RHODE ISLAND
Civic Readiness Task Force Recommendation Report

2023

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Spring 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2022, a diverse coalition of community members was assembled to establish the Rhode Island Civic Readiness Task Force. The task force was developed to consider specific measures to strengthen civics education in Rhode Island. Over the course of six months, task force members representing educators, parents, community members, students, and advocacy organizations, as well as some of the students who advocated for themselves and their peers in *Cook v. McKee* met to develop recommendations for improving civics education across the state. This iterative process included an examination of the current state of civics education at the national and state levels, identification of priorities, methods, and resources for civics education, and consideration of student, teacher, and community needs in implementation of student-led civics projects.

The result of this work is a robust set of recommendations that address each component of the task force charge and that support implementation of civics instruction in K-12 Social Studies.

The recommendation areas from the Rhode Island Civic Readiness Task Force include:

1. A definition of civic readiness;
2. Specific characteristics and methods for implementing and showcasing student-led civics projects;
3. Methods for strengthening civics education through continued development of the *Social Studies Framework* and other social studies guidance documents, funding and support for a high school civics course, local education agency (LEA) guidance for implementation, and professional learning opportunities for educators;
4. Specific methods and resources for engaging in lessons involving classroom discussion, media literacy, and voter registration;
5. Recognition options for high school and middle school students who demonstrate proficiency in civics education; and;
6. Support for implementation of civics education in context.

The recommendations in this report are the culmination of a collaborative and iterative process among task force members representing interested parties committed to improving civics education for all Rhode Island students. They aim to provide structures and guidance for LEAs in addressing the issues raised in *Cook v. McKee*, enacting the directives of the 2021 Civic Literacy Act in Rhode Island, and operationalizing the recently endorsed Rhode Island Social Studies Standards. The following pages describe the context in which this work was catalyzed and executed, outline the recommendations from the task force, and explain the process by which each recommendation was developed.

Active, informed and engaged participation of the public is fundamental to the success of a representative democracy. In developing the American system of free and public education, founders highlighted the importance of civic learning. "Horace Mann, a 19th century American educational reformer and politician, wrote, 'Education is our only political safety. Outside of this ark all is deluge.'"[1] In more recent times, former Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor noted that, "The better educated our citizens are, the better equipped they will be to preserve the system of government we have. And we have to start with the education of our nation's young people. Knowledge about our government is not handed down through the gene pool. Every generation has to learn it, and we have some work to do."[2] Much of that work still remains to be completed.

In the 2014 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), also known as The Nation's Report Card, only 23% of a nationally representative sample of 18-year-olds scored proficient in civics, and less than one third of eighth graders knew the historical purpose of the Declaration of Independence.[3] But a lack of civic proficiency is not the only issue that Americans face. In the 2008 presidential election, only 56.8% of eligible voters cast a vote. This translates to roughly one hundred million eligible American voters who did not cast a vote in the 2008 election.[4] In the 2016 election, less than half of eligible youth voters ages 18-29 voted – the lowest voter turnout of any age group.[5] Overall, Americans rank 139th in voter participation of 172 world democracies.[6]

As public disengagement with the political process increases, so too does exposure to media. However, recent studies show that many students are not prepared with the skills to differentiate between real and fake news or disinformation. In a study of roughly 8,000 secondary and college students across 12 states, only 9% of Advanced Placement high school students and 7% of college students could differentiate between reliable and unreliable web sources.[7]

While historically, the importance of civics education has been recognized by educational and political leaders at the national level, the responsibility for designing and implementing civics education and measuring student proficiency has landed squarely upon the states. The challenges for states in addressing the gaps in civic readiness in public K-12 education are myriad. However, there are examples of ways in which state and local education agencies have utilized structures including legislation and curriculum standards to promote civics proficiency. This begins by defining the scope of the issue at the local level. "While strong national data documents the decline in civic education offerings and the poor state of civic literacy, many states have found that conducting a baseline study is helpful to document the status of civic education locally and to create a benchmark against which civic learning and engagement progress can be measured" (The Council of State Governments, 2017).[8]

