

# Civic Education: Bicentennial Celebration and the Road to the Constitution

---

*A programs of the*

**Center for Civic Education**

**Marcie Taylor-Thoma, PHD**

**MD Council for Civic & History Education**

**[marciethoma@gmail.com](mailto:marciethoma@gmail.com)**

**[www.marylandciviced.org](http://www.marylandciviced.org)**

# Bicentennial Commission's Success for Schools

---

- We the People...the Citizen and the Constitution program was developed in 1987 and adopted by the Commission, chaired by Chief Justice Warren E. Burger.
- Principal civic education program of the federal Constitution's bicentennial celebration.
- Congress continued the program through the U.S. Department of Education as an authorized program of ESEA.
- Innovative political history classroom curriculum at the upper elementary, middle, and high school level.

# Warren E. Burger

**Chief Justice, 1969-1986**



**1987-1991 200<sup>th</sup>**

**Celebrations across the US**

“The lessons in this book are designed to give you, the next generation of American citizens, an understanding of the background, creation, and subsequent history of the unique system of government brought into being by our Constitution”

# What is Civic Education?

---

It is an organized and systematic approach to teach the content knowledge, skills (intellectual & participatory), and dispositions (civility) of government at the local, state, and national level.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY

# Center for Civic Education

---

- National Standards of Civics/Government
- Annual conferences for district coordinators
- Local, state, national simulated congressional hearings
- Framework for the National Assessment of Education Progress, Civics (4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grades)
- Professional Civics Community
- International Civitas Programs

# The Network of Civic Educators

---

- Beginning in 1986 sets of We the People textbooks were distributed to every upper elementary, middle, and high school teacher through their congressional districts (25 sets of books at each grade level).
- District congressional and state coordinators provided professional development and support.

# Two Flagship Projects

---

- We the People...the Citizen and the Constitution (program, curriculum, and simulated congressional hearings at elementary, middle and high school levels [We the People - civiced.org](http://civiced.org))
- Project Citizen in the Community...middle & high school [Project Citizen - civiced.org](http://civiced.org)

# What does the Research Indicate?

---



Research and Evaluation  
- We the People -  
civiced.org



# Providing PD & Resources

---

- Professional Development - civiced.org

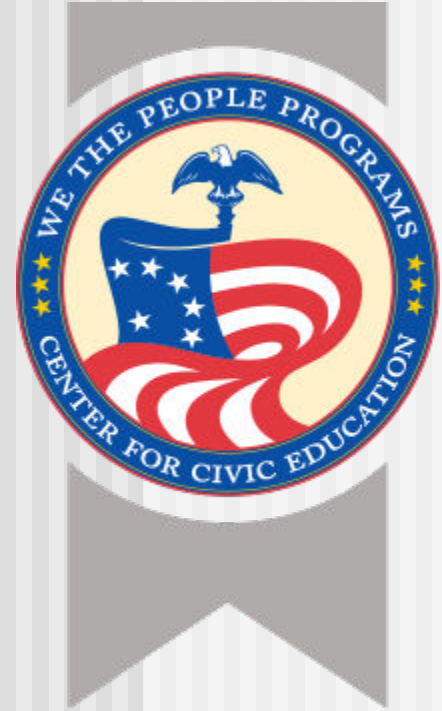
James Madison Legacy Project Summer Institute, June 24<sup>th</sup> to June 28<sup>th</sup> (middle & high school teachers)

Civics Empowers All Students Summer Institute, July 29<sup>th</sup> to August 2<sup>nd</sup> (elementary & middle school teachers)

# We the People

The Citizen and the Constitution

---



[We the People - civiced.org](http://civiced.org)

# We the People in Howard County Simulated Congressional Hearings (SCH)

---

- [Simulated Congressional Hearings SCH trailer take 1 \(youtube.com\)](#)

Consider judging at one of the 42 elementary schools this spring

[Kimberly\\_Eggborn@hcpss.org](mailto:Kimberly_Eggborn@hcpss.org)

[Reichardt@civiced.org](mailto:Reichardt@civiced.org)

# What is Project Citizen?

---

- Education for democratic citizenship
- Teaches students to monitor and influence public policy
- Interdisciplinary instructional program for adolescents
  - Focuses on state and local government
  - Applies learning to real world issues
  - Uses cooperative learning
  - Serves as a model performance assessment

# **Civics in Action: Connecting Project Citizen & Service Learning**

# What is MD Student Service Learning?

---

- Service-Learning is a teaching method that combines meaningful service to the community with curriculum-based learning
- Students improve their academic skills by applying what they have learned in school to the real world;
- A critical part of service-learning is reflecting on their experience to reinforce the link between school and their service

# What are the Components of Service-Learning?

---

- All service-learning must include Preparation, Action, and Reflection
- Action can either be Direct Service, Indirect Service, Advocacy
- Reflection is the final step in both Service-Learning and Project Citizen and can and should be done in small groups and individually

