

## **SIX ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOLS RECOGNIZED AS DEMOCRACY SCHOOLS**

*Preparing Young People To Be Effective Citizens*

**CHICAGO, September 17, 2012**— The Illinois Civic Mission Coalition has recognized six exceptional Illinois high schools as Democracy Schools, marking the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution. Illinois Democracy Schools are recognized for providing students with authentic experiences in the rights, responsibilities and tensions inherent in living in a constitutional democracy. Through these experiences, participating schools strive to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for informed, effective engagement in our democracy.

Since 2006, 17 Illinois high schools have successfully completed a school-wide civic assessment and have been subsequently recognized as Democracy Schools. The six high schools that have earned this distinction in 2012 include:

- Glenbard East High School, Lombard, IL
- Glenbard West High School, Glen Ellyn, IL
- Lakes Community High School, Lake Villa, IL
- Maine South High School, Park Ridge, IL
- Neuqua Valley High School, Naperville, IL
- Waubonsie Valley High School, Aurora, IL

The new Democracy Schools will receive a stipend from the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, which convenes the Coalition, to invest in high quality civic learning initiatives, as well as a banner for public display. Each high school will also receive a certificate signed by the Chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education, Gery Chico, the Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court, Thomas L. Kilbride, and the schools' state legislators.

“The availability of high-quality, school-based civic learning opportunities for all Illinois students are vital to sustaining democratic governance,” said Shawn Healy, chair, Illinois Civic Mission Coalition and civic learning and engagement scholar, Robert R. McCormick Foundation. “The committed students, teachers, administrators, and school board members of these six schools should be commended for living their civic mission and joining the growing ranks of Illinois Democracy Schools.”

Illinois Democracy Schools embrace their mission to provide high quality civic learning opportunities for all students. Their leadership emphasizes civic learning through development of professional faculty and staff capacity, and proven civic learning practices are woven throughout the formal curriculum. Democracy Schools foster a school climate that nurtures and models civic dispositions and build reciprocal relationships within the surrounding community. Democracy Schools provide numerous opportunities for students to participate in the democratic process through a range of classes and clubs. From class discussion on current issues and democratic simulations to extracurricular and service learning opportunities, students are able to experience first-hand the critical role they can play in shaping their government and society.

### **About the Robert R. McCormick Foundation**

The Robert R. McCormick Foundation is committed to fostering communities of educated, informed and engaged citizens. Through philanthropic programs, Cantigny Park and museums, the Foundation helps develop citizen leaders and works to make life better in our communities. The Foundation was established as a charitable trust in 1955, upon the death of Colonel Robert

R. McCormick, the longtime editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune. The McCormick Foundation is one of the nation's largest foundations, with more than \$1 billion in assets. To learn more about the McCormick Foundation visit [McCormickFoundation.org](http://McCormickFoundation.org), follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/McCormick\\_Fdn](https://twitter.com/McCormick_Fdn), or like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/McCormickFoundation](https://facebook.com/McCormickFoundation).

**About the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition**

The Illinois Civic Mission Coalition is a broad non-partisan consortium including educators, administrators, students, universities, funders, elected officials, policymakers and representatives from the private and non-profit sectors. Formed in 2004 by the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago, the Illinois Coalition is part of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, a national initiative to restore a core purpose of education to prepare America's youngest citizens to be informed and active participants in our democracy. The Robert R. McCormick Foundation has convened the Coalition since 2010. For more information, please visit [www.McCormickFoundation.org/DemocracySchools](http://www.McCormickFoundation.org/DemocracySchools).

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