To that end, in The Fordham Institute's 2021 report, *The State of State Standards for Civics and U.S. History in 2021*,[9] Rhode Island's standards earned a D in Civics and an F in U.S. History, rating "inadequate" overall for content and rigor. More specifically, the report notes that, "Although there are a few bright spots, many of Rhode Island's civics standards are too broad and vague to provide much useful guidance – and their organization leaves much to be desired."[10] Further, a 2022 survey of 971 middle and high school students in Rhode Island found that local trends in civic proficiency and access to civics education in the state align with national trends. Survey results showed that discrepancies in civics education opportunities existed between more resourced ("high-SES") schools, where 86% of students reported discussing current events at least monthly, and less resourced ("low-SES") schools where only 69% of students reported the same.[11]

In the same study, surveyed teachers reported a lack of resources and professional learning sufficient for supporting civics education, with similar discrepancies between low- and high-resourced schools.

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

The 2022 Rhode Island Civic Health Index from The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities notes that while Rhode Island ranks 11th of 50 states in voters who participated in the last election, it also ranks 47th in residents who volunteer in local communities.[12] Further, they cite a 2021 University of Rhode Island study that reports only "one in three Rhode Island students learn how to comprehend and analyze new media in schools."[13] The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities includes as a recommendation, "strengthening collective understanding calls for greater attention to civics, history, and media literacy education, and inclusive monuments and historic sites."[14]

In 2021, Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee signed legislation making civics proficiency a requirement for all public high school graduates.[15] The legislation requires that all students complete "no less than one" standards-aligned student-led civics project in either middle or high school. The legislation specifies, "each such project shall be consistent with the history and social studies standards and frameworks promulgated by the Rhode Island Board of Education. Civics projects may be individual, small group, or class wide, and designed to promote a student's ability to: (1) Reason, make logical arguments, and support claims using valid evidence; and (2) Demonstrate an understanding of the connections between federal, state, and local policies, including issues that may impact the student's community." The above-mentioned reports, along with this new legislation, were considered during the revision process of the Rhode Island Social Studies Standards, which were endorsed in February 2023. The new standards include civics education throughout K-12, with grade 8 dedicated to civics and government, and standards for a high school civics course. Concurrent with these improvements to the Rhode Island Social Studies Standards, the RI Civic Readiness Task Force was developed.

THE RI CIVIC READINESS TASK FORCE

In 2018, a class action lawsuit was filed in Rhode Island in which the plaintiffs, consisting of fourteen students (or parent representatives), alleged that the lack of adequate civics education was in violation of the Equal Protections clause of the 14th Amendment. Though the case was dismissed based on precedent, in the dismissal the judge noted:

> "This case does not represent a wild-eyed effort to expand the reach of substantive due process, but rather a cry for help from a generation of young people who are destined to inherit a country which we—the generation currently in charge—are not stewarding well. What these young people seem to recognize is that American democracy is in peril. ... We would do well to pay attention to their plea... The Court cannot provide the remedy Plaintiffs seek, but in denying that relief, the Court adds its voice to Plaintiffs' in calling attention to their plea. Hopefully, others who have the power to address this need will respond appropriately."[16]

Following the dismissal, both the State and the plaintiffs came to an agreement to create a RI Civic Readiness Task Force charged with advising the state on how to strengthen civics education, including creating a definition of civic readiness and recommending guidelines for student-led civics projects.

