

For Immediate Release

Francisco Martinez, 312-445-5068

fmartinez@mccormickfoundation.org

TEN ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOLS RECOGNIZED AS DEMOCRACY SCHOOLS

Preparing Young People for Informed, Effective Engagement in Our Democracy

CHICAGO, September 17, 2015— The [Illinois Civic Mission Coalition](#) (ICMC) has recognized 10 exceptional Illinois high schools as [Democracy Schools](#), for providing students with authentic experiences in the rights, responsibilities and tensions of a constitutional democracy. Through these experiences, participating schools equip students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for informed and effective engagement in our democracy.

Since 2006, [41 Illinois high schools](#) have successfully completed a school-wide civic assessment and have been subsequently recognized as Democracy Schools. The ten Illinois high schools that have earned this distinction in 2015 include:

- Antioch Community High School, Antioch
- Francis W. Parker School, Chicago
- Granite City High School, Granite City
- Marion High School, Marion
- O'Fallon High School, O'Fallon
- Oswego High School, Oswego
- Oswego East High School, Oswego
- Prairie Ridge High School, Crystal Lake
- Uplift Community High School, Chicago
- Westinghouse College Prep, Chicago

Illinois Democracy Schools embrace the 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 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 Shawn Healy, PhD, chair of the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition and civic learning scholar at the McCormick Foundation, a leading funder of civic learning initiatives. “With the emerging civics course requirement in Illinois, our 2015 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 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 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. To learn more visit McCormickFoundation.org/DemocracySchools.

###