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The State of Civic Education in Massachusetts

A Report Prepared for the Massachusetts
Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education

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Executive Summary

PURPOSE

Civic education in Massachusetts experienced a landmark shift in 2018. The approved [2018 History and Social Science \(HSS\) Framework](#) increases emphasis on civics across all grade levels Pre-K through 12 and requires an 8th grade civics course focused on United States and Massachusetts government and civic life. [Chapter 296 of the Acts of 2018](#) (An Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement) requires that all public schools serving 8th grade students and all public high schools engage students in at least one student-led civics project. The new law provides some money for the mandate by establishing a Civics Project Trust Fund to support underserved communities in the development and implementation of the 2018 HSS Framework, student-led civics projects, and civics professional development (PD) opportunities. The subsequent [Civics Project Guidebook](#), which the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) originally released in October 2019, emphasizes key defining components of student-led projects and project outcomes aligned to the Framework.

The 2018 HSS Framework was expected to be implemented in the 2019–2020 school year, and the student-led civics project requirement was expected to be implemented in the 2020–2021 school year. The purpose of this report is to answer the following questions:

- » What is the current *awareness and understanding* of Massachusetts K–12 educators and school and district decision-makers of the new civics requirements?
- » What is the current *spread and depth of implementation* among K–12 teachers of the content and pedagogical practices that the 2018 HSS Framework and civics policies espouse?
- » Is there any *systematic variation* in civics policy knowledge and civic education implementation based upon educators' geographic location, context, and types of students they serve (i.e., economically disadvantaged, English learners, grade levels taught, or resources available to support implementation of instructional reforms)?

METHODS

We conducted a sequential explanatory mixed methods design, whereby we collected and analyzed quantitative survey data and used survey responses to recruit and select interview participants to further explain and illuminate nuances in the quantitative findings. First, we created, disseminated, and analyzed surveys from K–12 classroom teachers ($n = 580$) and school and district decision-makers ($n = 113$) across Massachusetts in June of 2020. Our stratified sample represented educators working in districts across different regions of Massachusetts (northeast, southeast, central, and west) and working in districts with low and high proportions of economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and racially diverse student populations.

We interviewed 48 participants from the pool of teachers and school administrators who completed the surveys and expressed interest in participating in interviews. Interviewees represented elementary and secondary school educators across the Commonwealth with differing

levels of experience teaching civics. Themes that emerged from the interview data were triangulated with the quantitative data to corroborate emerging findings.

KEY FINDINGS

We found both an overall commitment to civic principles and practices among the educators surveyed across Massachusetts as well as variability in awareness of the civic policies and the depth with which civic practices are currently implemented. We also found marked differences between middle and high school and elementary school teachers in our sample. As compared to middle and high school teachers, elementary teachers were less aware and less likely to implement the elements of the Framework fully and reported lower confidence about teaching civics. Across teachers of all grade levels, participating in civic-focused PD was significantly and positively associated with educator reports of civic policy knowledge and civic teaching practices aligned with the 2018 HSS Framework.

Awareness and Understanding of New Civic Education Policies

- » Ninety-six percent of surveyed educators were aware of the revised 2018 HSS Framework, with varying depth of understanding of how it impacts their practices. Of those who reported any level of awareness, only 44% reported knowing how they would impact their instruction, 32% reported familiarity with standards and principles but not with how it would impact their instruction, and 20% have heard of the Framework but not the details. Educators reported less awareness of the civics project requirements than they did of the 2018 HSS Framework, with 37% of teacher survey respondents reporting that they have *never* heard of the civics project legislation. Among middle and high school educators, only 22% said they were both familiar with the civics project legislation *and* knew how it would affect their instruction.
- » Middle and high school teachers reported that they were significantly more aware of the 2018 HSS Framework and civics project legislation compared to elementary school teachers.

- » For middle and high school teachers, those who were provided civics PD at least once a year reported statistically significantly higher levels of awareness of the 2018 HSS Framework and civics project legislation compared to those who were provided civics PD from their school or district less than once a year.
- » Awareness of the HSS Framework and civics project legislation did not significantly differ based on the regions or the district-level demographics of students in the districts in which teachers worked.

Breadth and Depth of Civic Education Implementation

- » At the time of this research, teachers had begun to shift their teaching practices to align with the 2018 HSS Framework and civics project legislation to increase student access to civics. More changes involved overall curriculum and course changes rather than the introduction of student-led civics projects. However, student access was not uniform within or across schools and districts. For example, qualitative interviews revealed a trend in which students missed social studies because they were scheduled to be pulled out for interventions (e.g., IEP services) during social studies instruction.
- » Middle and high school teachers generally reported incorporating more civics content, inquiry and informed action, real-world learning, and democratic classroom practices than elementary school teachers. Qualitative findings further indicated that many teachers reported not following the entire inquiry arc process (i.e., developing inquiries about civic life, seeking and analyzing relevant information and research using discipline specific knowledge and tools, and communicating conclusions and taking informed action) and the civics project guidelines.
- » Middle and high school teachers reported more familiarity with and confidence about using the 2018 HSS Framework than they did with facilitating student-led civics projects, according to survey and interview data.

- » The majority of elementary school teachers surveyed did not dedicate substantial time to social studies. Only 8% taught it four or more hours a week on average; and 38% taught it only two to three hours per week. Twenty-eight percent did not have *any* specific time dedicated to social studies and instead integrate social studies into English language arts.
- » Elementary school teachers in districts with a high proportion of economically disadvantaged students or in districts with a high proportion of English learners relative to the state population were more likely to report not having time dedicated to social studies. In addition, qualitative data uncovered instances of within-school disparities: some students who received intervention services related to IEPs or ESL instruction did so during social studies classes.
- » Regarding resources that support overall civics implementation, the greatest barriers to implementation reported by teachers included not having enough time to plan and teach, having too much pressure to teach other content, and not having enough civics resources. The majority of teachers reported they were not receiving ongoing PD focused on civics from their school or their district.
 - » Forty-two percent reported having never been offered civics PD opportunities and only 18% reported being offered learning opportunities focused on civics more than once a year. Interview data corroborated a lack of district-level provision of civics PD.

Predictors of Civic Teaching Competency

- » Confidence in teaching civics was the strongest and most constant positive predictor of the following factors of civic teaching competency that teachers self-reported: 1) government and institutions content; 2) inquiry; 3) real-world learning; 4) interdisciplinary learning; 5) culturally responsive pedagogy; 6) discussions; and 7) student-centered classroom climate.

- » Access to professional learning opportunities was significantly and positively associated with teachers' confidence in teaching civics.
- » District per-pupil expenditures were positively and significantly associated with civic teaching competency across multiple scales for elementary and secondary teachers. District-level student demographic data, including the proportion of economically disadvantaged students, proportion of English learners, and racial diversity, were *not* significantly associated with differences in teacher reports of civic teaching competency.
- » Qualitative data suggested that, in many instances, teachers' self-initiative led them to engage in civics professional learning opportunities. Further, teachers reported feeling that they had to do most of the legwork to seek out civics resources and opportunities.

TEACHER REPORTS OF SUPPORTS NEEDED TO IMPROVE CIVICS INSTRUCTION

Through qualitative interview data and open-ended survey responses, Massachusetts teachers expressed the following needs to effectively teach civics:

- » PD that: 1) allows for collaboration across schools and districts on the 2018 HSS Framework and civics project legislation; and 2) provides teachers with both support with how to use available civic education resources and time to collaboratively plan to use these resources.
- » Framework-aligned, curated curricular and instructional resources that are appropriate for elementary school and 8th grade.
- » Support for student-led civics projects, including: 1) more teacher training on how to implement these projects; and 2) civics project exemplars across a range of school contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, we make the following recommendations.

1. Continue to prioritize equitable implementation of the 2018 HSS Framework and the civics project legislation.

Our findings suggest that intentional investment of civics resources in districts with a greater proportion of students from historically underserved groups may have kept disparities at bay. However, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic may compromise these positive signs. Commitment to and benchmarking of the extent to which the HSS Framework and student-led civics projects are implemented equitably across districts with students of varying economic disadvantage, racial/ethnic identity, and English learner status should remain of highest priority.

2. Continue to invest in and design for equitable PD and pre-service training infrastructure that is aligned directly to the [HSS Framework](#) and [Civics Project Guidebook](#), allowing for collaboration and sharing of best practices across schools and districts, and that is sustained across a school year or multiple school years.

Civics PD should not be a once-a-year event but sustained across a school year or multiple school years. It should strive toward forming a culture and infrastructure for continuous improvement, starting with *why* the HSS Framework is important and then *how* and *what* should be taught, using formative and summative assessment as a tool for improvement, making explicit connections to the HSS Framework, and allowing room for differentiation by educators' prior experience. We further recommend that civics PD be widely accessible and designed for equity, meaning it should be accessible even under the most chal-

lenging circumstances (such as pandemic-forced changes in in-person learning, working with students with multiple needs, and logistic challenges related to convening teachers who are already tasked with multiple responsibilities), and provide opportunities for collaboration and sharing of best practices across schools and districts.

Given the lack of programmatic focus on civics in Massachusetts teacher education programs, we also recommend a renewed focus in bolstering civic education for preservice teacher training in order to lay a strong foundation in civic education across the teacher pipeline.

3. Invest in developing resources and professional learning opportunities specifically designed for elementary educators and designed to address gaps for middle and high school educators.

Our study findings clearly point to the fact that *elementary* educators have lacked access to professional learning and are less prepared to teach civics the way the 2018 HSS Framework mandates. PD opportunities and civics classroom resources should be created for elementary school teachers—with a particular emphasis on civics content, controversial issue discussions, and the inquiry arc, which our findings pointed to as being the areas most in need of growth. For *middle and high school* teachers, PD should target the practicalities of student-led civics projects along with the underlying *whys* (e.g., rationale, research supporting the practice, how it would improve students' learning) and principles of the HSS Framework to help facilitate greater depth of practice.

4. Provide elementary school teachers with more time to teach social studies by carving out time in the existing schedule, more classroom resources to teach civics, and

more PD on how to integrate civics across subject areas.

Our study shows that it is fairly common for elementary teachers to report incorporating civics into other activities, with 28% having no dedicated social studies instruction time in a week. Research continues to build evidence that content-rich instruction in ELA builds content knowledge as well as reading and writing skills, opening up the potential for integrating rigorous content and inquiry-based instruction in ELA and social studies. Long-term time and resource investment should be made to support all elementary grade educators in building capacity to develop deep inquiry skills and social studies content expertise across the curriculum, including targeted elementary school PD that focuses on how to integrate civics content and inquiry into English language arts.

5. Educate school and district administrators on the requirements of both the 2018 HSS Framework and student-led civics projects and best practices in supporting continuous educator development in civics instruction.

District- and school-level administrator support is paramount in successful implementation of the 2018 HSS Framework and civics project legislation, yet educators in our sample reported wide variation in the extent to which they felt supported by administrators in their school or district. Research from other states suggests the impor-

tance of directing resources towards educating school and district administrators about the intent of new civic education laws and new social studies frameworks or standards. Resources might include specific ways in which administrators can support civic education in their districts (e.g., a parent-ready one-page document explaining what the student-led civics projects are and why they are important for students) and training on how the 2018 legislation and HSS Framework can support overall school culture and success.

6. Establish creative accountability and incentives mechanisms that bolster the value of civic education.

Currently, Massachusetts does not have a standardized civics test. While testing is what many people associate with the term “accountability,” there are alternative ways the civics community in the United States has created accountability and incentives to ensure that students receive an excellent civic education. These strategies include questions on the knowledge of mandated practices in teacher licensure exams, tying civics teaching strategies to teacher evaluation frameworks, and creating a student civics accomplishment badge. These strategies should be shared and borrowed when there are parallel mechanisms and opportunities in Massachusetts, and widely communicated across the Commonwealth to encourage aligned implementation to the 2018 HSS Framework and Civics Project Guidebook.

Introduction

Civics education in Massachusetts experienced a landmark shift in 2018. The approved 2018 HSS Framework increases emphasis on civics across all grade levels (Pre-K through 12) and requires an 8th grade civics course focused on United States and Massachusetts government and civic life. [Chapter 296 of the Acts of 2018 \(An Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement\)](#) provides money and mandates for civic education. The 2018 law established a Civics Project Trust Fund to support underserved communities in the development and implementation of the 2018 HSS Framework, student-led civics projects, and civics PD opportunities for educators. The law also requires that all public schools serving 8th grade students and all public high schools provide students with at least one opportunity to engage in a student-led civics project, creates a Commonwealth civics challenge to showcase student-led civics projects, and calls upon the state secretary in consultation with the commissioner of elementary and secondary education and the board of elementary and secondary education to establish a non-partisan high school voter challenge program. With the 2018 HSS Framework expected to be implemented in the 2019–2020 school year and the implementation of the student-led civics project requirement to start in the 2020–2021 school year, the purpose of this report is to answer the following research questions:

- » What is the current *awareness and understanding* of Massachusetts K–12 educators and school and district decision-makers of the new civic requirements?
- » What is the current *spread and depth of implementation* among K–12 teachers of the content and pedagogical practices that the 2018 HSS Framework and civics policies espouse?
- » Is there any *systematic variation* in civics policy knowledge and civic education implementation based upon educators' geographic location, the types of students they serve (i.e., economically disadvantaged, English learners), the grades they teach, and/or the resources available that support implementation of instructional reforms?

We begin by providing a brief summary of the history of civic education and related reforms in Massachusetts and an overview of the civic education content and pedagogy stipulated in the 2018 HSS Framework and civic engagement law. Then, after describing our methods, we present findings on: 1) awareness and understanding of the 2018 civic education reforms; 2) breadth and depth of the implementation of civic education practices; 3) predictors of civic teaching competency; and 4) supports that educators report they need to effectively teach civics in ways that aligns to the HSS Framework and student-led civics project requirements. We conclude with a list of recommendations to support equitable awareness and implementation of civic education as described in the 2018 HSS Framework for Pre-K through 12 and across the diverse array of schools and districts across the Commonwealth.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN MASSACHUSETTS: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Acts of 1920 mandated that all pupils shall be required to take one or more courses in civics and American history (Berkman, 2020). Without accountability mechanisms, that mandate, established 100 years ago, was largely unfulfilled. [The History and Social Studies Curriculum Framework](#) was first developed and adopted in 1997. For the first time, standards for civics,

along with history, geography, and economics were provided under the 1997 Framework. [The 2003 revision of the Framework](#) included civics at different grade levels and a 12th grade American Government elective. In 2003, an MCAS assessment for history and social science was created, and those tests were piloted in grades five, seven, 10, and 11 in 2007 and 2008. However, when the Great Recession hit, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education suspended the MCAS history and social science assessment (Berkman, 2020).

In 2011, the Massachusetts Legislature convened a Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning. This Commission was charged with studying the status of civic education in Massachusetts and making [a final report](#) on its deliberations and findings. Commission members included legislative, administrative, educational, and special interest group leaders and officials. In 2012, the Commission presented its recommendations, which included implementing civics requirements throughout K–12 education, developing a model curriculum that aligned with the history and social science curriculum framework, and providing sufficient funding for an MCAS history test (Special Commission on Civic Engagement and Learning, 2012).

In 2015, DESE began the multi-year process of revising the 2003 framework. This process included integrating feedback from practitioners and community members through various touchpoints. DESE surveyed educators and the general public on areas of the existing framework that should be attended to and created an advisory panel of Pre-K through 12 educators, scholars, and civic education content experts to review the 2003 framework, recommend changes, and help to draft the new framework (Berkman, 2020). During the drafting process, DESE conducted a follow-up survey of educators and the general public on the proposed revisions and also engaged a group of scholars with expertise in a range of history and social studies disciplines to review the revised framework for accuracy and to ensure that it reflects the latest scholarship.

By 2017, a broad coalition successfully advocated for the passage of SB2621: An Act to Promote Civic Engagement. This coalition included a bipartisan, intergenerational coalition of elected and appointed government officials and the formation of the Massachusetts Civic Learning Coali-

tion (MCLC), an advocacy group of leading civic education organizations based in Massachusetts and led by iCivics, Generation Citizen, and the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation. Today, the MCLC includes over 30 organizations, the majority of which provide in-school and out-of-school civic learning opportunities and resources for school-aged youth and educators. The new state civics law, which has set a new standard for such laws nationally, includes provisions for funding to support implementation of the legislation, a new requirement for schools to engage students in civics projects in 8th grade and high school, and a number of other initiatives to support high quality, equitable civic education.

THE NEW CIVIC EDUCATION APPROACH IN MASSACHUSETTS

The 2018 HSS Framework’s vision for civics is that students will be prepared to make informed civic choices; assume responsibility for strengthening equality, justice, and liberty in the United States and around the world; and demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The 2018 HSS Framework also makes explicit that civic learning involves inquiry-based pedagogy, valuing diverse perspectives, and social-emotional development.

In addition to the elevation of civics through the updated history and social science standards, [Chapter 296 of the Acts of 2018 \(An Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement\)](#) requires that all public schools serving 8th grade students and all public high schools have students engage in at least one student-led civics project. The subsequent [Civics Project Guidebook](#), which the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released in October 2019, emphasizes key defining components of student-led projects (see Figure 1) and six project stages. These stages include: 1) examining self and community; 2) identifying an issue; 3) research and investigation; 4) developing an action plan; 5) taking action; and 6) reflecting and showcasing. The Civics Project Guidebook also identifies a range of project outcomes aligned with the Framework, including: building civic content knowledge; developing and practicing civic skills, dispositions, and self-efficacy; conducting inquiries and determining next steps; developing and practicing literacy and media literacy; and social-emotional learning.

Table 1 *Massachusetts 2018 History and Social Science Framework Practice Standards*

Standard	Definition
<i>Practice Standard 1</i>	Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic knowledge includes the core knowledge in the Content Standards relating to civics and government, economics, geography, and history. • Civic intellectual skills encompass knowing how to identify, assess, interpret, describe, analyze, and explain matters of concern in civic life. • Civic participatory skills encompass knowing how to make and support arguments, use the political process to communicate with elected officials and representatives of government, and plan strategically for civic change. • Civic dispositions encompass values, virtues, and behaviors, such as respect for others, commitment to equality, capacity for listening, and capacity for communicating in ways accessible to others.
<i>Practice Standard 2</i>	Develop focused questions or problem statements and conduct inquiries.
<i>Practice Standard 3</i>	Organize information and data from multiple primary and secondary sources.
<i>Practice Standard 4</i>	Analyze the purpose and point of view of each source; distinguish opinion from fact.
<i>Practice Standard 5</i>	Evaluate the credibility, accuracy, and relevance of each source.
<i>Practice Standard 6</i>	Argue or explain conclusions, using valid reasoning and evidence.
<i>Practice Standard 7</i>	Determine next steps and take informed action, as appropriate.

Figure 1 *Student-led Civics Projects Defining Components*

Student-led Civics Projects Defining Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student led • Project based • Real-world • Rooted in understanding systems impact • Goal driven • Inquiry based • Non-partisan • Process focused • Action based

The 2018 HSS Framework emphasizes increasing access to civics across the Pre-K through 12 pipeline and civics learning opportunities that are meaningful to students. For example, it emphasizes “demonstrating civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions” as a practice standard for Pre-K through 12, establishes civics content area standards at each grade level, and requires a year-long 8th grade civics course focused on United States and Massachusetts government and civic life. The Framework also emphasizes social-emotional learning and elements of culturally responsive teaching. The specific civics content and pedagogy that the Framework and student-led civics project promotes

encapsulates best practices that civic education leaders have espoused over the past decade¹ and are described below.

Civics Content

The Framework emphasizes the teaching of civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions, placing it as the first practice standard. In addition, the first guiding principle highlights the legacy of democratic government, including the principles and philosophy of government in the U.S. founding documents; democratic government at local, state, and national levels; understanding how liberty, equality, justice, and human and civil rights shape the United States; achievements and challenges of maintaining democratic government; ways to act as citizens to influence democratic government systems; and the importance of respectful public discourse and dissent in democracies. The 2018 HSS Framework also mandates that civic content related to government institutions and civic principles be taught from Pre-K through high school, and provides age-appropriate content standards for civics at each grade level.

Inquiry and Informed Action

The practice standards in the 2018 HSS Framework and student-led civics project stages delineated in the Civics Project Guidebook follow an inquiry arc resulting in evidence-informed action. The practice standards ask students to: develop focused questions or problem statements to conduct inquiries (PS2); organize, analyze, and evaluate information and data from multiple primary and secondary sources (PS3, PS4, and PS5); argue or explain conclusions, using valid reasoning and evidence (PS6); and determine next steps and take informed action (PS7). The six stages of the student-led civics project similarly ask students to examine self and identity, identify an issue, research and investigate, develop an action plan, and take action.

Real-world and Interdisciplinary Learning

Real-world and interdisciplinary learning are key principles of the 2018 HSS Framework. Guiding Principle 5 states, “An ef-

¹ See, for example, *College, Career & Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies, Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Missions of School* (2011), and *The Republic is (Still) at Risk—and Civics is Part of the Solution* (2017).

fective history and social science education integrates knowledge from many fields of study.” Guiding Principle 6 states, “An effective history and social science education incorporates the study of current events and news/media literacy.” Likewise, the Civics Project Guidebook defines the projects in which 8th grade and high school students engage as “real world,” wherein students interact with community stakeholders or real-world decision-makers on a specific impact that students desire to make outside of the classroom. As Chapter 296 purports, one of the purposes of the civics projects is to “demonstrate an understanding of the connections between federal, state and local policies, *including issues that may impact the student’s school or community*” (italics added for emphasis).

Democratic and Supportive Classroom Climate

Principles of democratic engagement are found in the law and emphasized throughout the 2018 HSS Framework. As written in the 2018 HSS Framework preamble, students who will continue the legacy of democratic government “are prepared to discuss complex and controversial issues and ideas with people of different views, learning to speak with clarity and respectfulness” (p. 12). Chapter 296 outlines the purpose of student-led civics projects: to “promote student’s ability to (i) analyze complex issues; (ii) consider differing points of view; (iii) reason, make logical arguments and support claims using valid evidence; [and] (iv) engage in civil discourse with those who hold opposing positions.” In addition to supporting democratic dialogue, civic education is also fosters a classroom climate that supports students’ social and emotional needs. This mandate is made explicit in the 2018 HSS Guiding Principle 10, which states “An effective history and social science education develops social and emotional skills.”

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

A core of the 2018 HSS Framework’s guiding principles and the Civics Project Guidebook is acknowledging and incorporating into civic teaching practices the rich backgrounds of the diverse students throughout the Commonwealth. The HSS Framework states that effective history and social science education incorporates diverse perspectives, “involves discussions of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, gender identity,

sexual orientation, and other characteristics,” “challenges students to value their own heritage,” and “encourag[es] honest and informed academic discussions about prejudice, racism, and bigotry in the past and present.”

These types of student-centered approaches to teaching that create a classroom climate that attends to students’ emotions, interests, and identities are increasingly being recognized as being general best practices for teaching. Social-emotional learning is associated with increased academic achievement (Durlak et al., 2011). Culturally responsive teaching practices that incorporate the lived experiences of students into instruction are associated with increased student engagement and educational outcomes (Cohen, Kahne, & Marshall, 2018; Gay, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Rubin & Hayes, 2010).

RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The establishment of the Civics Trust Fund, which allocates funding for training for implementing the student-led civics projects and HSS Framework, provides an important lever

to drive changes to teachers’ civics instructional practices. Research on the implementation of instructional reforms finds that participating in professional learning opportunities aligned to policies that target content and pedagogy differentiate those teachers who changed their practices to align with reforms (Cohen & Hill, 2001). Bereft of such opportunities to make sense of new reforms in ways that align with the intended practices, educators tend to continue their old ways of teaching and “coopt” policies to fit under the umbrella of what they already understand and do (McLaughlin, 1990; Spillane et al., 2002).

In sum, the Commonwealth’s comprehensive civic education reforms address strong practices for civics teaching and learning that attend to content, inquiry, and classroom climate, address the experiences, interests, and needs of students from diverse backgrounds, and provide resources to facilitate implementation. In this report, we unpack the extent to which these approaches and resources for civics learning currently exist across Massachusetts.

Methods

To understand awareness of the new civic policies and the breadth and depth of comprehensive civic education practices across Massachusetts, we conducted a sequential explanatory mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). That is, we collected and analyzed quantitative survey data and recruited interview participants by asking if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Interviews also allowed us to probe deeper into the quantitative survey findings to better understand the results and uncover nuances in educators' perceptions of civic education and detailed descriptions of their civic teaching practices.

Surveys were distributed and interviews were conducted in June and early July of 2020. We sought a stratified sample (described further in the data collection and analysis section below) of educators from the major geographic regions in the Commonwealth and from districts with low, medium, and high proportions of economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and student racial diversity.²

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Quantitative Measures

The research team developed surveys for Massachusetts Pre-K–12 classroom teachers and school and district decision-makers. (see Appendix G and H.) The survey questions aligned with Chapter 296 of the Acts of 2018 (An Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement) as well as the content and pedagogy of the HSS Framework and Civics Project Guidebook. We developed the Massachusetts Teacher Civics Survey and included similar questions on district administrator and school principal surveys. For the teacher survey, items were developed in part based on a 2017 mixed-method study that included a teacher and administrator survey as well as 24 interviews of educators that were conducted by CIRCLE at Tufts University,³ the 2016–2018 surveys of Illinois social studies teachers used by CIRCLE, and a 2012 CIRCLE national survey of civics and American government high school teachers.⁴ While these pre-existing surveys provided a number of items that aligned with the 2018 in the Framework, the remainder of items for the present survey were developed by reviewing recent literature on culturally responsive instructional and assessment practices (e.g., Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011; National Council of Social Studies National Standards for the Preparation of Social Studies Teachers, 2017), and incorporation of student voice and expertise in classrooms (e.g., Cohen et al., 2018; Hammond, 2014). We developed a crosswalk to show that the survey items, together, covered the 2018 HSS Framework preamble and practice standards, and the

² This study was initially designed as the first part of a three-year effort to measure changes in civic teaching practices after the passage of the 2018 Act to Enhance Civic Engagement and approval of the 2018 HSS Framework in Massachusetts. The first wave of data collection, reported here, was designed to capture baseline practices of civics and social studies teachers and develop and pilot the teacher survey as a measurement of civic teaching competency for elementary and secondary grades. Due the COVID-19 pandemic, schools across Massachusetts were closed in mid-March of 2020. Teachers, school leaders, and district administrators faced unprecedented uncertainty and stress during the time in which our data was collected; therefore, we faced challenges in recruiting a representative sample.

³ The 2017 CIRCLE study of civics was supported by the Fireman Family Charitable Trust. The study took place while the Massachusetts HSS Framework was being reviewed by the committees and then opened for public comments. A DESE Humanities department staff member was consulted but this study was not a formal partnership with DESE.

⁴ Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge (2013). All together now: collaboration and innovation for youth engagement: the report of the Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge. Medford, MA: Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University. Retrieved December 12, 2020, from www.civicyouth.org/about-circle/commission-on-youth-voting-civic-knowledge.

Civics Project Guidebook. Whenever possible, we designed a scale to include items of varying “difficulty,” which in this case is, in this case, is estimated levels of teacher competencies needed. Once the base instruments were drafted, we reviewed and determined which items, if any, needed different versions for “elementary grades” and “middle and high-school grades” by examining the grade-specific content standards in the 2018 HSS Framework.

Quantitative Sample

We sought a stratified sample representing district administrators, school leaders, and teachers working in districts across different regions of the state, which we classified as the northeast (Essex, Middlesex, and Suffolk counties), southeast (Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Norfolk, and Plymouth counties), central (Worcester county), and west (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties). We also sought a stratified sample of educators in districts with varying levels of economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and racially diverse student populations, and in districts that received and did not receive Civics Teaching and Learning Grants awarded by DESE in January 2020.

To recruit participants, DESE shared the survey with all social studies curriculum directors in the state via their weekly e-newsletter, asking them to complete a survey and distribute the teacher survey to all elementary school teachers and middle and high school teachers teaching civics, government, or social studies. To reach teachers through alternative means, we also sent personalized emails to organizations that work directly with social studies, civics, and government teachers across Massachusetts, requesting them to send the survey out to their networks of educators. We also included the invitation in an e-newsletter of the Massachusetts Civic Learning Coalition, with the PI and Co-PI attending the coalition’s meeting to explain the importance of their support in having diverse teacher participation. We also distributed the survey opportunity widely by sending the invitation through the Massachusetts Reading Association monthly newsletter through the Co-PI’s network. We also encouraged potential participants to share the invitation with others with hopes of wide recruitment that represented a cross section of regions and demographics.

