation 10

Ms. Judar suggested that the Task Force consider a recommendation for a formal state assessment. Mr. Day reminded the group that there were already requirements for assessment in the Constitution and that any civics course required by Recommendation 1 would also be

required to assess their students through Recommendation 3/5. Other Task Force members raised concerns that the fiscal situation of the state would make such a requirement impossible and could draw undue scrutiny to the other recommendations.

The Task Force agreed not to include this recommendation. No vote was taken.

Recommendation 11

Recommendation 11 will serve as the added recommendation requesting an extension of time for the Task Force.

Mr. Healy suggested that the recommendation be similar to the language removed from the background section of the report. Mr. Porter recommended that the language be updated to remove references to an extended report-writing time. The Task Force discussed whether to include specific information about the process that would be undertaken for collecting public input and settled on remaining vague to broaden its options later on. Mr. Porter stressed that the wording of this requirement should not read as an apology because the report is sound and the request aims to foster a more democratic process for gathering feedback.

The Task Force agreed on the placement of this recommendation, which will appear in the report as Recommendation 10. No vote was taken.

Other Changes

Mr. Pahl suggested some final changes to the report, including striking “preliminary” from the title of the report. The Task Force broadly agreed that the word was no longer necessary.

He also suggested that the following preamble be added to the report as an introduction to the recommendations section:

“In the United States we are beneficiaries of a stable democracy. Our founding fathers brought forth here a government of and by the people. The virtues of a stable democracy don’t magically grace nations. The results of the recent “Arab Spring” assure us that even when people revolt and desire a democracy it often does not come. Egypt, after its overthrow of a decades-long dictator, is now governed by its military. Robust democratic activity is not an innate human characteristic. Functioning democracy depends on knowledge, learned behavior, and civic grit. If it is not valued and fought for, there is no mystic cavalry that will bring it. We are responsible for the continued embrace and strengthening of this democracy that has been a beacon light of liberty globally. Yet in recent years, civic learning in American schools has been marginalized, and two-thirds of 12th graders scored below “proficient” on the last national civics assessment. Recent research has documented that Chicago is the most corrupt city in America and Illinois is third-most corrupt among the 50 states. It is little wonder, then, that Illinois is found to be one of the few states in America that does not require its students to take a civics course. You can graduate from this state’s largest school district, in the heart of the nation’s most corrupt city, and never have taken a course that explains to you how a government works—or what it is. Here is an open invitation for corruption to prosper.

It is therefore the recommendation of this Task Force that the General Assembly provide to all the students of this state the education they need to help preserve our democracy and to learn to be active citizens in it by seriously responding to the following recommendations:”

Ms. Judar motioned to adopt the new preamble, and the Task Force voted unanimously to adopt it.

Ms. Judar followed by suggesting additional changes as well. She recommended that the Laws in Other Jurisdictions section include more specific information (e.g., states, dates referenced) in footnotes. She also suggested that the third and first bullet points be reversed in position. Finally, she suggested that the ninth bullet point include language to inform lawmakers that the trend has reversed and that states are beginning to create similar task forces across the country.

Ms. Judar also suggested that the Civic Education in Illinois bullet points be reordered to read: 4, 1, 5, 6, 3, 2.

Mr. Healy called for any more additions to the draft of the report and upon hearing none called for a vote to adopt the report with its suggested revisions.

The vote tally follows:

Representative Michael Connelly—Not present

Representative Deb Conroy—Not present

Representative Tom Cullerton—Not present

Dustin Day—Yes

Shawn Healy—Yes

Maryam Judar—Yes

Brian Kelly—Not present

Larry Pahl—Yes

Howard Phillips—Yes

David Porter—Yes

Ron Sandak—Not present

Pankaj Sharma—Not present

Dillan Siegler—Yes

At the completion of the vote, the Task Force adopted the report.

Notes and Next Steps

Mr. Healy reminded the Task Force about the timeline for completing and submitting the report to the General Assembly. MWCC will provide ISBE and Task Force with a final draft of the report for their consideration. Mr. Healy asked whether the Task Force would allow him to serve as a final approver on its behalf. He added that, if time permits, he would request their feedback on the report. The Task Force members expressed broad support for this idea.

Adjourn

The Task Force meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Appendix C

Task Force Resource List

The following is the list of resources consulted by the Illinois Task Force on Civic Education in accomplishing the charge created by Public Act 098-0301. The resources are organized around the first three tasks in the Task Force charge: 1) to analyze the state of civic education in Illinois; 2) to analyze current civic education laws in other jurisdictions, both mandated and permissive; and 3) to identify best practices in civic education in other jurisdictions.

Illinois Civic Education

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National Landscape: Civic Education in Other Jurisdictions

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