To address the improvement of civics education in Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) recruited an intentionally diverse coalition of individuals representing educators, parents, community members, students, and advocacy organizations, as well as some of the students who advocated for themselves and their peers in *Cook v. McKee*.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The following Rhode Island community members served on the RI Civic Readiness Task Force:

- **Eugenie Rose Belony,** Student, Providence Career & Technical Academy
- **Crystal Bozigian,** Social Studies Teacher, North Providence
- **Dr. Tashal Brown,** Assistant Professor of Urban Education and Secondary Social Studies, University of Rhode Island
- **Dr. Michael Browner, Jr.,** Social Studies Teacher, Newport
- **Michael S. Burk,** DCYF; Tiverton Town Council Member
- **Faith Carbon,** Associate Program Director, Generation Citizen New England
- **Demi Egunjobi,** Student, Classical High School
- **Moira Hinderer,** Parent; Development Director, College Visions
- **Pat Jaehnig,** Community Member
- **Ryan Lafond,** Social Studies Teacher, North Kingstown
- **Ellijah McLean,** Program Officer of Education Policy, United Way of Rhode Island
- **Maureen McGuirl,** Social Studies Teacher, Jamestown
- **Natalie Leduc O'Brien,** Social Studies Teacher, North Smithfield
- **Jennifer Wood,** Executive Director, Center for Justice
- **Nancy Xiong,** Lead Organizer, ARISE

Members of the Rhode Island Civic Readiness Task Force gather at the Rhode Island State Library on October 6, 2022.

The task force convened for six sessions from September 2022 through March 2023, and was charged with advising the Commissioner concerning:

- The advisability of adding a half credit course in civics in grades 8 and high school which would focus upon media literacy so students can learn to effectively utilize the internet and social media

- Methods and resources to support students in how to have respectful conversations on controversial issues with individuals having different views from their own, to be shared with LEAs, and ways to include hands-on instruction on voter registration that will also be provided to LEAs

- Implementation of the Commissioner's Diploma Seal of Civic Readiness for high school graduates and civics award program for middle school students

- The development of a specific definition of "civic readiness" – to include civic knowledge, civic skills (including media literacy skills), civic experiences and civic mindsets

- Implementation of the requirement in the 2021 Civic Literacy Act that every school district provide one student-led civics project for students during either middle or high school

- Such other recommendations as the Task Force members may deem advisable

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

01	Defining Civic Readiness

The task force recommends the following civic readiness definition: A civic ready student has a strong knowledge of history, democratic processes, citizens' rights and responsibilities, critical thinking and problem solving skills, and is empowered to actively advocate and participate in their community. A civic ready student values having a range of perspectives, diverse communities, and promoting inclusion and equity in civic spaces.

02	Characteristics of Student-Led Civics Projects

The task force recommends that high-quality student-led civics projects should strive to include the following characteristics or elements:

- Provide an opportunity for students to work together on a project. Projects may be individual, small group, or class wide. Group projects should ensure all students are contributing
- Support students to gain consensus building skills
- Focus on a public problem
- Require student choice
- Develop students' skills in researching and collaborating around a public problem. When doing so, students should work with a local official, community members / partners that are currently doing the work to experience real world problems

- Lead to a lifelong understanding and interest in civics engagement
- Embed digital/media literacy as part of the project or instruction leading to the project
- Identify positions and issues in their community and/or that are valuable to them
- Guide students in knowing their rights and responsibilities
- Include cross-curricular -weaving in disciplines outside of civics, history, geography, & social sciences
- Encourage students to reflect and analyze their ideas, experiences, and learning throughout all stages of the project
- Encourage students to communicate with community leaders, experts, and/or constituents

Further, the task force recommends that high-quality student-led civics projects use the following six stages as guidelines in the civics project.[17]

Stage 1: Examining Self and Civic Identity
Students start by exploring issues and topics that matter to them, their families, and communities. They can begin this process by examining challenges they are currently experiencing that they feel go unaddressed or under-addressed, or alternatively they can build upon valuable work that is already done in the community to solve problems.

Stage 2: Identifying an Issue
After students have spent time exploring and identifying issues that matter to them, the next step is to identify a focus issue for their student-led civics project.