After the blanket emails went out, we created a targeted sample list of districts for follow-up, which represented a stratified cross-section of regions, student demographics, and traditional public school districts versus charter school districts. For each district-level student demographic variable, we created bins based upon the distribution curves of students in all Massachusetts districts. We then did targeted recruitment of social studies curriculum directors and principals from a stratified sample of districts with low (below 13%), medium (13–32.3%), high (32.3–60%), and extremely high (above 60%) proportions of economically disadvantaged students; low (below 5%), medium (between 5–10%), and high (above 10%) proportions of students with English learners; and districts with racially diverse (less than 60% White) and not racially diverse (greater than 60% White) student populations.

A total of 580 teachers participated in the Massachusetts Teacher Civics Survey, representing 126 (or 31% of) traditional public and charter school districts in Massachusetts.⁵ Of those, 410 provided demographic information. Our sample of teachers predominantly identified as White (84%), female (86%), and experienced (67% had taught for over 11 years). This roughly matches the overall Massachusetts teacher workforce, where 91.9% of teachers identify as White and 74.4% as female (see [Massachusetts DESE 2018-19 Race/Ethnicity and Gender Staffing Report](#)). Almost all (96%) worked at a public school; 45% taught elementary school, 30% taught in middle school, and 25% taught in high school. (See Appendix D for complete breakdown of the sample’s demographic indicators.)

Educators also represented regions across the state, with 36.4% teaching in the northeast region, 18.5% in the west, 3.2% in central, and 41.1% in the southeast. This breakdown is compared to 45% of the student population in the northeast, 31.7% in the southeast, 13.6% in central, and 12.5% in the west, showing that we did have a lower proportion of teachers in the central part of the state compared to the proportion of students in that region and a higher proportion

⁵ We could not calculate specific yield rates of the actual number of surveys distributed. We do not have information on how many email invitations were sent because we did not have access to the distribution list that DESE or other organizations used nor access of how many additional individuals the initial recipients forwarded the survey to.

of teachers in the southeast compared to the proportion of students in the southeast.

Teachers also worked in districts serving a variety of students. Low-proportion economically disadvantaged districts account for 18.5% of teacher respondents; middle-proportion economically disadvantaged districts for 37.1%; high-proportion economically disadvantaged districts for 36.6%; and extremely high-proportion economically disadvantaged districts for 8.1%. Of the survey respondents, 52% worked in low-proportion English learner districts, 11% in middle-proportion English learner districts, and 35% in high-proportion English learner districts. Thirty-seven percent worked in racially diverse districts. (See Table 2 for a comparison to the state population.)

Overall, our survey sample did reflect a stratified cross section of educators working in varied locations across the state and in districts serving students with a range of demographics. However, compared to state-level student enrollment data, we had a lower proportion of teachers from central Massachusetts and a higher proportion of teachers from southeast Massachusetts compared to the proportion of students in those regions. Furthermore, based upon our outreach efforts to civics-oriented organizations, we imagined that teachers who completed the survey would be more

likely to be more informed about civics compared to the general population of elementary and social studies teachers. Therefore, results should be interpreted cautiously with this in mind.

We also fielded the survey to school and district leaders and administrators who have at least some authority to make curricular and training decisions related to civic education, including school principals and vice principals, district curriculum coordinator or directors, superintendent or assistant superintendent, history or social studies department chairs, and ELA/humanities coaches or specialists. Of those who took the principal and administrator surveys, 113 met these criteria. Decision-makers who responded to the survey represented 77 districts across the state. Forty-nine percent worked in the northeast, 21% worked in the southeast, 20% worked in the west, and 9% worked in central Massachusetts. Nearly all (95%) worked in traditional public school districts, with the other 5% working in public charter schools. Respondents to the decision-maker survey varied by the grade levels with whom they primarily worked, which included elementary school grades (19%), middle school grades (19%), high school grades (36%), or across K–12 (21%). Eighty-eight percent identified as White. Due to the unprecedented school closures during the coronavirus pandemic, our

Table 2 District-level Student Demographics by Teacher Sample and State Population

	Final Teacher Sample (n = 580)	All Massachusetts School Districts
<i>Proportion of economically disadvantaged students</i>		
Low	18.5%	21.1%
Middle	37.1%	42.8%
High	36.3%	28.4%
Extremely High	8.1%	7.7%
<i>Proportion of English learners</i>		
Low	52.9%	65.2%
Middle	11.5%	12.7%
High	35.6%	22.1%
<i>Racially Diverse</i>	37%	29%

final number of decision-makers respondents was too low for robust inferential statistical analyses. Therefore, we used this data for descriptive purposes only.

Quantitative Analysis Techniques

Once the data were cleaned and Item Response Theory (IRT) scales were created (see below), the survey data were merged with DESE administrative data, including with district-level student demographic and expenditure data produced. We examined the IRT scale quality and verified that all IRT scales we created in fact have characteristics of high-quality “ability/competency” scaling, such as high slope value and non-overlapping threshold values in the Polytomous IRT analysis. (See Appendix A; specific item parameters are available upon request).⁶

In preparing for IRT scaling, we conducted exploratory factor analysis (parallel analysis was used to select the number of factors, and a promax rotation was used to determine factor loadings) to identify factor structures and loading for each of the competency domains and calculated Cronbach’s Alpha, which is a measure of internal consistency. We conducted this analysis separately for elementary educator sample and the middle and high school samples because initial descriptive analysis suggested that item distributions may differ meaningfully for elementary teachers than middle and high school teachers. If all of the items in the proposed scale converged on one factor (e.g., the case with content coverage in the middle and high school sample), the scale was moved to IRT modeling. If the proposed scale did not converge on one factor or demonstrate sufficient internal consistency alpha (e.g., the case with the elementary civic content scale in which items did not vary sufficiently across participants to function well as a scale), the choice was made to move forward only with the items in the factor that had sufficient factor loading and convergence as an IRT scale.⁷ We verified

⁶ While this report is not intended to be a paper on educational measure development, interested readers should refer to resources such as this accessible guide (<https://www.metheval.uni-jena.de/jrt/VisualIRT.pdf>) to IRT scaling and item and scale quality evaluation. Practices described in this guide were used to make determinations that the scales we describe as “valid” and “high quality” in this report.

⁷ Namely in the elementary school sample, three items out of the “content” domain did not converge into the rest of the scale that represented core

that the IRT scales distinguished between those who reported high competency and low competency. However, these scales performed better on the low end of each scale than on high end, which means that the scales were better at distinguishing, in detail, teachers who reported being at the lower end of competency spectrum than they were at distinguishing teachers who reported being at the higher end of distribution. This was true for most measures. Definitions of the resulting IRT scales are in Appendix B.⁸ Overall IRT scores are listed in Appendix C, along with scores disaggregated by district indicators, region, and civics policy familiarity.

Once the IRT scales were examined, we determined that the following IRT scales met the factor structure and IRT scale quality thresholds that permit them to be used as part of the analyses: government and institutions content, inquiry, real-world learning, interdisciplinary learning, discussion-centered climate, culturally responsive pedagogy, teacher confidence, beliefs about civics, and perceived barriers. Each scale’s parameter estimates and internal consistency metrics are presented in Appendix A.⁹

One of the major advantages of IRT scales is that educators’ reports of competency and dispositional characteristics can be compared between and within individuals. To facilitate easy interpretation of the IRT scores, we put all IRT

content. Those three items were “the rights and responsibilities of citizens (especially helping students to understand how they and other individuals can participate) and local government,” “respect and tolerance for people of diverse backgrounds, an understanding of human rights,” and “ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.” While they load strongly on the same idea related to principles of citizenship in a democratic republic, they showed a low Chronbach’s alpha due to a small number of items and low item variability. Because the item loading coefficients were high (i.e., above 0.8), the item responses were aggregated to show the “average” response level across three items. This factor is not considered an IRT scale and should not be used as a measure of competency in this domain. Future research should revise and refine this scale.

⁸ Though the initial development of the IRT scales for teacher civic competency in use of Massachusetts HSS Framework show promising properties, the scale development is incomplete and was curtailed in the initial stage of development because of the unexpected disruption in the study’s three-year plan due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope to continue the scale development work in the near future but the current survey items and scales should be used with some caution.

⁹ When we state that the IRT Scales met the factor structure and quality thresholds, we mean that the initial factor analysis confirmed that each scale represented one factor (as opposed to multiple factors) and that item responses were able to differentiate between “levels” in the target construct.

Theta values into a T-score, in which the median is 50 and standard deviations are 30 points apart. Given this scale, we interpret a five-point difference as meaningful. In order to verify that the differences are in fact statistically significant, we ran additional analyses to verify this approach and heuristics.

Analytic strategies for this study include nonparametric strategies, where Gammas were used for ordinal-by-ordinal scale crosstabs and chi-square for nominal-by-nominal crosstabs. Directional alpha of $p < 0.05$ was used when the research hypotheses clearly suggested a directional outcome (e.g., more PD is associated with greater familiarity with the Civics Project Guidebook), and non-directional (two-tailed) alpha was used when the variables of interest were nominal or did not have clear directional hypotheses. These single-item indicators of interest include, but are not limited to:

1) familiarity with the 2018 HSS Framework, student-led civics project legislation and Civics Project Guidebook; 2) how history and social sciences are incorporated into classroom teaching; and, 3) whether teachers and schools have started to implement the civics projects. For scaled indicators, we used linear regression to understand how teacher reports of each civic competency factor were related to the following: 1) district-level variables (including per-pupil expenditure and proportions of economically disadvantaged students, students of color, and English learners); 2) frequency of access to PD; 3) teachers' reported confidence; 4) 2018 HSS Framework familiarity; 5) civics project familiarity; and 6) perceived barriers. We also tested for a mediating effect of teacher reports of confidence teaching civics, as preliminary analyses suggested that this construct played an important role and had direct correlations with the civic teaching competency scales¹⁰ (See Appendix E for a detailed description of the regression and mediation analyses.)

Data Preparation

For the teacher survey, items that asked about teacher practices, competency, attitudes, or content coverage were first analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and IRT polytomous modeling as the IRT procedure requires that items converge on one construct at a time. EFA was used

¹⁰ All tables of regression and mediation analyses are available upon request.

first to identify constructs that were relevant to the study because they are aligned with the 2018 HSS Framework. These were largely consistent with the initial hypotheses we made with regards to the subscales that appeared in the survey, such as teaching styles that embody culturally responsive pedagogy as well as the use of specific practices and content in the 2018 HSS Framework practice standards and Civics Project Guidebook, such as inquiry-based learning, information and news literacy, and controversial issue discussions. We confirmed some constructs to be unitary while others split into two factors (e.g., content areas were split into two factors as well as some classroom practices). We also found that certain key constructs were composed of different survey items, depending on whether teachers taught elementary grades (K–5) or secondary grades (6–12).

Therefore, we moved on to analyze the identified factors this time through IRT analysis. SAS was used for the initial data preparation and analysis. The final composite scores were calculated as standardized IRT coefficients, with each coefficient indicating the level of competency or maturity in each of the constructs.¹¹ The final sample was 418 teachers who completed sufficient numbers of survey questions to be part of the main analyses. Once the scales were constructed, subsequent analyses were conducted using SPSS Version 26.0.

In order to understand conditions and student populations educators worked with, we asked survey participants to identify the school district they worked in, which we then matched with district-level data. To do so, we imported relevant student population and expenditure data matching with the DESE District ID variable, which allowed us to understand which teachers taught in similar district-level conditions. District-level data included in the analysis were: size of student body; district location; proportion of economically disadvantaged students; proportion of racial and ethnic student groups; proportion of students whose First Native Language Not English; proportion of students identified as ELs; proportion of students with disabilities; district civic learning grantee status; and charter status. All district-level

¹¹ Refer to Appendix A, which provides information about items selected for each scale and the number of items that were included. Appendix B includes the list of the scales that we used for subsequent analyses.

data of the variables described above were obtained through the [public DESE School and District Profiles website](#) in spring of 2020. Student and district characteristics were used as covariates in some of the analysis below.

We created an in-state geographic region variable as well as variables for key student demographic groups within districts in order to make comparisons of teachers' reported civic awareness, practices, and perceptions. For instance, if Teacher A said she worked for District X and Teacher B taught in District Z and both District X and District Z have a high proportion of EL students, then both teachers would be put into the group "high EL" for analytic purposes. Geographic regions included west, central, northeast, and southeast, divided by county lines. Districts were sorted into one of four groups indicated by the proportion of economically disadvantaged students: low, middle, high, and extremely high. Sorting into these four groups is based on calculations of the proportion of economically disadvantaged students in the district relative to the proportion of economically disadvantaged students across the state (see "Quantitative sample" section above). A similar process was used for the proportions of EL students (e.g., low, middle, and high) and proportions of student groups by race/ethnicity. We created two categories based on district-wide proportions of student race and ethnicity. The first is "Predominantly White," comprised of districts in which 80% or more of the students identify as White. The second is "Diverse Districts," in which 40% or more of the students are students of color. In our sample, 37% of teachers work at "Diverse Districts" and 40% work in "Predominantly White" districts. This approximately mirrors the percentage of districts in the state that are "Predominantly White" (44.5%).

Due to the small sample size, we could not run IRT analyses for the decision-maker surveys. We merged the school administrator and district administrator files and removed responses from non-decision-makers (e.g., those who in the "Other" response wrote in that they were a classroom teacher only). We report descriptive statistics and qualitative information for this group.

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Qualitative Sample

We recruited interview participants from teachers and school administrators who completed the surveys and responded "yes" to a question that asked if they would be interested in participating in an interview. We sought a maximum variation sample that represented teachers from elementary school, middle school, and high school; various geographic regions (western, central, northeast, and southeast regions); and variation in the level of their implementation of student-led civics projects and frequency of teaching civics (as identified by teacher reports). In total, we conducted 48 interviews, including interviews with elementary school teachers ($n = 10$), middle school teachers ($n = 28$), high school teachers ($n = 7$), and principals ($n = 3$), including two leading elementary schools and one leading a middle school. For the middle and high school teachers interviewed, about half reported that their students had completed student-led civics projects and about half reported that their students had not. Elementary school teachers interviewed likewise varied in the amount of dedicated instructional time they devoted to teach social studies. (See Appendix D for a breakdown of demographic and implementation indicators for interview participants.)

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews were conducted over Zoom and typically lasted between 45 to 60 minutes. Educators were asked questions about their knowledge of and beliefs about civic education, their familiarity with Massachusetts state civic education policy, civics instructional practices, supports in teaching civics, barriers to teaching civics, and how, if at all, their civics instructional practices have changed due to the pandemic. (See Appendix I for the full interview protocols.) Interviews were transcribed and coded under the broad domains of beliefs (e.g., purpose of civic education, role as a civics educator), civics policy understanding, civic content taught, pedagogy, practice standards, civics projects, which students participated in civic learning opportunities, barriers, facilitators, and needed supports to effectively teach civics,

and the pandemic. Under each domain, open codes emerged from the data that captured the specific ways that educators described their beliefs, understandings, and practices. For example, under “pedagogy,” open codes included, among others, *collaborative learning*, *community outreach*, *connecting past and present*, *culturally relevant pedagogy*, and *interdisciplinary instruction*. Open codes under facilitators to implementation included, among others, *collaboration*, *collegial support*, *curricular resources*, *PD*, *personal experience*, *self-motivation*, *time to plan and develop resources*, *student*

engagement, and *using a little bit of everything*. Open codes were then grouped into larger pattern codes that captured themes related to the survey findings. These larger pattern codes were triangulated with the quantitative findings to corroborate emerging models and to provide a deeper, nuanced look into the depth of teachers’ understanding of the new civics policies and civic teaching practices along with understanding how teachers perceive supports for, barriers to, and needs for effectively teaching civics.

Findings: Section I

AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF NEW CIVIC EDUCATION POLICIES

With implementation of the 2018 HSS Framework expected in 2019-2020 and student-led civics projects required in 2020-2021, the school year following when data was collected in 2020–2021, overall, Massachusetts educators are aware of the changes in the 2018 HSS Framework, with varying depth of understanding as to how it should impact their practice. Educators have less awareness of the civics project requirements compared to their knowledge of the 2018 HSS Framework. Grade level and access to PD, rather than district demographic indicators, seem to differentiate variation in awareness.

The vast majority (96%) of Massachusetts K–12 teachers surveyed have heard of the 2018 HSS Framework. Forty-four percent said they were familiar with the standards and principles and knew how these standards affected their instruction. Thirty-two percent said they were familiar with the standards and principles but did not know how those would affect their teaching. Twenty-one percent had heard of the Framework but did not know the details. In contrast, 37% of teachers surveyed have *never* heard of the civics project legislation. Of the 63% of those who had heard of the civics project legislation, only a quarter reported any level of familiarity. Thirty-six percent reported they had heard of it but didn't know the details, 16% reported they were familiar and knew about the six stages of civics project, and only 11% reported that they were familiar with the requirement, definition, and the six stages, and how the requirement, definition, and stages would affect their instruction.

Decision-makers surveyed also reported similar levels of awareness of the HSS Framework: 99% had heard of the HSS Framework, and 48% reported that they were familiar with the standards and guiding principles and how they directly impacted teaching and learning in their school or district. Decision-makers surveyed did report more awareness than teachers surveyed around the civics project legislation. However, similar to teachers, decision-makers were less familiar with the civics project legislation compared to the HSS Framework. Fifteen percent had never heard of the civics project legislation, only 21% reported that “I'm familiar with the civics project requirement, definition, and six stages and how those directly impact teaching and learning in my school,” and a third had heard of the requirement but were unfamiliar with the details. Similarly, more decision-makers had discussed the HSS Framework with teachers in their school or district compared to the civics project legislation. Fifty percent have extensively discussed the HSS standards with their teachers, compared to only 20% who reported extensively discussing the civics project legislation, and a third reported not mentioning the civics project legislation to their teachers at all.

DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS DIFFERENCES IN AWARENESS

We discerned few differences in reported levels of awareness of new policies based on geography and district-level student demographics. The differences that we did observe tended to relate to the civics projects.

Geographic Region

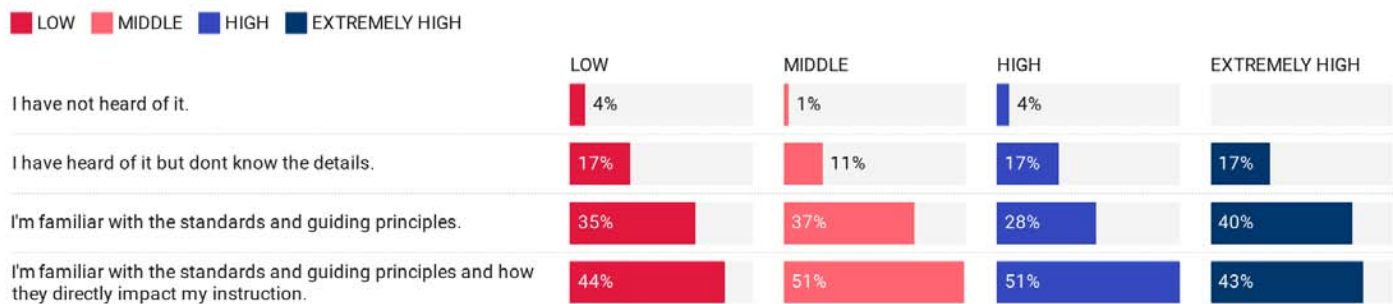
Overall, teachers surveyed in different regions of the state reported similar levels of awareness of the 2018 HSS Framework and civics project legislation (omnibus chi-square = 0.027, $p > 0.05$). Overall, no significant differences were observed in the extent to which teachers reported familiarity with the civics project legislation ($p > 0.05$).

Economically Disadvantaged Students

There was no statistically significant difference in familiarity with the 2018 HSS Framework based on the proportion of students who classified as economically disadvantaged in districts. However, there were differences in whether teachers have ever heard of the civics project legislation based on the proportion of economically disadvantaged students in the district. Teachers in districts with the *lowest* proportion

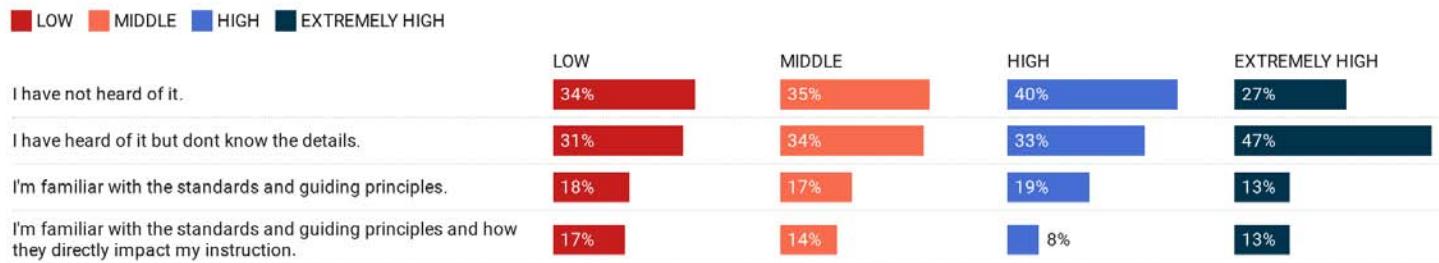
of economically disadvantaged students were the *most likely* to say that they have never heard of the legislation (Gamma = 0.122, $p < 0.05$) compared to teachers in districts classified as having middle, high, and extremely high percentages of economically disadvantaged students. Though statistically significant, this difference may not be practically meaningful when measured this way, as the difference by economic disadvantage groups created for the purposes of this analysis (e.g., low, middle, high, and extremely high proportions of students) is largely concentrated in the lowest two categories of familiarity (“have not heard of it” and “heard of it but don’t know the details”). In fact, when we combined the lowest two categories of policy familiarity together (“have not heard of it” and “heard of it but don’t know the details”) and highest two categories of policy familiarity together (“familiar with the standards and guiding principles” and “familiar with how they

Figure 2 Teachers Reporting Familiarity with the 2018 HSS Framework by Proportion of Economically Disadvantaged Students in the District (n = 392)



Note. Omnibus Pearson Chi-square value (8.49) is not statistically significant.

Figure 3 Teachers Reporting Familiarity with the Civics Project Legislation by Proportion of Economically Disadvantaged Students in the District (n = 392)



Note. Omnibus Pearson Chi-square value (7.92) is not statistically significant.

directly impact my instruction”) and re-ran this analysis, the finding became non-significant ($\text{Gamma} = 0.013, p > 0.05$). In both of these cases, the omnibus Pearson chi-square values for these analyses are non-significant ($p > 0.05$).

Race and Ethnicity of Students

Teachers surveyed in school districts where 40% or more of students do not identify as White were about as familiar with the Framework as teachers in school districts where less than 40% of students do not identify as White ($p = 0.643$). However, the familiarity with civics project legislation was greater among teachers who worked in districts where at least 40% of the students identify with race and ethnicities other than White ($\text{Gamma} = 0.185, p < 0.01$) compared to teachers in school districts where less than 40% of students do not identify as White.

Similar proportions of surveyed teachers in Predominantly White districts reported being familiar with the 2018 HSS Framework and how it affects their instruction as did teachers in districts where less than 80% of students identify as White (respectively 43.8% vs. 43.5%, $p > 0.05$). There was also no statistically significant association between teaching in Predominantly White districts and familiarity with the civics project legislation ($p > 0.05$).

English Learners

Familiarity with the HSS Framework did not significantly vary between surveyed teachers who taught in districts with high and those who taught in districts with low proportions of English learners student enrollment ($p > 0.05$). However, there was a marginally significant difference ($p < 0.10$) between how teachers in districts with high proportions of English learners students and those districts with low proportions of English learners students reported familiarity with the civics project legislation, with 31% of teachers in districts with high proportions of English learners reporting familiarity with the legislation or familiarity and understanding of the impact on instruction, while 25% of teachers in districts with low proportions of English learners report the same level of familiarity (omnibus $p = 0.092$).

Grade-level Differences

The most meaningful differences in policy familiarity was between the elementary school educators (K–5) and middle and high school (herein referred to as secondary) educators surveyed. Elementary school teachers largely reported less familiarity with the civics project legislation and the HSS Framework compared to secondary teachers. While elementary and secondary teachers both reported more familiarity with the 2018 HSS Framework than the civics project legislation, only 27.5% of elementary school teachers reported that they knew how the HSS Framework could influence instruction, compared to 65% of middle and high school teachers. Just over 26% of elementary teachers reported they have heard of the 2018 HSS Framework but did not know the details, and 5.6% said they had not heard of it. In contrast, just 1.3% of secondary teachers said they had never heard of it (Pearson chi-square (3, 418) = 65.40, $p < 0.001$). When comparing 2018 HSS Framework familiarity within grade bands (e.g., comparing elementary grades K–2 to 3–5 and comparing middle school to high school), follow-up analysis showed that variance in teachers’ familiarity with the 2018 HSS Framework and how it impacted classroom instruction approaches statistical significance ($\text{Gamma} = 0.22, p = 0.06$). Sixty-two percent of middle school and 67% of high school teachers said they were familiar with the 2018 HSS Framework and its application to their classroom instruction ($\text{Gamma} = 0.11, p > 0.05$). Between K–2 and 3–5 elementary grade teachers surveyed, upper elementary teachers were slightly more likely to say that they were familiar with the guiding principles and their impact on instruction (36%) than K–2 grade teachers (19%, $\text{gamma} = 0.24, p = 0.06$).

Awareness of civics policy legislation was statistically significant between elementary and secondary grade levels ($p < 0.001$). Only 2% of teachers in elementary grades said they were at least familiar with the civics project requirement, compared to 48% of middle and high school teachers. Likewise, 65% of elementary school teachers had not heard of the civics project legislation at all, compared to 15% of middle and high school teachers. The differences in civics project

awareness makes sense because the requirements apply only to middle and high schools. That being said, even in the middle and high school subgroup, only 22% said they were familiar with the legislation *and* knew how it would affect their instruction. The difference in civics project legislation familiarity did not vary significantly between middle and high school teachers surveyed nor between upper elementary grades versus lower elementary grades.

The difference in familiarity with the HSS Framework and the civics project legislation between the elementary and secondary teachers surveyed was apparent in the interviews as well. Elementary school teachers interviewed varied in their reported familiarity with the 2018 HSS Framework and the civics project legislation. A handful had not heard of either of them, while an upper elementary school teacher in western Massachusetts shared having familiarity with the Framework, explaining, “now I am really familiar with the brand new frameworks that came out because I followed them [in my classroom instruction] right up until COVID. I followed them to a T . . .”

In contrast, the majority of middle school teachers interviewed stated that they were familiar with both the 2018 HSS Framework and the civics project legislation. Most middle school teachers had started work to integrate civics explicitly in their curriculum and instruction or to revamp the scope and sequence of history and social science courses across the social science courses in all grade levels to align with the 2018 HSS Framework. One middle school teacher explained what she thought implementation of the HSS Framework may look like:

As of this school year coming up, I think every eighth grader in every public or charter school will be taking civics as a mandatory social studies course. That’s [what] I know relative to the bill because that’s what impacts me as an educator. It changed what I was teaching. I taught world history for eight years before that and US history way, way back. But it was not a civics-minded course, really a straight-up history course.

Most middle school teachers expressed awareness of the civics project requirement, and some mentioned they had read the Civics Project Guidebook. Regarding student-led civics projects, 75% of middle and high school teachers who took the survey reported at least some level of familiarity with this requirement (as described in the Civics Project Guidebook), yet only 40% report implementing student-led civics projects as described by Civics Project Guidebook. Other teachers said they would be revamping their civics courses and teaching for the 2020–2021 school year and plan to incorporate the project as their next step. This was indicative of a broader pattern that seemed to emerge, whereby 8th grade middle school teachers had already made wholesale changes to courses and units to align with the 8th grade civics course requirements, but had not yet jumped on board with civics projects prior to the requirement beginning in 2020–2021.

