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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THIRTEEN ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOLS RECOGNIZED AS DEMOCRACY SCHOOLS**

*Preparing Young People for Informed, Effective Engagement in Our Democracy*

**CHICAGO, September 15, 2016**— The Illinois Civics Mission Coalition (ICMC) has recognized 13 exceptional Illinois high schools as [Democracy Schools](#). 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 prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for informed, effective engagement in our democracy.

Since 2006, [54 Illinois high schools](#) have successfully completed a school-wide civic assessment and have been subsequently recognized as Democracy Schools. The 13 Illinois high schools that have earned this distinction in 2016 include:

- Alton High School, Alton
- Collinsville High School, Collinsville
- James B. Conant High School, Hoffman Estates
- Marie Sklodowska Curie Metro High School, Chicago
- Elmwood Park High School, Elmwood Park
- Lindblom Math and Science Academy, Chicago
- Mascoutah High School, Mascoutah
- New Tech High at Zion-Benton East, Zion
- Normal Community High School, Normal
- Normal Community West High School, Normal
- Plainfield North High School, Plainfield
- Streamwood High School, Streamwood
- Wheaton Warrenville South High School, Wheaton

Illinois Democracy Schools embrace the mission to provide high-quality civic learning opportunities for all students. Their leadership emphasizes civic learning through professional development of faculty, and proven civic learning practices are woven throughout the formal curriculum. Democracy Schools foster a school climate that nurtures and models civic dispositions and builds reciprocal relationships within the surrounding community.

The new Democracy Schools will receive funding from the [Robert R. McCormick Foundation](#) which convenes the ICMC to invest in high-quality civic learning initiatives.

“Our Democracy Schools network spans the state and represents its rich diversity,” said Sonia Mathew, Civic Learning Manager at the Robert R. McCormick Foundation. “With the implementation of the new civics course requirement in Illinois, our 2016 Democracy Schools stand as models for their peers throughout the state to emulate.”

Democracy Schools provide numerous opportunities for students to participate in the democratic process through a range of classes and clubs. From class discussions 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 Illinois Civic Mission Coalition**

The Illinois Civic Mission Coalition (ICMC) is a broad non-partisan consortium which includes 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. Learn more at [www.McCormickFoundation.org/DemocracySchools](http://www.McCormickFoundation.org/DemocracySchools).

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

The Robert R. McCormick Foundation’s mission is fostering communities of educated, informed, and engaged citizens. Through philanthropic grant-making and Cantigny Park, the Foundation works to make life better in Chicagoland. The McCormick Foundation, among the nation's largest foundations with more than \$1.5 billion in assets, was established in 1955 upon the death of Col. Robert R. McCormick, the longtime editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*. Find out more at [www.mccormickfoundation.org](http://www.mccormickfoundation.org).