



CLC Policy Committee

What We Do

The Policy Committee works in collaboration with the member organization, the national [CivXNow](#) coalition of civic education programs. The Policy Committee selects policies for quality civic programs and works to get them implemented in the state. As a member of the CivXNow coalition, the Civic Learning Council reviewed and prioritized [guidelines](#) for state policies on how to restore and enhance the civic mission of schools.

The Policy Committee's first task was to analyze the national state policies and determine whether Washington had these policies and, if not, whether they would be good for Washington. There were several areas where the policy committee felt complying with the national statement of state standards would be beneficial.

CivXNow Policy Areas Recommended by for Washington State

- **Universal Access to High Quality Civic Learning Opportunities** -The CivXNow standards call for more time devoted to civic learning in the elementary grades with a common upper elementary assessment
 - A semester-long civics course in middle school
 - A full year of high school civics
 - Cultivation of students' media literacy skills
- **State and Local Learning Standards** –States should undertake periodic revisions of their standards for learning in the social studies. States should also ensure a uniform approach to media literacy instruction across core curricular areas.
- **Pre-Service Requirements** – States should strengthen pre-service requirements for civics teachers by requiring undergraduate courses in U.S. Government and U.S. History, as well as undergraduate course work in the unique pedagogy of history and civics. States should also implement a fellowship program to encourage humanities and social science graduates of color to join the social studies teaching profession.
- **Educator Professional Development Through Network-building Across Local Educational Agencies**– States should provide adequate resources for ongoing professional development for civics teachers, on par with that provided to math, literacy, and science teachers. PD opportunities should strengthen teachers' civic and historical content knowledge, as well as instructional strategies, including media literacy, to facilitate engaged and effective learning.

- **Assessment and Accountability** – States should ensure that assessments are embedded in classroom instruction and used as sources of information for students and teachers, with the results informing and/or shifting classroom practices. States should provide student credentialing benchmarks at appropriate grade-level junctures, including civics graduation seals or certificates, with district-level implementation. States should require a civic learning plan from every Local Education Agency (LEA) and aggregate LEA civic learning plans to allow comparisons and assessments of progress, permitting the reporting of results disaggregated by demographic subgroups. States should integrate civic learning plan data within school performance indicators and participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Civics and U.S. History.
- **Deepen and Honor Schoolwide and Community Commitments to Civic Learning** - Each state should ensure that youth voice and participation are included in education and community decision-making by ensuring meaningful student representation on local boards, commissions, and other governmental bodies. Student representatives should be elected by, and accountable to, their peers. States should also verify that school and district practices related to school discipline, safety, and culture reflect the principles of constitutional democracy, with a commitment to ensuring that every student has an opportunity to be heard when they are in conflict or facing discipline. States should establish a recognition program to encourage excellence in civic learning for all, capacity building, practices of constitutional democracy, and student agency.
- **Equity** – Access to high-quality civic learning opportunities must be universal and culturally responsive. The students who make up the United States’ increasingly racially and ethnically diverse student body must both see themselves in civics curriculum and instruction and experience “windows” to cultures beyond their own. States should actively recruit and work to retain teachers of color into the ranks of social studies educators and disaggregate civics assessment and accountability data to ensure equitable access and address disparate outcomes. Equity should be among the major criteria for school recognition programs, and policy implementation must take equity into account through both design and investment.
- **Implementation** – States should establish or empower an in-state entity to help schools and districts implement new policies equitably and create designated funds to attract public and private investment in civic education policy implementation.

The Policy Committee focused their initial actions on increasing elementary school civic learning and adding a middle school requirement. In addition, it explored in a meeting the Superintendent of Public Instruction the creation of a seal of civic learning for high school students as well as increased efforts in media literacy.

For more information or to get involved with this work, contact the CLC Policy Committee.