Nearly all high school teachers interviewed were “intimately” familiar with both the Framework and the civics legislation and had begun revamping units to align with the new standards. One high school teacher in a district with a large population of students of color from diverse backgrounds who had thoroughly read and redesigned courses said it was “great to see” that there was “a lot of cultural permission to engage in cultural competency, and presenting things in a culturally respectful way in the frameworks.” As with middle school teachers, most of the high school teachers had spent time in revamping and revising their courses to incorporate civics and have spent less time designing or planning for a project. As one veteran high school teacher shared:

We’ve just been spending two or three years unpacking the frameworks, redoing our curriculum maps. And I’ve been leading that endeavor. And then we just finished revamping our resources. So we have all new textbooks or other resources, depending on the grade level, six through 12 to support it . . . And then our last piece of the puzzle is a civics project . . . that’s the missing piece. Or the next step.

Elementary and secondary teachers interviewed also varied in how they came to be familiar with the Framework.

For example, some teachers worked directly with curriculum coordinators and their colleagues to realign instruction. As a middle school teacher shared:

My department head and I have been looking at [the Framework] for three years as it developed and passed. I've been to a number of the Department of Education's programs over the summer, [including] an institute that was three days that looked at it. We had all of our professional development time for eighth grade social studies this past year devoted to unpacking the curriculum standards. We really went through each one, one by one, and talked about: in what order do we teach them? What resources do we have? We did a ton of that stuff. I kept a printed out copy of it as I went through the year and was checking things off and identifying are the lessons I did that apply to this because sometimes people ask you for that information as a teacher, are you hitting all of the standards? We use [the Framework] as a base for what we're doing for sure.

Other teachers worked alone and took the initiative to unpack what the 2018 HSS Framework and Civics Project Guidebook means for their classroom instruction. This work of teachers in isolation can lead to varied interpretations of the Framework based on teachers' existing practices, potentially resulting in practices that may not be fully aligned with the expectations in the Framework, legislation, and Guidebook. As one middle school teacher in a small northeast school noted:

With the frameworks, I'm very familiar. When those came out, I was told to completely redesign my curriculum based on that and because I'm the only eighth grade social studies teacher [in my school], I just did it by myself. As far as the civic project requirement, I'm a little bit less familiar with it but . . . I had been doing that mock town meeting for about four years now . . . When DESE came out with that requirement, my superinten-

dent said this is exactly the type of thing they're looking for with this big project for civics so just keep doing what you're doing.

A different middle school teacher in central Massachusetts shared how she took it upon herself to attend conferences and trainings to familiarize herself with the frameworks without any district support:

I've attended a number of different conferences specifically for the civics curriculum changes, put on by DESE as well as Center for Collaborative Education, and a couple other places, so I feel like I'm very familiar with them. I have my own copy of all of those [curriculum changes] in Google Docs. I feel like I'm the only one in my district who's familiar with the guidelines about . . . enhancing civic education. I'm not the only one who knows it exists, but only because I've made sure my department head knows. . . . But no one else in my district, I think, even knows [it] exists despite my efforts. I try to tell them and ask them especially up at the high school, because . . . the civic engagement project within the law doesn't have to be eighth grade. It says 8th through 12th grade, so I've just taken it upon myself to [say] it's going to be in eighth grade here, because no one else seems to know it exists.

As this quote shows, without coherent district guidance, only students in 8th grade in that teachers' district would have the opportunity to participate in student-led civics projects even though the law requires that students participate once in 8th grade and once in high school.

Awareness and Professional Development Access
Teachers' familiarity with the 2018 HSS Framework and civics project legislation was also associated with access to PD focused on civic education. Sixty-four percent of teachers who reported that they received civics PD at least once a year reported both that they were familiar with the standards and principles in the 2018 HSS Framework and knew how these

standards affected their instruction, compared to 43% who did not report receiving civics PD at least once a year ($p < 0.001$). Likewise, for the civics project legislation, 43% who reported that their school or district provided professional learning opportunities focused on civics PD less than once a year had not heard of the legislation, compared to 21% who had been provided civics PD at least once a year ($p < 0.001$).

There were differences in the 2018 HSS Framework and civics project familiarity depending on the grade level band teachers taught and how routinely they had civics PD opportunities. Middle and high school teachers were more likely to participate in civics PD to begin with, and those middle

and high school teachers who had civics PD more routinely reported greater awareness of the 2018 HSS Framework and the civics project legislation ($p < 0.01$). Elementary teachers participated less frequently in civics PD. In our sample, those elementary school teachers who received more frequent civics-focused PD were not statistically significantly more aware of the new civics policy and Framework than elementary teachers who received less frequent civics-focused PD. The lack of significant differences may suggest, among other possibilities, that the civics PD elementary teachers receive was not be adequate or it might not be aligned well with the 2018 HSS Framework and civics project legislation.

Table 3 *Elementary (K-5) and Secondary (6-12) Teacher Reported Familiarity with the 2018 HSS Framework by Frequency of Civics Professional Development*

	PD frequency	I have not heard of it.	I have heard of it but don't know the details.	I'm familiar with the standards and guiding principles.	I'm familiar with the standards and guiding principles and how they directly impact my instruction.
Elementary Teachers	low	5%	28%	42%	26%
Elementary Teachers	high	8%	22%	36%	33%
Middle & High School Teachers**	low	2%	9%	31%	58%
Middle & High School Teachers**	high	0%	6%	19%	75%

Note. PD frequency "low" denotes PD offered less than once a year and PD frequency "high" denotes PD offered at least once a year.

**Denotes statistically significant difference at the 0.01 level.

Table 4 *Percentage of Elementary (K-5) and Secondary (6-12) Teachers' Familiarity with Civics Project Legislation by Frequency of Civics Professional Development*

	PD frequency	I have not heard of it.	I have heard of it but don't know the details.	I'm familiar with the standards and guiding principles.	I'm familiar with the standards and guiding principles and how they directly impact my instruction.
Elementary Teachers	low	66%	31%	2%	1%
Elementary Teachers	high	58%	36%	6%	0%
Middle & High School Teachers**	low	20%	37%	25%	18%
Middle & High School Teachers**	high	8%	31%	34%	27%

Note. PD frequency "low" denotes PD offered less than once a year and PD frequency "high" denotes PD offered at least once a year.

**Denotes statistically significant difference at the 0.01 level.

Findings Section II

BREADTH AND DEPTH OF CIVIC EDUCATION PRACTICES

Teachers have begun to shift practices to align with the HSS Framework and civics project legislation to increase student access to civics. However, there is variation in the extent to which teachers have aligned instruction to the Framework and incorporated the civics project; hence, access for students to civics instruction also varies. Greater depth of implementation can be seen with the HSS Framework than with the student-led civics projects. For the overarching approaches to teaching civics that the new policies espouse, including civic content, inquiry and informed action, real-world and cross-disciplinary learning, democratic and supportive classroom climate, and culturally responsive pedagogy, there are clear variations in implementation within and across grade bands, with middle and high school teachers generally reporting higher levels of incorporating civic content, inquiry and informed action, real-world learning, and facilitating a democratic classroom climate than elementary school teachers. In contrast, elementary school teachers report greater frequencies of identifying perceived barriers to incorporating civics.

VARIATION IN CIVICS REACH

According to decision-maker and teacher survey respondents, civics is being taught in a variety of courses, most frequently integrated into history and social science classes. The majority of the 113 decision-makers surveyed ($n = 79$) reported that it is integrated throughout social studies courses, just under half ($n = 50$) reported that it is taught as a standalone course or integrated throughout multiple subject areas, and between a quarter and third report that civics is integrated into school-wide events ($n = 38$), extracurricular activities ($n = 33$), and interdisciplinary/culminating projects ($n = 28$). For the 87 survey respondents teaching 8th grade civics, the majority (77%) are teaching it as a standalone course rather than integrating it into another social studies course. After sixty-two percent ($n = 131$) of middle and high school teachers reported that they were teaching civics in a course that is required for all students. This proportion included both teachers who reported teaching a standalone civics course or integrating civics as part of another required course. The remaining teachers reported teaching civics as an elective course (19%; $n = 41$) or as a selective AP/IB/honors class (11%; $n = 25$). Nearly all secondary school courses that incorporate civics are yearlong (73.6%) or semester long (21.4%).

Whereas the majority of middle and high school teacher survey respondents were providing some sort of civics instruction to students, the elementary school teachers in our sample report that civics was not frequently addressed in their instruction. This may be in part because elementary school teachers don't have dedicated time to teach it. The majority of elementary school teachers do not dedicate much instructional time to history and social science (only 8% teach it four or more hours a week on average; and 38% two to three hours per week). Twenty-eight percent don't have any specific time dedicated to social studies and instead integrate social studies into English language arts. Approximately half of respondents reported including civics as part of regular social studies instruction. Twenty-five percent responded that they were unsure, perhaps suggesting uncertainty in what civic education entails.

Furthermore, elementary school educators in districts with a high proportion of economically disadvantaged students and in districts with a high proportion of English learners rela-

tive to the state average reported higher frequencies of not having time dedicated to social studies but integrating it throughout other subjects. Thirty-eight percent of elementary school teachers in districts with a high proportion of English learning students integrated civics throughout other subjects compared to about 20% for districts with low and middle proportions of English learners. A similar pattern existed for districts with a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students: 43.5% of teachers in high economically disadvantaged districts reported that they did not have time dedicated to social studies, compared to 17% and 13% of teachers in low or middle (respectively) economically disadvantaged districts.

As depicted in Table 5, the most common ways that elementary school teachers surveyed reported teaching civic content in the classroom included incorporating civics into literacy/English language arts, students' everyday experiences, or a theme in social studies units.

The decision-maker survey results suggest that currently, there is variation in the extent to which students across all

grade level bands engage in civic learning opportunities that align to the 2018 HSS Framework and civics policies. Just over half of respondents reported that most or all students engage in lessons that incorporate civic content, discussions of controversial issues that incorporate multiple perspectives, or research and inquiry around civic themes. Only 29% reported that the majority of students share work with authentic audiences.

The results displayed in Table 6 loosely correspond with the percent of decision-makers surveyed who reported that they considered "most" or "all" teachers proficient in these domains. Almost 60% of decision-makers considered most or all teachers in their school or district proficient in incorporating civic content and helping students research issues in ways that involve examining and evaluating multiple sources. Just over 45% of decision-makers considered most or all teachers in their school or district proficient in planning, implementing, and evaluating inquiry cycles, and facilitating discussion of controversial issues that incorporates multiple points of view. Only 28% of decision-makers reported that the

Table 5 *Civics Integration Strategies Reported by Elementary School Teachers*

Civics Integration Strategy	Percentage of Teachers Reporting
Incorporated into literacy/English language arts	71%
Integrated in student's everyday experiences (e.g., discussions about being a responsible classmate)	61%
As a theme in Social Studies units	52%
An explicit theme of a student project	23%
Through student games and/or simulations	23%
As an interdisciplinary unit	20%
None of the above. I do not incorporate civics content into my teaching.	4%

Table 6 *Decision-maker Reports of Student Engagement in Civic Learning*

Civic Domain	Percentage of decision-makers reporting that “most” or “all” students engage in the following activities
Lessons that incorporate subject-specific civics content	58%
Learning based on exploration of issues and themes through inquiry	55%
Discussion of controversial issues that incorporates multiple points of view	54%
Researching issues of concern to civic life in ways that involve examining and evaluating multiple sources	49%
Sharing work with authentic audiences (e.g., community members, policymakers)	23%

Note. These are the responses to the survey question: “In your school/district, approximately how many students engage in the following during a typical school year?”

Table 7 *Decision-maker Perceptions of Teacher Proficiency by Civic Teaching Domain*

Civic Teaching Domain	Percent of decision-makers that reported “most” or “all” teachers proficient
Incorporating subject-specific civics content	59%
Helping students research issues in ways that involve examining and evaluating multiple sources	59%
Helping students select a variety of texts, synthesize information, understand the purpose of the text, and identify bias to maximize content mastery	58%
Facilitating discussion of controversial issues that incorporates multiple points of view	47%
Planning, implementing, and evaluating inquiry cycles	46%
Providing opportunities for students to share work with authentic audiences (e.g., community members, policymakers)	28%

Note. These are the responses to the survey question: “In thinking of all of the teachers in your school or district who teach social studies or civics, about how many would you consider proficient in each of the following?”

majority of teachers were proficient in providing opportunities for students to share work with authentic audiences.

Overall, we found few meaningful differences in the civic teaching domains outlined above based on district demographics (see Appendix B). However, interview data did reveal instances of school-level inequities in student access to civic instruction. Elementary, middle, and high school teachers all agreed that civics, and social studies more broadly, is not prioritized because it is not a “core” tested subject on Massachusetts state student assessments. One repercussion, reported by teachers in a diverse array of schools, is that it becomes the subject that students are pulled out of for interventions. A 5th grade teacher in a school designated as chronically underperforming explained that the students who do not receive civics instruction are those who do not have equal access to instruction:

Those are the ones who are ELLs or ESL students or students with special needs. We really try to integrate the classroom as much as we can, but it's not up to me who comes in and who goes out. It's up to the administration . . . We probably had 120-ish kids in our grade; I think I taught about 85 to 90 of them . . . There were still a good amount that I never saw because they didn't take history. They were in a math extra help class or an ELA extra help class.

Another middle school teacher from central Massachusetts said that the “only students who would not take that [civics class] would be students who are ESL . . . Instead of taking social studies, they take their ESL class. Other students who are not a part of that class . . . are rather in a life skills kind of program.” This illustrates how school-level structures that govern instruction contribute to civic education disparities.

A handful of secondary teachers interviewed also described how their schools formally and informally group students based on ability level (e.g., all “gifted” students are in one course, all students with IEPs are placed in an “integrated” course), and therefore those teachers differentiated instruction and resources based upon the class ability level.

Most of these teachers reported teaching the same content objectives across classrooms and ability levels, but modifying content and materials to different reading levels or different discussion questions. For schools already implementing student-led civics projects or whole-school experiential learning activities, teachers interviewed reported equitable participation for student groups. For instance, middle school teachers interviewed described various strategies they used to differentiate instruction so that all students' needs could be accommodated in student-led civics projects.

Finally, teachers' reports of their competency to engage students in robust civic learning experiences—such as inquiry arcs focused on issues germane to students' lives or discussions of contentious topics—can impact the learning experiences students receive, even if the content and curriculum are the same in each classroom in a particular grade level. Our IRT analysis identified six key domains that, collectively, represent the HSS Framework principles, content standards, and practice standards: civics content, inquiry and informed action, real-world and interdisciplinary learning, democratic and supportive classroom climate, culturally responsive pedagogy, and belief in the importance of teaching civics. We report on teachers' self-reports of their use of these practices in the sections that follow. Survey and interview data show variability in depth of instruction, within and across grade bands.

While the 2018 HSS Framework emphasizes that civics should be incorporated across K–12, we did find differences between elementary and secondary teachers' particular civics teacher competence domains. As Table 8 shows, secondary school teacher reports scored significantly higher compared to elementary teachers on government and institutions content, discussion-centered climate, and culturally responsive pedagogy scales, while elementary school teacher reports scored significantly higher compared to secondary teachers on interdisciplinary learning and student-centered climate scales. Using mixed general linear models, we also found significant differences between elementary and secondary teachers for culturally responsive pedagogy and interdisciplinary learning teaching practices ($p < 0.001$) and student-centered climate and discussion-centered climate scales ($p < 0.001$). (See Appendix F for complete findings.)

Table 8 Overall IRT Score Average by Elementary and Secondary Teachers

Civic Teaching Competency Domain	IRT Scales (Scaled as T-Score)	Elementary Overall IRT Score Average	Secondary Overall IRT Score Average
Content	Government and Institutions	44	54
	Citizenship Principles	56	N/A
Inquiry and Informed Action	Inquiry (Elementary)	50	N/A
	Inquiry (Secondary)	N/A	50
Real-world Learning	Interdisciplinary Learning**	56	46
	Real-world Learning (Elementary)	50	N/A
	Real-world Learning (Secondary)	N/A	50
Democratic and Supportive Classroom Climate	Student-centered Climate**	56	45
	Discussion-centered Climate**	42	56
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**	44	54
Possible Mediators	Belief in Civics**	54	47
	Perceived Barriers**	61	42
	Teacher Confidence**	41	56

Note. Citizenship Principles was only calculated for elementary teachers due to difference in item distributions on the content factors between the LEUE sample and MSHS sample. **Denotes cases where IRT average score differences between elementary-grade teachers and secondary-grade teachers was statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ level. For some domains, IRT analysis showed that scale distribution and item compositions differed between elementary and secondary scales. Therefore, scales are centered at 50 for elementary and secondary separately and direct grade-band comparisons could not be made.

Because these analyses show statistically significant differences between civics teaching practices among secondary and elementary school teachers, we separately describe the prevalence of each of the various factors that comprise civics teacher competency for our secondary and elementary school teacher sample.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER SELF-REPORTS OF CIVIC TEACHING COMPETENCY

Content

About two-third of middle school and high school teachers reported frequently covering civic content as either a focus of a whole unit or major emphasis of an entire course. In

interview data, secondary teachers also reported that the following civics content topics were the most important to cover: the foundation of local, state, and federal government; connecting the past and present; founding documents; and civil rights. As a veteran high school teacher shared:

Something that I've really been focusing on recently is how to get and understand reliable information about what is happening in our society . . . That's necessary for information on voting, it's necessary for information on knowing what the government is doing, and especially with so many ways that media can be biased and partisan, I think that it's important for students to be able to identify that. That's a huge piece of what I feel like I've been teaching in terms of civics this year. The basics of how government works is a huge thing to teach as well. I spent a lot of time on that. I think also understanding inequality and looking at how the system was designed to work and why it was designed that way, but also ways that the system can be made better. I also spend a lot of time on the rights that are in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights. That definitely gets a lot of coverage because it's important for students to know what their rights are and how to make sure that those rights are protected.

Especially for teachers in small towns, knowledge of local government consistently emerged as an area of focus. As a high school teacher in the western part of the state explained:

Truthfully, I think the most important civics aspects to cover are local. I like to get into the local history of government and the local town and the city ordinances and bylaws and elections, all that stuff. I want them to know the local aspect of it because there's a greater ownership. Even [in] a town like [ours] . . . a graduating class can make a big difference, theoretically, in elections.

Inquiry and Informed Action

Sixty-three percent of middle and high school teachers surveyed agreed that “I can support learning through on-going inquiries.” However, the majority of teachers did not report frequently practicing all steps of an inquiry arc. For the following two areas, over 60% of teachers reported that: 1) “Students use data and research from multiple sources to understand and analyze issues before they develop conclusions or form an action plan”; and 2) “Students investigate causes and solutions to social problems that they address” at least once a semester. That percentage drops to less than 50% when teachers were asked about whether students address root causes and possible solutions as well as develop appropriate action plans. Only one-third of teachers reported that students explore and analyze systems-level causes and solutions. While 91% agreed that students *can* make a positive difference in their communities, only about 25% of teachers reported that students present to authentic audiences and take action together locally.

Many teachers interviewed said they believed inquiry-focused learning to be ideal pedagogy for teaching civics. As one urban middle school teacher shared, “The best parts of the year for me are when I'm helping them tackle things that they've identified and take initiative on things that are happening in their world.” Importantly, teachers recognized the benefits of inquiry-based instruction even if they didn't put that pedagogy into practice, suggesting that their beliefs were aligned to the 2018 HSS Framework and civics project legislation. How teachers defined inquiry-focused learning and put it into practice differed. For some, teachers followed a multi-step process of an inquiry arc that ended in students' planning for and taking action. For example, a middle school teacher in central Massachusetts described a project that spanned five weeks and focused on the Massachusetts state-level government response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

The pre-knowledge that my students already had was they'd been learning about coronavirus since we got back from Christmas break, because they watched CNN 10, a student news segment, every day in class . . . Then they're also doing the news

assignments for Friday and then we're debating the news on Friday. So the students were very familiar with coronavirus by the time our schools shut down, and what had been going on in China and Italy and other places. They already had a pretty good background knowledge in that, so I just needed to give them a quick lesson on the local government structure in Massachusetts, since we hadn't done that by the time school shut down . . . Then there was a five step project where the first step was they had to research, on our town's website, what our town's policies and reaction had been to coronavirus. Second step was they had to interview somebody who lived in a different town anywhere in the world about what policies and reaction on the local, state, or country [level] has been to coronavirus there. Third step was they had to do this compare and contrast analysis of their findings between our town and some other place, and then the fourth step was . . . compare and contrast results. I took those and I put them on a Padlet, then students could have discussions about those topics. Their assignment was that they had to respond to this many posts, and then they had to . . . vote on which ideas they liked the most. They had to vote on one to two and they had to comment on four of them, and they had to use traditional debate rules for commenting, and use transitional phrases. The last step was that after the Padlet discussion, when they're able to flesh out ideas and hear other ideas and responses to their ideas, they then had to choose one policy that they wanted to propose to our town government and they had to write a letter to our town government.

Many, though not all, of the middle school and high school teachers who described guiding students through the multiple steps of the inquiry process also described how they used the Civics Project Guidebook or materials aligned to the Guidebook from nonprofit civic education organizations (e.g., Generation Citizen, iCivics, U.S. Constitution Center). A

middle school teacher in an urban school explained that, before the pandemic, "Our plan was to use the Massachusetts [student-led civics project] guidelines of identifying a problem, identifying stakeholders and possible solutions, [and] presenting it in a civics fair."

At the same time, for a proportion of the teacher interviews, qualitative data also uncovered patterns of research devoid of action or action devoid of research. A middle school teacher in a northeast town shared a great example of engaging students with government officials:

I have my students write letters to representatives and senators. What I have them do is go into the Massachusetts Legislature website. They look at bills that are currently in the process of being worked on, whether they're still in committee [or] whether they've gone to the house and senate level. The students have to find who the author of the bill is and write a letter to the author explaining what they agree with or what they disagree with, and it's been very successful. I've actually had two students invited to the state house now.

Yet, this teacher did not mention an inquiry process for how students arrived at their opinions about the bills they wrote letters about. A number of other teachers discussed "traditional" community service endeavors like food drives or school clubs with student volunteer components. However, these are typically not actions informed by research. For example, a middle school teacher shared that, "we were working with the Sheriff and they had started to come to our school to work on a 'citizenship project' and do a community-based project. After lockdown, they had to send me a picture of them doing something like donating clothes or gardening." This information suggests that while teachers associate service and taking action with civics, these student activities are not always associated with key steps in the inquiry process such as asking essential questions, analyzing root causes, and achieving systems level impact.

Other teachers reported that they only incorporated the front half of the inquiry arc, for example, using research and

data as evidence for arguments and conclusions, yet not using that data to devise solutions for identified issues. A high school teacher shared, “We do these mini research projects. The kids did a photo essay and they had to create little captions on civic issues. Or looking at and evaluating the government’s response to the War on Terror. So we were trying to give them issues. And I do think that provides opportunities for them to enhance, because they can try to formulate their own opinions and then back them up with actual data.” This case illustrates how some teachers in our sample provided opportunities for students to formulate their own opinions and use data to support those opinions on particular issues, yet did not guide students to devise alternate solutions and action plans.

Real-world and Interdisciplinary Learning

About three-quarters of middle and high school teachers reported that at least once a semester, “students critically analyze news coverage” and “students research, debate, and write about issues related to elections, politics, public policy, or social issues.” Fifty-eight percent reported that “students lead discussions about topics related to civics, government, and/or history.”

Numerous middle and high school teachers interviewed described ways that they incorporated the news and weaved media literacy throughout their courses. For example, one middle school teacher reported that for the first 10 minutes of class every day students watched a CNN 10 student news segment and every Friday a portion of class was dedicated to “debating the news.” Another middle school teacher shared how their class analyzes social media posts. Multiple teachers also said that they spent more time focusing on the news and current events after the pandemic. As one teacher summarized:

One of the big skills that we emphasize this year is analyzing a source of information. That’s becoming one of the most important things in the United States or any democratic society because there’s so much information generated and, because of the Internet and social media, not all of that information is vetted or edited and can very

often be presented as factual even when it isn’t. Often kids come into class with the question: “I read this. Is this true?” Teaching them how to figure that out on their own without needing me to tell them or to evaluate it for them, that’s something we work on all year. There’s a lot of great sources out there on how to interpret and analyze media. That became something that we worked on pretty much every week. We talked about a news story, looked at different versions from different newspapers, talking about the opinion side of it: “Well, from this perspective in America people view this, this way and from another perspective they might view it a different way.” That’s a really important skill that’s specific to civics but also useful in other history classes.

A handful of secondary teachers described how they incorporated other content disciplines into civics lessons and units. Those teachers who did tended to emphasize incorporating literacy skills. Only a handful of secondary teachers mentioned teaching interdisciplinary, inquiry-based units (e.g., incorporating environmental justice into civics).

Democratic and Supportive Classroom Climate

The vast majority of middle school and high school teachers agreed that they have a class climate that encourages discussions on issues with multiple viewpoints. Over 90% agreed with the statements that “students are encouraged to make up their own minds about issues,” “students can respectfully disagree with teachers,” and “student opinions are respected and encouraged during class.” A smaller percentage of secondary teachers (63%), reported that they feel comfortable facilitating discussions of controversial issues in class. One teacher expressed the belief that civil discourse is a primary purpose of civic education. A high school teacher lauded the 2018 HSS Framework for giving “permission” for teachers to engage students in these conversations:

I believe in dialogue. I believe in constructive debates. I believe in hearing opinions. I think that’s something that we’re lacking as a society, is our

rigidness to stick to our own opinions without hearing the opinions of others . . . We can change our opinion based on someone’s perspective, someone’s life experiences. You just have to be open minded enough to hear it, and engage in respectful dialogue . . . I love the [2018] history frameworks. . . . It seems like there’s permission, if you will, to really help young people to engage in those kinds of discussions. For them to debate, for them to critically think, to challenge injustices.

Our survey and interview protocols that asked teachers to self-report their level of confidence in and the practices they use to conduct discussions of current and controversial issues did not probe about the quality and depth of dialogue and debate in the actual classroom. We can see from descriptions that teachers provided that they differed in the ways in which they embedded such discussions in the classroom, with topics ranging from logistical classroom processes (e.g., debating classroom rules) to deep and complex real-world issues (e.g., the Black Lives Matter movement). Some teachers integrated discussions in their instruction by tying past events to current events, such as connecting the civil rights movements of the 1960s to the Black Lives Matter protests taking place in the spring and summer of 2020. Other teachers tied discussions of controversial issues to local, community-based or neighborhood issues. Multiple teachers also explained how they see social studies and civic content knowledge as a base that can be used for discussions and experiential learning in social studies, civics, and other content areas.

For example, pedagogically, multiple secondary teachers identified Socratic Seminars and debates as tools that they used to spark discussion. One teacher shared:

One of the rules in my classes’ debates, is that you have to use a transitional phrase to respond to the conversation, and so I taught them some very basic transitional phrases on the ‘I disagree’ side or the ‘I agree side’ . . . I feel like I was trying to teach them how to professionally and politely debate topics even when you disagree, and even

[when discussing] contentious topics. Some classes really have some really great discussions and we even debated . . . gun control, vaping, feminism, Black Lives Matter. . . . Also we’d be able to dig in deeper into things, like what counts as sexual assault or not and the Me Too Movement. We would research more on the spot to dig in deeper, and I think it helped the students.

Another middle school teacher shared:

Marbury vs Madison. An eighth grader is like, “What?” They don’t care about that. But [they care] if it’s a question like: what are rights for different groups of Americans? We talked a lot at the beginning of the year because that was a big issue at the time, citizenship versus immigration versus refugees, and should rules apply differently to all of these people.

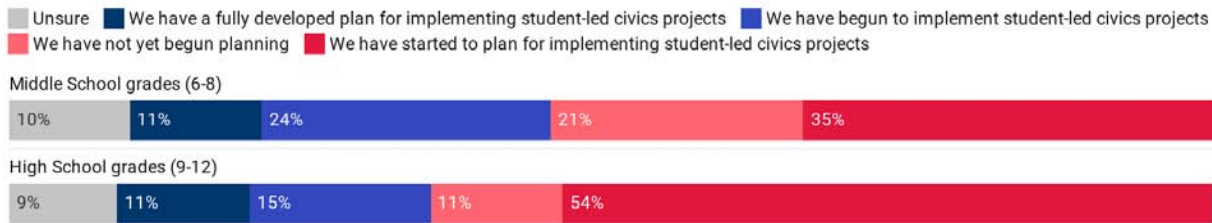
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

The majority of middle and high school teachers surveyed reported various aspects of culturally responsive teaching practices as being “very much their approach.” Eighty-seven percent reported that it is “very much their approach” for encouraging students to express opinions in class. However, just over half considered it “very much their approach” to incorporate students’ lived experiences, backgrounds, identities, and communities into the classroom. Similarly, when it comes to beliefs, 58% of middle and high school teachers surveyed agreed that “each student brings a wealth of relevant civic experience and knowledge that contributes to learning for everyone in my classroom.”

