

**NEW CIVIC BLUEPRINT OFFERS ROADMAP
TO ENGAGE YOUTH IN DEMOCRACY EDUCATION**

Illinois Plan Offers Sustainable, Systemic Approaches to School-Based Civic Learning

CHICAGO, October 8, 2013— In an effort to offer high-quality civic learning opportunities and experiences for youth in Illinois, the [Robert R. McCormick Foundation](#), in partnership with the [Illinois Civic Mission Coalition](#) (ICMC), releases the 2nd Edition of the *Illinois Civic Blueprint*.

“When it comes to civic learning, Illinois doesn’t make the cut,” said David Hiller, president and CEO of the McCormick Foundation. “It is one of ten states that does not require a standalone civics or government course and its standardized tests ignore social studies altogether. Illinois’ failure to prepare young people to participate in democracy has dangerous consequences for the state’s civic health.”

The *Civic Blueprint* is designed to give educators, policymakers, parents, and Illinois residents:

- explanations of proven school-based civic learning practices;
- examples of Illinois high schools, educators, students, and community partners using these approaches;
- recommendations for implementing these approaches in high schools throughout Illinois; and
- resources that support schools and communities in promoting civic engagement among Illinois high school students.

Illinois schools often lack necessary support structures to manage current demands amidst high expectations by administration, parents and community leaders. The *Illinois Civic Blueprint* recommends that school improvement processes and school-wide commitments to their civic mission reinforce one another. Preparing young people for their role as citizens in our great democracy should stand alongside college- and career-readiness as the central charges of today’s schools.

“Thankfully, Illinois boasts outstanding examples of schools that embrace their civic mission despite prevailing incentives to focus solely on college and career preparation,” said Shawn Healy, chair, Illinois Civic Mission Coalition and civic learning and engagement scholar at the Robert R. McCormick Foundation. “These schools, many of them detailed in the *Civic Blueprint*, have leaders who value civic learning, embrace a challenging curriculum where civics is central, have a deep commitment to staff development, maintain positive school climates, and leverage the resources of the surrounding community, all in an effort to prepare students for active participation in democracy.”

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, follow us on [Twitter](#) at or like us on [Facebook](#).

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 ICMC 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 ICMC since 2010. For more information visit www.McCormickFoundation.org/DemocracySchools.

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