A low-angle, close-up photograph of the Statue of Liberty's head and crown against a clear blue sky. The statue's face is in the foreground, looking slightly to the right. The crown's rays extend upwards and outwards.

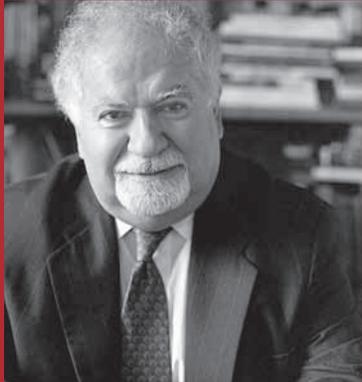
*Carnegie*

REVIEW

**A New Civic Mission of Schools**

SPRING 2011

CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK



In his stirring inaugural address on January 20, 1961, President John F. Kennedy reminded us that, as citizens, we should not just think of ourselves but of our nation; not just of our rights but also of our responsibilities and obligations. He was speaking at a moment in time when the United States faced many challenges—both at home and abroad—and needed an informed, engaged citizenry to ensure the strength of our democracy and the continued progress of our society.

Indeed, from our nation's earliest days, Americans have been linked together by a vision of democracy in which all citizens understand and actively engage in civic and political life. In recent decades, however, increasing numbers of Americans—particularly young citizens—have become disengaged from democratic institutions and processes. As an example, the latest reported results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, often referred to as “the Nation’s Report Card,” revealed that only 26 percent of high school seniors were proficient in civics. It seems our school systems are sending many students on to college with a very limited idea of how our government works and how the basic tenets of our democracy intersect with nearly every facet of our experience.

It’s not that young people don’t care about issues ranging from international upheavals to conditions in their local neighborhoods, or other critical problems. They *do* care, and they show us that every day. Students, for instance, are volunteering and participating in community service in record numbers. But we need to help them make the link between their concerns and how politics and government make a difference. We need to teach them how to wisely employ the levers of democracy that they will inherit. We need to educate them for citizenship, and in doing so, prepare them to be the future leaders of our nation.

One of the most promising approaches to increase young people’s informed engagement in our national life is school-based civic education. After all, understanding and actively participating in our civic life was one of the principal missions given to American schools from the very beginning. In creating our nation, the founders realized they had brought something new into the world in which all citizens were meant to play a vital role.

In that connection, as Carnegie Corporation of New York celebrates its Centennial, we are reminded of the words of our founder, Andrew Carnegie, who said that along with the freedom to pursue wealth and happiness, the greatest gift the American Republic has to bestow is citizenship. It is in our schools that all citizens must begin to learn the value of that gift and how to both cherish and use it for generations to come.

**Vartan Gregorian**  
President, Carnegie Corporation of New York

**Carnegie Review** is a publication series that generally focuses on program areas as they come to their natural conclusion. Its aim is to assess a cluster of grants, providing insight into how a particular program area developed, the grantmaking and people involved and the lessons learned.

# A New Civic Mission of Schools

“Knowledge about our government is not handed down through the gene pool. Every generation has to learn it, and we have some work to do.”

—Justice Sandra Day O’Connor

Democracy, in the United States or anywhere, can only thrive where citizens understand and participate actively in civic and political life. This was a core belief of Andrew Carnegie, and a central tenet of Carnegie Corporation from the day it was founded. Civic participation entails building communities, solving problems, learning about public issues and voting—activities fewer individuals in the United States, including young people, engage in with every passing year. “Declining civic engagement is bad news for the nation,” says Carnegie Corporation’s Geri Mannion, “particularly when young people lose interest in civic and political institutions, since the fate of the democracy ultimately is in their hands.”

Where will the country’s next generation of leaders come from if young people don’t care? This question was being asked with considerable urgency at Carnegie Corporation in late 2001. At that point, surveys showed Americans under the age of 25 were less likely to vote than their parents, or young people of prior generations. Even though many were volunteering and joining in community activities, the connection to civic engagement was seen as tenuous. New strategies were needed to educate the country’s youth and fully prepare them

for responsible citizenship, but experts couldn’t agree on what approach would work best. To find the answer, the Corporation created a new area of democracy grantmaking aimed at identifying and jump-starting the most effective approaches to civic education.

## Gerri Mannion



**Program Director  
U.S. Democracy and  
Special Opportunities Fund**

Carnegie Corporation had spent decades working on non-partisan voter engagement, especially voting rights and get-out-the-vote efforts around elections. In particular, we aimed at those voters who were least likely to vote or be civically engaged—youth, African-Americans, Latinos and low-income folks. In the early 1990s, with the advent of the Internet, the Corporation supported some of the most innovative new technologies designed to provide all voters with nonpartisan candidate and election information through such sites as Project Vote Smart and DemocracyNet. It

wasn't just structural barriers that impeded voters from voting, but rather the lack of information on candidates and issues. Who best represented them? What was their background? Where did they get their campaign contributions? The Corporation tried to engage voters through a range of strategies: removing structural barriers such as voter registration hurdles; providing information to encourage participation through nonpartisan Internet voting sites; tackling campaign financing that drove down voter engagement and more.

Seen over time, the lack of civic education in schools emerged as a continuing barrier that needed to be tackled systemically. Along with other foundations, we had supported some school-based civics courses, but the problem was that programs usually were very narrow in terms of who received access. Only a few students were able to take advantage because the approach wasn't systemic.

When Cynthia Gibson was hired as our program officer, we reviewed all the grantmaking to date. We decided that, given the Corporation's long engagement in education and democracy, it made sense for us to tackle civic education. Despite Carnegie Corporation's credentials in this field, it was still not easy to build the bridge between education and civics. In the schools, civics was usually either an afterthought or a necessary evil in the curriculum. It also seemed that everyone had encountered a bad civics teacher or some other negative experience. It was daunting to take on an issue that seemed to come with so much baggage.

But Cynthia and I saw civic education as part of the continuum of creating informed, committed citizens. We wanted to reach young people where they were in

the K-12 curriculum and bring them a civics experience that included not only basic knowledge about civics, government and history but also an experiential opportunity that would allow students to take this knowledge and put it to use in their communities—working on a campaign or solving a local problem such as cleaning up their neighborhoods or a local river, for example. These experiences would build understanding of how the problem could be solved for the long haul, rather than just a short-term fix, by engaging policymakers in the solution.

We knew just cleaning up the beach as a volunteer wouldn't change anything long term. Feeding the homeless every week made a person feel good, but it was important to ask why there are homeless people in the community. How do you ensure that there are fewer homeless needing the shelters? What does it take to make that happen? It's a matter of systemic versus stopgap solutions. Concepts such as the role of taxes and how government works at all levels also needed to be understood. *The Civic Mission of Schools*, when it rolled out, stressed that civics needed to be both experiential *and* required in schools. Good teachers needed to be part of the mix in order to get students engaged and excited about the subject.