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER SELF-REPORTS OF IMPLEMENTING STUDENT-LED CIVICS PROJECTS

Required student-led civics projects for all 8th grade and high school students are a cornerstone of the 2018 Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement and represent a culmination of the civic domains that the 2018 HSS Framework espouses. With the civics project mandate scheduled to take effect in

Figure 4 Student-led Civics Projects Implementation in Middle School and High School



Note. Percentage of middle school and high school teachers that reported which phase of implementation they were in.
 *Differences between middle school and high school teachers' responses are statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level.

the 2020–2021 school year, 28% of middle and high school teachers responded that their students have conducted student-led civics projects and 74% of respondents reported that their school had at least begun the planning process for student-led civics projects when the survey was conducted in spring 2020. There were significant differences between middle and high school teachers' reports of what phase of implementation they were in (omnibus $\chi^2 = (4, 240) = 9.9, p < 0.05$). Twenty-one percent of middle school teachers reported that their schools had not yet begun planning compared to 11% of high school teachers.

Corroborating teachers' reports on the survey, school and district decision-makers surveyed reported that not all students are participating in civics projects. For example, only 14% of decision-makers reported that the majority of high school students are engaging in student-led civics projects and only 2% of decision-makers reported that the majority of middle school students are engaging in student-led civics projects. In addition, 47% of decision-makers reported that they were unsure of how many 8th grade students participated in civics projects compared to only 5% of decision-makers being unsure for high school students. This information suggests that the decision-makers who participated in this survey may be more aware or focused on high school students participation in student-led civics projects compared to middle school students.

Table 9 Percentage of Decision-makers Reporting of How Many Students Engage in Student-led Civics Projects

	8th Grade (n = 45)	High School (n = 57)
None	16%	14%
A small percentage of students	4%	11%
About half of students	20%	54%
The majority of students	2%	14%
All students	11%	2%
Unsure	47%	5%

In interviews with teachers who have already begun implementing student-led civics projects, there was variation in how teachers reported implementing student-led civics projects. Teachers who had begun to implement projects explained that they continued practices of similar student-led projects prior to the new law being passed or were participating in PD focused on student-led civics projects. Teachers also varied in whether they required students to do projects individually, in small groups, or as a class. Teachers who reported implementing student-led civics projects on the survey varied in the length of time they spent on student-led projects. According to survey data, 38% teachers said they embedded projects throughout the school year, while 36% of

teachers said they integrated projects for a few weeks during a single semester. These findings are not surprising, given that the Civics Project Guidebook does not specify whether projects should be individual or collective, taught as a stand-alone unit, or spread out throughout a few weeks, months, or the entire school year.

Civics Project Focus

As illustrated in Table 10, over half of of teachers who responded on the survey that they were implementing student-led civics projects, over half reported the following to be key foci of the projects: 1) students solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question; 2) students seeing themselves as powerful agents of change; 3) students having choice; 4) teachers providing an authentic opportunity for students to practice research skills; 5) students taking action; or 6) teachers facilitating conversations where all voices are respected. Corroborating survey data, the majority of teachers interviewed described student-led projects that focused on real-world issues and had an action component. Actions included, for example, local efforts, such as starting a campaign to refurbish a public playground, beach cleanup, and advocating for town by-laws to require sidewalks be cleaned of snow. Other action efforts contributed to wider national or global issues such as supporting the Black Lives Matter movement and eliminating plastics pollution. However, only 33% of teachers surveyed reporting that *aiming* for systems-level impact was a key focus of their facilitation of student-led civics projects, which the Civics Project Guidebook describes as “the processes, policies, institutions, and people most connected to a root cause of an issue” (p. 7).

Teacher Knowledge and Interpretation of Civics Projects

A number of teachers interviewed provided examples of projects that did not follow an inquiry process. This might be in part because of a lack of familiarity with the legislation and guidebook, as 25% of the teachers who reported that they were implementing student-led civics projects were not familiar with the Guidebook. Of the teachers who did say they were familiar with the Civics Project Guidebook, just over one third (36%) reported that they did not conduct student-led civics projects as described by the Civics Project Guidebook.

Table 10 *Percentage of Middle and High School Teachers Reporting Whether Civics Project Principles Are a Key Focus of the Civics Projects They Implement*

Civics Project Principle	Percentage of Teachers Reporting Key Focus of the Civics Projects (n = 67)
Solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question.	79%
Students see themselves as powerful agents of change.	71%
Student choice and student led.	66%
Provide an authentic opportunity for students to practice research skills.	64%
Students take action toward achieving systems impact and engage with decision-makers.	59%
Facilitate conversations where all voices are heard, respected, and rooted in evidence from legitimate sources.	56%
Students learn to influence public opinion and policy.	46%
Provide students opportunity to consider multiple points of view in a non-partisan way.	43%
Students learn effective processes for civic action including incorporating the six stages of civics projects.	33%
Aiming for systems-level impact.	33%

In interviews, some teachers discussed using existing research projects or simulations that they already conduct to fit the civics project requirement. However, the examples provided did not always align with the civics project principles outlined in the Guidebook. For example, some teachers described projects that did not follow the six-stage inquiry arc. Other teachers described conducting civics projects that did not focus on inquiry, but instead provided creative ways for students to synthesize information and demonstrate learning outcomes. For example, a middle school teacher who taught a diverse EL population shared, when asked for examples of civics projects in her classroom, “I always like to do a project or something at the end that’s a little bit more creative with what we’ve learned. So, we’ve done Instagrams, we’ve done postcards to King George, we’ve done protest songs . . . I like to learn some things first, do a project, apply it.” Another middle school teacher shared, “We had done a project-based learning project where the kids created photo essays incorporating [a philosopher they were assigned to study] with things they see in the news . . . so not so much student-led but they did get some autonomy in crafting that project a little bit.”

In sum, middle and high school teachers who have implemented student projects have done so in varied and creative ways. However, most teachers from our qualitative sample have not yet implemented student-led civics projects as defined by the policy and some who have begun implementing student-led projects do not include key components of the inquiry arc.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER SELF-REPORTS OF CIVIC COMPETENCY

Civic Content

Overall, a very small percentage of elementary school teachers indicated in their survey responses that they incorporate content related to United States government and history into their instruction. Only half of elementary school teachers agreed with the belief that “it is my responsibility to make sure that all students understand the founding concepts of American democracy.” Even fewer reported having translated that belief into practice. Seventy-percent of surveyed elementary school teachers reported that they do *not* address the powers of federal, state, and local governments at all and over

half do not address the structures of government or the U.S. Constitution. This can, in part, be explained by the fact that the 2018 HSS Standards do not require this information to be taught as part of the content standards until 5th grade. However, over half of elementary respondents reported addressing major themes in U.S. history, major themes in the history of Massachusetts towns and cities, and the ways in which everyday people affect and interact with policy and government, at least briefly. Interviews corroborated this information, as few elementary school teachers shared that they incorporated specific content on government institutions and the founding documents when asked about the civic content they teach.

Inquiry and Informed Action

Eighty-two percent of elementary school teacher respondents believe that inquiry-based learning deepens students’ content learning and engagement; however, less than half of survey respondents engage students in inquiry-based activities at least once a marking period. Specifically, only 29% reported that “students identify and create essential and supporting questions to a topic” and just under half reported that students investigate causes and solutions to social problems *at least once a marking period*. When it comes to taking informed action, 94% of elementary teachers reported that they believe that students can make a positive difference in their communities. However, less than half reported that students have the opportunity in class to propose changes to solve problems in their school or community at least once a marking period.

Interview participants did provide examples of how they engage elementary school students in inquiry and action, often in ways that tied back to the community. For example, a veteran teacher teaching early primary grades discussed her hands-on approach to engaging students in informed action:

One thing that I was hoping to do in the spring, for instance, was have a day of zero waste, and how that connects to responsibility. It would be project-based . . . we would collect all of the garbage from a typical waste day, and then the next day encourage the families to have a zero waste

day. Then look at what that does. Did they have to go to the farmer's market to get their broccoli, because even if you go to Whole Foods, there's a sticker on it, and that sticker is waste. Really looking at hands-on, what they can actually see. . . . As far as civics, we have a responsibility to each other and to protecting our resources as a community. And you guys can do this. Tell your families to go to the farmer's market.

Another veteran teacher of lower primary grades shared how she asked guiding questions to prompt students to inquire about their communities and the wider world through what she called "being there" experiences. Such questions included:

We have the globe in the classroom, but why is it sitting there? It's required to be in everybody's classroom, but why? Why is that there? Why is that such an important symbol in our classroom? So to really not just have these symbols, like we have the flag, we pledge allegiance, but why? Why is that such a needed symbol in every public classroom?

An upper elementary school teacher explained how her students do "genius hour" projects that tie back to current events:

There was a big discussion about the [Black Lives Matter] protests that are happening right now. A few students did a project on a timeline that's the history of racism in the United States, when it started, all the events that had happened from 1600s to now. There's a big protest that happened in the community that I work in, so many of the students were involved in that and they were very interested in how [racism has] been going on for so long and still happening now. They came away with [the idea] that history is continuing to repeat itself. It was fascinating. We talked a lot about what they could do going for-

ward. How could they make sure that this doesn't continue and what steps could they take?

Democratic and Supportive Classroom Climate

Over 80% of elementary school teachers encourage students to express opinions during class and make up their own minds on issues. However, only 33% agree that they are comfortable facilitating discussions of controversial issues in class. As one elementary school principal explained:

One of our own internal school goals is that some of the civics instruction has some really hard conversations that come along with it, and not all teachers are ready to have those conversations or feel comfortable in them. I think every [student] gets a baseline level of instruction. But when it starts to get deep, so you've got a conversation on slavery that's happening and it starts to get deep like that, if there are teachers that don't feel comfortable with those conversations, it's not that [students] didn't get exposed to the civics pieces, but the depth of that experience could be different [in different classrooms].

Some elementary school teachers reported that they do dive into discussions of difficult topics. A 4th grade teacher in the northeast part of the state shared how her class discussed the history of racism in the United States and what steps students in the class could take to combat it. Another teacher shared:

I find civics doesn't work if I'm just sitting there talking to them because the whole point of being a citizen is to engage with what is going on. And if I am just telling them how it is, that doesn't make them citizens, that just makes them listeners. And with that in mind, it's important that they discuss [issues] with their peers as well, because that's who they're growing up with and their opinions and the opinions of their [peers] will be changed by that.

Other teachers interviewed, however, did not see it as their place to discuss controversial issues with young learners. A kindergarten teacher in a low-income, western school district explained:

It's tricky at a kindergarten level because their ideas are really their family's ideas and especially since we're talking about this year, the climate is very extremely controversial . . . it's not my position to do controversial discussions or experiences for them at this level in kindergarten I don't feel.

Real-world and Interdisciplinary Learning

Relatively low proportions of elementary school teachers reported that students engage at least once a marking period in real-world learning activities: 27% reported students “using data and research from multiple sources”; 34% reported students “reading and analyzing information in the news”; and 15% reported students “researching, debating, and writing about issues related to elections, community, and society.”

Elementary school teachers interviewed did provide examples of how they infused civics into other content areas. In some cases, teachers reported that this decision was out of necessity because they did not have time slated to teach civics as its own block. Often, civic dispositions (e.g., respect for others, commitment to equality) are integrated by elementary teachers into literacy. As one lower elementary school teacher in an affluent suburb shared, “[Civics] is [woven] into our literacy curriculum . . . A lot of the kindergarten literacy stories have to do with kindness and friendship and belonging and family.”

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Seventy-four percent of teachers in our sample agreed that they believe that “each student brings a wealth of relevant civic experience and knowledge that contributes to learning for everyone in my classroom.” Yet, only approximately half of elementary school teachers in our sample agreed that incorporating culturally responsive practices is “very much their approach” to teaching.

In sum, elementary school teachers in our sample generally believed in the importance of many of the domains of civic teacher competency, such as inquiry and informed action and culturally responsive pedagogy, but reported engaging in these less frequently than middle and high school teachers.

RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT CIVIC TEACHING AND LEARNING

Many educators in our sample are aware of the resources available to help them teach civics, including PD and curricular and instructional materials for the classroom that are often provided by nonprofit civics organizations and colleagues. However, the majority of teachers interviewed did not describe systemic and intentional ways that teachers responsible for teaching civics within their schools or districts are currently accessing these resources.

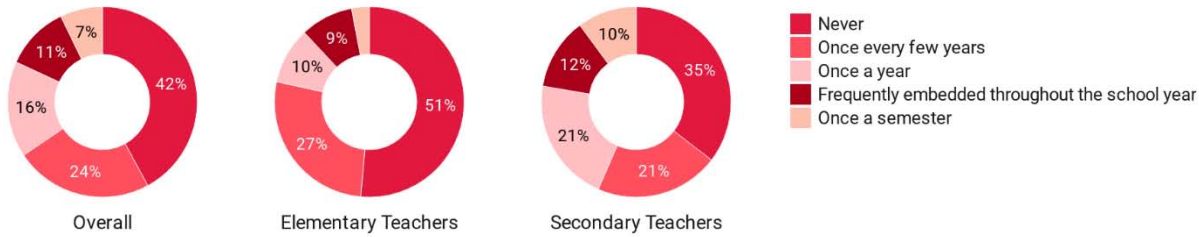
Professional Development

The majority of teachers surveyed from across the state report they are not receiving ongoing PD focused on civics from their school or their district. Forty-two percent report having never been offered civics PD opportunities and only 18% reported being offered learning opportunities focused on civics more than once a year. As shown in Figure 5, teachers are more likely to have never been offered civics PD than have it offered multiple times a year, but elementary school teachers reported significantly fewer civics PD opportunities compared to secondary teachers ($p < 0.01$).

Decision-makers reported higher, although not high, frequency of civics PD opportunities than teachers. Nineteen percent of decision-makers reported that their district has never provided civics professional learning opportunities (compared to 42% of teachers), and 30% of decision-makers reported that the district provided civics PD only once every few years. Thirty percent reported that their district provided civics opportunities at least once a year (compared to only 18% of teachers).

Furthermore, decision-makers surveyed reported that few non-social studies teachers are receiving civics PD. While social studies and civics teachers were more likely to report participating in civics learning opportunities, decision-makers

Figure 5 Frequency of Civics Professional Development Opportunities Offered by School or District



Note. Differences between elementary-grade teachers and secondary grade teachers' responses are statistically significant at $p < 0.01$ level.

Table 11 Decision-maker Reports of Teacher Participation in Civics Professional Learning

	Social Studies Teachers	Civics/Government Teachers	Non-Social Studies Teachers
N (decision-maker responses)	95	84	87
None	12%	19%	44%
Some	36%	23%	43%
Most	35%	26%	9%
All	18%	32%	5%

reported participation also varies across this group. Table 11 shows that just over half of decision-makers reported that either most or all of their social studies and civics teachers participate in at least some civics professional learning opportunities, and 19% reported that no civics or government teachers have received civics PD, despite civics being their primary content area.

We also examined variations in PD offerings by district-level student demographics, exploring whether frequencies of civics PD offered by districts differed by district-level student body characteristics and if certain types of PD were offered more frequently in some types of districts than others. Through these analyses, we were interested in understanding what, if any, disparities existed in access to PD, which could indirectly contribute to disparities in quality of civic learning across districts.

We examined whether districts differed in their civics PD offerings depending on the types of students they serve (e.g., proportions of EL students, Predominantly White districts,

districts serving high proportions of economically disadvantaged students). When we combined teacher responses from elementary and secondary school grade bands, we found no statistically significant differences in frequency of PD offerings by district student demographics. We did find differences, although not significant at the 0.05 level, in the availability of civics-related PD reported by elementary grade teachers for districts teaching in districts with different proportions of economically disadvantaged students ($p < 0.10$). Ten percent of elementary school teachers in districts serving the *lowest* proportion of economically disadvantaged students reported being offered civics PD at least once a year. For elementary school teachers teaching in districts serving “extremely high” proportions of economically disadvantaged students, the percentage of teachers who reported their district or school offers civics PD at least once a year goes up to 33%. Elementary teachers in districts serving “extremely high” proportions of economically disadvantaged students were also more likely to be part of a professional learning community (33%), especially

compared to teachers in districts who serve low proportions (10%) of economically disadvantaged students (of which 10% reported being a part of a professional learning community) as well as teachers in districts serving a moderate proportion of economic disadvantaged students (of which 10% reported being a part of a professional learning community).

Elementary grade teachers in Predominantly White school districts reported participating in civics PD less frequently than elementary grade teachers in non-predominately White school districts. Fourteen percent of these teachers reported participating in at least one civics PD offering per year, compared to 27% of elementary teachers in non-predominately White districts.

Furthermore, when elementary school teachers receive civics PD, there may be an emphasis on technology (e.g., online civics games or websites) rather than pedagogy. Within the elementary grade teacher sample, 34% of teachers in the Predominantly White districts had engaged in technology-related civics PD compared to 21% of teachers in non-predominately White districts, a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$). Further analysis also indicates that 66% of elementary grade teachers in Predominantly White districts had no or just one type of civics PD.

For middle and high school grade teachers in our sample, we found few differences in the reported frequency of civics PD by district demographics. Regarding type of civics PD offerings, we found a higher percentage of teachers in districts with a “low,” “middle,” or “high” proportion of economically disadvantaged students reporting that they participated in peer-mentoring by another teacher compared to coaching or mentoring by a specialist, administrator, or expert. Conversely, teachers in districts that serve “extremely high” proportions of economically disadvantaged students were significantly more likely to report working with a specialist, administrator, or expert coach. As shown in Figure 6 below, teachers in the districts with “extremely high” proportions of economically disadvantaged students were more significantly more likely to receive civics PD from a specialist, administrator, or expert than from another teacher (14% vs. 7% respectively), while teachers in districts with a “low” proportions of economically disadvantaged students had a reverse pattern,

reporting engaging with peer mentors more often than they reported working with an external or specialist PD.

Interviews corroborated the lack of civics-focused PD reported by teachers in the surveys. Some interview participants also pointed to lack of support as a barrier, noting that there were few, if any, school or district administrators who were aware of the 2018 HSS Framework or civics project legislation, or provided oversight of teachers’ implementation of these. In some cases, teachers explained that the lack of support came from school-level staffing challenges. As one novice civics teacher shared:

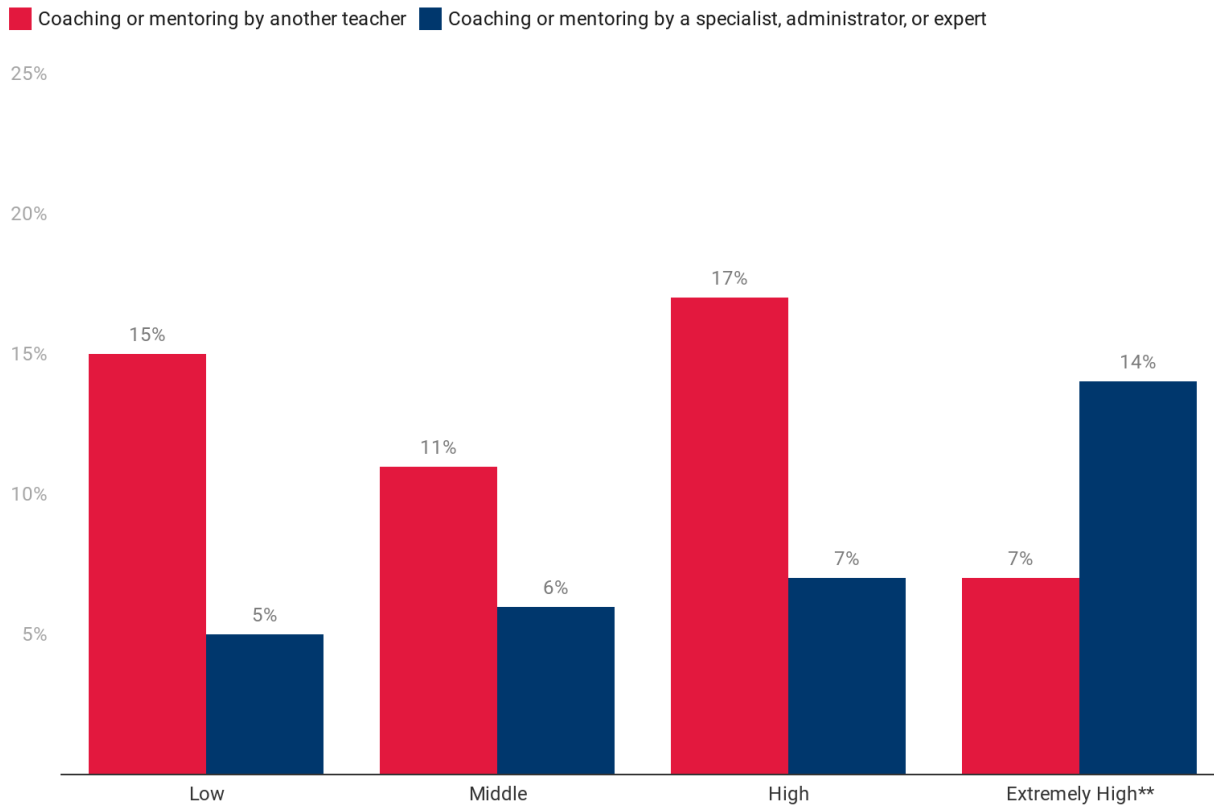
It’s my first year teaching civics and it’s just me. I’m the only eighth grade civics teacher. My school effectively doesn’t have a curriculum director . . . and I don’t have really a lot of oversight in my curriculum or any oversight in my curriculum from my department head or my administration. To be honest, if I hadn’t taken the initiative to find out that the frameworks were changing and what they were, I’d probably still be teaching World History I this past year, because I don’t think anyone else would have even noticed that we’re supposed to be doing something different.

A middle school teacher in western Massachusetts similarly emphasized that administrative support is necessary if teachers are to change their practices to align with the new Framework and civics legislation:

We’d never done civics. In my district, this was the first year we’ve done it and [for the] high school teachers [in my district], it’s not even on their radar. No matter how many times I’ve brought it up in department meetings they’re like, “Well, we’re not going to do anything until the principal tells us.”

The inconsistent and generally low frequency of district-level PD is compounded by the dearth of a civics focus in the roughly 50 higher education institutions approved to

Figure 6 Expert and Peer Mentoring Access by District Proportion of Economically Disadvantaged Students



Note. **Denotes differences are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

prepare teachers across Massachusetts.¹² While each university may vary in the types of concentrations and licensure paths they offer, about 40 have undergraduate programs and less than 40 have graduate programs. Of those, less than 10 specifically cite *social studies education* as a degree. According to the individual websites of the approximately 50 post-secondary institutions, only five universities offer teacher preparation courses that directly reference *civics*, *civic engagement*, *civic education*, or similar in course titles or descriptions. Social studies education program descriptions and missions posted online are almost devoid of references to civic education or knowledge; only one Massachusetts university has a program that explicitly makes mention of civic

education as a component of the mission of the social studies education program. While this does not mean that civics does not play a role in Massachusetts social studies teacher education programs in individual courses, civics is not emphasized at the universities approved to prepare teachers according to our review of websites.

Curricular and Instructional Classroom Resources

Massachusetts has a robust, longstanding ecosystem of organizations and institutes that provide civics professional learning and instructional resources for K–12 districts, schools, and educators. A majority of interview participants did utilize these organizations and found them—along with national civic education organizations—helpful in supporting their ability to teach civics. The organizations mentioned by interview participants included: iCivics, Generation Citizen,

¹² The list of approved Educator Preparation Program providers was retrieved in April 2020 from DESE: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/directory.html>.

the Massachusetts Center for Civic Education, Facing History and Ourselves, Democratic Knowledge Project, Teaching Tolerance, Bill of Rights Institute, U.S. Constitution Center, Discovering Justice, the Anti-Defamation League, and Primary Source. Many teachers mentioned using online and print news sources for students as well, such as Newsela, PBS, Scholastic, the Stanford History Education Group, and the Gilder Lehrman of American History.

Over half of interview participants drew upon resources from numerous organizations and/or worked with multiple nonprofits. As one teacher noted:

There's a lot of great civics groups out there. There's a lot to sift through. Facing History and Ourselves has been very helpful. iCivics has been tremendously helpful. As our primary text, we use the *We the People* book, which is the Center for Civic Education, so their resources have been helpful. It's kind of a combination of all of those things.

Some interview participants reported that the lack of school- or district-level administrative oversight gave teachers professional autonomy in curating and creating the civics resources they used in their classrooms. However, teachers also mentioned that this autonomy has led to variations in civics instruction implementation and exhaustion for teachers who constantly have to create resources. As a middle school teacher in the northeast stated:

My district has a very interesting approach to it where it's like we're artisans, we get to create what we want. We give you this big topic and you get to do it. That's great. But it's also mentally exhausting to consistently and constantly come up with materials, ideas, and projects.

A middle school teacher in western Massachusetts corroborated the amount of time and work teachers devote to developing appropriate civics materials:

You have to be very creative as a civics teacher . . . the issues I'm going to teach about in 2020 are not the same as in 2018, or when I taught the election in 2016. They're different, and you can't be complacent. You have to be constantly creating and researching materials. Sometimes you'll find materials that you can steal, sometimes you'll collaborate with coworkers, but a lot of the time you're going to have to create materials from scratch. . . . Teachers can get very, very irritable when they have to create materials from scratch because they don't think that they should have to always.

Collegial Collaboration and Support

About a third of the teachers interviewed reported that collaborating with fellow teachers is an important support in teaching civics. In some instances, supportive collaboration involved formal planning time, such as common planning in the schedule to create civic content, discuss best practices, and share resources. As a middle school teacher in the south-east explained:

We do collaborate as a civics team and eighth grade team where we can discuss projects. We do have our professional development days where we meet together in teams so we can discuss what's upcoming, what's working, what's not working, same thing with benchmark alignment, standards alignment. . . . With the new rollout for the civics curriculum, there was a lot of intentionality, and we need to get our teachers together.

For those whose schools did not provide time and space for formal collaboration, some teachers described supporting one another through informal networks. A middle school teacher in a low-income district shared:

We actively collaborate a lot. We're not really coached through it. We're not forced to. We hardly ever even get meeting spaces where

we can do it. We spend a lot of our time before and after school, and on the weekends, texting, calling, emailing, sharing, Google Drive, really trying to work with each other. If I'm going to give credit to anybody, I'm going to give credit to my coworkers.

About a third of interviewees reported receiving support from their school or district administration. This support came in the form of providing resources (e.g., time for workshops or planning, funding for field trips or curriculum) or curriculum directors/coordinators facilitating PD. As a middle school teacher in southeast Massachusetts shared:

The greatest resource we have is time, when we can get ahold of it, time for collective planning or when I can work with other teachers in my department to develop ideas that have been effective in their classrooms, talk about what's been effective in my classroom and then use that information to create more cohesive units moving forward. We do have a curriculum coordinator for the seventh grade level history. She's five through 12, but she works with us in the seventh grade department meeting. She's been a tremendous resource, especially with knowledge of what the mandates are from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Having that point person who's coming in with a large amount of information to begin with as far as what our mandates are, and then giving us that opportunity to actually meet collectively, has been huge.

In some instances, teachers found a supportive group of colleagues elsewhere. Teachers who did not have supportive collegial networks in their school or district resourcefully drew upon broader networks, including friends in other districts, social media (e.g., a civics teacher Facebook page, social studies Twitter chat), and educator networks from nonprofit PD providers such as the Democratic Knowledge Project and iCivics.

Implementation Barriers

Overall, the greatest barriers to implementation reported by teachers on the survey included not having enough time, too much pressure to teach other content, and not having enough civics resources. When broken down by grade band, differences emerged, with elementary school teachers perceiving more barriers overall than middle and high school teachers. Time, resources, and motivating students are the most frequent barriers reported by secondary teachers. Elementary school teachers resoundingly agree that too much pressure to incorporate other content and not having enough time are barriers to teaching civics. When compared to secondary teachers, elementary school teachers were far more likely to report that they lacked the training (79% vs. 44%), information (75% to 34%), and expertise (72% to 34%) to teach civics.