# What are the Goals of Project Citizen?

---

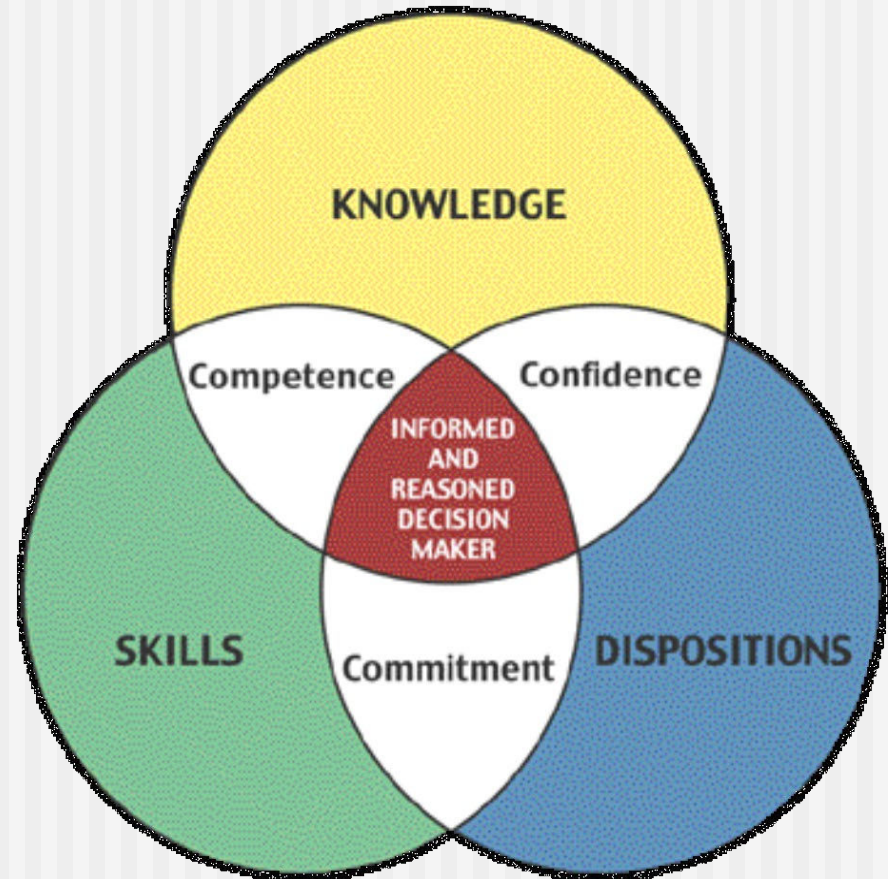
The primary goal of Project Citizen is to develop in students a commitment to active citizenship and governance by

- providing the knowledge and skills required for effective citizenship
- providing practical experience designed to foster a sense of competence and efficacy
- developing an understanding of the importance of citizen participation



# What are the Educational Outcomes of Project Citizen?

- Civic Knowledge
- Civic Skills
  - Intellectual
  - Participatory
- Civic Dispositions
  - Democratic values and principles
  - Reasoned commitment



# What are the Advocacy Goals of Service-Learning and Project Citizen?

---

- The goals of these are to increase public awareness, support, and engagement for our democratic society
- Other projects in the advocacy category prepare students to become leaders in their civil society
- Project recommends a public policy review, revision, or addition
- Both begin with an assessment of the community, conducts research, does either the direct, indirect, or advocacy component and then reflects

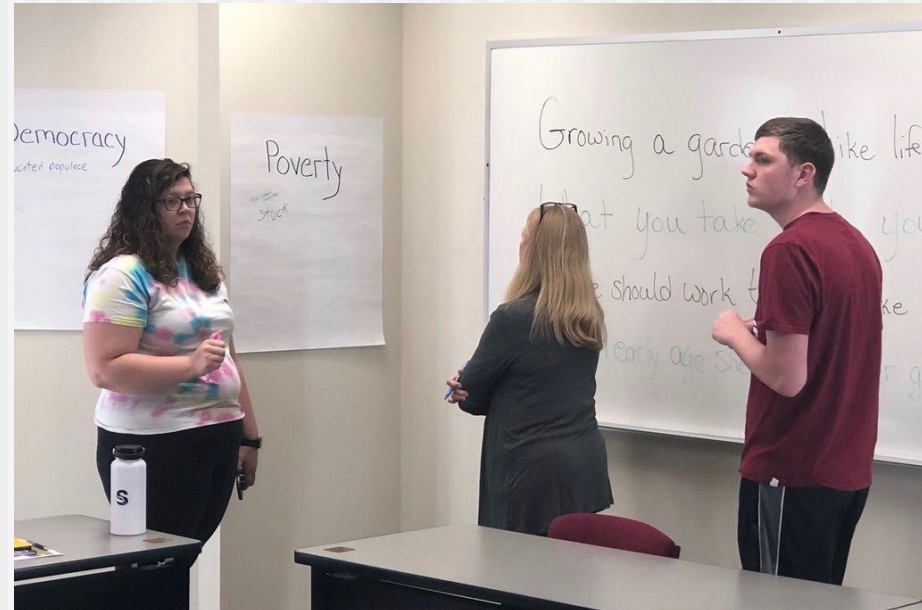
# Maryland's 7 Best Practices or Service-Learning