Sixty or more institutions from every part of the political spectrum signed on. *The Civic Mission of Schools* became more than a report; it was a call to action, and we wanted all public institutions to take it on. But with so many other needs in the education reform movement, little progress has been made since the report was released. Other subjects such as math and science have taken priority and civics has been left behind.

Carnegie Corporation's ambitious goal was to unite a divisive field and find solutions that would lead to an inclusive, equitable and practical approach to educating the nation's young citizens, despite the known challenges of civic participa-

tion. The Corporation's work in this field mobilized disparate experts who were eager to participate in an ongoing project aimed at reaching a consensus that could ultimately be shared with policymakers, educators and civic organizations.

Scholars and practitioners representing a variety of fields—including education, developmental psychology, political science, history, youth organizing and the law—were enlisted in the effort. The group shared an overall vision of the need for a richer, more comprehensive approach to civic learning in the United States in spite of longstanding disagreements. As they wrote in *The Civic Mission of Schools*, “Being a competent and responsible citizen is not easy. It can take courage, sacrifice and passion to be civically and politically engaged. Engagement is especially difficult for disadvantaged young people, who lack resources and are often discouraged from participating. Thus, an essential goal of civic education is to provide skills, knowledge and encouragement for all students, including those who may otherwise be excluded from civic and political life.”

---

## Assessing the Crisis

In 2001, newly hired program officer Cynthia Gibson was given the assignment of figuring out how to stem young people’s growing disinterest in civic and political life. Carnegie Corporation was dedicated to preserving American democracy, but its leaders wondered what one foundation could realistically hope to do to reverse such a trend. Advisors in the field named alternative strategies, from supporting youth voting to urging young people to engage in community activism and organizing, to strengthening the service-learning sector. Program staff considered all these suggestions while recognizing that, more than an objective assessment of what the civic engagement field really needed, they often reflected advocates’ personal, political, ideological and/or disciplinary perspectives.

Searching for a results-oriented approach, Gibson began interviewing experts and reviewing

mountains of data from all points on the ideological spectrum. Fellow funders were also invited to weigh in. What emerged was an approach that would blend the various perspectives in the field, and that emphasized school-based civic learning. The focus on schools was well aligned with the Corporation’s longstanding commitment to education and reflected the growing concern of educators and the public that Americans had lost touch with many of their democratic values. Besides, it was an opportunity to fill a significant gap, because other funders were not focusing their support in this area.

Research showed there were many ways to acquire a civics education. Parents represented one—especially in homes where public affairs were discussed or children saw their parents volunteer or vote on a regular basis. Belonging to religious organizations also makes young people more civically engaged than their peers, the data indicated, a fact that holds true across income, race and educational level. Membership in voluntary organizations, watching the news or being connected with the law or the military, among other activities, familiarizes young people with the workings of government and civic responsibility and can lead to greater civic engagement.

Only one organization, experts argued, was established for the express purpose of preserving and protecting democracy: the country’s educational system. Recognizing that literacy and citizenship education were critical to a healthy democracy, George Washington promoted the creation of “institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge” as an “object of primary importance.” His vision was carried out with the establishment of America’s public schools during the nineteenth century—a time when all education had a civic purpose and every teacher was seen as a civics teacher. Forty state constitutions point to the value of civic literacy, and 13 of them cite the promotion of good

citizenship and free government as the central purpose of their educational system.

Carnegie Corporation President, Vartan Gregorian, was adamant about the role schools played in civic education. “Today’s students must experience, debate, understand and argue about what it means to be a citizen,” he stressed. “There is no better place to transmit the ideas—and the challenges—inherent in our democracy than in school.” Data collected by Carnegie Corporation in the early stages of this project confirmed that schools were the only institutions able to reach virtually every young person in the country, and that social responsibility and inter-

est in politics could develop as early as age nine. Researchers concluded the way students learn about social issues, ethics and institutions *from elementary school on* has a great impact on their civic development. Consistent with this finding, they see schools as best equipped to teach the cognitive aspects of good citizenship along with skills such as critical thinking and deliberation, and it is in diverse school communities that young people learn to interact, argue and work together with others—ideally under the guidance of positive adult role models.

However, the research also showed that for decades, civic education curricula and programs had

## Cynthia Gibson



**Former Carnegie Corporation  
Program Officer  
Now Senior Vice President  
The Philanthropic Initiative**

Coming up with a strategy to address the “dismal youth vote” was my job at Carnegie Corporation. Yes, it was dismal—but was it a crisis? That view seemed simplistic; it didn’t ring true. Were kids not civically engaged just because they didn’t vote? It depended on your definition. Besides, lots of Americans were disengaged, and with good reason. It seemed to me the old guard had a romantic view of the subject, and young people were seeing through it. Theirs was a savvy generation that was sick of media spin and consultant-driven campaigns. Young people were turned off. The ethos among youth, specifically the millennials born after 1980, had come to fruition. They are drawn to service, but they worked behind closed doors—a development that wasn’t documented in 2001.

I decided to take a step back and see if there really was a problem, and if so what was it? I wrote an inter-

nal white paper for the Corporation, “From Inspiration to Participation: Perspectives on Youth Civic Engagement.” In preparation, I read every piece of data there was, and I found disagreement existed about youth participation. There were different big ideas about how to connect. A pattern emerged that I saw in terms of the following four camps:

1. A back-to-basics faction, which saw a return to traditional civics education, especially history and government, as the remedy;
2. Service-learning advocates, who viewed interest in community service and experiential learning as a positive trend;
3. Community organizers and political scientists most concerned about young people’s lack of interest in political processes, who felt nothing matters unless you’re politically engaged;
4. Youth development experts, such as psychologists, who saw young people’s interest in service as a positive trend, and civic engagement as something that would naturally happen over time.

People started asking for copies of the paper, seeing it as a typology for the field. Eventually it was published by the Grantmaker Forum on Community and National Service.

received decreasing amounts of time, money and attention while schools focused on preparing students for employment or for tests of academic progress. The traditional civic purpose of schools effectively had been forgotten. At the same time, it was shown that the trend in other organizations that once engaged young people in civic and political affairs, such as unions, political parties and nonprofits, had moved away from youth involvement.

It's important to note that the school-based approach the Corporation envisioned was not meant to be a solely classroom-based, textbook driven rote learning of facts. The goal was a deeper, more

comprehensive approach that included instruction on democracy along with experiential opportunities focused on community and social issues, integrated into school curricula, plus opportunities for reflection and analysis of those experiences. This idea was based on the assumptions that *both* political involvement and democratic participation are critical, that service needs to be linked to civics and that civic engagement is a developmental process. Therefore, learning cannot be limited to one course or class but must take place in developmentally appropriate ways throughout a student's school career.