Time, Resources, and Professional Learning. Interviews revealed specific details about the lack of time and resources teachers reported regarding teaching civics. Time barriers included the lack of time in the schedule to actually teach civics and the lack of planning time to adopt and develop resources and units. Nearly all elementary school teachers interviewed did not have allocated time in the school day for social studies or had to split available time between social studies and science. A handful of secondary teachers also worried about finding time to incorporate student-led civics projects given all of the content they had to cover over the course of the year. Teachers interviewed also pointed to a lack of time to plan for civics and to participate in PD on the civics instructional practices. As one teacher in a northeast suburb noted:

The barriers would be not always having consistent time to sit and plan lessons without feeling like your feet are against the fire. It's that, what are we doing today? What's tomorrow's lesson? Let's just get two days ahead of ourselves . . . You're not 100% sure how it's going to unfold and you don't always have the time to sit and do a formal reflection . . . The time is the biggest problem.

Other teachers also noted in interviews that civic resources were available in the state, but they lacked the time to delve into those resources in meaningful ways. As a middle school teacher in a small town shared:

There are a lot of good programs out there and having the time to evaluate and what to bring into the class [is a challenge]. iCivics has got some good stuff. The Bill of Rights Institute has got some. Do you have the time to bring it all together? And then there are other groups I probably haven't heard of who have effective programming as well.

A high school teacher in further suggested that district funds would be better spent on collaborative professional learning than textbooks, stating:

This money that often comes from the state for these social studies changes tends to go towards large scale consultants or things like that. We don't necessarily as a classroom teacher get to see or feel . . . any sort of financial benefit from it other than maybe a new textbook. Here's 10 grand to buy some new textbooks and then that's it. It'd be great if they had brought in people once a month or once every semester or send us someone. Even if it's just other local high schools to collaborate and say, "What are you doing in civics? This is what we're doing. This is how we're doing it." We don't get that.

At the same time, other interview participants shared that they did not have enough resources, mainly because their districts didn't have the necessary funds. Teachers reported going without updated textbooks, technology to support students in conducting research, money for field trips to civic institutions in the state (particularly for teachers from western and central Massachusetts), and developmentally appropriate texts and primary sources, particularly for elementary and middle school students. As one middle school teacher shared:

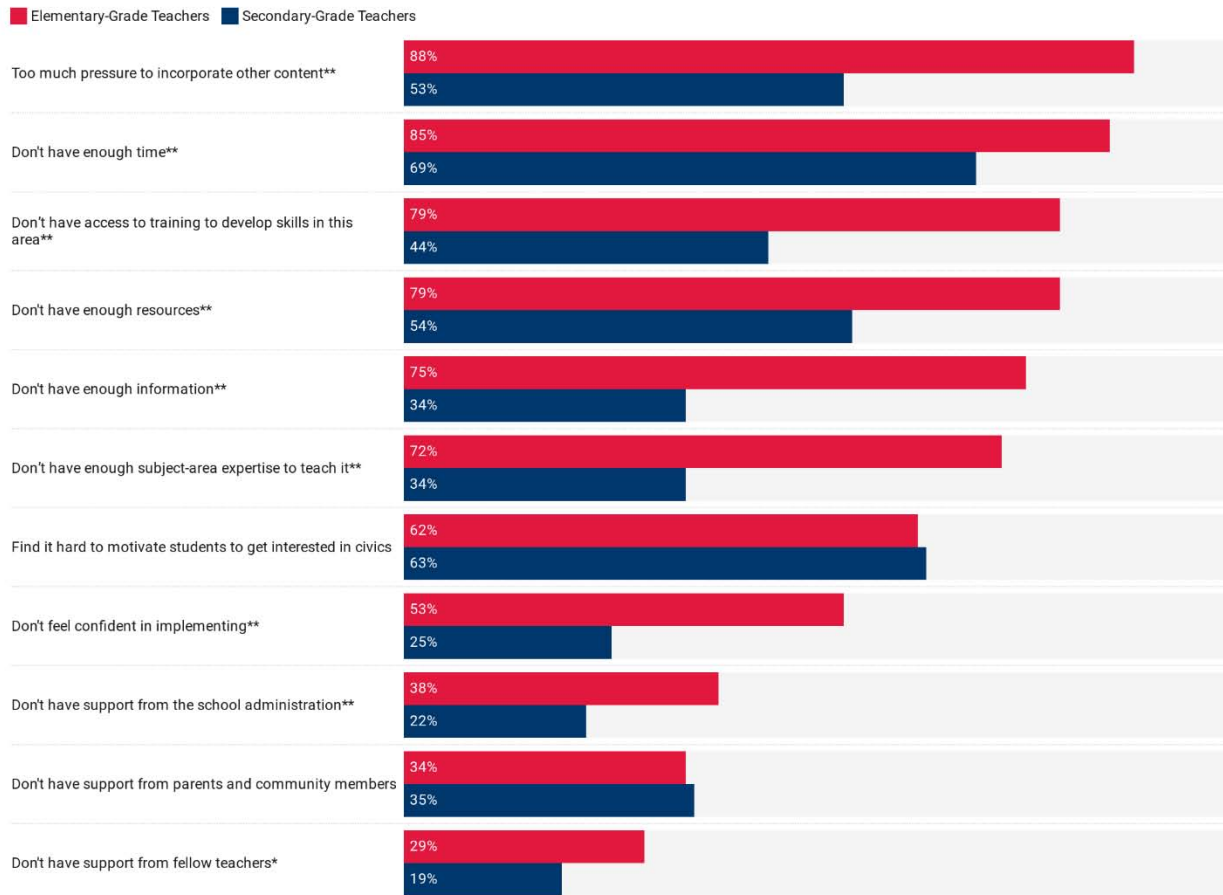
One challenge was that our district didn't want to buy us textbooks. I'm 99% sure that that was a financial thing. They felt that there were plenty of open source online materials and so that was kind of hard because I think historically we rely on textbooks to give a narrative or a backbone . . . That created a time suck where we had to go and find things that were appropriate for eighth graders or accessible to their reading level in eighth grade.

Undervalued Subject Area. Interview participants across the board reported civics, and social studies generally, as being undervalued, largely because it is not an MCAS-tested subject area and therefore under-prioritized compared to tested subject areas. In interviews, participants reported that the relatively low priority of social studies results in the time and professional learning barriers described above. For example, middle school teachers reported having to teach tested English Language Arts standards or math standards during social studies or social studies instructional time being used to pull students out of the classroom for interventions such as ESL support, academic intervention, speech services, or life skills. For example, a middle school teacher in low-income district shared:

There's a huge, huge emphasis on me helping with Common Core standards . . . My principal really did not place any amount of importance on civics . . . Huge, huge, huge amount of MCAS pressure. I do think the [Reading Informational] standards can be helpful . . . Cite evidence as well as draw inferences, we absolutely did that. But I had to dedicate more time and make close connections between Common Core and what I found to be most important.

Elementary school teachers who reported that they believe in the importance of civic education shared that they could not prioritize civics due to demands of the other subject areas. One teacher admitted, "It's certainly not a

Figure 7 *Teacher Reports of Perceived Barriers to Civics Implementation, by Grade Band*



Note. Percentage of teachers in elementary and secondary school that “agree” or “strongly agree” that they encounter each barrier to implementation.

*Denotes items in which the difference between elementary and secondary grade teachers’ responses were significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

** Denotes items in which the difference was significant at $p < 0.01$ level.

topic that’s at the forefront of our minds at the moment to be honest.” Another further corroborated:

I think a lack of focus, a lack of importance, lack of leadership . . . I see most of our professional development time used on literacy learning and math and even science, I’d say, ahead of social studies and in particular civics . . . [Social studies] is not even really allotted, it’s just maybe 20 minutes a day. But as long as you’re reading a book about the flag in literacy, that counts. So it’s just not a priority.

A third agreed, saying “All our PD most of it is centered around math and reading so just to have opportunities to have PD in some type of civics would be great.”

For middle school teachers, this situation leads to another barrier to implementation: students do not arrive with the requisite background knowledge. A middle school teacher shared:

I would say my number one obstacle is that in our district, up until about seventh grade, [social studies] is a completely neglected subject. I am talking tragically neglected. Because, at the elementary

level, . . . they have the same obstacles that we do. And there's so much pressure in our district on standardized test scores. So, elementary teachers are often pressured to neglect the social studies topics and teach English, math, and science prior. Or when they teach social studies topics, they're really teaching writing lessons, or they're really teaching reading lessons.

Another middle school teacher likewise explained, "A lot of the times we get students from elementary schools and they just have not been in a real social studies class before."

Political Trepidation. About a third of interview participants, including elementary, middle, and high school teachers, pointed to trepidation about teaching civics because of its political nature. Most of this apprehension was reported by teachers interviewed who worked in small towns. Of those interviewed, teachers in small towns particularly noted apprehension. Teachers at all grade band levels reported that the political nature of civics led them to tread extra carefully when discussing current events or to avoid discussion of controversial issues altogether. One high school teacher acknowledged this fear of getting in trouble for bringing up difficult topics, reporting:

[I'm] very, very cautious with [teaching] civil rights because of all the unrest in the country [at this time]. I was going to videotape all my lessons like I'd done earlier, but I was afraid that if I did that and I said even something remotely off the cuff it's now out in the video world. So I scaled it back and did a bunch of worksheets and stuff that I had which was kind of lame. But I also didn't want to offend anybody, or have my name in the paper for, "Mr. X said this."

Similarly, a middle school teacher who had not yet received professional status, meaning that s/he did not yet have tenure and increased job security, lamented:

It's really challenging to teach something where your entire basis of modern thinking and modern knowledge is based on the scientific method, but you can be accused of being politically biased just by using the scientific method or not, or asking your students to or not. I really had been avoiding all politics and current events in general since the 2016 election basically. It had been stressing me out so much that I just stopped paying attention, and then I heard I was probably going to have to be teaching [civics] . . . I was not excited . . . I was scared, and I made sure to let my department head and my school administrator know that I felt very unsafe teaching [civics], especially as a nonprofessional status teacher and I felt like I would face a lot of criticism. I feel like my school in general, but particularly our parent population, if you ask them what civics is they'd [say], "It means the pledge of allegiance and singing the national anthem, and being proud of America." I'm more academic and a historian about it.

Civics is fighting your government all the time, and wanting to change your government and participate [in] it, and one of the most civic things you can do is hold a protest. That's the most American thing you could do. That's how our country was founded, so it's been a challenge . . . Then of course the political nature of the town I'm in doesn't match with my own political views and nature. So balancing that and being aware of my own biases as well as my students' biases, and trying to teach them to see their biases without it coming across just trying to teach them that they're wrong [is challenging].

To understand these qualitative findings further, we conducted a supplemental analysis using total FTE enrollment and charter status as a way to categorize the size of

the city/town in which the district is located and understand whether district size is associated with teachers' practices related to student-centered teaching and learning. FTE Pupil enrollment size was binned into high, middle and low categories by creating cut-offs, and all charter schools were put into the "large" category. Results show little differences in teaching practices based on district size. Analysis indicates that, for elementary teachers, the district size seems to matter slightly; elementary school teachers in smaller districts are less likely to provide students with these experiences than teachers in larger districts but this difference was not significant ($F(2, 308) = 2.42, p < 0.10$). This pattern is not observed for middle school and high school grade teachers. In addition,

elementary teachers were statistically significantly less likely to provide students with real-world and interdisciplinary civic learning in their classroom ($F(1, 380) = 26.42, p < 0.001$) than secondary teachers. Analysis indicates that, for elementary teachers, the district size seems to matter slightly; elementary school teachers in smaller districts are less likely to provide students with these experiences ($F(2, 308) = 2.42, p < 0.10$) than elementary teachers in larger districts. This pattern is not observed for middle school and high school grade teachers. In addition, elementary teachers were generally less likely to provide students with real-world and interdisciplinary civic learning in their classroom ($F(1, 380) = 26.42, p < 0.001$).

Findings Section III

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CIVIC TEACHING COMPETENCY

Professional learning opportunities seem to be the most important factor associated with teachers' reported confidence in teaching civics, which in turn is associated with teacher reports of engaging in policy-aligned civic teaching practices. The demographic makeup of the districts was not associated with any reports of civic teaching competency scales (e.g., government and institutions content, inquiry), though district per-pupil expenditure was. Qualitative data suggest that, in many instances, teachers' self-initiative leads them to civics professional learning opportunities.

Our IRT analysis of teachers' self-reported beliefs and practices around teaching civics identified a set of factors that collectively represent the 2018 HSS Framework guiding principles, content, and practice standards, which we refer to as civic teaching competency:

1. government and institutions content;
2. inquiry;
3. real-world learning;
4. interdisciplinary learning;
5. culturally responsive pedagogy;
6. discussion-centered climate; and
7. student-centered climate

For each factor above, we examined whether that factor was associated with: 1) district-level student demographics and per-pupil expenditures; 2) understanding of the HSS Framework; 3) having access to civics PD opportunities at least once a year; 4) perceived barriers to teaching civics; and 5) confidence in teaching civics.

In all cases, regression analyses found that teachers' self-reported assessment of civic teaching competency was not related to district-level student demographics, including the proportion of economically disadvantaged students, the proportion of EL students, and whether districts were Predominately White. Crosstabs showed that civic teaching competency did not significantly differ based on the region of the state where teachers worked. The only significant district-level association between teacher's self-reports of their civics teaching competence was per-pupil expenditure, which was positively associated with the following IRT factors: elementary and middle and high school content ($p < 0.05$), elementary discussion-centered climate ($p < 0.05$), elementary inquiry ($p < 0.05$), and secondary real-world learning ($p < 0.05$).

The strongest and most consistent predictor for nearly all of the civic teaching IRT factors listed above was teacher reports of their confidence in teaching civics. For elementary school teachers, confidence was positively associated with culturally responsive pedagogy ($p < 0.01$), interdisciplinary learning ($p < 0.05$), student-centered climate ($p < 0.05$), discussion ($p < 0.01$), and real-world learning ($p < 0.05$). For middle and high school teachers, reported confidence in teaching civics was associated with content ($p < 0.01$), culturally responsive pedagogy

($p < 0.01$), interdisciplinary learning ($p < 0.01$), student-centered climate ($p < 0.01$), discussion-centered climate ($p < 0.01$), real-world learning ($p < 0.05$), and inquiry ($p < 0.01$). Familiarity with the 2018 HSS Framework was significantly associated with a handful of factors, including middle and high school content ($p < 0.05$) and elementary interdisciplinary learning ($p < 0.05$). Familiarity with civics project legislation was positively associated with elementary content ($p < 0.01$), middle and high school culturally responsive pedagogy ($p < 0.01$), and student-centered climate ($p < 0.05$).

Because confidence was the variable most consistently associated with civic teaching competency factors, we explored how teachers report how their confidence developed to begin with and in particular how it related to the availability of civics PD through a set of mediation analyses. Confidence was highly correlated with each of the civic teaching competency factors. When entered as a mediator after district demographic and resource variables were entered, confidence often accounted for a large proportion of the variance explained by the whole equation and turned previously significant demographic variables non-significant. In these cases, confidence completely mediated district demographic and resource variables. For other civic teaching competency factors, confidence did not make all other predictors non-significant but made them less salient, therefore acting as a partial mediator. Table 12 displays all mediation analyses run by grade level band. (See Appendix E for a complete description and tables of the mediation analysis.)

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER MEDIATION RESULTS

For elementary school teachers, PD was not correlated with the inquiry or content domains. Therefore, mediation could not be tested. Further, we found that civics PD that elementary school teachers in our sample experience is not correlated with their familiarity with the 2018 HSS Frameworks or civics project legislation. This finding suggests that civics PD may not currently include explicit guidance on how the HSS Framework affects instruction.

However, frequency of civics PD was correlated with culturally responsive pedagogy and discussion-centered climate. For the two factors that were correlated with PD

(“culturally responsive pedagogy” and “discussion”), mediation occurred in all cases. This finding means that PD is associated with teachers’ confidence about: 1) creating an inclusive and open classroom climate; 2) taking measures to ensure that students of diverse backgrounds feel comfortable expressing their opinions, beliefs, and experiences; and 3) helping develop civic responsibility and commitment among students.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS MEDIATION RESULTS

Unlike the elementary school analysis, for our sample of middle and high school teachers, PD was correlated with the following civic teaching competency factors: inquiry, government and institutions content, student-centered climate, and interdisciplinary learning. PD was unrelated to discussion, culturally responsive pedagogy, or real-world learning.

Confidence partially mediated the connection between PD and the outcomes of interest, meaning that PD remained a significant predictor of each civic teaching competency factor after accounting for confidence and perceived barriers. A complete mediation was observed for content, student-centered climate, and inquiry domain scales, meaning that PD was no longer a significant predictor of these civic teaching competency outcomes after accounting for confidence.

INTERVIEW INSIGHTS INTO FACILITATORS OF CIVIC TEACHING COMPETENCY

Qualitative data corroborated the quantitative findings that frequency of district-level professional learning opportunities reported by teachers is significantly associated with multiple civic teaching competency factors, derived from teachers’ self-reports of their civics instruction. Interviews provided an in-depth understanding of the aspects of professional learning opportunities that teachers find helpful and how teachers learn about and participate in these professional opportunities in the first place. The majority of interview participants mentioned PD, nonprofit organizations, and classroom resources as facilitating their perceived will and capacity to teach civics. Teachers interviewed reported that personal and interpersonal factors, including self-initiative (i.e., taking it upon themselves to find and create resources),

Table 12 *Mediation Analysis of PD and Confidence*

Civic Teaching Competency Domain	Scale Name	Elementary Grade Teacher Sample (K–5)		Middle/High School Grade Teacher Sample (6–12)	
		Related to PD Access	Mediated by Confidence	Related to PD Access	Mediated by Confidence
Inquiry and Informed Action	<i>Elementary Inquiry</i>	No	N/A		
	<i>Secondary Inquiry</i>			Yes	Yes, Partial
Civic Content	<i>Government and Institutions Content (All Grades)</i>	Marginal	Yes, Complete	Yes	Yes, Complete
	<i>Citizenship Principles (Elementary Only)</i>	Marginal	Yes, Complete		
Democratic and Supportive Classroom Climate	<i>Student-centered Climate</i>	No	N/A	Yes	Partial
	<i>Discussion-centered Climate</i>	Yes	Yes, Complete	No	N/A
Real-world Learning	<i>Interdisciplinary Learning</i>	No	N/A	Yes	No
	<i>Elementary Real-world Learning</i>	No	N/A		
	<i>Secondary Real-world Learning</i>			No	N/A
	<i>Culturally Responsive Pedagogy</i>	Yes	Yes, Complete	No	N/A

collegial support, and personal experience (e.g., undergraduate coursework) tended to facilitate their desire and ability to teach civics and to seek these resources out.

Interview data further suggests that PD alone doesn't necessarily increase the level of civic teaching efficacy that teachers report. Both the structure and content of PD matters. Teachers interviewed reported civics PD was most beneficial when it included the following: planning time, including time to revise instructional units to align with new standards; collaborating with and learning from other educators; content and material that can be used directly in the classroom; and PD designed as multiple meetings over a period of time (i.e., not one time only). As a middle school teacher in the northeast explained about the civics PD they participated in:

Most of [the professional development] had to do with the [student-led civics] project. The information that my colleague and I really needed was what do we do with this massive project? How are people doing it? [The professional development] was super helpful because they had teachers in attendance who had been running projects like that for years, sometimes at different grade levels. What the kids are supposed to do with the civics project is pretty elaborate. That was a lot of what we talked about . . . how do you let students come in to do it? What kinds of feedback do they need from their teacher? What role do you play [as a teacher]]? . . . Really the most helpful thing was to talk to teachers in a mixed group who have done something like this before about concerns that different people have thought of.

An elementary school principal further described the importance of professional learning that occurs over a period of time and that provides both content resources and pedagogical strategies:

I think you have to bring a person in, help the [school] community connect with that person, and then allow them to go do their work, as opposed to any one shot deal. When we worked

with Facing History, they did a great job of that. They come in, and they come in again, and they come in again. It's not just working with you once . . . They have that instructional approach so it's not just, "Here are your resources for teaching the Holocaust," but also "Here also are some strategies that you can use in the classroom to create dialogue to bring out different perspectives." I think you have to blend those two things together. What's the content? And what's the instructional strategy? And you have to be super practical with teachers so they can use it in their classroom tomorrow.

Beyond PD, the interview data suggests that personal factors may be related to teachers' self-reports of their confidence in teaching civics and their agency in seeking out civic education learning opportunities and resources. Multiple teachers noted that their own personal experience motivated them to teach civics despite the barriers and provided them with the confidence and background knowledge they needed to do so. This included having civics as a part of their own K–12 educational experience; majoring in subjects related to history, government, or civics in college; coming from a politically active family; or simply having a personal interest in the topic. An urban elementary school teacher, who, of her own volition, developed and taught a civil rights unit for her 2nd grade students, explained how her college undergraduate experience majoring in African American Studies built her confidence to do this development. Another high school educator from western Massachusetts noted:

If I didn't truthfully come from a family that was politically active in local politics, I don't think I'd have half the knowledge that I have with these things. . . . Some of my friends, colleagues, who teach at my school don't have a local history because they're not from here. I was born, raised, and went to school in the town I teach in. Some of them are from all over, so there's not that sort of institutional or local history understanding.

In addition, many of the teachers interviewed explained that they take it upon themselves to seek out opportunities and resources for teaching civics and creating curriculum, often utilizing an array of materials from a variety of nonprofits in and beyond Massachusetts. Some teachers did so with the blessing of their building administration. For example, a middle school teacher in the northeast shared:

I was pretty much on my own on this one. And my administration was very supportive. They gave me the money to go to Generation Citizen, they let me participate in the Democratic Knowledge Project. They were very supportive. But there wasn't any initiative [by] the school to do any of this. It was very much me leading it, and I don't want that to come across as pompous. I just want to communicate that I guess a lot of times, teachers are taking the initiative to do things.

Another middle school teacher working in the central part of the state described creative ways that she gained access to PD that her district couldn't afford, putting in a lot of extra work and time to gain the knowledge she felt was necessary to implement student-led civics projects:

If your school district meets certain ethnic and financial criteria you get [certain PD] programs for free, and if you don't then you can pay thousands of dollars for the program. My school can't afford it and we don't qualify to get it for free, so I've seen them at some conferences . . . I heard about them just through doing my own Google research, and they have a civics day that's at the Statehouse. They have one for the end of the fall semester and they have one at the end of the spring semester, so I signed up as a guest judge who judged the student projects and my school counted it as a conference day, so I could do some recon and see what the projects were like. Since my school can't afford the program and we don't get it for free, I was like, I'll figure out how these projects work and what they look

like and what the process is, just by talking to the students who are doing them when I judge their projects.

A middle school teacher in the northeast part of the state likewise explained:

There's a lot of great civics groups out there. There's a lot to sift through. Facing History and Ourselves has been very helpful. iCivics has been tremendously helpful. As our primary text, we use the *We The People* book, which is the Centers for Civic Education, so their resources have been helpful. It's a combination of all of those things. Then just having the time to sit and look at the resources, put everything together. That time isn't always that easy to find during the day. A lot of that work teachers often do before and after school and outside of the school day hours. But by and large, I feel our district has been very supportive of that. A lot of it's you got to go and look for it. So we've gone and looked. We found stuff.

However, other educators did this work without support from their administration. An elementary school teacher in an urban district describes how she independently created a developmentally appropriate civil rights unit for her young learners:

I noticed that there would be a lot of schools that would have Black History Month happen and would have nothing or no curriculum about it. So, I took it upon myself to be like, "Well, it may not happen during Black History Month, but we're going to have a unit about this, because I think this is important." So, that's when I started creating that unit. Then I've been teaching it through the different grade levels as well, adapting it for either third grade or second grade, but the content essentially still remains the same . . . I joined a program last school year called Passion to Teach that helped me to fine-tune that unit. It's

a program where teachers are able to cultivate a passion project in terms of building a curriculum . . . So, I took my curriculum that I already had, and I entered the program with it, and I was able to have a little bit more connections with people and get more information to help fine-tune the unit . That was something that I had to seek out on my own, because there isn't a lot of district hel. . . [Civics is] something that you have to be really self-driven to want to teach it and find the materials and resources to teach social studies in the district, at least at the elementary school level.

Many teachers also take initiative in directly engaging with community organizations to provide real-world civic learning experiences for students. For example, an elementary teacher in the northeast shared, “I think many of the teachers that I work with make a real point of becoming as involved in the community as possible and forming those important relationships whether it’s with the library or at the local history museum that is being established in the community.” Examples of outreach that teachers across the K–12 spectrum noted included engaging with local and state government officials (e.g., selectmen, representatives) and local community organizations, such as history museums and nonprofits doing work related to student projects. Importantly, educators noted how outreach takes dedicated time outside of class and oftentimes years of cultivating relationships.

Finally, descriptive data from the decision-maker survey further indicate that, together, PD and personal background may increase the confidence of these decision-makers to support civic teaching and learning. The most frequent support that decision-makers reported that helped them support teachers in integrating civics into instruction included: information received from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education” ($n = 73$, 68%); attending PD or trainings focused on civic education ($n = 53$, 47%); prior background knowledge in civics ($n = 53$, 47%); and experience as a social studies or civics teacher ($n = 48$, 42%).

WHAT MAY BE SHAPING CIVIC TEACHING PRACTICES? SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

In exploring what may be shaping the civic teaching practices of the educators in our sample, a few themes emerged from the mediation analysis and qualitative interviews. First, the relationship between PD and teacher practices related to incorporating civic content, inquiry, and informed action corroborated qualitative findings that show that for those middle and high school teachers who participate in civics PD, a major focus appears to be the content and practice standards in the 2018 HSS Framework and guidance on the required civics project.

Second, the majority of elementary school teachers lack access to information and guidance about the HSS Framework and PD opportunities that help them implement civic teaching practices described in the 2018 HSS Framework or achieve content mastery in a way that allows them to incorporate specific concepts and content related to civic and government institutions and systems. When elementary teachers *do* receive civics PD at least once a year, their reported sense of confidence in their ability to provide students with high quality civic education is greater than the level of confidence reported by those teachers who receive less frequent training (including no training), particularly in domains such as culturally responsive teaching and creating a classroom climate where students can engage in meaningful discussions about various issues even when they disagree.

Third, it is notable how the frequency of civics PD opportunities correlated with different civic teaching competency factors when comparing the elementary school teacher sample to the secondary school teacher sample. In particular, the secondary teacher analysis suggests that, although these teachers reported more civics PD opportunities, they may not be receiving the training necessary to ensure that they can support students from diverse backgrounds and civic experiences to become fully prepared civic actors. In our analysis, middle and high school teachers’ access to PD—while associated with content and inquiry scales—was

not related to scales in the democratic classroom climate and culturally responsive pedagogy domains. In contrast, for elementary school teachers in our sample, civics PD was associated with their self-reports of confidence in fostering discussion-centered climate and utilizing culturally responsive pedagogy. These differences could be due to differences in the content focus of the PD that elementary and secondary teachers receive.

Finally, while the mediation analysis pointed to civics PD as explaining a portion of variance in teachers' sense of

confidence and civic teaching competency factors, interview data suggests that the ways in which teachers access civics PD is haphazard. While some teachers have the professional and fiscal support of district and school administrators, many are seeking out opportunities on their own, meaning that students may not be consistently assigned to teachers who have the time and passion to seek out opportunities that will improve their civic teaching practices.

Findings Section IV

NEEDED SUPPORTS

TEACHING CIVICS PER NEW GUIDELINES

Open-ended survey and interview questions asked educators what supports they need to effectively teach civics in ways that aligns to the HSS Framework and student-led civics project requirements. Through responses from open-ended survey and interview questions, the following themes emerged around what those Massachusetts educators who participated in the study say they need to teach civics effectively: PD, curricular and instructional resources, and support for student-led civics projects. These self-identified areas of support correspond with the quantitative finding that PD participation and implementation of the 2018 HSS Framework was greater than that for student-led civics projects.