---

- Meet a Recognized Need in the Community
- Achieve Curricular Objectives through Service-Learning
- Reflect Throughout Service-Learning Experiences
- Develop Student Responsibility
- Establish Community Partnerships
- Plan Ahead for Service-Learning
- Equip Students with Knowledge & Skills Needed to Serve

# Service-Learning Connects to Civic Engagement?

- After assessing the needs of the community, Dorchester HS students agreed to research voter apathy and related issues. Students designed and developed posters to be placed in the community to encourage the adult population to participate in voting



# Service-Learning Connects to Civic Engagement

- Talbot County students examined community needs, chose an issue, and worked in small groups to research their topics. Students decided to develop PSAs for the public good of their community



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

# Service-Learning Connects to Project Citizen

---

- Both programs assess the needs of the community and focus on one topic project a year
- Both programs are student-focused involving civic action (direct or indirect) and can include advocacy
- Project Citizen involves not just action but a recommended policy

# What are the Instructional Advantages of Project Citizen and Service-Learning?

---

- Students cooperate with peers in group settings
- Students work with clear, attainable goals
- Students evaluate their own progress through self-assessment
- Students benefit from the involvement of parents and other community members

***How can we connect these two programs to the Governor's new Service Year Initiative?***

## May 2024 Research Impact: Civics and ELA/Literacy - civiced.org

- Knowledge growth was significantly greater for Project Citizen students than for students who took a traditional civics, social studies, American government, or American history class.
- Project Citizen teachers placed significantly more emphasis on civic dispositions in their classes after participating in the professional development program.
- The number of teachers who focused a great deal on civic skills increased from 40% to 73% in Year 1, from 57% to 71% in Year 2, and from 22% to 47% in Year 3.
- The percentage of high school students who were very likely to turn out in elections increased from 69% to 72% in Year 1, from 63% to 69% in Year 2, and from 66% to 76% in Year 3.



# Key Findings

---

- Students believe they can make a difference in their communities
- Students develop better media literacy skills
- Students develop greater understanding of public policy
- Students develop greater understanding of challenges facing policy makers
- Students learn how their government works

# Key Findings

---

- Students develop a commitment to active citizenship
- Students become involved in their communities
- Students learn about specific community problems
- Students learn to work in groups
- Students develop important research and communication skills

# Timeline of Social Studies & Civic Education Initiatives in the Nation and Maryland

---

- 1987 Bicentennial Civic Education Movement
- 1992 Implementation of the Service-Learning Requirement beginning with the graduation class of 1997
- 1992 Maryland State Performance Assessment Program (Social Studies testing in grades, at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade)
- 1998 Maryland High School Assessment, Government
- 1998 Development of the mdk12.org website
- 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)
- 2002 The Elimination of Maryland State Assessment Program (MSPAP)
- 2002 Bridge to Excellence Act established by the Thornton Commission (Master planning process requirement for all LEAs)
- 2003-2006 Congressional Conference on Civic Education (all 50 states)
- 2000 Social Studies Content Standards adopted
- 2006 Voluntary Social Studies Curriculum accepted into COMAR
- 2006 SB47 Task Force to Convene a Summit in Civic Literacy in Maryland

# Timeline of Social Studies & Civic Education Initiatives in the Nation and Maryland

---

- 2005-2006 Research gathered by Francene Engel (MD “The Decline in Civics & Social Studies”)
- 2010 Social Studies Task Force Report published
- 2010 Voluntary State Curriculum is changed to State Curriculum (SC), including social studies and civics
- 2014 College, Career, & Civic Life (C3): Framework for Social Studies is published nationally
- 2015 MSDE uses C3 to update their SC
- 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- 2016 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)
- 2018 Maryland Comprehension Assessment Program (MCAP)
- 2017 The State of Maryland’s Civic Education: Maryland’s Architecture Symposium
- 2019 Social Studies mdk12.org is removed from state website
- 2021 Education for American Democracy: Roadmap for History and Civics is published
- 2021 The Blueprint: A 13 Year Plan for Investment and Opportunity for all Students (Kirwin Commission)

# Check it out!

---

- [Maryland Social Studies Task Force Report | Social Studies](#)

# Recommendations:

---

- Say, yes to civic education initiatives
- Involve your partners & schools
- Connect with state-wide incentives
- Affect civic & social studies policy decisions (civic seal & mandated elementary time in the classroom)
- Embrace teaching the Constitution & Bill of Rights
- Be a Lafayette