In 2002 Peter Levine from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), then at the University of Maryland, called to ask if the Corporation would be interested in partnering on a civics summit. I said yes, but only if we could bring the service-learning people to the table. Once we all started talking about the issue, the biggest point was that, despite major differences of opinion, we all agreed on the need to work with schools to educate and involve young people in a much more *systematic* way. It was the right niche for Carnegie Corporation and for uniting the field to work toward a common goal.

The next step was to bring together the country's best researchers on this topic. The process worked so well we achieved collaboration among 60 people. Some were progressive, others service oriented, some in political science or youth development. Scholars came from all areas and did a lot of pre-meeting work, beginning by responding to our questionnaires. We looked for overlap, areas of agreement, before bringing everyone together, because we didn't want to bring people together to argue. Since we all agreed on data and approach, this obviated the need for opposing sides to fight with each other at the meeting. We had requested best strategies currently in schools,

and we asked for data to back them up. The idea was to throw information out to practitioners as evidence-based practice. All the different camps responded with recommendations in an inclusive wiki-style process. Then we sent a draft out to the participants and got them all to sign it. The resulting publication, *The Civic Mission of Schools*, got a ton of play. Producing it was challenging for all the reasons coalitions are challenging, but it succeeded.

This was the first time people had evidence they could take around and talk about. *Washington Post* columnist E.J. Dionne covered it, for example. A lot happened as a result of our work. It drove legislation in various states. That part of the process was great: We had coalesced a group of people and laid out a frame and agenda for a field that needed it. But before long we asked, what comes next? We needed to operationalize our findings. Two foundations came through with funding for continuing the work as the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. The Campaign has had mixed success, which has been frustrating. It spurred honest conversation and put issues on the agenda. Today civic learning (the currently preferred term) is still moving forward, but very slowly.

## Peter Levine



**Director**  
**The Center for Information**  
**and Research on Civic**  
**Learning and Engagement**  
**Tufts University**

CIRCLE is a research center that looks broadly at the education of young people as voters. Our collaboration on *The Civic Mission of Schools* report was our first connection with Carnegie Corporation.

The research mattered. There was a 30-year period when conventional wisdom said civics education didn't work. The belief was that one's political party was determined by family and wealth. However, evidence proved that opinion wrong or out of date. There was a scattered body of research from the disciplinary point of view; we did a literature review and collected and analyzed it. Then came the summit and the writing of the report—not by the foundations but by experts from all walks of life. That's the most important part, and it gave the publication a lot of weight. Carnegie Corporation chose the participants and CIRCLE's role was organizing. All 60 people did the writing, then we did the wordsmithing.

The hard work wasn't coming up with the findings but forging the agreement. Civics education is divisive because it talks about what kind of children we want. It's a political football. For years everyone would fight over it and there was no consensus. Right away the report got a surprisingly large response—30,000 requests and downloads. It was the subject of a syndicat-

ed column by David Broder, several unsigned editorials and numerous news stories. Copies were distributed at White House and Congressional events.

The results were that it raised awareness, brought together structure and influenced some state changes. Unfortunately, at the time we had zero awareness that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was happening. I'm optimistic that the ground has been laid for advocacy in a post-NCLB era. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan was involved and gave a shout-out to the work. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor strongly favors this work.

There's been a seesaw in the field between a perception of terrible decline in engagement and what young people actually do. More recently it has tilted toward celebration. The volunteering rate is high. The report hedges or compromises, but in fact the trend is toward the positive in volunteering and voting rates. These are signs of better civic engagement. I'm optimistic. There was a decline that was generational, but the current generation looks different. They have record high volunteering levels—it's an ascent. They can become politically active, although it didn't happen in 2010. People have gotten the picture.

Millennials could be our service generation. The leading edge of this group is in college and recently out of college; they look better in many respects. But for real progress we need to make people change priorities. Civic education is a route to education reform. Schools should be equitable, high quality and follow the practices listed in the report. They should offer professional development and better ways of assessing outcomes. Unfortunately civic education is at the bottom of the pecking order.

Carnegie Corporation's Cynthia Gibson and Peter Levine of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) saw their two organizations as natural allies, and civic education offered an ideal opportu-

nity for them to work as partners. The Corporation's long legacy of encouraging full participation in U.S. democracy complemented newly established CIRCLE's research on the civic engagement of young Americans. The national summit would

help sort out conflicting opinions between two factions: those who viewed the dramatic decrease in participation in the electoral process with despair, and those who considered the rise in commitment to service a highly positive trend. It was important for the event to come together quickly in time for President George W. Bush's White House Forum on American History, Civics, and Service, titled "We the People," to take place in February 2003—just 10 months away. This opportunity to put the issue in front of key policymakers was simply too good to miss.

---

## A Strong Start

The Corporation came to the meeting equipped with a wealth of background research (summarized in Gibson's white paper) indicating that the best type of civic education comprised key parts of the approaches favored by four groups she had identified: back-to-basics advocates; the service-learning faction; community organizers and political scientists; and youth development experts. In short, the program needed to be comprehensive, experiential, analytical and developmentally based.

Top scholars from the field took part in a convening to assess the data and provide recommendations. While disagreements existed—on the extent to which schools should operate as democracies, for instance, or the effects of federal standards on education—the degree of candor and consensus surprised the participants. Then the process was repeated with 35 practitioners who determined whether the scholars' recommendations would work in real schools. Finally, Gibson and Levine consolidated the comments of both groups to produce a consensus document that went out to all the contributors to review and endorse. The result was the comprehensive report, *The Civic Mission of*

*Schools*,<sup>1</sup> and its central vision is captured in what the report terms "Six Promising Approaches to Civics Education":

1. Provide instruction in government, history, law and democracy.
2. Incorporate into the classroom discussion of current local, national and international issues and events, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives.
3. Design and implement programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction.
4. Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities.
5. Encourage student participation in school governance.
6. Encourage student participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.

The buzz about the upcoming White House Forum had begun as plans took shape for launching the report. Reporters were contacted, a press release went out and formal invitations were issued for the launch—planned for just before the White House event, in hopes this publication would become its central framing document. Carnegie Corporation President Vartan Gregorian and Pew Charitable Trusts President Rebecca Rimel co-wrote an op-ed calling for the reinstatement of civic education in the nation's schools. "There's no better time to engage young people," they wrote. "The issues are big. And young people are giving us an opening through their demonstrations of concern and service. We can capitalize on these trends."