Stage 3: Researching and Investigating
During this stage, students engage in rigorous research. The purpose of this research is to examine the context, policies, perspectives, and history of their issue, and to learn about possible root causes.

Stage 4: Developing an Action Plan

Once students have determined the root causes at the core of their project, it is time to build a theory of action and action plan aimed at achieving systems impact. Based on further testing, research, peer surveys, community interviews or surveys etc. Refine and revise the Action Plan.

Stage 5: Taking Action

Students begin implementing their action plan. They can be encouraged to move beyond the walls of the classroom and exercise their voice. This is the stage that will be the most unique to each project, depending on the choices students make along the way.

Stage 6: Reflecting and Showcasing

Students continue to build and develop their project beyond the scope of the course and classroom. Part of this work may include a summative reflection and showcase. Other summative actions may include planning and executing a campaign to impact the issue or initiative that the student has selected for focus and work. Such a showcase is a best practice of project-based learning that supports student pride and ownership. Students should reflect on individual growth and project success throughout the six stages.

Finally, the task force recommends that RIDE host an annual state-wide civics showcase for students to present their projects to community members and other interested parties.

03 Strengthening Civics Within Social Studies Instruction

In support of the endorsement of the revised Social Studies Standards, the task force recommends:

- RIDE actively support integration of civics instruction throughout the curriculum framework and other guidance documents for social studies
- Requiring and providing adequate funding for civics in high school

In development of the Social Studies Curriculum Framework and ongoing bodies of work, the task force recommends:

- RIDE considers ways to support LEAs in the implementation of civics content. This includes balancing the implementation of scope and sequence to ensure content integration and continuity of instruction
- RIDE provides professional development to support implementation of the revised social studies standards and the curriculum framework

04 Methods and resources for students to engage in discussion and debate and provide hands-on instruction on voter registration

Task Force Members recommend ensuring that when engaging in civics education, particularly in relation to media literacy, discussion and debate, and voter registration, students should experience opportunities to:

- Engage in classes that are grounded in reasoned and evidence-based discussion and debate
- Participate in instruction and activities that are student centered
- Feel valued, heard, and powerful
- Participate in role play, including switching roles

- Attend and observe public meetings and meetings of governance
  - Summarize from your perspective as the "reporter" and compare with actual articles on the meeting
- Research subjects using various media modalities and learn how to differentiate facts from opinion/perspective
  - Compare and contrast the same story on different media sources
- Engage in experiential learning, e.g. host the voter registration drive; have kids exposed to multiple sources to spot misinformation
- Make calls and write letters, both welcoming and challenging, in order to engage civically without directly voting
- Fact check media
- Expand conversations & network with industry professionals / experts

Task Force Members recommend the following **methods** when engaging in media literacy, discussion and debate, and voter registration:

- Specific instructional tools (e.g., graphic organizers)
- Socratic Seminar
- Holding forums (so students can understand issues, meet people, ask questions, discuss)
- Mock debates
- Create class norms with students to explore and practice civil discourse
- Observe videotaped meetings and analyze discuss went well, what didn't and how it informs the project

Task Force Members recommend the following **resources** when engaging in media literacy, discussion and debate, and voter registration:

- Voter registration at school – define importance and significance of voting
- RI Media Literacy Project at URI – resource that RIDE should partner with – how it helps your credibility
- League of Women Voters (Voter registration and involvement)*
- Identify local experts in specific areas
- Project Citizen is a great resource (We the People)
- Disability Rights Rhode Island (Voter readiness and technical assistance on voter education)
- Guest speakers
- Congressional Hearing by the Center for Civic Education

05 Civics Recognition

Task Force Members recommend that civics is included in endorsement development and recommend the following criteria be considered as features when developing the Civic Readiness recognition at the high school level:

- Provide multiple opportunities for students to exhibit their mastery of civics knowledge and understanding, such as,
  - Completion of a Civics course
  - Engagement in an opportunity to demonstrate attainment and proficiency in a civics-related task
  - Participation in practical experiences such as:
    - Developing a portfolio, publication of research and writing, presentations to government entities, testifying in the General Assembly or other public bodies, participation in events and conferences, demonstrated leadership in youth organizations, running for office or serving on on municipal state boards or commission
    - Practical experiences should be considered as life experience credits in lieu of a course in the course sequence
- Additional Consideration: Implement a point system like NY State's Seal of Civic Readiness with multiple pathways to earn the credential[18]

Task Force Members recommend the following criteria to be considered when developing the Civic Readiness recognition at the middle school level:

- State level civics showcase - provide grant funding to districts to send students to present their civics projects
- Recognition of leadership participation in the civic action project
- Students participate in community based events/organizations, student groups, testifying/speaking at public meetings; preparing written input to public bodies; engaging "mock" public meetings within the school day to recognize the challenges some students have with doing service/work learning outside of school hours

06 Support for Implementation

Task Force Members recommend that RIDE support implementation of the recommendations by:

- Providing a guidance document and clear expectations around the student-led project and civics education which will include:
    - The objective and goal of the student led civics project
    - Exemplar projects and/or topics
    - Example of scope and sequence, implementation, and possible rubric
    - Instructional resources in supporting teachers in developing projects
    - Instructional resources to support teachers in implementing the projects
    - Guidance for teachers on how to structure and support students as they work through the projects, including professional learning opportunities
    - Citing resources from the Massachusetts Civics guidance document[19]
- Communicating clear expectations of implementation of civics education, based on the Civic Literacy Act
- Continuing with a Civics Advisory Group beyond the Task Force meetings
- Collating and maintaining a collection of recommended resources on RIDE's website, including a hub of student exemplars and other resources to support teachers with civics instruction
- Collaborating to schedule accessible voter registration dates for students: one in the fall before the election, one in June before graduation
- Providing teacher professional learning on the implementation of civics education

CADENCE OF TASK FORCE MEETINGS

Session 1 October 6	Session 2 October 26	Session 3 December 7	Session 4 January 11	Session 5 February 15	Session 6 March 22

Definition of civic readiness

Implementation of a student-led civics project

Strengthening civics within Social Studies instruction

Drafting & Synthesizing Recommendations

LEA Recognition of Civic Readiness

To address each component of the charge, RI Civic Readiness Task Force members engaged in an iterative process, facilitated by representatives from the Region 2 Comprehensive Center. The Region 2 Comprehensive Center (Region 2 CC) is part of the nationwide Comprehensive Center Network that provides capacity-building services to all fifty states, the District of Columbia, the Bureau of Indian Education, and U.S. territories and outlying areas. Led by WestEd in collaboration with the Education Development Center (EDC) and Mathematica, the Region 2 CC serves the state education agencies —and their regional and local constituents — in Connecticut, New York, and Rhode Island.

Each task force meeting included preparatory background reading, time for individual reflection on the session's focus, small group discussion, and large group reflection. Agendas, slide decks, and resources for each of the meetings are available on RIDE's website.

In addition to the six scheduled meetings, RIDE hosted a virtual office hours session in January to address task force members' request for support in gathering stakeholder feedback on the draft recommendations. RIDE offered support with suggested agendas, slide decks, and other resources that task force members could use to engage with their networks. This resulted in a survey that task force members could use to liaise with their respective constituents in gathering feedback to inform revision and consensus building. The survey was also posted to RIDE's website, and shared with student representatives during the February 2023 meeting of the Rhode Island Student Advisory Council.

The recommendations provided in this report are the result of this process and on-going consensus building conducted both online and in group discussion. The following section describes the iterative process for the development of each recommendation.

