

EDUCATING FOR AMERICAN ★ DEMOCRACY

STAKEHOLDER BRIEF FOR RESEARCHERS

This brief is meant for **researchers**, including specialists in civic and history education, education researchers generally, people who work with relevant data in organizations and agencies, and scholars in related content areas, such as American history, political science, and law.

LEARNING FROM IMPLEMENTATION

The *EAD Roadmap* recommends a coherent structure of professional development, content and pedagogy, Civic Learning Plans for local education authorities across the country, badging and other forms of student assessment, and regular data-collection, including National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) civics and history results at the state level.

This structure will allow detailed and rigorous investigation of *what works for which students under which circumstances*. It will be possible to understand much more than is known today about the impact of pedagogy and content themes on students from different backgrounds and in different settings; the impact of various local and state policy choices; and the relationships between teachers' knowledge and skills and students' outcomes—among other key topics. The data that emerges from this structure will help us learn how to promote excellence and equity in civic education.

The *EAD Roadmap* presents Design Challenges as ongoing invitations to all stakeholders—educators, administrators, policy makers, content providers, and students themselves—to wrestle with fundamental issues and trade-offs. They are more likely to succeed if the Design Challenges also set an agenda for empirical research that yields insights about what works.

More generally, the *EAD Roadmap* will succeed to the extent that all the stakeholders continuously improve policy and practice so that all students benefit. In turn, continuous improvement requires learning; and learning can be enhanced by rigorous research. Therefore, success depends on extensive and robust research, using the data generated by EAD history and civics.



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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.

UNDERSTANDING YOUTH

Effective civic and history education depends on understanding the children and youth in America’s schools: their diverse backgrounds, experiences with institutions and technologies, expectations, and cultures. Educating students from age five through high school also requires an understanding of human development.

EAD teachers are skillful at learning about—and with—the students in their own classrooms. EAD teachers exhibit curiosity, a growth mindset, and listening skills. They can also benefit from rigorous independent research about American youth that informs standards, curricula, professional development, materials, and assessments.

The research community must strengthen civic and history education by continuing to investigate such questions as these (among others):

- ▶ **How are** various youth at different ages using social media to follow news and public affairs?
- ▶ **How do** youth beliefs about frontline representatives of the government, such as police, vary by demographic group and community in the United States?
- ▶ **What** background knowledge do parents of various cultures tend to pass on to their children?

We the People

A NEED FOR SCHOLARSHIP IN THE HUMANITIES THAT STRENGTHENS K-12 HISTORY AND CIVICS

As argued in the *EAD Report*, the academic disciplines of political science and history have tended to drift away from the content of K–12 social studies. Other relevant disciplines, such as communications, philosophy, and law, are also removed from what teachers know and what students learn. This is partly because developments in the academic disciplines have not been reflected in teacher education, curricula, or materials; and partly because few university-based scholars have been engaged with K–12 civics and history.

Research in these fields is important for assessing, informing, and enriching what teachers know and what their students read, discuss, and learn. It is not simply a matter of translating what historians, political scientists, and others already know, but also of generating new scholarly knowledge that specifically meets the needs of students in today’s schools.



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