---

<sup>1</sup> Download the full report at: [http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/site/campaign/cms\\_report.html](http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/site/campaign/cms_report.html)

CIRCLE developed a Web site to allow free downloading of the report. Heads of major education organizations, state and federal legislators and the report's many authors attended the launch, as did assistant to the president and director of USA Freedom Corps John M. Bridgeland, who rated the report "timely, really serious and important." Congress also took note, and Senator Lamar Alexander cited the publication on the Senate floor as the impetus for federal legislation in support of school-based civic education.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> An article on civic education by Senator Alexander appeared in the Spring 2005 *Carnegie Reporter*: [http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/Reporter/PDF/carnegiereporter\\_v3n2.pdf](http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/Reporter/PDF/carnegiereporter_v3n2.pdf)

## Kathleen Hall Jamieson



**Walter and Leonore  
Annenberg Director  
Annenberg Public Policy Center  
University of Pennsylvania**

The Carnegie Corporation project came along at a very important time: it raised national awareness when the accountability movement was asking, "How do we measure learning?"

High quality standards and assessments were largely about science, math and language arts. Social studies was not included. But the timing was right, and the message was right. It was, and is, important to the nation and to the nation's children. There was continuity of mission between the Corporation's founder Andrew Carnegie and the Civic Mission of Schools. The stars were aligned.

The report mattered because Carnegie Corporation speaks with an authoritative voice and is very respected among all sectors. It was a well-done, synthetic document. One didn't doubt the quality of the research

## Proving Best Practices

Carnegie Corporation's focus on civics—a subject area that had been effectively sidelined—as a critical element in American education put the issue of K-12 school-based civic education on the map. By 2003 the Corporation was advancing the agenda through a combination of grants, research, communications and advocacy, using data to support the importance of this initiative. This work brought key players together and encouraged them to achieve consensus on what to do and how to do it and provided a set of policy recommendations for legislators and school leaders. *The Civic Mission of*

or the message. This was no small effort and it held up well under scrutiny. We now have some level of standards across all the states.

Annenberg has been producing research to help advance the mission, for example, showing that people who have studied the basics of civic education are more likely to believe that in difficult times the Constitution of the United States should be protected. Those who have not had such education do not hold this belief. Clearly, without civics you have the potential for very bad consequences.

The subject isn't simply "taught." We need to give the teachers resources to teach it well. We've been creating materials that teach teachers.

We're also going to reissue an updated version of *The Civic Mission of Schools*. It's a logical next step. Annenberg has stepped in to fund the updating of the report. The recommendations were important, and they've developed a life of their own. Important research has been generated since the report came out. Lots of good research has been done between 2003 and now. This is a function of the success of the original project.

*Schools* report laid the foundation for future policy work and supported building of the field through rigorous research and advocacy.

The report's recommendations made news, and made sense, because they established that individuals do not automatically become free and responsible citizens but instead must be actively educated for citizenship. New strategies were provided for capitalizing on young people's idealism and their commitment to service and voluntarism while addressing their disengagement from political and civic institutions. This approach was met with enthusiasm by scholars; teachers; civic leaders; local, state and federal policymakers; federal judges and other funders.

*The Civic Mission of Schools* report set a high bar for young people to be considered competent and responsible citizens. They were expected to be informed and thoughtful, with a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy; belong to and contribute to groups in civil society that participate in public service; act politically, including influencing public policy and voting; demonstrate moral and civic virtues including concern for the rights and welfare of others, respect for the law and willingness to strike a reasonable balance between their own interests and the common good. Such high aspirations called for far more than stereotypical "drill and kill classes," where students are relentlessly drilled on facts, to the detriment of their imagination and critical thinking skills. The better alternative is a range of dynamic learning opportunities, engaging discussions and activities such as simulations that put a real life perspective on what is learned in class.

Discussing controversial issues, especially with others who may have different opinions, is an excellent way to learn to participate directly in a robust democracy, says Diana Hess, a professor of

education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The ability to deliberate thoughtfully and purposefully is a skill that is often overlooked, she argues, yet is fundamental to becoming an engaged citizen. Hess is conducting a longitudinal study examining how high school students learn from participating in such discussions and whether the experience influences their civic behavior after graduation. One of the largest such studies in the nation, it includes data from 1,000 students in 21 high schools over a four-year period (data that is being compiled and analyzed as this *Review* is being written). The McCormick Foundation, CIRCLE, Brown University and the Spencer Foundation all joined the Corporation in funding this work in hopes of finding the holy grail of engagement that would make civics come alive.

Engagement in student-centered discussion of controversial issues need not be limited to top students, according to Susan Graseck, director of the Choices for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Program at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies. The right resources and teaching approaches are the keys to success with students of widely varying backgrounds and abilities. Graseck's skill at integrating complex topics in the classroom has been honed through years of working with teachers who have adopted this approach to covering the core social studies curriculum, employing student-owned discussion as a path to valuable civic learning.

Launched in 1988, the Choices Program has received substantial support from the Corporation. It encourages students to talk about difficult current issues as part of comprehensive civic and political education—one of the best practices recommended in *The Civic Mission of Schools* report—a tactic shown to increase young people's interest in politics as well as boosting their critical thinking skills. (Data on these outcomes is in-

## Diana Hess



**Professor of Education  
University of Wisconsin—  
Madison**

Early in my career I worked with teachers who taught controversial topics. As a consequence I spent years studying this approach, and then teaching teachers how to do it. For my dissertation I conducted my first study of teachers who were really good at creating “more light than heat” discussions. In some ways this kind of teaching should remedy a serious problem in our society—people’s insulation from differing viewpoints, which tends to harden ideological positions at both ends of the spectrum.

For my second study I looked at how students experience and learn from highly political and constitutional issues, and I saw that it’s just brilliant to have different ideas about the nature of democracy. There’s a strong correlation with attitudes and civic learning but it’s not clear why. Do different kids experience these discussions in a different way? When kids are in classrooms where they get a big dose of controversy, how does it work and what effect does it have down the road?

We’re looking at a large group of different types of schools: public, private, urban, religious, nonreligious. We’ve taken a close look at the nature and impact of ideological diversity in the classroom, and we’re doing so at a time when there’s a national trend for people only to talk to others with the same views they already have. This is not healthy for democracy. What we

found is that it makes a difference to have a range of political beliefs in classrooms. Really good discussions can happen with or without differences of opinion, but in the latter case the teacher has to purposely insert alternatives. In classrooms where there is ideological diversity, the teacher’s job is to awaken kids’ awareness and normalize it, to exploit the multiple and competing points of view.

One mark of a good teacher is that kids have very specific memories of those classes. We’re looking at long-term impact, and we don’t have definitive answers yet. Qualitatively, though, we can say that kids can repeat the discussions that spark engagement that has lasted. These are high-quality classes that make lots of demands on kids. In really strong classes teachers are doing everything in *The Civic Mission of Schools* report. These teachers are democratic heroes and should be encouraged, supported and seen as role models. Their classes are truly memorable.

