

EDUCATING FOR AMERICAN ★ DEMOCRACY

INITIATIVE SUMMARY

WHAT IS EDUCATING FOR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY?

The Educating for American Democracy (EAD) initiative is an unprecedented effort that convened a diverse and cross-ideological group of scholars and educators to create a *Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy*—guidance and an inquiry framework that states, local school districts and educators can use to transform teaching of history and civics to meet the needs of a diverse 21st century K–12 student body.

The EAD initiative is a call to action to invest in strengthening history and civic learning, and to ensure that civic learning opportunities are delivered equitably throughout the country.

WHO IS BEHIND EDUCATING FOR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY?

The Educating for American Democracy initiative was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the U.S. Department of Education through a grant to iCivics in collaboration with Harvard University, Tufts University, CIRCLE, and Arizona State University.

First proposed in July 2019, the initiative brought together a national network of more than 300 scholars, classroom educators from every grade level, practitioners, and students from ideologically and demographically diverse backgrounds and roles, who pooled their expertise to create a strategy for providing excellent history and civic education to all students.

We the People

A healthy constitutional democracy requires a citizenry that has the knowledge, skills, and desire to participate in it. The founders devised a form of government that required each new generation to learn to play its part.



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.

WHY IS EDUCATING FOR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY IMPORTANT?

Our constitutional democracy is in peril. After years of polarization, the United States is highly divided, and there is widespread loss of confidence in our very form of government and civic order. For many decades, we have neglected civics and history, and we now have a citizenry and electorate who are poorly prepared to understand, appreciate, and use our form of government and civic life.

At the federal level, we spend approximately \$50 per student per year on STEM fields and approximately \$0.05 per student per year on civics¹. A lack of consensus about the substance of history and civics—what and how to teach—has been a major obstacle to maintaining excellence. The Educating for American Democracy initiative provides tools to make civics and history a priority so that we as a country can rebuild our civic strength to meet the modern challenges we are facing.

The EAD initiative demonstrates that an ideologically, demographically, and professionally diverse group can agree about history and civics content, as well as pedagogy. This detailed consensus, presented in a broad *Roadmap* that allows states, localities, and educators to assess and reprioritize their own approaches, will encourage investments in civics and history at all levels.

EAD shifts from breadth to depth by offering an inquiry framework that weaves history and civics together and inspires students to learn by asking difficult questions, then seeking answers in the classroom through facts and discussion.

The *Roadmap* is neither a set of standards nor a curriculum. It recommends approaches to learning that: (1) inspire students to want to become involved in their constitutional democracy and help to sustain our republic; (2) tell a full and complete narrative of America's plural yet shared story; (3) celebrate the compromises needed to make our constitutional democracy work; (4) cultivate civic honesty and patriotism that leaves space to both love and critique this country; and (5) teach history and civics both through a timeline of events and the themes that run through those events.

The EAD *Roadmap* includes suggested educational strategies for every grade level, a website of curated examples, and implementation recommendations that each state and district can use to fit the needs of their own, unique communities. It details benchmarks for state-level accountability to support continuous improvement—as well as recommendations for investment in developing a corps of history and civics educators.

The renewal of history and civics will require the input and participation of everyone from educators and school and state administrators, to local, state, and federal lawmakers, parents, students and community members.

It will require a harmonized “collaborative federalism” approach across all jurisdictions—local, tribal, state, and national. We encourage you to take the time to learn more about EAD and then reach out to your community to help inspire them to utilize the *EAD Roadmap*.

WHAT IS IN THE ROADMAP TO EDUCATING FOR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS?

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

¹ These figures are based on STEM funding: \$2.9 Billion annually (www.gao.gov/assets/700/690840.pdf); civics funding: \$3.5 Million annually (www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget19/summary/19summary.pdf); and K-12 enrollment: 56.4 Million students (nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372#PK12_enrollment)



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