Professional Development

Teachers point to the need for more professional learning opportunities for civics. Teachers shared descriptions of the PD formats and topics that would be most beneficial to their instruction. First, teachers described the *opportunity for structured collaboration across schools and districts on the new Framework and civics projects*. Elementary, middle, and high school teachers reported that it would be helpful for them to collaborate with other teachers teaching the same grades and are especially interested in talking with civics educators beyond their school walls. For example, one survey participant stated that teachers were most in need of “meaningful professional development,” explaining:

When the standards change, we don't get a copy of them nor do we get time to look them over and collaborate and plan on how to teach them. Having an opportunity to dig into the standard with other teachers and coordinate and plan units and lessons would be a huge benefit to teachers and students.

A middle school teacher in the northeast likewise noted:

I think that when you're with a room full of educators, allowing for them to share ideas is incredibly important. That's how I've learned how to become a better teacher, is watching teachers, talking to teachers, and listening to teachers . . . just making sure things are relevant and giving teachers time to talk. All the best PDs have been the ones that have allowed us to talk and not have to sit and listen to somebody else talk for an hour or two hours. Even though they're probably experts, and they know a lot, I think that talking to colleagues and people around the state is important.

In addition, teachers see the benefit of collaboration as a loose accountability mechanism, to check in with one another to see whether they were actually implementing best practices. As a high school teacher in western Massachusetts shared:

I think the dialogue would be important because I want to know where my colleagues are struggling and what they don't know. What my strengths are might be somebody

else's weaknesses. I would love to . . . just create a dialogue. Allow us to get together more than just once. Because in my high school of 1,000 kids, there are six social studies teachers, and there is no one really that can say, "By the way, you've done it wrong for two years." I'd love to . . . say, "We're doing it this way," and have the [other] local high schools around here say, "We're doing it this way." Then, "Why are you doing it that way?"

This desire came up particularly for educators who were the only civics or social studies teacher in their school. As a middle school teacher at a public charter school acknowledged, "I don't know other civics teachers. So maybe some time for us to get together . . . some communication, some cross pollination. I do feel like . . . in schools, [civics teachers are] often kind of isolated."

Teachers also point to the need for PD that gives *time and support on how to use available civics resources*. As an elementary teacher stated, "I just wish we'd have a lot of training in everything including civics, from the resources that are out there to everything. Pinterest is nice but it doesn't always thoroughly cover everything." A veteran middle school teacher teaching ethnically diverse students pointed to the need for PD on how to find resources that represent a range of cultures and perspectives:

Specific professional development around a more equitable classroom and more equitable curriculum. I think that's the other component for people my age is our exposure curriculum-wise and content-wise was probably limited. The wells that we have to draw on to do a better job by our kids usually means doing a lot of our own investigative work, which is going to follow our own biases and pathways. I think it's important for people that think about what's taught in university campuses to prospective teachers, what are the types of curriculum that we should be exposed to before we go teaching it our own students? What kind of professional development workshops from

a content standpoint should be important? Where can I access a more diverse array of primary sources? Maybe I know of some, but there might be others that are sitting under my nose and I just can't find them because I just have never been exposed.

Other civics-related topics that teachers want PD to cover include: facilitating discussions of controversial issues for students of all ages; anti-racist educational practices and content; culturally relevant pedagogy; strategies to incorporate civics across disciplines; civic content knowledge; and, strategies to implement student-led civics projects.

Curricular and Instructional Resources

Teachers also pointed to a need for resources that they can use in their classroom. Notably, elementary and middle school teachers pointed to the need for resources that are *appropriate* for the grade levels that teachers teach and designed specifically for young learners. In both interviews and surveys, teachers noted a lack of civics classroom resources designed for elementary grades. As an elementary school teacher noted: "Everything is middle and up." An elementary school principal who was able to purchase a civic education curriculum for her teachers lamented that even this age-appropriate curriculum wasn't robust enough, covering only a few units that did not span across the school year.

A number of 8th grade teachers reported feeling similar to elementary educators. As one survey respondent shared:

I know the eighth grade teachers in my building have had to start their curriculum from scratch, trying this book, this website etc. It would seem some straightforward 8th grade level textbooks, websites, etc. would be really helpful. Eighth grade is a tough age to be teaching Supreme Court cases both in terms of understanding and interest.

Another 8th grade teacher vehemently requested:

A workshop that combines [project based learning] with civic action project steps that is NOT

full of elementary, single section/classroom courses. Projects that call for experts become cumbersome in my district because we have ten sections of civics and need to be “lockstep” with major projects and assessments. Every example of how [project based learning] works only focuses on ONE section or classroom, and I REALLY need to see how you manage this times four. . . . Often teacher-lecturers are from high school and those resources are not always appropriate for middle school. Grade 8 civics teachers NEED age appropriate resources from OTHER Grade 8 teachers, preferably who have at least five years of classroom experience.

Teachers also reported that they would appreciate lists of *Framework-aligned curated resources*. The need for such lists reflects the time crunch that teachers feel. As one survey respondent shared, “There are almost too many resources. When people are so exhausted from the professional and personal demands of this spring,¹³ and are trying to recover their health, I wish Massachusetts could give us a “The best of.”” Educators would also appreciate resources that are directly aligned to the HSS Framework. As a middle school teacher shared:

Having materials that are tied to the specific standards that we can use when we’re designing our own lessons and curriculum would be helpful. Having maybe discussion themes tied to the standards. Those are things we all had to make on our own as well . . . Some of the standards are very, very vague. Having some more specific historical context that they would like taught along with some of the specific standards, that would be helpful. I found I would be going in one direction with a standard and teaching parts of the historical context behind it, but the civics teacher at the other campus could be going in a totally

different direction, and his kids could be learning something completely different, even though we were both teaching the same standard.

A middle school teacher in the northeast likewise noted:

I really think that there is a new emphasis with this round of standards on local and state government, which is great but there’s not a ton of stuff out there because every locality and state have different governments. I think having more resources for Massachusetts, the Constitution in Massachusetts and that kind of stuff would help us spread out that unit and really make it more enriching.

An elementary teacher in the northeast addressed both of these concerns: the need for standards-aligned curriculum that took the onus off of the teacher:

This notion of grow your own, it’s time consuming, it’s labor intensive, and you’re left wondering is it really going to be that effective? I just always think, if we had new standards in math, reading or writing in 2018, we would not be sitting here entering into the 2020-2021 school year wondering what in the world we’re going to do.

Finally, a handful of teachers in central and western Massachusetts pointed to the need for funding to take students on field trips. As a high school teacher in central Massachusetts shared:

The Edward Kennedy Institute, where they do that mock Senate, that’s great if you can get there. You know how expensive busing is? It’s one thing if you’re a school in Boston. You can hop on the [MBTA], but where I teach . . . it’s just an astronomical amount of money. And when you divide it by the amount of kids that are going to attend then each kid has to spend \$100. It just doesn’t happen. . . . It’s so hard to get that funding

¹³ This interview took place during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, which is what the interview participant is referring to regarding personal health demands.

[for trips]. Everything's tight. Everybody's tight. No one has money anymore for anything . . . And so a little bit of [funding] might be helpful . . . Especially for central and western schools that don't have easy access to Boston.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENT-LED CIVICS PROJECTS

Teachers expressed trepidation about the new civics project requirement. Concerns included that projects in 8th grade are not “developmentally appropriate,” projects are not sustainable for teachers who have multiple sections of students, and that the curriculum is too crowded to fit projects in. To that end, teachers are requesting: 1) more training on how to implement the student-led projects; and 2) exemplars of civics projects from a range of school communities. In other words, teachers need practical guidance on and examples of how to plan for and implement projects up in their classroom. The following quotes illustrate how teachers feel they could best be supported in getting student-led civics projects successfully off of the ground:

- » “I think that teachers could really use some exemplar civics projects to take a look at. This is a very different large undertaking. Many of us would really like to see some successful student led projects with all the components to wrap our heads around. I also think that it will be challenging to implement this project next year coming off of six months of no in-person school. We are going to have to deal with a lot of issues as students return to the classroom and I am not sure now is the time to implement a new large project like this. I think teachers would appreciate another year to try-out and pilot projects before full implementation.”
- » “Access to either modules we could look through or things that maybe even the department puts together that are resources for us, even if they start to do highlights or spotlights of teachers who have already started the civics [projects]. There are some districts that have had American history in eighth grade for so long that the civics switch was more

seamless for them because they had more experience. Let's get some highlights and some short little mentor videos of how these teachers did a project. I want to see practical examples. A lot of examples are charter schools with small classes or elementary, self-contained classrooms where you can do a big community project because you only have 25 kids doing it. There [are] 200 kids in our grade. All three of us have to do this project. How do we do a community project without tapping out all the resources before every kid gets an opportunity? I just feel like professional development oftentimes gives very impractical examples of these mentor teachers doing these great things because their classrooms are not the same as our classrooms. I need to see a teacher in a small town like I work in.”

CONSIDERATIONS FOR CIVIC EDUCATION AMID REMOTE LEARNING

Schools across Massachusetts shuttered mid-March and switched over to remote learning for the duration of the school year. For obvious reasons, this changed how and what educators taught. Some form of remote learning will be a likely reality for schools, at least in the near future. Therefore, we asked educators to provide insights on the challenges and successes of teaching civics amid a pandemic and in virtual settings.

Challenges

Sixty-one percent of teachers responded that they were teaching less civics to prioritize other content. A myriad of challenges emerged for teachers when learning moved online in March due to school closures. Some challenges were civics specific, while others were potentially problematic for teachers of all content areas. Key barriers discussed include challenges engaging students, various difficulties in conducting conversations, civics not being prioritized, an inability to teach civics in-depth, and, in some cases, an inability to teach civics at all.

Generally, teachers found engaging students during remote learning to be one of the most daunting challenges with which to contend. Teachers' perception of engagement

challenges varied. Some teachers noted involvement suffered due to the online format when students were able to turn off their cameras and microphones and not participate. In many cases, attendance was not mandatory, so students simply did not have to show up. Some teachers stated that access to technology or social-emotional issues students were contending with adversely impacted engagement as well.

Teaching remotely also curtailed two cornerstones of Massachusetts's comprehensive civics approach: student-led civics projects and a democratic classroom climate that facilitates open discussion. Ten teachers interviewed divulged that they had either pared down or entirely stopped student-led civics projects when schools went remote. Teachers lamented, "The experience of creating the project was lost" and "I was getting ready to get to that level, but the virus got in the way."

The difficulty of having conversations and discussions online was a frequently cited challenge as well. The online format was not conducive to discussion, many teachers claimed, and "not being able to talk . . . was the hardest because such a big part of civics is hearing from them [students] and letting them ask each other questions and politely disagree and get into things and that was completely lost." There was some overlap here with challenges related to student engagement or attendance during remote learning. However, for many teachers, it was the nature of online learning that made discussions too difficult to organize and facilitate effectively. Another component at play was content related, that many teachers found discussions they may typically engage in with students in person to be too controversial or political and did not want to potentially upset parents or administrators. As an elementary school teacher in western Massachusetts shared "Once you put it on camera, all bets are off." Similarly, a high school teacher in the same region stated, "I shied away from teaching about more controversial issues during this time because . . . the idea of trying to address a really controversial subject . . . I couldn't do that distance learning."

Several teachers felt that in the shift to remote learning, civics was not a priority, a message they received explicitly or implicitly. Some cited a lack of time in general as a factor, noting they were unable to cover all planned content, or

that teachers were not able to go as in-depth as they usually would. A high school teacher stated that "Truthfully, I was, from the time of the pandemic . . . until now is our last day, I wasn't able to do really much of anything with civics . . . because there wasn't time." Others contended that civic education was an "afterthought" or that more emphasis was placed on continuing instruction in other subjects, such as math and English. In some cases, this situation translated to teachers severely limiting civic education curriculum and even engaging in no civic content at all once learning moved online. "I've taught zero civics from March 13th on," one elementary school teacher admitted.

Successes

While the challenges outweighed the successes, teachers did share some positive experiences and outcomes from remote learning, largely less content based and more grounded in social-emotional learning of some kind. Critical successes included giving students a voice and making connections.

Several teachers we interviewed spoke of online learning's ability to engage students who may have been more reluctant to participate in-person. One middle school teacher shared, "The cool, weird thing about the pandemic is a lot of kids who are not vocal in class tend to be more open to communicating through Google Classroom feedback or the chat feature of Zoom . . . the dynamics of the discussions changed, and it was good for certain types of personalities and learning styles." Another middle school indicated remote learning allowed teachers to take on more of a facilitator role, and students to be more independent learners, and a middle school teacher in the southeast discussed the importance of leveraging their relationship with students. To that end, a third middle school teacher expressed, "I felt like I was making a lot of one-on-one contact in a way that I hadn't been able to do in the classroom."

For many educators, remote learning allowed for more connections with students and families, which helped foster a climate that addressed students' social and emotional needs. An elementary school teacher shared, "We took advantage of what kids were hearing or seeing or potentially listening to in their households and tried to give them a place to share and have a voice for that" in the online forum. A

middle school principal in the northeast pointed to successes in school-home communication as a result of the shift online, explaining:

Each teacher, I asked them to make a PowerPoint slideshow of their final unit that we could share with students, and we could share with parents. We were super transparent about what was going to be required, how it was going to flow, and what was the schedule.

A middle school teacher observed this was not just beneficial for academics, but for students' social-emotional well-being, saying:

I made connections with kids that I wouldn't have otherwise if we were in the building. I certainly had kids reach out to me . . . that didn't understand something and asked questions . . . where they would have sat in the back of the room and just sat there quietly and just shut down . . . They didn't do that.

Likewise, a middle school teacher highlighted the supportive role teachers played in students' well-being: "We peppered way more social, emotional pieces into it. I hosted what I call the 'Feel Good Friday.' I shared wellness videos. I allowed kids the ability to post in Google Classroom and share what was going on with them. So, there was a bigger focus on wellness and cutting kids slack, and giving kids grace."

Finally, due to this new reality of remote learning, teachers asked for more online resources for teaching civics and for training on strategies to teach civics online. One survey respondent noted that they would like "Easily accessible online resources that included instructional videos and a variety of platforms for students to engage in a civics discussion." Another wrote, "I would say one thing that would work right away would be instruction (PD) in the details of the online resources we are using. It oftentimes feels that we are unaware of how much more helpful these programs would be if they were explained to us."

Conclusions and Recommendations

AREAS OF PROMISE

Our findings highlight numerous “bright spots” for civic education in Massachusetts. First, across the board, teachers of all grade levels and school and district administrators have a **strong belief in the importance of civic education** that is inquiry based and builds on students interests and experiences. This conclusion was most evident in our survey scales on educators’ beliefs about civics, where nearly all teachers and school and district decision-makers agreed that students can make a difference in their communities, inquiry-informed instruction should be a part of civic education, and students’ social-emotional development in schools matter. Likewise, in interviews, the majority of teachers, when asked, expressed that their role was a *facilitator* of knowledge rather than a transmitter of knowledge. This belief about the role of teachers is crucial for allowing for discussions of issues that students may hold diverse perspectives and for implementing civics projects that are truly student-led.

Second, we **did not find significant differences in civic teaching practices in districts serving students with different demographics**. Although there has been a widely documented civic opportunity gap that disadvantages students in low income communities and communities of color (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Levison, 2010), in our study, teachers’ self-reported practices did not differ based on the proportions of students their districts serve from different student groups, including the proportion of economically disadvantaged students, proportion of English learners, or the proportion of students from diverse racial/ethnic groups (e.g., not White). In instances where civics policy awareness and practices did differ based on the demographic makeup of district student bodies, a higher prevalence of awareness and practices tended to be in districts that serve greater proportions of students of color and greater proportions of low-income students. This situation may be in part due to the work being done in the Commonwealth to intentionally provide such districts with support for civics instruction. For example, the Civics Project Trust Fund, established in the 2018 Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement, is meant to “focus on underserved communities across the Commonwealth, including those school districts with high concentrations of economically disadvantaged students.” In addition, among civics PD providers in the state, there has been increased awareness of cost considerations for districts and waived or lower fee services for those who cannot otherwise afford training. Teachers in racially diverse or low-income school districts may also realize the urgency of teaching civics for students who do experience institutionalized biases, and therefore make a concerted effort to do so.

Of note, our data could be masking “big city” biases, whereby smaller cities in the state are not receiving the same resources as the largest districts. In addition, our data does not account for school-level inequities that occur in assigning students to classes and teachers or the lower amount of civics instruction those students receive who are pulled out of social studies classes for interventions. Yet, overall, these lack of differences among teachers from districts that serve students with very different demographic profiles may provide credence to the notion that demographics is not destiny. Rather, intentional investments of resources can drive changes to teacher practice and, ultimately, student outcomes.

Third, **high quality professional development and resources** aligned to the new Framework and civics project guidance do exist and show promise of influencing teacher reports of their civic teaching competency. When teachers have access to civics-focused PD,

they report greater confidence as civics instructors. Confidence, in turn, was positively associated with prevalence of civics practices promoted in the 2018 HSS Framework and Civics Project Guidebook, as measured by the civic teaching competency IRT factors. This situation suggests that civics PD opportunities offered across the Commonwealth may target different aspects of civic teaching competency espoused by the 2018 HSS Framework and civics legislation and that the time and money spent to participate in these professional learning activities are worth the investment.

ONGOING AREAS FOR GROWTH

Incorporating Civics into Elementary Schools

Despite the 2018 HSS Framework guiding principle that every student Pre-K through 12 deserves to study history and social science, elementary school teachers are less aware of the new civics policies and how these policies impacts their instruction, report infrequent implementation of civic teaching practices, participate less in civics PD, and perceive more barriers to implementing civics compared to their middle and high school teacher contemporaries. As interview data suggests, the dearth of civics instruction in the younger grades is largely due to a lack of prioritization, as time to teach social studies is condensed in order to accommodate tested subject areas and there is less PD that focused on civics content compared to other core subject areas. The lack of civics instruction in elementary school thwarts vertical alignment: as numerous middle school teachers reported in interviews, students do not come into their classes with the requisite civic background knowledge.

Student-led Civics Projects

Currently, there is less awareness and implementation of student-led civics projects in middle schools and high schools compared to changes that have been made to courses and curriculum that align with the 2018 HSS Framework. While the majority of participants interviewed at the middle school level described how their school or district had changed their course scope and sequence to teach civics in the 8th grade, fewer had dived into implementing student-led civics projects. This finding does make sense given that the timing of data collection was the spring and summer following the

expected implementation of the HSS Framework, and that schools were not required to implement student-led civics projects until the subsequent 2020–2021 school year. At the same time, open-ended survey responses and interviews suggest that teachers have varied concerns about how to implement these civics projects. This could be because civics projects do provide a departure from more traditional forms of teaching history, government, and civics, or that teachers are generally less informed about the details of what student-led civics projects should look like.

Depth of Civics Teacher Competency

Survey and interview data show that while middle and high school teachers generally reported engaging in inquiry and creating classroom climates open to discussion, they reported engaging in deeper levels of practice with less frequency, such as investigating root causes of issues, taking action on research-informed plans, and engaging students in discussions around *controversial* issues beyond encouraging students to generally share opinions. This situation could be because current PD is focused on other areas of civic teaching competency (e.g., integrating civic content) or that teachers have less comfort level in these areas.

Systemic Intentional Structures

In our sample of interviewees, teachers often were seeking out professional learning opportunities and cobbling together classroom resources individually. While this shows teachers' commitment and dedication to teaching civics, it also points to a potential civics teaching divide, whereby if the onus is on teachers to improve civics instruction, motivated teachers will take the time to get the resources they need to be successful and those who do not have the time or motivation to teach civics—for any number of reasons—will not.

Showing the Value of Civics in Time and Resources

A consistent theme that emerged from educators across all grade levels and in all parts of the state is that civics is undervalued in terms of resource allocation compared to other subjects. This situation has real consequences for teachers, who may not get the professional training or instructional resources they need to feel successful, and perpetuates the

elementary school civic gap as teachers feel pressure to focus on other subjects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, we recommend the following:

1. ***Continue to prioritize equitable implementation of the 2018 HSS Framework and the civics project legislation.*** Our findings suggest that intentional investment of civics resources in districts with a greater proportion of students from historically underserved groups may have kept disparities in the kind of civic education students receive in different districts at bay. However, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic may compromise these positive signs. Commitment to and benchmarking of the extent to which the HSS Framework and student-led civics projects are implemented equitably across districts with students of varying economic disadvantage, racial and ethnic identity, and English learner status should remain of highest priority.
2. ***Continue to invest in and design for equitable professional development and pre-service training infrastructure that is aligned directly to the HSS Framework and Civics Project Guidebook, allowing for collaboration and sharing of best practices across schools and districts, and is sustained across a school year or multiple school years.*** The Massachusetts HSS Framework and the Civics Project Guidebook are designed to advance students' higher order thinking skills through inquiry, research, problem-solving, and action, while building strong content knowledge. Civics-focused professional learning came up time and time again as a differentiator of civics policy awareness, associated with civic teaching competency scales and a support that teachers say they need. Our data suggests that the target, focus, and structure of civics professional learning matters. PD should target key competency domains that the majority

of Massachusetts educators need improvement in, particularly around class climate indicators (e.g., climates that are student-centered and foster discussion around complex civics topics) and around taking *informed* action while providing key content support.

Professional learning should not be considered a once-a-year event but should be part of a culture and infrastructure for a continuous improvement, allowing for collaboration and sharing of best practices across schools and districts sustained across a school year or multiple school years. Drawing from research in PD (e.g., Desimone & Garet, 2015), successful implementation of the Framework requires that teachers understand the why, what, and how of the guiding principles, Pre-K through 12 practice standards, and grade-specific content standards. Below are key lessons learned from past PD research and more than three years of civics law implementation efforts in Illinois (Desimone et al., 2015; Daneels, Kawashima-Ginsberg & Healy, 2019; Hayat & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2020):

- a. ***Universal access to PD that differentiates training based on teachers' prior experience and knowledge.*** Specifically, our research suggests that elementary educators, on average, have more experience with general best practice in teaching, such as use of social-emotional learning and interdisciplinary experiential projects, while secondary teachers are more likely to have more experience with civic-specific content and teaching strategies, such as issue discussion.
- b. ***Strive for a coherence between the HSS Framework and PD to promote application of new civics learning.*** In Illinois, teachers sometimes did not use what they learned in a training offered by national organizations because they did not see an immediate

connection to the Illinois Social Sciences Standards which they were supposed to follow. When the providers made an explicit connection between their curriculum and the standards teachers “clicked” and utilized what they learned. This did not mean revising existing curriculum, but sometimes meant explaining why the curriculum helped teachers meet the standards and referring to the standards during the training. This observation from Illinois is also consistent with research which further suggests that PD materials and content should be timed in sync with the curriculum, and teachers from this current study indicated that they want professional learning experiences that they can apply directly to their classrooms the next day.

C. *Design PD with systemic inequity in mind.*

A review of randomized control studies of PD indicates that PD is most effective when it is designed to account for conditions that are common in urban settings, such as high principal and teacher turnover, student mobility, and teachers changing subjects and grades (Desimone & Garet, 2015). Providing consistent and evidence-based professional learning experiences in civics across multiple years can address these challenges, especially the session logistics and dosage that are designed for challenging circumstances such as these. Though solutions will vary from one district to another, it is important for district and school teams to examine other successful initiatives within their district and identify factors that led to success as they plan civics PD.

3. *Invest in developing resources and professional learning opportunities specifically designed for elementary educators and designed to ad-*

dress gaps for middle and high school educators. Our study findings clearly point to the fact that *elementary* educators have been underserved when it comes to access to professional learning and less prepared to teach civics the way the 2018 HSS Framework mandates. Elementary teachers need developmentally appropriate civics resources and PD on how to effectively integrate the teaching of civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions into their classroom. PD opportunities should be designed for elementary school teachers, with a particular emphasis on civics content, controversial issue discussions, and the inquiry arc, which our findings pointed to as being the areas most in need of growth. For *middle and high school* teachers, PD should target the practicalities of student-led civics projects along with the underlying whys and principles of the HSS Framework to help facilitate greater depth of practice.

4. *Provide elementary school teachers more time to teach social studies by carving out time in the existing schedule, more classroom resources to teach civics, and more professional development on how to integrate civics across subject areas.* Our study shows that it is fairly common for elementary teachers to report incorporating civics into other activities, with 28% having no dedicated social studies instruction time in a week. Because elementary school scheduling constraints and focus on maintaining rigorous instruction in English language arts (ELA) and math increase the likelihood that civics will be taught within other subjects, more research and training is needed on how to intentionally integrate the teaching of civic dispositions, knowledge, and skills into ELA and other non-social studies subject areas. The lack of time currently dedicated to explicitly teaching social studies by elementary school teachers in our sample also points to the need for increased

instructional time for social studies at the elementary school level, for example, by scheduling a social studies block into the K–5 school day. A recently complete rigorous analysis of federal longitudinal assessment data shows that adding social studies time in early elementary grades does not compromise learning, and may even uniquely promote reading skills years later, especially for those who come from non-English speaking and/or low-income households (Tyner & Kabourek, 2020). Research continues to build evidence that content-rich instruction in ELA builds student background knowledge as well as reading and writing skills, opening up potential for integrating rigorous content and inquiry-based instruction in ELA and social studies. Long-term time and resource investment should be made to support all elementary grade educators in building capacity to develop deep inquiry skills and social studies content expertise across the curriculum, including targeted elementary school PD that focuses on how to integrate civic content and inquiry into English learning arts.

5. *Educate school and district administrators on what the Framework requires and how to support continuous educator development.*

There is a real opportunity for administrators to support teachers in improving their civic teaching competency beyond simply “giving their blessing.” Findings from the implementation of a new civic education law in Illinois (Hayat & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2020) suggest the importance of directing resources towards educating school and district administrators about the intent of the 2018 Massachusetts civics legislation and HSS Framework, and showing administrators specifically how they can support civic education in their districts. For example, an administrator academy could facilitate school and district administrators’ understanding of the underlying principles of the new policies, how

the 2018 HSS Framework and student-led civics projects directly impact instruction for the grades served in their schools, and the types of resources and structures that can be institutionalized at the school or district level so that *all* teachers, not just those who are personally motivated, participate in PD that will change their teaching of civics. Administrators may need communications resources (e.g., a parent-ready one-page document explaining what student-led civics project law is about and why it is important) or training to help them see how supporting civic education helps them excel as school and district leaders. For instance, if administrators become familiar with the new civics project mandate and the 2018 HSS Framework, they may see an opportunity to elevate the quality of teaching for all teachers across disciplines as pedagogical approaches included in the HSS Framework (such as inquiry-based investigations and culturally responsive teaching) can apply to teaching any grade level or content area.

6. *Establish creative accountability and incentives mechanisms that bolster the value of civic education.*

Given that civics, and social studies more broadly, receive less priority in terms of time and resources when compared to other subject areas, there is a need to rethink how to hold schools accountable for implementing these important policy changes. Currently, Massachusetts does not have a standardized civics test. Yet, without providing a clear incentive to make changes, civics may not be equally implemented across Massachusetts schools in ways that the policy intends. While testing is what many people associate with the term “accountability,” many teachers in our study agreed that MCAS testing is not the answer, as civic dispositions, knowledge, and skills are not easily captured in standardized test forms.

There are alternative ways the civic education community in the United States has created accountability and incentives to ensure that students receive an excellent civic education. These strategies range from including questions about knowledge of the mandated civic pedagogical practices in teacher licensure exams, tying civic teaching strategies to teacher evaluation frameworks, and creating a student civics accomplishment badge. For instance, Illinois, which mandates the use of specific pedagogical strategies and inquiry throughout, does not have any required student assessment in civics. However, trainers help educators make explicit connection between high quality civic teaching (e.g., proper use of student-led discussion strategies) and the state's teacher competency Framework. Research found that this appeared to increase motivation among teachers because teacher evaluation is in turn tied to promotion. Furthermore, the civics implementation team in Illinois worked with the state teacher licensure exam provider to integrate questions about the mandated civic pedagogical strategies, which meant that teacher education

programs across the state will now teach those strategies. In Chicago specifically, the quality of civic learning is going to be part of the "Five Essentials" survey, which produces a public dashboard that families can use to understand the educational quality of each school in the city (Kahne & Hodgins, 2020). In addition, multiple states, including California, Tennessee, and Virginia, now have a "Civics Seal": an award given to individual students who or to schools that demonstrate excellence in civic knowledge and learning.¹⁴ This is expected to create demand for high quality civic learning experience among students and their families because the Civics Seal will go into student record. These accountability strategies listed above can be shared and borrowed when there are parallel mechanisms and opportunities in Massachusetts, and widely communicated across the Commonwealth to encourage aligned implementation to the 2018 HSS Framework and Civics Project Guidebook.

