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## Pilot Study of Teacher Preparedness for Mandated Civics Education in Illinois

Zoe Michelle Prevatt

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

PILOT STUDY OF TEACHER PREPAREDNESS FOR  
MANDATED CIVICS EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY

BY

ZOE M. PREVATT

CHICAGO, IL

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Dedicated to my loving mother, Amy  
And my outstanding partner, Alexander

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## ABSTRACT

Following thirty-nine states, Illinois became the 40th state to make Civic Education a mandatory class for students to graduate high school in 2015. The mandated class is a semester long and usually occurs in the students Junior or Senior year of high school. The Illinois General Assembly then passed a separate bill that indicated that the 2016-17 school year would be when the mandated class would be fully implemented.

Throughout my piece I look to this implementation plan as well as the original Call to Action laid out by Barack Obama and Arne Duncan from 2012. These two pieces work together to build the foundation of my study. I also use theoretical discussions on democratic education to further understand education in this civic context. I pose the question if civic education is really “working” in terms of the standards and guidelines set out for it in the original Call to Action. I chose to tackle this question in terms of teacher training and implementation of this mandate. A detailed survey was sent to high schools in 65 counties in Illinois which will help us begin to see how teachers were or were not prepared and possibly what the future of the mandate will look like. Responses came back from eleven different high school teachers in seven different counties. The responses showed that teachers in Illinois were left wanting in terms of their training and the resources available to them to implement a civics education class at their school.



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE CREATION OF THE MANDATE

*Our children should learn the general framework of their government and then they should know where they come in contact with the government, where it touches their daily lives and where their influence is exerted on the government, where it touches their daily lives and where their influence is exerted on the government. It must not be a distant thing, someone else's business, but they must see how every cog in the wheel of a democracy is important and bears its share of responsibility for the smooth running of the entire machine.*

*-Eleanor Roosevelt*

Eleanor Roosevelt's words are now more applicable than ever.<sup>1</sup> People in the United States are beginning to question the credibility and legitimacy of our democracy. Our democracy relies on an informed public, and we need to create a bridge between the private individual and the public citizen to bring in a new era of democratic information. After this past election, many have felt like their voices were not heard, and thus the foundations of democracy were crumbling. The current problems with our democracy stem from a much earlier point than when we can vote. It starts with the institution of education in our nation and the lack of civic education our students receive. Democracy is a process and we as citizens need to put work into it just as our officials do, otherwise it cannot grow. Our public is largely uninformed and has recently based many of their decisions out of fear. As citizens we have a duty to our democracy to stay informed the best we can and elect the best officials we deem fit. The public has varying notions of

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<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt, Eleanor. "Trust for Representative Democracy Quotes." National Conference of State Legislature. November 1941. Accessed November 7, 2016. <http://www.ncsl.org/legislators-staff/legislators/trust-for-representative-democracy/trust-for-representative-democracy-civic-education-quotes.aspx>.

what schools are meant to do for our young citizens, which leads to an interesting argument between a citizen's right to choose to participate, and what would be best for the continuation of American democracy. Peter Levine states a school's influential role in the civic education of citizens, "Public schooling was established to equalize political power by giving everyone the knowledge and skills they would need to participate. Instead it tends to reinforce pervasive political inequalities."<sup>2</sup> School boards and even regulations in social studies curriculum are constantly putting pressure on our schools, districts, teachers and even our students to uphold the ideals of our nation, of our democracy. It seems clear from the level of participation in society from these young people, that these ideals are not instilled into students, and maybe trying to teach values is the wrong way to go about civic education. It has not been effective in getting our schools and students to see the merit of becoming active participants in their American democracy.

Mandated civic education poses an interesting new solution to this problem. It was passed in forty-seven states and the District of Columbia in 2016, with testing only required in nine of those states and service learning in seventeen; we have a large sample to start conducting research as to how this mandate is working or not working for America's students.<sup>3</sup> Every state requires some amount of coursework in social studies or civics. However, this will mainly focus on Illinois and the other forty-six states that have a mandated civics class (a semester) to graduate high school. Only seventeen states, not including Illinois have a standardized test centered on civics. Arguably, the

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<sup>2</sup>Levine, Peter. *We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: The Promise of Civic Renewal in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, 130-145.

<sup>3</sup> "Resource Title:50-State Comparison: Civic Education Policies." Education Commission of the States. Accessed March 18, 2019. <https://www.ecs.org/citizenship-education-policies/>.

effectiveness of these classes leans heavily on the teacher. If we are to begin looking at the effects of this class across the nation we must look at how teachers were prepared and trained to teach civics. Illinois is an interesting case, as it is the newest state to mandate this class for high school students, but also for the fact that it has an extremely diverse population of political ideologies. While talking about civics education and what this mandate could possibly change it is important to note the current voter climate and thus young peoples' current participation in their democracy. Illinois millennials are also very unlikely to vote or even discuss politics. A survey done in 2015 said that, "70% of Illinois overall have little to no trust in their state government."<sup>4</sup> This is only slightly better than the current national average of 82%.<sup>5</sup> Much of the youth population is still not voting or participating within their own communities. Perhaps the policy is just starting to take effect in many schools, but on the contrary, some schools have had the mandate in place for years with no evidential support. These statistics show the critical need for Illinois to put an emphasis on their civic education. The dire need for this type of education is why Illinois is such an interesting case for mandated civic education.

