

EDUCATING FOR AMERICAN ★ DEMOCRACY

STAKEHOLDER BRIEF FOR PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS

This brief is meant for parents and other adults who care for children who care about American history and civic education. This brief will inform you and help you convince others to support history and civic education.

YOUR SUPPORT IS IMPORTANT

**We need clear and positive voices for history and civics in all communities.
You are an essential leading voice.**

Principals, district leaders, and other officials responsible for education report that adults rarely ask about civics and history instruction. Educators receive constant pressure to raise test scores and graduation rates. They are pressured to prepare students for jobs. They are not pressured to emphasize civics and history in the same ways. Your support is needed to strengthen these subjects in schools.

THE CASE FOR CIVIC AND HISTORY EDUCATION

Consider making these points when talking to fellow members of your community and especially those with influence over education. You can find these points in greater detail in the *Educating for American Democracy Roadmap*.

- ▶ **Strengthening** history and civic education preserves and improves America's constitutional democracy.
- ▶ **Greater** civic and history education can bridge overly divided politics and reduce the spread of false information.
- ▶ **History** and civic education have been neglected, especially in K-8.
- ▶ **The *EAD Roadmap*** demonstrates agreement of the core topics and issues to study in history and civics. That consensus includes an agreement about the deep and worthy disagreements that young Americans should understand and learn to navigate.
- ▶ **All young people** deserve an excellent education in history and civics and a curriculum that connects to their own backgrounds and experiences.



VISIT
www.educatingforamericandemocracy.org
to download a copy of the Roadmap.

For more specific information about what you can do, click on "Take Action," and look for the stakeholder brief that best matches your role. For comments or questions, please contact us at EAD@iCivics.org.

WHAT YOU SHOULD ASK

These are questions to consider asking school leaders in your community

- ▶ **How** much instructional time is devoted to American history and civics? How does this time compare to the instructional time afforded to other subjects?
- ▶ **Have** you reviewed the quality, equity, and impact of history and civic education in our schools?
- ▶ **Do** you have a plan for strengthening civic and history education?
- ▶ **Do** curricula align with the themes of the *Roadmap*?
- ▶ **Are** teachers following the recommended pedagogical practices for civics and history?
- ▶ **Are** teachers prepared and supported to teach these disciplines?
- ▶ **What** do our youth think about history and civic education in our schools?
- ▶ **How** can adults from outside the school help?

TEACHING CIVICS AT HOME

As a parent or caregiver, you can also engage with and support your child's learning in support of the EAD. You can engage and collaborate on civic activities together, support passionate yet respectful discussions of current events at the table, explore your own family's heritage and how that has changed over time, introduce your children to civic activities (from service to voting), and critically assess media sources together. Strengthening democracy is all of our work and we should do it together—it is not just the work of schools.

Schools are not the only institutions that educate young people about American history and civics. Families, neighborhoods, religious congregations, community groups, social movements, and all kinds of media (from classic literature to video games) also play powerful and sometimes valuable roles.

Your own beliefs and agendas may align best with specific groups and movements outside of schools. That is understandable and appropriate. However, by teaching American history and civics in a relatively impartial and academic way, schools complement other groups that can have their own agendas.

Schools can offer students valuable core knowledge and skills. They can offer a setting to converse with people who strongly disagree. They can also ensure that all young people gain knowledge and skills for civic life. A constructive conversation among concerned parents or caregivers, professional educators, and the students themselves can enrich and improve history and civic education and help preserve our republic.

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN AND CANNOT DO



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