¹⁴ Examples include California (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/hs/hssstatesseal.asp>) and Tennessee (<https://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/governor-s-civics-seal.html>).

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Appendix A

TEACHER COMPOSITES FOR 2020 MASSACHUSETTS DESE CIVIC EDUCATION SURVEY

Survey Section	Composite Name (Factors)	Individual Variables included	# of Items	Cronbach's α Standardized and AIC	Threshold (or Difficulty for TLA Factor) Min/Max	Slope Min/Max	
Section-2 {ELEMENTARY Teachers} Civics Pedagogy and Practice	Government and Institutions (Content Coverage Factor 1)	Content_Powers, Content_Structures, Content_Constitution, Content_World, Content_USHistory, Content_Change	LEUE: 7	0.86	-2.28	0.88	
Section-3 {SECONDARY Teachers}: Civics Pedagogy and Practice		LEUE: + Content_MAHistory		0.48	2.04	7.48	
Section-2 {ELEMENTARY Teachers} Civics Pedagogy and Practice		Citizenship Principles (LEUE Content Coverage Factor 2*)	Content_RightsResp, Content_Tolerance, Content_Citizenship	3	0.45	**	**
			Content_RightsResp, Content_Tolerance, Content_Citizenship		0.14		
Section-2 {ELEMENTARY Teachers} Civics Pedagogy and Practice	Culturally Responsive (Civics Teaching Approach Factor 1)	Teach_Discuss, Teach_Opinions, Teach_Authentic, Teach_OwnIdentity, Teach_ExistingKnowledge,	7	0.76	-4.55	1.19	
Section-3 {SECONDARY Teachers}: Civics Pedagogy and Practice		Teach_StudentIdentity, Teach_Demonstrate		0.31	0.04	1.87	
Section-2 {ELEMENTARY Teachers} Civics Pedagogy and Practice	Interdisciplinary (Civics Teaching Approach Factor 2)	Teach_Group, Teach_Responsibility, Teach_Interdisciplinary	3	0.60	-3.16	1.25	
Section-3 {SECONDARY Teachers}: Civics Pedagogy and Practice				0.34	0.73	1.80	

Survey Section	Composite Name (Factors)	Individual Variables included	# of Items	Cronbach's α Standardized and AIC	Threshold (or Difficulty for TLA Factor) Min/Max	Slope Min/Max
Section-5 {ALL}: Opinions about Teaching, Learning, & Civics Education	Beliefs about Civic Education	General_SEL, General_Efficacy, General_Concepts, General_StudentExperience	4	0.53 0.22	-11.95 -0.46	0.32 4.53
Section-5 {ALL}: Opinions about Teaching, Learning, & Civics Education	Barriers	Barrier_OtherContent, Barrier_Time, Barrier_Resources, Barrier_PD, Barrier_Confidence, Barrier_Expertise, Barrier_Motivation, Barrier_Information, Barrier_AdminSupport, Barrier_CollSupport, Barrier_CommSupport	11	0.87 0.37	-2.22 3.52	0.68 3.58
Section-5 {ALL}: Opinions about Teaching, Learning, & Civics Education	Confidence	Confident_PeerLearning, Confident_Collaboration, Confident_SystemsUnderstanding, Confident_FactFiction, Confident_Credible, Confident_AuthenticQuestion, Confident_Discussion, Confident_TeachCivics, Confident_FacilitateDiscussion, Confident_Inquiry	10	0.89 0.46	-4.40 0.37	1.19 3.11
Section-5 {ALL}: Opinions about Teaching, Learning, & Civics Education	Discussion (Class Climate Factor 1)	MyClass_OwnMind, MyClass_DisagreeResp, MyClass_Disagree, MyClass_Discussions, MyClass_Express	5	0.74 0.36	-3.76 -0.02	2.17 3.14

Survey Section	Composite Name (Factors)	Individual Variables included	# of Items	Cronbach's α Standardized and AIC	Threshold (or Difficulty for TLA Factor) Min/Max	Slope Min/Max
Section-5 {ALL}: Opinions about Teaching, Learning, & Civics Education	Student-centered (Class Climate Factor 2)	MyClass_Community, MyClass_StudentSay, MyClass_InquiryBased, MyClass_SEL	4	0.53 0.22	-4.65 1.65	0.87 2.31
Section-2 {ELEMENTARY Teachers} Civics Pedagogy and Practice	Inquiry (LEUE: Teaching and Learning Activities Factor 1)	Instruction_ProposeChange, Instruction_CausesSolutions, Instruction_Discussions, Instruction_CreateQuestions	4	0.56 0.24	0.04 1.32	1.03 1.60
Section-2 {EL-ELEMENTARY Teachers} Civics Pedagogy and Practice	Real-world (LEUE: Teaching and Learning Activities Factor 2)	Instruction_AssessQuizzesEssays, Instruction_UseData, Instruction_News, Instruction_AssessPerformance, Instruction_ResearchDebateWrite	5	0.45 0.14	-1.79 2.25	0.51 1.65
Section-3 {SECONDARY Teachers}: Civics Pedagogy and Practice	Inquiry (MSHS: Teaching and Learning Activities Factor 1)	Instruction_ActTogether, Instruction_AuthenticAudiences, Instruction_LocalIssues, Instruction_SystemsLevel, Instruction_DevelopPlans, Instruction_CausesSolutions, Instruction_PublicPolicy, Instruction_UseData	8	0.79 0.32	-0.71 0.99	1.38 2.16
Section-3 {SECONDARY Teachers}: Civics Pedagogy and Practice	Real-world (MSHS: Teaching and Learning Activities Factor 2)	Instruction_AssessQuizzesEssays, Instruction_News, Instruction_ResearchDebateWrite, Instruction_CreateQuestions	5	0.46 0.17	-2.05 -.67	0.61 1.78

Note. LEUE = Lower Elementary Upper Elementary; MSHS = Middle School High School

* IRT analysis of Factor 2 is prohibited by a lack of sufficient variability. Items loading onto the second factor were aggregated into the variable "Content_F2."

Appendix B

IRT SCALES ALIGNED TO CIVIC COMPETENCY DOMAINS

Civic Teaching Competency Domain	Factor (s)	Description
Content	Government and Institutions Content	Teaching the powers and structures of U.S. local, state, and federal government; themes in United States history; founding documents; and how people interact with power and governance structures.
	Citizenship Principles (Elementary)	Teaching about rights and responsibilities and respect and tolerance as principles of citizenship in a democratic republic.
Inquiry and Informed Action	Inquiry (Elementary)	Students create questions; understand causes and solutions; and propose changes to solve community problems.
	Inquiry (Secondary)	Students discuss local policy and community issues; unpack root causes and devise solutions; use data; and plan for and take action.
Real-world Learning	Interdisciplinary Learning	Students participate in interdisciplinary projects; have opportunities to hold responsibilities in school and class; and make decisions as a group.
	Real-world Learning (Elementary)	Students research, debate, and write about issues; use data; read and analyze issues in the news; and are assessed through various mediums.
	Real-world Learning (Secondary)	Students create questions; research, debate, and write about issues; read and analyze issues in the news; and are assessed through various mediums.
Democratic and Supportive Classroom Climate	Student-centered Climate	Students feel like they are a part of a caring community; have agency; and have their social and emotional needs addressed.
	Discussion-centered Climate	Students express their own opinions; make up their own minds on issues; and engage in discussions on controversial issues.

Civic Teaching Competency Domain	Factor (s)	Description
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	Teachers calibrate instruction based on students' lived experiences, providing opportunities for students to connect their classwork to personal experiences, identities, and communities.
Possible Mediators	Beliefs about Civics	Teachers' beliefs in underlying principles of the 2018 HSS Framework, including student agency and incorporating social-emotional learning, students' backgrounds, and the foundations of democracy into civics.
	Perceived Barriers	The extent to which teachers agree that time, resources, administrator and collegial support, confidence, and motivation, among others are barriers to teaching civics.
	Teacher Confidence	The extent to which teachers feel confident teaching in ways that align with the civic domains above.

Appendix C

MEAN IRT SCORES BY DISTRICT INDICATORS, REGION, AND CIVICS POLICY FAMILIARITY (OVERALL SAMPLE)

Scale Label	FIRST LANGUAGE NOT ENGLISH			ENGLISH LEARNER			ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED			
	1.00 LOW	2.00 MIDDLE	3.00 HIGH	1.00 LOW	2.00 MIDDLE	3.00 HIGH	1.00 LOW	2.00 MIDDLE	3.00 HIGH	4.00 EXTREMELY HIGH
Valid N	180	91	90	193	48	126	67	136	139	25
Confidence	50	46	54	49	48	51	48	50	51	48
Perceived Barriers	49	53	46	50	50	48	53	48	49	46
Beliefs about Civics	50	49	51	51	46	51	48	52	50	46
Inquiry LEUE	53	46	50	53	47	49	54	53	47	48
Real-world Learning LEUE	52	45	50	52	45	48	53	50	50	42
Inquiry-MSHS	48	53	52	49	53	51	47	52	52	42
Real-world Learning MSHS	46	52	55	47	52	54	45	48	54	52
Government and Institutions Content	50	48	53	50	49	52	47	50	52	52
Principles of Citizenship (LEUE ONLY)	53	46	52	53	44	49	51	53	46	62
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	51	46	53	50	46	52	50	51	50	50
Student-centered	50	50	48	51	46	49	51	50	49	48
Discussion-centered Climate	49	48	53	49	49	51	48	51	50	51
Inter-disciplinary Learning	50	48	50	50	43	50	48	51	48	47

Note. LEUE = Lower Elementary Upper Elementary; MSHS = Middle School High School

Scale Label	District is 80% or More White students		Civics Teaching and Learning Grant Recipient		Regions of Massachusetts			
	.00	1.00	.00	1.00	1.00 Northeast	2.00 West	3.00 Central	4.00 Southeast
Valid N	222	145	269	112	118	58	8	118
Confidence	51	48	51	46	51	50	55	49
Perceived Barriers	48	51	50	51	49	48	42	50
Beliefs about Civics	50	50	50	52	51	48	59	51
Inquiry LEUE	49	53	50	50	50	52	32	54
Real-world Learning LEUE	49	51	49	52	50	48	38	53
Inquiry MSHS	51	48	50	49	51	50	58	50
Real-world Learning MSHS	52	47	51	47	50	49	42	52
Government and Institutions Content	50	50	48	55	52	50	49	51
Principles of Citizenship (LEUE ONLY)	49	53	50	51	53	53	43	49
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	51	49	51	49	50	51	55	51
Student-centered Climate	49	50	50	50	53	50	40	51
Discussion-centered Climate	51	48	50	51	50	49	50	51
Interdisciplinary Learning	49	49	50	52	52	45	49	50

Note. LEUE = Lower Elementary Upper Elementary; MSHS = Middle School High School

Scale Label	2018 HSS Framework Familiarity				Civics Project Familiarity			
	1 I have not heard of it.	2 I have heard of it but don't know the details.	3 I'm familiar with the standards and guiding principles.	4 I'm familiar with the standards and guiding principles and how they directly impact my instruction.	1 I have not heard of it.	2 I have heard of it but don't know the details.	3 I'm familiar with the standards and guiding principles.	4 I'm familiar with the standards and guiding principles and how they directly impact my instruction.
Valid N	58	10	116	183	127	68	49	123
Confidence	36	39	47	56	40	57	66	50
Perceived Barriers	64	65	51	43	59	41	36	49
Beliefs about Civics	46	53	53	50	50	52	49	50
Inquiry- LEUE	49	46	48	56	50	65	61	52
Real-world Learning LEUE	45	51	49	55	48	51	47	53
Inquiry- MSHS	45	23	45	54	42	52	62	45
Real-world Learning MSHS	36	16	45	55	37	54	56	47
Government and Institutions Content	41	45	48	55	44	54	62	51
Principles of Citizenship (LEUE ONLY)	41	54	52	58	48	58	63	55
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	43	48	46	56	47	57	59	46
Student-centered Climate	52	52	46	51	52	46	53	48
Discussion-centered Climate	42	39	49	54	44	54	61	50
Interdisciplinary Learning	51	52	48	50	53	49	49	46

Note. LEUE = Lower Elementary Upper Elementary; MSHS = Middle School High School

Appendix D

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Table 1 *Teacher Survey Sample Demographics (n = 410)*

	Percentage
Grade Level	
Lower elementary teacher	21%
Upper elementary teacher	24%
Middle school teacher	30%
High school teacher	25%
School Type	
Public	96%
Public charter	3%
Religious	1%
Race/Ethnicity	
White	84%
Nonwhite	9%
Prefer not to disclose	7%
Gender Identity	
Woman	68%
Man	26%
Years of Experience	
0 to 2	3%
3 to 5	11%
6 to 10	19%
11 to 20	37%
21+	30%

Table 2 Interview Participants Demographics

	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Grade Level		
Elementary teacher	10	20.83%
Middle school teacher	28	58.33%
High school teacher	7	14.58%
Principal	3	6.25%
Region		
West	10	20.83%
Central	5	10.42%
Northeast	22	45.83%
Southeast	11	22.92%
School Type		
Public	43	89.59%
Public charter	4	8.33%
Religious	1	2.10%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	41	91.11%
Nonwhite	4	8.89%
Years of Experience		
3 to 5	9	18.75%
6 to 10	8	16.67%
11 to 20	16	33.33%
21+	15	31.25%

	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Implementing Student-Led Civics Projects (Secondary only)		
Yes	16	45.71%
No	17	48.57%
Unsure	2	5.71%
Dedicated Time for Teaching Social Studies (Elementary only)		
4 hours per week or more	3	30%
2-3 hours per week	5	50%
1 hour or less	1	10%
No time is specifically dedicated	1	10%

Appendix E

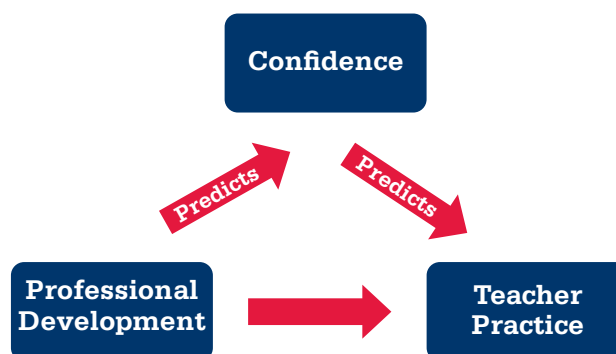
REGRESSION AND MEDIATION ANALYSIS

To see what factors predicted civic teaching competency, we ran a three-step regression for each civic teaching competency scale and separate regressions for elementary and secondary teachers. The district-level demographic variables in the first step included Predominately White districts, English learners, economically disadvantaged students, and total district expenditures. The second step added professional development (PD) access (0 = offered PD less than once a year or never, 1 = offered PD at least once a year). The third step added 2018 HSS Framework familiarity, civics project legislation familiarity, perceived barriers, and confidence.

Our mediated regression analysis asked: in what ways does investment in PD pay off for the teaching and learning of civics? We ask this question because the IRT scale “confidence” (which was highly correlated with the perceived barriers IRT scale) was highly correlated with all of the civic teaching competency outcomes. Therefore, it would take up the variance of other predictors, meaning that if the initial demographic predictors were significant before confidence was added to the regression, they would no longer be significant after. It was, therefore, important to understand where confidence came from and whether investment in PD makes a difference. We define outcomes, mediators, and predictors as follows.

Key outcomes of interest included reported teaching practices and content coverage in civics, which included the following IRT scales: 1) government and institutions content; 2) inquiry; 3) real-world learning; 4) interdisciplinary learning; 5) culturally responsive pedagogy; 6) discussion-centered climate; and 7) student-centered climate. Possible mediators were perceived barriers and confidence. Key predictors were access to frequent civics PD. Because PD was found to be correlated with total district per-pupil expenditure, total expenditure and the major district demographic characteristics were included as controls in the regression equation.

Using Baron and Kenny’s definition of statistical mediation (1986), the predictor must be correlated with the outcomes of interest and the correlation between the mediator and outcomes must be significant for this test. The diagram below is a hypothesized relationship between civics PD and civic teaching practice, with confidence as a mediator. Mediation is said to have occurred when the relationship between predictor and outcome are either attenuated or no longer significant after accounting for the effect of the mediator.



Due to a large difference in key predictors outcomes by grade, mediation analysis was run separately for elementary school teachers and middle and high school teachers. It should first be noted again that civics-specific PD was more readily available to middle and high school educators than to elementary school educators. While 79% of our elementary school teacher sample said that have “never” received PD in civics (51%) or have only received it “every few years” (28%), that percentage dropped to 55% for middle and high school teachers (with 33% reporting “never” and 23% reporting having had one civics PD every few years). Put another way, only one in five elementary school teachers participate in civics PD at least once a year, while almost half of middle and high school teachers in our sample participate in civics PD at least once a year. It should also be noted that for the middle and high school teacher sample, there were no difference in access to PD by the proportion of Nonwhite, economically disadvantaged, and EL students enrolled in the district or by region of the state.

We tested possible mediators other than confidence, but in most cases, confidence remained the most significant and robust mediator, taking up variances that can potentially be attributed to other mediators. Bivariate correlation between the mediating factors are weak to moderate but they often functioned similarly in these models. One indicator that tended to make an additional and independent contribution to these regression models is familiarity with the HSS Framework and/or student-led civics project. In these cases,

PD often did not have a significant effect. For instance, confidence was the strongest predictor in the model predicting culturally responsive pedagogy for both grade bands, but the HSS Framework familiarity was also a marginally significant predictor in the elementary grade model. Familiarity with the civics project was a strong predictor of the culturally responsive pedagogy model for secondary teachers. Culturally responsive pedagogy was *not* correlated with PD frequency at the secondary level, suggesting that this type of competence may come from other sources as qualitative findings indicate (e.g., teachers’ personal experiences or initiatives outside of formal PD). Similarly, the model predicted student-centered teaching, where both confidence and HSS Framework familiarity remained significant ($p < 0.05$).

In the secondary model predicting discussion-centered climate, civics project familiarity but not HSS Framework familiarity was a significant predictor along with confidence. In one case, confidence did not make a difference. The elementary grade real-world learning scale did not correlate with confidence. Instead, the total expenditure per pupil was the only significant predictor of this outcome in the model, and confidence, perceived barriers and civics project familiarity did not make a significant contribution to the model. Instead, HSS Framework familiarity had a marginally significant effect.¹⁵

¹⁵ Regression tables for each civic teaching competency outcome for elementary and secondary teachers are available upon request by contacting the principal investigator at arieltw@bu.edu.

Table 3 *Bivariate Correlation between PD Frequencies and Mediating Variables*

Grade Band			HSS Familiarity	Civics Project Familiarity	Confidence	Barriers
Elementary	HSS Familiarity	r	1	.212**	.327**	-.275**
		p		0.008	0.000	0.001
		N	153	153	149	152
	Civics Project Familiarity	r	0.212**	1	.261**	-0.052
		p	0.008		0.001	0.523
		N	153	153	149	152
	Confidence	r	.327**	.261**	1	-.462**
		p	0.000	0.001		0.000
		N	149	149	164	163
	Barriers	r	-.275**	-0.052	-.462**	1
		p	0.001	0.523	0.000	
		N	152	152	163	167
Secondary	HSS Familiarity	r	1	0.045	.230**	-.292**
		p		0.508	0.001	0.000
		N	214	214	212	214
	Civics Project Familiarity	r	0.045	1	-0.028	-0.125
		p	0.508		0.681	0.069
		N	214	214	212	214
	Confidence	r	.230**	-0.028	1	-.399**
		p	0.001	0.681		0.000
		N	212	212	234	234
	Barriers	r	-.292**	-0.125	-.399**	1
		p	0.000	0.069	0.000	
		N	214	214	234	237

Note. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix F

COMPARING ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY TEACHERS' REPORTS OF CIVIC TEACHING APPROACHES AND CLASSROOM CLIMATE FACTORS

Based on the overall differences between secondary and elementary school teachers when it came to civic teaching competency, we further investigated both the differences between factors associated with civic teaching competency scales related to civic teaching approaches and classroom climate for elementary and secondary teachers. This analysis revealed statistically significant differences in how teachers in different grade bands incorporate civics.

Teaching Practices Comparisons

We used a mixed general linear model (GLM) with grade level as a between-subjects factor and civic teaching practices measures as a within-subjects factor, to confirm the differences between two teaching practice scales: culturally responsive pedagogy and interdisciplinary learning. Measures varied significantly for elementary versus middle and high school teachers ($F(1, 403) = 115.31, p < 0.001$). For the first factor, culturally responsive pedagogy, middle and high school teachers reported greater use than lower and upper elementary teachers ($F(1, 403) = 27.16, p < 0.001$). In contrast, for the second factor, interdisciplinary learning, lower and upper elementary teachers reported greater use than middle and high school teachers ($F(1, 403) = 28.67, p < 0.001$).

Class Climate Comparisons

A mixed GLM, with grade level as a between-subjects factor and the class climate measures as a within-subjects factor, confirmed that the differences between the two class climate scales—student-centered and discussion-centered—varied significantly for elementary versus middle and high school teachers ($F(1, 396) = 137.25, p < 0.001$). For the first factor, discussion-centered climate, middle and high school teachers reported greater scores than elementary teachers ($F(1, 396) = 53.35, p < .001$). In contrast, for the second factor, student-centered climate, elementary teachers reported higher scores than middle and high school teachers ($F(1, 396) = 26.29, p < 0.001$).

Teaching and Learning Activities Comparisons

Survey items associated with teaching and learning activities, which included real-world learning and inquiry scales, for elementary school teachers had a different factor structure than those for middle and high school teachers. For elementary school teachers, a repeated measures GLM was conducted with the real-world learning and inquiry scale measures as a within-subjects factor. There was no effect of the type of measure ($F(1, 163) = 0.04, p = 0.85$), suggesting that elementary school teachers did not emphasize either inquiry-based or real-world teaching and learning activities over the other.

The same analysis was run for the middle and high school teacher real-world learning and inquiry scales. For secondary teachers, there was a significant effect of the type of scale ($F(1, 235) = 7.43, p = 0.007$), with secondary teachers reporting more use of the inquiry-based learning activities represented by the first factor than the real-world learning activities represented by the second factor.

Appendix G

MASSACHUSETTS CIVICS EVALUATION STUDY TEACHER SURVEY

Spring 2020

Q1: In which Massachusetts county is your school located?

- Barnstable
- Berkshire
- Bristol
- Dukes
- Essex
- Franklin
- Hampden
- Hampshire
- Middlesex
- Nantucket
- Norfolk
- Plymouth
- Suffolk
- Worcester
- I prefer not to disclose. *(If you prefer not to share, please provide an estimate of student demographics below.)*

Q2: Please select your school district.

Q3: [IF PREFER NOT TO DISCLOSE] Please provide a **rough estimate of the percentage (%)** of the student body each of these groups represent at your school. *(If you are unsure, please check “I don’t know.”)*

	Less than 10% (1)	10–25% (2)	26–50% (3)	51–75% (4)	More than 75% (5)	I don't know. (6)
White students (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
African American/ Black students (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hispanic/ Latino students (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asian American students (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students from other racial groups or of multiracial origin (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English Learners (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Immigrant students (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economically disadvantaged students (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4 Which of the following type of school do you work at?

- Public school
- Private school
- Religious school
- Public charter school

Q5 Which grade levels do you teach? *(If you teach across grade levels, select the one which is your primary grade or where you teach civics the most.)*

- Lower elementary grades (K–2)
- Upper elementary grades (3–5)
- Middle school grades (6–8)
- High school grades (9–12)

Q6 How familiar are you with the 2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework?

- I have not heard of it.
- I have heard of it but don’t know the details.
- I’m familiar with the standards and guiding principles.
- I’m familiar with the standards and guiding principles and how they directly impact my instruction.

Q7 How familiar are you with the Massachusetts Civics Project Legislation and Guidebook?

- I have not heard of it.
- I've heard of it but don't know the details.
- I'm familiar with the civics project requirement, definition, and six stages.
- I'm familiar with the civics project requirement, definition, and six stages, and how it directly impacts my classroom instruction.

Section-2 {ELEMENTARY Teachers}: Civics Pedagogy and Practice

In this section, we will be asking you about the instructional strategies you like to use and your general approach towards teaching civics. For each of the following, please **choose an option that is closest to your experiences**. We realize what and how you teach right now has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are asking you to respond based on a **typical** year of teaching before the pandemic.

Q8 On average, how much time in your classroom is dedicated to studying History and Social Science?

- 4 hours per week or more
- 2–3 hours per week
- 1 hour per week
- 1 hour every 2 weeks, or less
- No time is specifically dedicated to History and Social Science, but it is integrated with Literacy and/or other subjects.
- No time is specifically dedicated to History and Social Science.

Q9 Do you include civics as part of your regular History and Social Science instruction?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q10 For each of the following, please choose the option that is the closest to whether you incorporate each of the following content themes.

	Not at all, and not part of my grade level or content standards (1)	Not at all, but believe that this content is important to teach my students (2)	Yes, briefly mentioned in occasional lessons (3)	Yes, part of a standalone unit (4)	Yes, integrated throughout the year (5)
Respect and tolerance for people of diverse backgrounds; an understanding of human rights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Major themes in the history of MA towns and cities (including Native peoples; Pilgrims; Puritans; American Revolution)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Major themes in the history of the United States	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The rights and responsibilities of citizens (especially helping students to understand how they and other individuals can participate) and local government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The structures of government at local, state, and federal levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The powers and limitations of federal, state, and local governments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The U.S. Constitution as a living document; how and why the Constitution has evolved over time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How everyday people affect policy or interact with and change structures of power, authority, and governance (including voting, lobbying, running for/holding public office, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 How do you integrate the content above into your classroom instruction? (Check all that apply.)

- Incorporated into Literacy/English language Arts
- An explicit theme of a student project
- As a theme in Social Studies units
- As an interdisciplinary unit
- Through student games and/or simulations
- Integrated in student's everyday experiences (e.g., discussions about being a responsible classmate)
- None of the above. I do not incorporate civics content into my teaching.
- Other: _____

Q12 Thinking of how you typically teach, please tell us how much each of the following matches your approach.

	Not at all my approach (1)	Not really my approach (2)	Somewhat my approach (3)	Very much my approach (4)
I encourage students to discuss political or social issues about which people have different opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, students are encouraged to express opinions in class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students have frequent opportunities to connect their classroom work to their personal experiences, identities, and communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I take into account how my own identities and values affect my interactions and learning experience with different students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students are encouraged to draw on their existing knowledge from multiple sources (e.g., news reports, other classes).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students regularly make decisions as a group using a range of methods (e.g., debate, deliberation, voting, negotiating, voting, choosing randomly, deferring to experts).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students have opportunities to hold responsibilities (e.g., classroom aids or jobs, peer tutoring, specific roles in group work) in developmentally appropriate ways.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I calibrate my instructional approach and framing of certain contents/topics based my understanding of students' lived experiences and backgrounds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students demonstrate their knowledge and skills in various ways (e.g., projects, presentations, performance assessment).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I plan and implement interdisciplinary projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13 Which of the following happens at least **once a marking period** as part of your instruction? *(Check all that apply.)*

- Students lead discussions about topics related to civics, government, and/or history.
- Students read and analyze information in news (e.g., the difference between fact and opinion, how to evaluate information).
- Students investigate causes and solutions to social problems (e.g., food waste, pollution).
- Students identify and create essential and supporting questions to a topic/issue.
- Students research, debate, and write about issues related to elections, community, and society.
- Students propose changes to solve problems in their school or local community.
- Students use data and research from multiple sources to understand and analyze issues before they develop conclusions.
- Students express voice, opinions, and research to authentic audiences (e.g., community members, policymakers).
- Students are assessed through performance assessments, portfolios, and/or reflections/journaling.
- Students are assessed through quizzes, tests, and/or essays.

Section-3 {SECONDARY Teachers}: Civics Pedagogy and Practice

In this section, we will be asking you about the instructional strategies you like to use and your general approach towards teaching civics. For each of the following, please **choose an option that is closest to your experiences**. We realize what and how you teach right now has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are asking you to respond based on a **typical** year of teaching before the pandemic.

