



Civics Across the Curriculum Webinar Series

The Democracy Schools Network will engage Illinois Democracy Schools and McCormick Foundation Democracy Program “Engage Youth Civically” grant partners to participate in a webinar series centered on the various elements of Democracy Schools. This year’s theme builds upon the topic of our originally scheduled Spring 2020 convening, “Every Teacher is a Civics Teacher: Best Practices for Civic Learning and Organizational Supports.” The series will have a kick-off on Thursday, December 3rd; subsequent sessions will occur from 4-5 p.m. on the first and third Thursdays in 2021 from January until April. Sessions will highlight various Democracy School and partner innovations that can strengthen your work to ensure that students are informed, actively participate in their communities, and have healthy civic dispositions.

[12/3: Civics Across the Curriculum: A Panel Discussion to kick-off our webinar series](#)

Join us for a kick-off to our Civics Across the Curriculum webinar series to explore the intersections of civic learning, vision and leadership and school climate for our work.

Panelists:

- Nicole Beechum, Co-Director of the Equitable Learning and Development Group, University of Chicago Consortium on School Research
- Alejandra Frausto, Project-Based Learning Manager, Chicago Public Schools Department of Social Science and Civic Engagement
- Eileen McMahon, Principal, Maine West High School

Moderator: Sonia Mathew, Program Officer, Democracy Program, Robert R. McCormick Foundation

[1/7: Be a Guardian of Democracy: Strategies for Using Current and Controversial Issues in the Classroom](#)

Presenters:

- Tracy Freeman, Social Studies Department Chair, Normal West High School
- Alia Bluemlein, Social Science Teacher, Prairie Ridge High School

Moderator: Mary Ellen Daneels, Civics Instructional Specialist, Illinois Civic Mission Coalition



The Guardians of Democracy Micro-credential program is a free online course that can support teachers across the curriculum in creating a safe, equitable space for civil discourse. Two members of the Democracy Schools Network will discuss how the course impacted their practice and participants will get connected with strategies and resources to support their classrooms.

1/21: From Reflection to Action: “Choosing to Participate” Across the Curriculum

Presenters: Facing History and Ourselves

This school year has demonstrated how crucial it is to focus on students' social and emotional needs, build relationships, and nurture community. Join us as we provide tools and strategies to help classroom educators create engaging and resilient classrooms, and discuss activities, readings, lessons, and strategies that teachers can use to develop a civic action experience that meets their classroom's specific curriculum objectives, grade level, and available time.

Facing History will offer resources that support the understanding that effective “action civics” depends not only on providing civic education—grounded in the study of history and literature—that nurtures students' capacity for reflection and action, but also supports these essential practices:

- Civic education begins in learner-centered classrooms that value students' identities.
- Civic education must confront bias and develop a sense of the common good.
- Civic education must engage with the complexities of history.
- Civic education must introduce current events and controversial issues.

2/4: Simulations of Democratic Processes: Do This, Not That!

Panelists:

- Candace Fikis, Social Studies Teacher, West Chicago Community High School
- Logan Ridenour, CTE and Social Studies Teacher, Dupo Jr./Sr. High School

Moderator: Mary Ellen Daneels, Civics Instructional Specialist, Illinois Civic Mission Coalition

Join your DSN colleagues for a look at best practices in simulations of democratic processes that can be used in traditional, remote, and hybrid classrooms. Explore how the research of Dr. Jane Lo and Dr. Walter Parker was applied in their classrooms as a result of participating in the Guardians for Democracy pilot course in this best civic



practice. Learn culturally responsive and equitable practices to make simulations work in your discipline

2/18: Civic Online Reasoning Across the Curriculum

Presenters:

- Thomas McManamen, Carrie Ory, Adrienne Toomey, Kelli Tufo, and Deanna Lindsey (Neuqua Valley High School)
- Sarah McGrew, and Joel Breakstone (Stanford History Education Group)

On subjects ranging from the coronavirus to voting, disinformation proliferates online. How can we help students sort fact from fiction? During this interactive session, educators from Neuqua Valley High School and staff from the Stanford History Education Group will discuss how they have integrated research-tested strategies for evaluating online information into ninth-grade biology and social studies classes.

3/4: Facilitate Students to take the L.E.A.D. with Service Learning

- Stacy Steiner, Carlinville High School
- John Beirbaum, Normal West High School
- Gwynne Ryan, Maine Township High School

Moderator: Mary Ellen Daneels, Civics Instructional Specialist, Illinois Civic Mission Coalition

Learn about approaches to service-learning that allow students to take the L.E.A.D. (Learn, Engage & Explore, Authentic Action, Demonstrate Learning). Collaborate with your DSN colleagues who are participating in the IllinoisCivics.org Service Learning Facilitator Initiative and earning their micro-credentials in service-learning through designing and facilitating cross-curricular opportunities for informed action.

3/18: School-wide Commitment to Civic Learning

Presenters:

- Jason Janczak, Social Studies Department Chair, Grayslake Central High School
- Georgia Brown, Social Studies Teacher, Grayslake Central High School
- Brian Centella, Life Fitness Teacher, Grayslake Central High School
- Lora Ciferri, Math Teacher, Grayslake Central High School
- James Plaza, Social Studies Teacher; Grayslake Central High School



This webinar will provide a brief overview of how Grayslake Central High School embeds civic learning into social studies, math and life fitness courses. A panel discussion with various departments will follow with specific examples of what they are doing in learning areas across their school.

[4/8: Digital Well-Being and Citizenship](#)

Presenter:

- Grant Murray, Dean of Students, Antioch Community High School

In 2019, Antioch Community High School (ACHS) embarked on a journey to incorporate digital well-being and citizenship practices and spread them to staff and students. With goals of taking a positive perspective, promoting human interaction, and incorporating student voice and decision making, #ACHSDigiCit was born. This webinar will explain how ACHS approached school climate through this process and will highlight some of the activities used to promote positive human interactions through digital formats and support a sense of belonging for students and staff alike.

[4/22: Strengthening School Climate through Inclusion: An Approach to Teacher Professional Development](#)

Presenter:

- Jon Schmidt, Clinical Assistant Professor, School of Education, Loyola University

Loyola University Chicago is currently partnering with a few Democracy Schools across the Chicago metropolitan area, as they seek to develop and implement strategies to strengthen school climate through inclusion. Inclusive school climates can be strengthened through a variety of approaches including teaching and learning, elevating and supporting student voice particularly among marginalized student populations, and examining social identity formation and bias among adults. This workshop will provide both insights into the process of engaging questions of race, culture and diversity that tend to be fraught with tension, misunderstanding and lack of clarity as well as what approaches schools are taking to engage all students more meaningfully through an assortment of strategies that do not, once and for all, solve the problem of lack of inclusion, but at a minimum, position schools to undertake this important work with commitment and fidelity.