We’re also focusing a lot on the problem that voting is highly correlated to social class. The lower the socioeconomic status, the less likely one is to vote. High socioeconomic status correlates with better civics education. This is the democracy divide—unequal opportunities to learn how to be civically engaged. We want to know what can be done to help less economically privileged kids want to participate. So far we’ve only reached the tip of the iceberg of understanding. Still, we know a ton more than we did 10 years ago, which should have a direct impact on policy and practice. Carnegie Corporation funding launched this work and I’m totally indebted to them. In a field where money is sparse, they have made a real difference.

cluded in Diana Hess’s evaluation.) Students talk about everything from terrorism, U.S. relations with China and environmental stewardship to economic policy, immigration and the wars in Iraq and

Afghanistan. Teaching history through the lens of civics, Graseck shows students how the choices they make today can become historical turning points, proving “History is what we create....

“Don’t avoid the controversy,” she warns; put students “into the heart of it” where they can explore multiple perspectives, instead of passively sitting by thinking there’s one right answer. Only by active analysis will they come to their own considered judgment on the issue. “High school is the last universal stop on the path to adulthood and full citizenship,” Graseck contends. “Here they can learn to wrestle collectively with important public issues they will encounter as 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens.”

Other research has shown that involving students in democratic deliberation has school-wide impact on civic knowledge and participation, including community service. Importantly, such positive changes can be greater for disenfranchised youth and for students who initially demonstrate less interest in civic activities, indicating that good programs are indeed capable of reaching the students they were designed to reach. All students—not just a select few—will engage in civic activity in their schools when given appropriate opportunity.

James Youniss, a professor of psychology at Catholic University of America, and a leading expert in the youth development field, has looked explicitly at the role that direct civic action such as community service plays in generating political awareness and social responsibility. He conducted a rigorous 10-year study of school-based service-learning programs in four large high schools to assess the effects these programs had on students. The Corporation provided further support for in-depth analysis of the data to determine how service promotes civic and political development in young people and how the individual characteristics of students play a role in their interest and willingness to engage in service, political and/or civic-related activities in the future.

Testimonials regarding service learning tended to be glowing, yet the research on its impact was thin, not rigorous and hugely problematic, says

Shelley Billig, an authority in the field with RMC Research. Carnegie Corporation funded Billig’s major study of service learning, which “found the prevailing concept of quality totally wrong and became hugely influential in the field.” Billig tested elements of service learning that practitioner wisdom deemed most important and found no evidence they were predictors of a good outcome. Instead, her study revealed that controlling for quality yielded huge impacts, while no quality control yielded little or no impact.

Billig says relatively simple changes made a big difference. Having students do initial investigations themselves, for example, instead of teachers choosing their assignments, offered an opportunity to analyze problems and personalize solutions. Linking celebration to demonstration—a presenting of the project’s impact to an important public—“assured intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation and allowed students to feel they’ve made a real difference,” Billig says. Most importantly, her study revealed that high-quality programs prompted formulation of a specific set of academic skills through cooperative learning, presentation, writing and convening that “firmly established a place for service learning in schools. It was not just a wonderful activity for personal growth. Done well, with increased duration, intensity and quality, service learning became intentional, academic and career aspirational.”

In addition to service learning, *The Civic Mission of Schools* encouraged more integrated, democratic schooling linking K-12 and higher education. Such continuity would allow students to move from high school into college better prepared to engage in and learn about all aspects of citizenship, from volunteering to voting. Partnerships with colleges and universities can also help bring much-needed resources to low-income K-12 classrooms, especially inner

## James Youniss



**Wylma R. & James R. Curtin**  
**Professor of Psychology**  
**Catholic University of America**

I did my earliest work in psychology in the 1960s, shifting focus around 1990 to civics because of the service aspect in relation to moral development. I wanted to study morality in real life and started by looking at what happens at the time high school kids do service. I started with one teacher in D.C. who ran a program where kids worked in a soup kitchen four times a year, and many of them went above and beyond. They would discuss what went on each time and write an essay about their experiences. Meanwhile, class discussion focused on issues ranging from prison to nuclear weapons, homelessness or the death penalty—but always grounded in the soup kitchen work.

Many of the students expressed an interest in working in government so they could do something about the problems they encountered in their volunteering. Years later I interviewed about 100 alums and all of them remembered very specifically what they did in class. There were some very inspiring stories, including one kid who ended up at Harvard Law and said he would not be going into corporate law but would be coming back to D.C. to work with “kids like myself.”

I ended up writing my dissertation on community service and social responsibility in youth. Over the past nine years I’ve received several grants from the W.T. Grant Foundation to look more deeply into service and

civic development. I studied two large high schools where students must perform community service, although neither of these schools gave students anything like the experience of the first school I studied. This is very common; schools are afraid today. I saw that what you get out of service depends on what goes into it.

The school community needs to understand that service is 24/7 and the group needs to have a purpose to it: the environment, or a shelter for battered women, say. Civic life in the United States is rich; it reflects people’s beliefs of how life should be. In the process, participants are exposed to the moral focus in society. Students need to be absorbed into communities, which exist everywhere. Students who are lucky enough to join up get a lot more out of it. Data shows they are much more influenced life-long. My work identified one major factor that distinguishes life-changing service experiences: whether the person believes they have really contributed to the organization.

Service requirements in high school have come under question as to whether they “do any harm.” Several studies have shown that having to do service does not harm anyone who has already been exposed to service (through family or religion, for instance). But those who stand to gain the most are young people who had no original intention or exposure. They gain a lot. One great example is a high school football player who waited until his senior year to fulfill his service requirement because he was so busy. In his last semester he took a blind man to work out at the gym every Saturday and walked him through his exercises. At the end of the term this student gave a talk about what it felt like to be able to take an adult and help him become more self-sufficient and confident. It was very powerful.

city schools with large enrollments and minimum resources, where older students help to develop projects, act as mentors and provide benefits that can be sustained over time.

One of the few efforts of this kind is located at the University of Pennsylvania’s Netter Center for Community Partnerships, an academically based community service-learning program led by Penn

associate vice president Ira Harkavy. Launched in 1985, the Center for Community Partnerships involved approximately 3,300 children and youth, parents and community members annually at the time it received support from the Corporation (in 2005). A core component of the Center's activities is a set of university-assisted community schools that function as centers of education, services, engagement and activity for students, their parents and other community members within a specified geographic area.

"Higher education is crucial to realizing the civic mission of schools," Harkavy says. "It's not only good work, it needs to be at the very soul of higher education... We shape schooling because we teach the teachers," Harkavy explains. "If we don't do that there won't be civic education." He laments what he sees as a decade-long tendency toward isolation among higher education institutions, which has made them poor role models. Lately, though, he sees a shift toward greater engagement and realization of their democratic mission. "Nonengagement sends the wrong message," he says. "Universities teach much more by what they do than by what they say," he adds, quoting late Yale president Bart Giamatti.