Recommendation 1: Civic Readiness Definition

Session 1 focused on the development of a definition of civic readiness. To inform this process, pre-reading for the session included Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools, State Civic Education Toolkit published by The Council of State Governments, and the New York State Education Department's Civic Readiness Initiative website. Task force members were provided with a note-taker to capture key ideas and takeaways from each reading.[20]

The drafting process began with individual reflection about the meaning of civic readiness. Task force members then worked in small groups to brainstorm ideas and engaged in reflection activities to identify recurring themes as related to what it means for Rhode Island students to demonstrate civic readiness.

The meeting generated initial ideas for a working definition of civic readiness which guided subsequent work in considering recommendations for classroom practices, student-led projects, and student recognition. Task force members were able to provide any additional ideas through "exit ticket" feedback surveys, conducted online at the end of each session.

Region 2 CC facilitators organized the ideas generated by task force members into two possible working definitions of civic readiness. These definitions were shared with task force members for feedback prior to Session 2, during which the team shared their suggestions for revision. Updated definitions were revisited as part of an iterative process throughout subsequent meetings.

Between Sessions 4 and 6, task force members shared both working definitions with stakeholders as part of a broader effort to gather feedback on their draft recommendations. Both stakeholders and task force members agreed that the second definition option (included in the current recommendation) best reflected what it means for Rhode Island students to demonstrate civic readiness.

Recommendation 2: Characteristics of Student-Led Civics Projects

In preparation for a discussion of student-led civics projects, task force members reviewed the Massachusetts Civics Project Guidebook and the New York Civic Readiness Capstone Project, both of which are available on the respective states' Department of Education website.[21] Task force members also reviewed exemplar project descriptions and designs from Kentucky's Civic Action Project, published through the C3 Teachers Initiative, which supports teachers in using inquiry-based learning within social studies classes.[22]

Geralyn Ducady, Education Specialist for Humanities & Social Studies at RIDE, provided an overview of the structure and content of the Draft Social Studies Standards to contextualize how civic readiness is woven into the standards across grade levels. Using the Draft Rhode Island Social Studies Standards as a guidepost for considering how civics inclusion can support the implementation of student-led projects, task force members engaged in individual and small-group reflection and brainstorming to identify a list of key characteristics of strong student-led projects. Large group discussion focused on characteristics in common across all brainstorm lists.

The ideas generated during small-group activities were synthesized by Region 2 CC facilitators and served as a foundation for further discussion in Session 3. Additional questions that arose during the final reflection included consideration of how LEAs might support implementation of projects, including attaching projects to a specific course, identifying action-based or project-based learning already occurring in schools and leveraging that work, and aligning curriculum across grade-level curricular teams to support student projects. This generative discussion served as a foundation for the development of Recommendation 6.

Between work sessions, task force members reviewed the prework, sample projects from other states, and the synthesized characteristics list to identify areas for revision and to ensure alignment of the work to the working definition of civic readiness.

Recurring themes that emerged in Session 4 discussion included the importance of student agency and student reflection. Specifically, discussion included how teachers might support students in identifying issues of

importance, considering and acting upon steps they need to take, and reflecting upon their learning. Members also highlighted the importance of students interacting with the community beyond the school and in defining what successful completion of a project looks like.

During the consensus-building process for Recommendation 2, Task Force members noted that while the recommendation focuses on action civics, it is important for RIDE and LEA guidance for Social Studies teachers to underscore the importance of building students' constitutional knowledge as well. They also highlighted the importance of naming the guidelines, particularly Stage 6, as recommendations for implementation to the extent that Social Studies teachers are able within their local contexts.

Recommendation 3: Strengthening Civics Within Social Studies Instruction

In addition to the overview presentation described in Recommendation 2, task force members conducted a station rotation activity focused on civics education in the Draft Rhode Island Social Studies Standards, the broader experiences and instructional practices that students should engage in and have as part of their civics education, and resources for LEAs. All written notes and whole group share-outs were collated and disseminated for task force members for review.