Q14 For each of the following please choose the option that is the closest to the way you incorporate each of the following content themes.

	Not at all or briefly mentioned (1)	Focus of up to a few class periods (2)	Focus of a whole unit (3)	Major emphasis of the whole course (4)
Major themes in the history of the United States	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The rights and responsibilities of citizens (especially helping students to understand how they and other individuals can participate) and local government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The structures of government at local, state, and federal levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not at all or briefly mentioned (1)	Focus of up to a few class periods (2)	Focus of a whole unit (3)	Major emphasis of the whole course (4)
The powers and limitations of federal, state, and local governments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The U.S. Constitution as a living document: how and why the Constitution has evolved over time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How everyday people affect policy or interact with and change structures of power, authority, and governance (including voting, lobbying, running for/holding public office, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q15 Thinking of how you typically teach civics, please tell us how much each of the following matches your approach.

	Not at all my approach (1)	Not really my approach (2)	Somewhat my approach (3)	Very much my approach (4)
I encourage students to discuss political or social issues about which people have different opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, students are encouraged to express opinions in class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students have frequent opportunities to connect their classroom work to their personal experiences, identities, and communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I take into account how my own identities and values affect my interactions and learning experience with different students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students are encouraged to draw on their existing knowledge from multiple sources (e.g., news reports, other classes).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students regularly make decisions as a group using a range of methods (e.g., debate, deliberation, voting, negotiating, voting, choosing randomly, deferring to experts).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students have opportunities to hold responsibilities (e.g., classroom aids or jobs, peer tutoring, specific roles in group work) in developmentally appropriate ways.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I calibrate my instructional approach and framing of certain content/topics based my understanding of students' lived experiences and backgrounds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students demonstrate their knowledge and skills in various ways, (e.g., projects, presentations, performance assessment).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I plan and implement interdisciplinary projects to provide students with high quality, authentic learning experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q16 Which of the following happens at least **once a semester** as part of your social studies and/or civics instruction?
(Check all that apply.)

- Students lead discussions about topics related to civics, government, and/or history.
- Students critically analyze news coverage (e.g., media bias, the difference between news and opinion, how to choose a news source).
- Students investigate causes and solutions to social problems that they address.
- Students identify and create essential and supporting questions to a topic/issue.
- Students research, debate, and write about issues related to elections, politics, public policy, or social issues.
- Students identify, research, and analyze issues affecting people in the local community and identify root causes and possible solutions.
- Students explore and analyze systems-level causes of the problems they identify and are encouraged to develop a plan that has a systemic impact.
- Students analyze public policy (at any level, including school rules) with a goal of proposing changes.
- Students use data and research from multiple sources to understand and analyze issues before they develop conclusions or form an action plan.
- Students develop appropriate plans (such as creating a timeline, identifying relevant resources, anticipating challenges, and criteria for successful outcome).
- Students take action together.
- Students present solutions to authentic audiences (e.g., community members, policymakers).
- Students are assessed through performance assessments, portfolios, and/or reflections/ journaling.
- Students are assessed through quizzes, tests, and/or papers.

Section-4: {Middle School & High School Teachers Specific Questions}

Q17 Has your school planned to implement student-led civics projects?

- We have not yet begun planning.
- We have started to plan for implementing student-led civics projects.
- We have a fully developed plan for implementing student-led civics projects.
- We have begun to implement student-led civics projects.
- Unsure.

Q18 Who is responsible for implementing student-led civics projects at your school? *(Check all that apply.)*

- This has not yet been determined.
- All social studies teachers
- 8th grade social studies teachers
- 9th grade social studies teachers
- 10th grade social studies teachers
- 11th grade social studies teachers
- 12th grade social studies teachers
- Interdisciplinary team of teachers
- Other: _____

Q19 Over the last two years, did you teach one or more courses that involved civics, government today, or significant discussion of current social and political issues? *(A "course" refers to one course with one or more sections.)*

- I did not.
- I taught one such course.
- I taught more than one such course.

Q20 Which of the following describe the type(s) of civics or government courses you taught? *(Check all that apply.)*

- Required course for all students
- AP, IB, or honors class
- Elective class
- Other: _____

Q21 How long was the civics-related course that you taught? *(Check all that apply if you taught multiple courses of different durations.)*

- Semester-long
- Year-long
- Other: _____

Q22 In the past two years, have you taught 8th grade civics?

- Yes, in a standalone civics course
- Yes, integrated into a social studies course
- No

Q23 Have you taught 8th grade civics in a way that aligns with the 2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework?

- I am not familiar with the 2018 History and Social Science Framework.
- No, I have not yet aligned my teaching to the Framework.
- No, but I plan to align my teaching to the Framework next academic year.
- Yes, I've started to align my teaching to the Framework but have not fully integrated it yet.
- Yes, I intentionally align my teaching with the 2018 History and Social Science Framework.

Q24 Have your students conducted a student-led civics project?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q25 How long have you spent planning and implementing student-led civics projects in the classroom?

- A few class periods
- A few weeks
- A semester
- Embedded throughout the school year
- Only as part of an extracurricular activity
- Other: _____

Q26 What grade levels have you implemented the project in? *(Check all that apply.)*

- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

Q27 Have these student-led civics project been conducted as described by the Massachusetts Civics Project Guidebook?

- I am not familiar with the Civics Project Guidebook.
- No, but I'm familiar with the Civics Project Guidebook.
- Yes, and I'm familiar with the Civics Project Guidebook.
- Other (Please, specify) _____

Q28 How important have the following been in your planning and facilitation of student-led civics projects?

	Not incorporated (1)	A small or tangential part of the project (2)	An important part of the project (3)	A key focus of the project (4)
Student choice and student led	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aiming for systems-level impact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students see themselves as powerful agents of change and recognize that their voice and contributions matter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students learn to influence public opinion and policy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide an authentic opportunity for students to practice research skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide students opportunity to consider multiple points of view in a non-partisan way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilitate conversations where all voices are heard, respected, and rooted in evidence from legitimate sources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students learn effective processes for civic action including incorporating the six stages of civics projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students take action toward achieving systems impact and engage with decision-makers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section-5 {ALL}: Opinions about Teaching, Learning, & Civics Education

In this section, we are asking you about **your perspective and opinions on civics teaching and learning**. We are asking you to think of a **typical** year when you would teach before the pandemic. For each of the statements below, please choose the answer that is closest to your view.

Q29 In my Social Studies class/units . . .

	Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Agree (4)
Students feel free to disagree openly with me about political and social issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students are encouraged to make up their own minds about issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I respect student opinions and encourage students to express them during class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, during class discussions students can disagree with teachers, if they are respectful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to introduce a variety of cultural, ideological, and historical perspectives in classroom discussions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable facilitating discussions of controversial issues in class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe inquiry-based learning deepens students' content learning and engagement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students have a say in how the class is structured and run.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to support development of social and emotional skills as part of students' in-school experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students feel like they are part of a community where people care about each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q30 Through civic learning experiences in my school. . .

	Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Agree (4)
Students should explicitly discuss difficult and divisive issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students should develop news and media skills that enable citizens to take well-informed positions on public issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students must learn how to gather credible information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students must learn how to produce credible information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q31 Generally speaking, I believe that . . .

	Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Agree (4)
Incorporating social-emotional learning will benefit students' civic development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students can make a positive difference in their communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is my responsibility to make sure all of my students understand the founding concepts of American democracy and how they manifest in contemporary American society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Each student brings in a wealth of relevant civic experience and knowledge that contributes to learning for everyone in my classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q32 I am confident that . . .

	Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Agree (4)
I can help students learn how to respond to and learn from their peers' contributions during a discussion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can create learning experiences in which my students depend on each other (e.g., collaborative learning).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how to help students understand the connection between the levels of government, policies that impact their community, and their rights and responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how to teach my students to sort fact from fiction in the digital age.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how to teach my students to consume and create credible information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how to teach students to develop an authentic and compelling question.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how to choose the right discussion strategy for the specific objective of a current issue discussion (e.g., building consensus and identifying different opinions).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can teach civic content effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can plan and facilitate controversial issue discussions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can support learning through ongoing inquiries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section-7 {ALL} Teacher Prep & Background

Q33 Below are some barriers many teachers face when they are adjusting their teaching practice. To what extent do you agree with each of the statements below in how it affects your ability to teach civics in a way that is aligned with the 2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework and Civics Project Legislation and Guidebook?

	Disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Agree (4)
Don't have enough time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't feel confident in implementing civic education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't have support from my school administration.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't have support from fellow teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't have support from parents and community members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't have enough resources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't have enough information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't have enough civics expertise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Find it hard to motivate students to get interested in civics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Too much pressure to teach other content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't have access to professional learning to develop skills in this area.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q34 How **often** does your school or district provide you professional learning opportunities focused on civic education?

- Never
- Once every few years
- Once a year
- Once a semester
- Frequently embedded throughout the school year

Q35 Did you participate in a professional learning activity funded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Civics Teaching and Learning Grant?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q36 [IF YES TO Q35] What type of grant-funded activity did you participate in? *(Check all that apply.)*

- Professional development
- Civics teacher teams
- Student-led civics projects
- Curriculum/lesson plan development
- Purchase of learning materials (e.g., textbooks, workbooks, curriculum materials)
- Field trips
- Other: _____

Q37 [IF YES TO Q35] In thinking about the grant-funded activity in which you participated . . .

	Not at all (1)	Slightly (2)	Somewhat (3)	A lot (4)
Do you think that your experiences aligned with the content and practice standards you teach?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Was it easy to integrate what you learned into your regular classroom practices?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you engage with colleagues to share knowledge and ideas stemming from your professional learning experience(s)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q38 [IF YES TO Q35] How did participating in the Civics Teaching and Learning Grant activity help you (or not) better understand and incorporate civics knowledge, skills, and dispositions into your instruction?

Q39 Please indicate whether you have participated in any professional development (or “teacher training”) activities since you started teaching that would help you to teach students about civics. *(Check all that apply.)*

- Participating in a half or full day training
- Coaching or mentoring by another teacher
- Coaching or mentoring by a specialist, administrator, or expert (not a peer)
- Participating in a training program or institute lasting more than one day in total time
- Completing an online or self-paced course or program
- Training to help teachers effectively use technology in the classroom to improve instruction and learning
- Participating in a professional learning community for more than a semester
- None of the above

Q40 Which of the following group(s) do you identify as?

- White
- African American
- Latino, Latina, Latinx
- Asian American or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Multiracial
- Other
- I prefer not to identify.

Q41 Which of the following group(s) do you identify as?

- Man
- Woman
- Gender non-conforming
- I prefer not to identify.

Q42 How many years of teaching experience do you have?

- 0–2 years
- 3–5 years
- 6–10 years
- 11–20 years
- 21–30 years
- More than 30 years

Section-8: {ALL} Qualitative, Open Ended Questions + Pandemic-related Qs

Q43 How has the amount of civics content you cover changed as a result of switching to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- I am teaching less of it than I would to prioritize other content.
- I am teaching about the same as I would in comparison to other content.
- I am teaching more of it than I ordinarily would and am prioritizing it over other content.

Q44 What successes and/or challenges have you had in teaching civics through remote learning?

Q45 What additional resources and supports would be helpful at this time related to civics teaching and learning?

Appendix H

MASSACHUSETTS CIVICS EVALUATION STUDY DECISION-MAKER SURVEY

Spring 2020

Q1 In which Massachusetts county is your school located?

- Barnstable
- Berkshire
- Bristol
- Dukes
- Essex
- Franklin
- Hampden
- Hampshire
- Middlesex
- Nantucket
- Norfolk
- Plymouth
- Suffolk
- Worcester
- I prefer not to disclose. *(If you prefer not to share, please provide an estimate of student demographics below.)*

Q2 Please select your school district.

Q3 [IF SELECTED PREFER NOT TO DISCLOSE] Please provide a **rough estimate of the percentage (%)** of the student body each of these groups represent at your school. *(If you are unsure, please check "I don't know.")*

	Less than 10% (1)	10–25% (2)	26–50% (3)	51–75% (4)	More than 75% (5)	I don't know. (6)
White students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
African American/ Black students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hispanic/ Latino students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asian American students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students from other racial groups or of multiracial origin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English Learners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Immigrant students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economically disadvantaged students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4 Please select your current **role**.

- District Curriculum Coordinator or Director
- Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent
- School Principal
- Vice Principal or Assistant Principal
- Other *(please specify below)*: _____

Q5 How many years have you been in your **current** role?

- 0–2 years
- 3–5 years
- 6–10 years
- 11–20 years
- 21–30 years
- More than 30 years

Q6 How many total years have you worked in your district¹⁶?

- 0–2 years
- 3–5 years
- 6–10 years
- 11–20 years
- 21–30 years
- More than 30 years

Q7 In which of the following type(s) of school districts do you work? *(Check all that apply.)*

- Traditional public school district
- Private school
- Religious school
- Public charter school district

Q8 What option below most closely matches the grade levels you work with?

- Elementary school grades (K–5)
- Middle school grades (6–8)
- High school grades (9–12)
- K-8
- K-12

Q9 Which of the following group(s) do you identify as?

- White
- African American
- Latino, Latina, Latinx
- Asian American or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Multiracial
- Other
- I prefer not to identify.

¹⁶ For school principals, “district” is replaced with “school” throughout the survey.

Section-2: Civic Policy Knowledge

In this section, we are interested in understanding your general awareness of recent Massachusetts policy and guidance regarding civic education.

Q10 How familiar are you with the 2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework?

- I have not heard of it.
- I have heard of it but don't know the details.
- I'm familiar with the standards and guiding principles.
- I'm familiar with the standards and guiding principles and how they directly impact teaching and learning in my school/district.

Q11 Have you discussed the 2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework to teachers in your district?

- I have not discussed the 2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework with teachers in my district.
- I have briefly discussed the 2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework with teachers in my district (e.g., mentioned through email, mention at a staff meeting).
- I have extensively discussed the 2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework with teachers in my district (e.g., dedicated meetings and trainings).

Q12 How familiar are you with the Massachusetts Civics Project Legislation and Guidebook?

- I have not heard of it.
- I have heard of it but don't know the details.
- I'm familiar with the civics project requirement, definition, and six stages.
- I'm familiar with the civics project requirement, definition, and six stages, and how those directly impact teaching and learning in my school/district.

Q13 Have you discussed the Massachusetts Civics Project Legislation and Guidebook with teachers in your district?

- I have not discussed the Massachusetts Civics Project Legislation and Guidebook with teachers in my district.
- I have briefly discussed the Massachusetts Civics Project Legislation and Guidebook with teachers in my district (e.g., mentioned through email, mention at a staff meeting).
- I have extensively discussed the Massachusetts Civics Project Legislation and Guidebook with teachers in my district (e.g., dedicated meetings and trainings).

Q14 In the past year, have you provided teachers in your district concrete supports and encouragement to teach civics in a way that aligns with the 2018 Massachusetts DESE History and Social Science Framework?

- No, and I don't think our district would have time or resources to encourage and provide concrete supports to align teaching to the Framework next academic year.
- No, but I do plan to encourage and provide concrete supports to teachers to align teaching to the Framework next academic year.
- Yes, I intentionally encourage and provide concrete supports to teachers to align teaching with the 2018 History and Social Science Framework.
- Other (*please specify below*):

Section-3: Civics Pedagogy and Practice

In this section, we will be asking you about the instructional strategies and approaches towards teaching civics currently being implemented in your school/district. We realize that schools have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, in this section we are asking you to respond based on a **typical** school year before the pandemic.

Q15 What are the general approaches to teaching civics knowledge, skills, and dispositions in your district? (*Check all that apply.*)

- Stand-alone courses
- Integrated throughout social studies courses
- Integrated throughout multiple subject areas
- Interdisciplinary/culminating projects
- Extracurricular activities
- School-wide events
- School-wide theme
- Other (*please specify below*): _____

Q16 In your district, *approximately* how many students engage in the following during a typical school year?

	None (1)	A small percentage of students (2)	About half of students (3)	The majority of students (4)	All students (5)	Unsure (6)
Lessons that incorporate subject-specific civics content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussion of controversial issues that incorporates multiple points of view	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Researching issues of concern to civic life in ways that involve examining and evaluating multiple sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning based on exploration of issues and themes through inquiry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharing work with authentic audiences (e.g., community members, policymakers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q17 Has your district planned to implement student-led civics projects?

- We have not yet begun planning.
- We have started to plan for implementing student-led civics-projects.
- We have a fully developed plan for implementing student-led civics projects.
- We have begun to implement student-led civics projects.

Q18 Who is responsible for implementing the student-led civics project? *(Check all that apply.)*

- This has not yet been determined.
- All social studies teachers
- 8th grade social studies teachers
- 9th grade social studies teachers
- 10th grade social studies teachers
- 11th grade social studies teachers
- 12th grade social studies teachers
- Interdisciplinary team of teachers
- Other *(please specify below)*: _____

Q19 About how many 8th grade students in your district engage in student-led civics projects during a typical school year?

- None
- A small percentage of students

- About half of students
- The majority of students
- All students
- Unsure

Q20 About how many high school students in your district engage in student-led civics projects during a typical school year?

- None
- A small percentage of students
- About half of students
- The majority of students
- All students
- Unsure

Q21 To your knowledge, how important have the following been in the planning and facilitation of student-led civics projects in your district?

	Not incorporated (1)	A small or tangential part of the project (2)	An important part of the project (3)	A key focus of the project (4)	Unsure (5)
Student choice and student led	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aiming for systems-level impact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students see themselves as powerful agents of change and recognize that their voice and contributions matter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students learn to influence public opinion and policy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide an authentic opportunity for students to practice research skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide students opportunity to consider multiple points of view in a non-partisan way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilitate conversations where all voices are heard, respected, and rooted in evidence from legitimate sources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students learn effective processes for civic action including incorporating the six stages of civics projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students take action toward achieving systems impact and engage with decision-makers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q22 In thinking of all of the teachers in your district who teach social studies or civics, about how many would you consider **proficient** in each of the following?

	None (1)	A handful of teachers (2)	Some teachers (3)	Most teachers (4)	All teachers (5)	Unsure, this is not a focus of my supervision (6)
Incorporating subject-specific civics content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilitating discussion of controversial issues that incorporates multiple points of view	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping students select a variety of texts, synthesize information, understand the purpose of the text, and identify bias to maximize content mastery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping students research issues in ways that involve examining and evaluating multiple sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning, implementing, and evaluating inquiry cycles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing opportunities for students to share work with authentic audiences (e.g., community members, policymakers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section-4: Support for Educators

In this section, we will be asking you about how your district encourages and supports teachers in helping students develop their civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. We realize that schools have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, in this section we are asking you to respond based on a typical school year before the pandemic.

Q23 How often does your district provide teachers professional learning opportunities focused on civics education?

- Never
- Once every few years
- Once a year
- Once a semester
- Embedded frequently throughout the school year

Q24 What professional learning opportunities does your district provide teachers around civics teaching and learning?
(Check all that apply.)

- Participating in a half or full day training
- Coaching or mentoring by another teacher
- Coaching or mentoring by a specialist, administrator, or expert (not a peer)
- Participating in a training program or institute lasting more than one day in total time
- Completing an online or self-paced course or program
- Training to help teachers effectively use technology in the classroom to improve instruction and learning
- Participating in a professional learning community for more than a semester
- None of the above

Q25 About how many teachers from your district participate in the **civics** professional learning opportunities selected above?

	None (1)	Some (2)	Most (3)	All (4)
Social studies teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Civics/government teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-social studies/civics teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elementary school teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Middle school teachers (Grades 6 and 7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Middle school teachers (Grade 8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High school teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q26 What resources has your district provided teachers in the past few years to support civics teaching and learning?
(Check all that apply.)

- Curriculum
- Texts
- Other instructional materials
- Field trip opportunities
- Other (please specify below): _____

Q27 Please use this space to share any additional ways you support educators in teaching civics.

Q28 Which of the following has helped you support teachers integrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions into the classroom? (*Check all that apply.*)

- Information received from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Information received from professional associations
- Attending professional development or trainings focused on civic education
- Prior experience as a social studies or civics teacher
- Background knowledge in civics (e.g., history or government major in college)
- The alignment of civic outcomes to the district mission
- Funding and resources from the district or state that directly supports civic education
- Partnering with organizations that provide curriculum for students and/or professional development for teachers
- Other (*please specify below*): _____
- None of the above

Q29 What barriers do you face in supporting teachers' ability to teach civics in a way that is aligned with the 2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework and Civics Project Legislation and Guidebook? (*Check all that apply.*)

- Not enough time
- Don't feel confident in supporting teachers implement civic education
- Don't have enough knowledge of the 2018 Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework OR Civics Project Legislation and Guidebook
- Lack of support from district administration
- Lack of support from parents and community members
- Lack of alignment to existing district priorities and initiatives
- Lack of district funding and/or resources
- Lack of state funding and/or resources
- Other (*please specify below*): _____
- None of the above

Section-6: Perspectives about Civics Education

Q30 In your opinion, in your district . . .

	Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Agree (4)
Students feel that they are part of a community where people care about each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students have a say in how the school is run.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q31 Generally speaking, I believe that . . .

	Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Agree (4)
Incorporating social-emotional learning in academic instructions will benefit students' civic development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students can make a positive difference in their communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Every student in my district needs to receive civic instruction that helps them understand the founding concepts of American democracy and how they manifest in contemporary American society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Each student brings in a wealth of relevant civic experience and knowledge that contributes to learning for everyone in their classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to support development of social-emotional skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q32 As you complete this school year remotely and think forward to next year, do you think the amount of civics content teachers cover should change?

- Civics should be taught less to prioritize other content.
- Civics should be taught the same as it ordinarily would be in comparison to other content.
- Civics should be taught more than it ordinarily would be and prioritized over other content.

Q33 What additional resources and supports would be helpful at this time related to civics teaching and learning in your district?

Section-7: {For DISTRICT Administrators ONLY}

Q34 Did your district receive a Civics Teaching and Learning Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2020?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

[IF YES, ANSWER Q35 THROUGH Q42 BELOW].

Q35 What type of activity did the grant fund? *(Check all that apply.)*

- Professional development training
- Civics teacher teams
- Student-led civics projects
- Curriculum/lesson plan development
- Purchase of learning materials (e.g., textbooks, workbooks, curriculum materials)
- Field trips
- Other *(please specify below):* _____

Q36 About how many educators from your district participated in these grant-funded activities?

	None (1)	Some (2)	Most (3)	All (4)
Social studies teachers				
Civics/government teachers				
Non-social studies/civics teachers				

Q37 How would you characterize the educators who participated in these activities? *(Check all that apply.)*

- Elementary school teachers (grades K–5)
- Middle school teachers (grades 6–7)
- Middle school teachers (grade 8)
- High school teachers (grades 9–12)
- School administrators
- Other *(please specify below):* _____

Q38 To date, how would you categorize the extent to which you implemented your grant activities?

- Have not implemented
- Partial implementation
- Full implementation

Q39 From your perspective, how have the grant-funded activities impacted teachers' capacity to teach civics?

Q40 Has the current pandemic changed any of your planned grant-funded activities?

- Yes
- No

Q41 How has the pandemic changed the scope of your planned activities?

Q42 What other challenges have you faced in implementing grant-funded activities?

Appendix I

CIVICS TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Background Information

1. Describe your current role in your school.
2. How long have you been in your current position? What, if any, experiences did you have as an educator prior to taking on your current role?
3. What classes do you teach civics in?
[PROBE about whether it is a designated civics class, civics is integrated throughout the class, or a handful of lessons/units/activities.]
4. How would you categorize the students in each of your classes?
[PROBE about “higher” vs. “lower” tracks, English learners, students with disabilities.]

Knowledge and Beliefs around Civic Education

5. What do you think the purpose of civic education is?
6. How would you define/describe the civics knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students should develop?
7. What civics content do you think is most important to cover? Why? What do you think your role is in teaching civics?
8. In an ideal world, what do you consider to be the best pedagogical approaches for teaching civics? Why?

Instructional Practices

9. In thinking about your own classroom, how do you teach a “typical” civics lesson or unit? Share one or two examples from the past year.
10. What approaches towards civic learning do you think work best for your students? Why?
11. [ONLY ASK IF TEACHER RESPONDED THAT THEY TEACH CIVICS IN MULTIPLE CLASSES.] Is there any variation in how you approach civics across your different classes?
 - 11A. [IF YES] Why do you think that’s the case?

12. Do students engage in student-led civics projects at your school?
 - 12A. [IF YES] Please give examples of what these projects look like. How are they taught? When during the school year are they taught?
 - 12B. [IF YES] Does every student get an opportunity to engage in student-led civics projects?
[IF YES] How does your school support equitable participation?
[IF NO] Which groups of students do **not** have opportunities to participate? Why do you think that is?
13. How do you use assessment to enhance students' civic learning?
14. Describe any other civics learning opportunities that your school provides students.
15. How familiar are you with the 2018 Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement and the 2018 History and Social Science Framework?
 - 15A. Describe any way(s) that your teaching, or teaching/activities in your school/district, has changed as the result of the new law and Framework.

Implementation Supports for Teaching Civics

16. What people, resources, and experiences have helped support you in teaching civics?
17. What barriers/challenges have you faced in teaching civics?
18. In your view, what are the areas in civics most in need of professional development for teachers? [e.g., understanding how government works, media analysis, elections, action-based civics, service-learning, mock-trials, pedagogy of effective civics education]
19. What additional supports would help you (and/or your colleagues) effectively teach civics to all students?

Closing

20. This school year, how has your instruction changed because of the pandemic?
[PROBE for changes to pedagogy, the content that teacher is prioritizing teaching, professional learning experiences, priorities in planning for next year.]
21. Were there any units or lessons that you were planning to teach that you weren't able to because of the pandemic? How will this affect your planning moving forward?
22. Please share any additional comments you have about your capacity to teach civics and beliefs about its importance.
23. Would you be willing for someone from our research team to contact you for a follow-up interview next year?

School Principal Interview Protocol

Background Information

1. How long have you been in your current position as school principal? What experiences did you have as an educator or administrator prior to taking on your current role?
2. How would you categorize your student population?
3. In what classes is civics taught?
[PROBE about whether it is a designated civics class, civics is integrated throughout the class, or a handful of lessons/units/activities.]
4. Does your school offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for civic learning? If yes, describe them.
[PROBE about how many and what categories of students participate.]

Knowledge and Beliefs around Civic Education

5. What do you think the purpose of civic education is?
6. How would you define/describe the civics knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students should develop?
7. What civics content do you think is most important for teachers to cover? Why?
8. In an ideal world, what do you consider to be the best pedagogical approaches for teaching civics? Why?

Instructional Practices

9. What approaches towards civic learning do you think work best for the students in your school? Why?
10. Do students engage in student-led civics projects at your school? (IF NO, Why not?)
 - 10A. [IF YES] Please give examples of what these projects look like. How and when are they taught during the school year?
 - 10B. [IF YES] What students in your school have an opportunity to engage in student-led civics projects?
 - 10C. How does your school support equitable implementation? Which groups of students do **not** have opportunities to participate? Why do you think that is?
11. Describe any other civics learning opportunities that your school provides students.
[PROBE for activities during the school day vs. out-of-school times, opportunities provided by community/non-school providers, and what groups of students participate.]

12. How familiar are you with the 2018 Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement and the 2018 History and Social Science Framework?
- 12A. Describe any way(s) that teacher professional development, classroom instruction, or other learning activities in your school have changed as the result of the new law and Framework.

Implementation Supports for Teaching Civics

13. As principal, how do you support teachers in implementing civic education and the new History and Social Science Framework?
14. What people, resources, and experiences have helped support your school in teaching civics?
15. What barriers/challenges does your school face in teaching civics?
16. In your view, what are the areas in civics most in need of professional development for teachers? [e.g., understanding how government works, media analysis, elections, action-based civics, service-learning, mock-trials, pedagogy of effective civic education]
17. What additional supports would help your school effectively teach civics to all students?

Closing

18. How has civics instruction changed in your school as a result of the current pandemic?
[PROBE for changes to classroom instruction, professional learning experiences, priorities in planning for next year.]
19. Please share any additional comments you have about your school's capacity to teach civics and beliefs about its importance.