"We must prepare citizens for politics, but also improve politics for citizens," Peter Levine cautions. "Neither effort can succeed in isolation from the other. Civic education that teaches people to admire a flawed system is mere propaganda. Educational curricula and programs, including service learning, if disconnected from the goal of strengthening and improving democracy, can easily become the means of accommodating young people to a flawed system."

Education for participation will require much more than knowing when the Constitution was written or how a bill becomes a law, according to Cynthia Gibson. "Young people will need to know

how to deliberate, think critically, collaborate and work with others with diverse perspectives and backgrounds. They must learn to analyze and assess growing amounts of information from numerous sources and build lasting relationships with other individuals who comprise their communities—however community is defined."

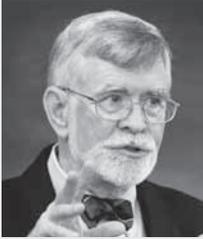
---

## Building Momentum

The summit and resulting *Civic Mission of Schools* report appeared to catalyze a promising new movement in civic learning. Still, the question loomed: Could the agenda move forward? Funders organized a follow-up meeting to determine next steps and generate greater action. They formed a national coalition—the first of its kind in the country—managed by the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the Council for Excellence in Government. As a result, the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools was launched to advocate for the policy recommendations outlined in the report. It had initial funding from the Corporation and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the participation of 40-plus organizational members representing the varying perspectives on this issue and beyond—from the American Bar Association and the National Education Association to the Center for Civic Education and the Forum for Youth Investment.

Leading the Campaign was former Congressman David Skaggs, who had served 12 years as a U.S. Representative from the 2nd Congressional District of Colorado and three terms in the Colorado House. Now hosted by the National Council for the Social Studies, the Campaign is led by Ted McConnell, a 30-year veteran of the political, government and nonprofit sectors.

## David Skaggs



**Former United States  
Congressman  
Senior Strategic Advisor and  
Independent Consultant  
McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP**

Back in 2001 the Center for Democracy and Citizenship got pulled into the group that had worked on the original *Civic Mission of Schools* report and wanted to know what to do with it. If you're a hammer everything looks like a nail, so to me everything looks like a campaign. Out of that meeting came the idea that we would form a campaign to try and operationalize the work at the state level.

We had an organizing meeting months later to create a structure, pursue grants, etc. People were encouraged by the new burst of effort. Retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and former Colorado Governor Roy Romer agreed to be honor-

ary co-chairs. We secured some planning grants and began to go after more funding to take the effort forward. Carnegie Corporation was always at the core of those funders. We also got Annenberg and John S. and James L. Knight Foundation funding and some others.

Our initial grants postulated a series of steps:

1. Solicit potential state level cooperation and sub-grant funding;
2. Develop a Web-based system for vetting best practices and case studies in K-12;
3. Send out an RFP to the states and select major and lesser grants over a period of several years.

We were very deliberate about picking as grantees people who had mature state level efforts underway. Somewhere in the middle of this we started running out of money and entered an awkward period of trimming our sails. When I left the project, despite the funding problems it was an established organization in reasonably good shape. Today the Campaign is part of the National Council for the Social Studies, with Ted McConnell as executive director.

## The Campaign Marches On

In 2004, the Campaign issued a new publication, *Advancing the Civic Mission of Schools: What Schools, Districts, and State and Federal Leaders Can Do*.<sup>3</sup> Based on input from the coalition's experts and citizen activists, this guide identified and explained six major challenges to civic learning and specified action steps for tackling them by leaders from all sectors. Other advocates were encouraged to use their influence to persuade political and district leaders to pursue these actions:

**Challenge 1:** Making students' civic learning a priority in school reform

**Challenge 2:** Integrating civic learning into the curriculum

**Challenge 3:** Implementing sound civic education standards

**Challenge 4:** Developing better assessment methods to evaluate students' civic learning and to make schools accountable for civic education

**Challenge 5:** Improving teachers' and administrators' training for civic education

**Challenge 6:** Increasing collaboration between schools and communities

Meeting these challenges, it was hoped, would lead to the best in comprehensive *civic learning* (as the coalition termed it), not only covering history and government but embracing service learning, character education, civics-focused extracurricular

<sup>3</sup> The report can be downloaded free at [www.civicmissionofschools.org](http://www.civicmissionofschools.org).

## Ted McConnell



### Executive Director Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools

My background is in politics from the local to the national level. In the mid 1980s I worked for Justice Warren Berger. It was a history and civics lesson for us all. His evolution in thinking was of the necessity to keep democracy flourishing by diminishing the effect of politics. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, more people realized the importance of this fact. Forty years of tumult, tragedy and scandals have resulted in the alienation toward civic life of many, many people. Fifty years ago people trusted government. Today it's different.

The book *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam came out in the late '90s and explored the decline of service and civics clubs in the United States, while other studies showed not just youth alienation but lack of knowledge of how government works. Carnegie Corporation funding, along with funding from the Annenberg, Knight and Gates foundations, launched the Campaign, which was made up of organizations from civil rights, business and think tanks. There were significant activities as well as accomplishments: Our chief aims were to bring the field together for the greater good; develop a message for lay people and politicians to persuade them to take action; to conduct research projects and develop a how-to guide.

Vast numbers of folks are now getting the word out. We are a true coalition of the willing, and we've got a robust volunteer group on Capitol Hill (at the federal level) as well as a network of people taking it to the state level. Over 70 pieces of legislation have passed. One outstanding accomplishment in Florida was the passage of the Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Education Act. Initiated by Representative Lou Frey and for-

mer Florida governor and U.S. senator, Bob Graham, the bill requires that seventh graders complete a civics course and that eighth graders pass a civics test to be promoted to high school. Additionally, civics related content must be taught at all grade levels. This is a model for other states too. At present just 20 states offer assessments that count. If civics is not there, it sends a message that it's not valued.

We support school reform, but have to remind our colleagues that it's a big mistake not to include well-rounded civic learning. Our public awareness campaign pushes the "3 Cs": college, career, citizenship. Our research shows effective civic education strengthens other skills such as critical thinking and collaboration. We are gravely concerned about the civic learning gap, especially among inner city kids. Lower socioeconomic background and rural kids simply are not getting essential civics education. Doubling down on math and literacy has squeezed civics out of the curriculum. We see this as disenfranchisement.

Our task is to get policies in place to allow civics to be an essential part of every kid's education. We believe the most appropriate way is *of the states, for the states*. But they should all get together and empower their best minds. It makes no sense to have varying standards across 50 states. We have academic research indicating state standards are overloaded laundry lists; just date/place rote learning. It's more important to learn what the document means, not when it was written.