Initial recommendations from the task force for strengthening civics within social studies instruction included:

1. Integrating Civics instruction throughout the K-12 social studies curriculum, as doing so provides a broad base of knowledge, supports continuity and depth of learning, and recognizes the intersectionality among civics, social studies, economics and geography,
2. Emphasizing Civics in Grade 8, as it allows students the time to really learn and engage with the material, and
3. Offering a dedicated civics course in high school

Task force members were also invited to submit feedback during the stakeholder input period for the Draft Rhode Island Social Studies Standards. As a result of the endorsement of the Rhode Island Social Studies Standards, task force members revised their recommendations, as reflected in the current recommendation for continued support in the development of the *Social Studies Framework*.

A key consideration raised during conversation for this recommendation was the importance of professional learning opportunities for teachers. In recognition of the potential challenges posed by effective and thorough implementation of civics within social studies instruction, task force members underscored the importance of RIDE providing funding and resources for this professional development.

Recommendation 4: Methods and resources for students to engage in discussion and debate and provide hands-on instruction on voter registration

Ideas specific to methods and resources for discussion, debate, and instruction for voter registration were gathered in conjunction with recommendations for strengthening civics within social studies instruction. As described in Recommendations 2 and 3, this process included individual and small group brainstorming, synthesis and presentation of results by Region 2 CC facilitators, and review, reflection, and revision by task force members.

The resource lists provided by the task force are not exhaustive, but reflect the ideas generated during session discussion and from stakeholder feedback.

Recommendation 5: Civics Recognition

To situate their work in the context of current student recognition systems in Rhode Island, Stephen Osborn, RIDE State Strategy and Student Opportunity Officer, provided a presentation to task force members about Rhode Island's Diploma Seal and Pathway Endorsement programs. After this presentation and brief discussion, task force members worked in small groups to provide input and recommendations on civics recognition in middle school and high school.

Task force members discussed a high school diploma designation that offers a means of civics recognition beyond standardized test scores. Key points in determining how to recognize those students who demonstrate excellence in civic readiness included the importance of engaging with community organ-

izations and offering multiple opportunities including both in- and out-of-school learning activities, through which students can achieve a pathway endorsement.

Task force member feedback was synthesized by Region 2 CC facilitators and distributed for feedback between Sessions 5 and 6. Additional opportunity for feedback was provided through the Session 5 exit ticket and through a consensus-building document to refine each of the recommendations generated.

Recommendation 6: Support for Implementation

Recommendation 6 was developed over the course of each session as task force members identified potential barriers to district implementation of the draft recommendations.

Discussions included the types of guidance and support that RIDE and LEA leadership could provide to facilitate the implementation of student-led civics projects at the middle and high school levels, and resources that would best support teachers.

Task Force members also agreed that clear communication of expectations and implementation of civic readiness education from RIDE would ease the work of teachers and allow them to utilize resources with confidence and the ability to face any potential criticism more easily.

Conclusion

The Rhode Island Civic Readiness Task Force believes that recommendations included here will substantially improve civics education for Rhode Island students. They also recognize that to successfully implement these recommendations, RIDE must provide ongoing support through clear communication of expectations, professional learning opportunities for teachers, and accessible resources to support engagement with civics learning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Rhode Island Civic Readiness Task Force and RIDE would like to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations, without whom this report and recommendations would not have been possible.

First and foremost, these efforts would not be possible without the excellent work of civics and social studies teachers who embolden youth to make their voice heard, and students who are willing to stand up and advocate to make Rhode Island a better place.

Thank you to Amaal Awadalla (Region 2 Comprehensive Center) and Kevin Perks (Region 2 Comprehensive Center), for their exceptional support and facilitation skills to help generate discussion and promote engagement throughout the task force sessions. As well, thank you to Carolyn Fagan, Fellow at RIDE through Brown University's Urban Education Policy program, for her support in logistics coordination and diligently capturing the rich discussions of the task force.

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