Surveys of people under 25 years old show they love service but not government, so we advocate civics integrated with service learning. The two components must be linked with classroom learning for educational validity. What an individual can do to impact the situation, in the school setting, is to ensure that civics is linked to curriculum so students can get how it connects to government. This is one of the dominant reasons public schools were created. The founders realized they had created something new and citizens needed to learn.

and after-school activities and classroom- or community-based reflection. At the same time, a major obstacle existed in the No Child Left Behind Act, signed in January 2002, which stressed literacy and math at the expense of the civics curriculum. An unintended consequence has been the marginalization of the core social studies disciplines—civics/government, economics, geography and history—in K-12 classrooms.

A well-rounded education comprises English/language arts, math, science and social studies. Decreased attention to social studies content, professional development and assessments is of great concern to social studies educators. Proficiency in each of these subjects is needed for U.S. students to be prepared for college, career *and citizenship* in the complex and globally interdependent world. The continued lack of civics testing in most states still promotes the view that this subject is an “add-on” for which overburdened teachers have neither time nor resources. Along with severe cutbacks in funds for service learning, lack of support has severely hampered attempts to promote school-based civic learning in all but a few areas.

One notable exception is North Carolina. There the state legislature mandated new civics provisions for middle and high school students largely as a result of a Corporation-supported “Civic Index” survey that culled the most rigorous measures of political and nonpolitical aspects of citizenship for a large sample of the state’s young adults and adults—and ended up on front pages of newspapers throughout the state. The survey was conducted by the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium, a 200-member bipartisan coalition established by public officials and community leaders. Subsequently, forums were held in communities around the state to review survey results and develop action plans around them.

This organization advocated for the inclusion of civic education and service-learning content as

part of the state’s curriculum review and revision process, and helped to restore civics as a separate course for the state’s social studies public school curriculum. The consortium also trains high school teachers in civics education and makes a wealth of educational resources available. The consortium received two two-year grants from 2002 through 2006 to help carry out the recommendations in *The Civic Mission of Schools* report.

---

## Where Things Stand

Much remains to be done. In 2011, the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools continues to provide nonpartisan support for civic learning while working with its many coalition partners to bring about changes in state, local and national policy.

*The Campaign’s national advocacy track:*

- Brings national attention to the importance of improving civic learning in schools;
- Encourages the federal government to allocate the creation of stronger policies and increase funding to the states for civic education;
- Advocates for more effective school reform based on active student engagement in schools and communities;
- Works to improve the National Assessment of Educational Progress civic assessments by testing a larger sample of students;
- Heightens awareness of the need to close the civic learning achievement gap.

*Its state advocacy track:*

- Develops communications tools to support state advocacy;
- Makes a comprehensive set of civic learning resources and practices available online;
- Provided two years of funding for 18 state coalitions, and provided technical assistance to strengthen their states’ civic learning policies;

## Kelly O'Brien



**Director**  
**North Carolina Civic**  
**Education Consortium**

North Carolina's story is different from many of our colleagues in the field. We had a big group of organizations working to increase the status of civics. The roots of the movement included local elected and appointed officials and attorneys who wanted young people to know about law. They recognized the urgent need for young people with civics education to become the next generation of local leaders.

We're connected to the School of Government at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, a continuing education entity for mayors, sheriffs, city council members, finance officers and the like—the people who make government work. Ours is the largest local government training site in the country; it was begun in the 1930s.

In the mid 1990s there were many concerned public officials at the city and county level looking for a way to reach out to young people. "People don't know us or our jobs or how to participate," they said. "We need young people to understand, to form a pipeline of future state and local leaders." There's a real connection to workforce/economic development, to better places to live and job opportunities. Young people should be prepared for careers in public service, which they live every day. This was the impetus for the consortium.

Local governments then were facing brain drain and retirement. Local leaders wondered who would replace them if young people didn't think they could work in county or local government. Civic education and teaching how communities work is the answer, and it should go through schools. We're lucky that they saw this as a proactive way to create an engaged community.

We made a study of the current civics course asking, "What are you learning about in government class?" We discovered it was considered a second-class course, boring. North Carolina required a civics course "on paper," but that was all. By 2005, because of the survey and the coalition's efforts, the state stipulated five courses students needed to pass in civics/economics in order to graduate. Overnight the importance of these subjects leapt exponentially. Suddenly you needed a good teacher for students to pass the test. So we began to spend a lot of time on professional development.

We used *The Civic Mission of Schools* report as touchstone for our work. Our program offers lots of successful activities. We have core standards and testing. We took on best practices—simulations, legislative committees, current events—and created lesson plans meshing best practices with standards. We offer 1,000 lesson plans across history, economics and U.S. government, all establishing what you can do to make a difference by being an active, engaged citizen. We have a fully searchable database for teachers and we average over half-a-million page views per year. Of the teachers who use it, 70 percent say it increases test scores and active engagement.

Now we're trying to find funding. The news is full of reasons why we need this to stay in the schools. The current education budget requires that we keep the course. But we are like every other state with shortfalls. One state representative put forth an amendment to take away end-of-course tests not required by No Child Left Behind. Without that requirement it doesn't give national credence to this course, which trickles down. *What isn't tested isn't taught.* Lack of a national requirement (NCLB) or other testing hinders us—it's an uphill battle. Having a group of professionals across the state (elected and appointed) is helpful, especially when they rally around. Nonpartisan support is very useful.

- Persuades state legislators, education officials, teachers, business and community leaders, parents and students that civic learning is vital to the health of our democracy.

“We have to keep at it,” says Susan Griffin, executive director of the National Council for the Social Studies. Because of pressures on schools for accountability in math and reading there hasn’t been the space for civic learning. “The message is not being heard. Our message is: This is important and not impossible. And there are good reasons why we need to do it. In a knowledge economy our role as citizens is inextricably linked to our role in the workplace.” To prove its case, in 2010 the Campaign produced *No Excuses: Eleven Schools and Districts That Make Preparing Students for Citizenship a Priority, and How Others Can Do it, Too*.<sup>4</sup> Featuring a collection of urban, suburban and rural schools from East LA to West Chicago to Queens, New York, this publication uses case studies to make clear what quality civic learning looks like.

“Two-thirds of Americans know at least one of the judges on the Fox television show *American Idol*, but fewer than one in 10 can identify the chief justice of the United States,” former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor wrote in the foreword. “Thankfully there are many schools and school districts across the nation that do recognize their historic civic mission and successfully fulfill that mission.” Interviews with administrators, faculty, students and community members identify the elements that create an overall, systemic approach to civic learning, and many elements echo across these institutions—a strategic vision for an engaging, interactive civic curriculum; resources dedicated to civic instruction and professional development; an authentic assessment scheme at the state or local level and a willingness to overcome the dead hand of tradition.

For students to be competitive they need an analytical understanding of the world they live in, argues Griffin. “It’s a much smaller world today than it was even 20 years ago. STEM [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] and reading competencies aren’t going to be enough. Students need to be able to look at challenges facing the United States and the world and weigh them in a thoughtful way. Civic education seems so straightforward to me, but up on Capitol Hill, people tend to think of it as a class they had in junior high or high school.”

To combat this outdated view, the Campaign partnered with the American Bar Association’s Division for Public Education on *Paths to 21st Century Competencies Through Civic Education Classrooms*.<sup>5</sup> This publication maintains that to thrive in an economy that is rapidly changing, global in scope and technology driven, young people need more than basic skills in reading and mathematics. Basic knowledge of economic and political processes; skill in understanding what is presented in the media; the ability to work well with others, especially diverse groups; positive attitudes about working hard and obeying the law; creativity and capacity for innovation are critical keys to success.

Even though educators are beginning to mobilize in support of these competencies viewed in an integrated way, solid research continues to be lacking. To help bridge the gap, the analysis of existing data collected from students in large-scale assessments provided here suggests content that should be included in future assessment efforts. According to the Bar Association report, civic education, especially when it is interactive and involves discussion of current issues, is an important way to develop the skills that young Americans need to succeed in the 21st century workforce. “It’s

<sup>4</sup> *No Excuses* can be downloaded at [www.civicmissionsofschools.org](http://www.civicmissionsofschools.org)

<sup>5</sup> *Paths to 21st Century Competencies* can be downloaded at [www.abanet.org/publiced](http://www.abanet.org/publiced)

a tangible connection between content and application,” says Griffin.

These reports are two in a series of accomplishments attributable to the Campaign’s advocacy and awareness efforts. Some additional highlights are: • In 2005 the Campaign achieved the goal of having the civics assessment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), known as the nation’s report card, administered every four years rather than every eight; • The organization’s 18 state campaigns resulted in creating statewide coalitions to support restoring civic education requirements in U.S. schools. • A national poll commissioned by the campaign showed parents were willing and eager to see civic education reinstated in schools; and • Op-eds calling for civic learning have regularly appeared in major newspapers across the country.

Influential organizations including the Council of Chief State School Officers, American Enterprise Institute and Bill of Rights Institute have joined the coalition, and in response to the movement to develop common state standards for basic subjects, a strategy has been shaped to bring about state-led development of social studies standards. In an effort to revitalize the movement, the Campaign is currently updating the original *Civic Mission of Schools Report*, which will be published as *CMS Report 2.0*. Its contents will include relevant research conducted since 2003, an urgent

call for action and updated recommendations for policymakers, educators, parents and the media.

One of the most respected and outspoken proponents of civic learning, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, is co-chair of the Campaign’s advisory board. Since retiring from the bench, Justice O’Connor has devoted much of her time to raising awareness of the need for civic education in the United States. She frequently makes the point that self-government in this country cannot survive unless people—our citizens—are willing to get engaged and understand the commitments necessary to make democracy work.

“Statistics show that there’s a very strong correlation between ignorance and distrust of our government,” O’Connor told the Florida legislature. “We must take action to reverse the trend of removing civics from our schools before this cynicism begins to suffocate our democracy.” Civics is about “teaching students that one person can ignite political fires on the ground, and those fires almost always begin with a very small spark,” she believes. “It takes a renewed commitment for each generation to continue the great experiment that we Americans undertook in 1779.”

*Written by Karen Theroux.*

*Theroux is an editor/writer in the Corporation’s Public Affairs department with many years’ experience in educational publishing and communications.*

“We must take action to reverse the trend of removing civics from our schools before this cynicism begins to suffocate our democracy.”

–Justice Sandra Day O’Connor

Organization	Contact	Number of Grants	Beginning Date	Total Funding
Association for Community-Higher Education Partnerships		1	2003	\$ 25,000
Bill of Rights Institute (bilofrightsinstitute.org)		1	2004	\$ 175,000
Brown University (brown.edu)	Susan Graseck	1	2003	\$ 598,400
Catholic University of America (cua.edu)	James Youniss	2	2003	\$ 81,700
Center for Public Interest Research, Inc. (pirg.org)		2	2006	\$ 225,000
Constitutional Rights Foundation (crf-usa.org)		2	2003	\$ 899,000
Council for Excellence in Government (excelgov.org)		6	2002	\$ 1,102,200
Earth Force Inc. (earthforce.org)		1	2003	\$ 517,600
Education Commission of the States (ecs.org)		3	2002	\$ 946,700
Greater Washington Educational Telecommunications Association, Inc. (weta.org)	Judy Woodruff	1	2006	\$ 100,000
Indiana University (indiana.edu)	David Reingold	1	2005	\$ 45,500
Institute of Government Foundation, Inc. (iog.unc.edu)		2	2002	\$ 820,000
International Center for Innovation in Civic Participation (icicp.org)	Susan E. Stroud	2	2002	\$ 40,000
National Conference of State Legislatures (ncsl.org)		1	2004	\$ 50,000
National Council for the Social Studies (ncss.org)		1	2007	\$ 300,000
NSA Anthology Charitable Trust		1	2005	\$ 25,000
Peace Games Inc. (peacegames.org)		1	2003	\$ 23,900
Project Pericles, Inc. (projectpericles@aol.com)		1	2002	\$ 250,000

Organization	Contact	Number of Grants	Beginning Date	Total Funding
RMC Research Corporation (rmcdenver.com)	Shelley Billig	1	2003	\$ 312,700
Saint Anselm College (anselm.edu)		3	2002	\$ 100,000
The University of Maryland Foundation, Inc. (umd.edu)	Peter Levine, CIRCLE	2	2002	\$ 870,000
Tufts University (tufts.edu)	Peter Levine, CIRCLE	2	2004	\$ 1,050,000
University of Maryland, College Park (umd.edu)	Judith Torney-Purta	1	2003	\$ 50,000
University of Minnesota (umn.edu)	Harry Boyte	1	2003	\$ 499,600
University of Pennsylvania (upenn.edu)	Ira Harkavy	2	2004	\$ 800,200
University of Wisconsin, Madison (wisc.edu)	Diana Hess	1	2005	\$ 38,000

**Since 2002 the Corporation has made 43 grants toward the Civic Mission of Schools, totaling \$9,945,500.**

**\$ 9,945,500**

*Carnegie*  
CORPORATION  
OF NEW YORK

437 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10022  
T. 212.371.3200

[www.carnegie.org](http://www.carnegie.org)

©2011 by Carnegie Corporation of New York



MIX  
Paper from  
responsible sources  
FSC® C102832