The city of Chicago has implemented many civics education classes in public schools that have shown decent results, however there are many schools that have not shown any. There are arguments to be made about whether this is the best choice for the student. Should they be allowed to choose to participate, or should they be forced to? Are these mandated classes pushing students to be a certain kind of citizen, and does

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<sup>4</sup> Shawn Healy, "Illinois Civics Bill Becomes Law," Microsoft Chicago, September 11, 2015, accessed November 28, 2016, <http://microsoft-chicago.com/2015/09/11/illinois-civics-bill-becomes-law/>.

<sup>5</sup> "Public Trust in Government: 1958-2017." Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. April 25, 2018. Accessed February 05, 2019. <http://www.people-press.org/2017/12/14/public-trust-in-government-1958-2017/>.

that infringe on their rights? It is not easily determined if mandated civic education “works” or not. However, we can begin to get an idea with the classes are set up for success with how the teachers were prepared and taught and even their own confidence on the subject matter. The major determining factor in Illinois, and many other states seems to be how the school and teacher implements the curriculum. From working in Chicago Public Schools, I would argue that since the standards are still somewhat vague, it is hard to get any sort of uniform class structure across the state. The specified civic teacher's decision on how to teach this material, as well as how much training he/she has been provided, in each classroom is the determining factor in both, the success and failure of these classes in Illinois, thus far.

### **The Foundation of the Mandate**

Former President Obama along with the U.S. Secretary of the Department of Education, Arne Duncan, presented a plan to increase civic education practices within secondary education in January of 2012 titled, “Advancing Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy: A Road Map and Call to Action.”<sup>6</sup> The introduction of the report presents that since the creation of the American schooling system, civic education has played a vital role in creating citizens to “protect and strengthen democracy.”<sup>7</sup> It also continues to say that this initiative helps President Obama reach his goal to have the highest proportion of college graduates by the year 2020. The main idea behind this is that the increase in quality of civic education for students will lead more students to

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<sup>6</sup>. United States. U.S Department of Education. Office of Post-secondary Education. Advancing Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy: A Road Map and Call to Action. By Arne Duncan and Barack Obama. Chicago: U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of the Under Secretary and Office of Postsecondary Education, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 2.

continue their education into college and become ‘good,’ democratic citizens. While great in theory, there is no evidence provided that this relationship is realistic to assume. The report continues to give their definition of “civic learning and democratic engagement;” which is incredibly important, due to many definitions being widely used in the public sphere. The U.S. Department of Education details that civic education is meant to “intentionally prepare students for informed, engaged participation in civic and democratic life by providing opportunities to develop civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions through learning and practice.”<sup>8</sup> Due to this being the foundational meaning for the entire initiative; the basis of this paper will look at the implementation of this policy in Illinois and if it is succeeding based on the Department of Education’s definition.

In 2015, Governor Bruce Rauner passed House Bill 4025 into law for the state of Illinois. This new law created a mandate for all Illinois students, that they must take and pass a civic education course (one semester) to graduate from high school.<sup>9</sup> However, Illinois was the 40th state to do so. It is important to establish a background in where mandated civics education started and why. Many researchers have found that mandatory civics education in America begins around the Cold War and Civil Right Movement.<sup>10</sup> From a historical perspective, this makes complete sense. The general

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<sup>8</sup> United States. U.S Department of Education. Office of Post-secondary Education. *Advancing Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy: A Road Map and Call to Action*. By Arne Duncan and Barack Obama. Chicago: U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of the Under Secretary and Office of Postsecondary Education, 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Quigley, Charles N. "Civic Education: Recent History, Current Status, and the Future." Center for Civic Education. February 26, 1999. Accessed December 7, 2016. [http://www.civiced.org/papers/papers\\_quigley99.html](http://www.civiced.org/papers/papers_quigley99.html).

public was incredibly scared of foreign ideas and cultures and believed more than ever they needed to safeguard American traditions and way of life. A key way of doing this would be instilling classic American values into students from a very young age through their schooling. However, this type of civic education was extremely biased, full of pressure and limited in what students were allowed to think and believe. We also begin to see history, government and civics all being labeled under a “social studies” umbrella instead of separate classes. Before the 1950’s-60’s, social studies had been a broader term used for the study of many social sciences, such as sociology. We first start to see ‘social sciences’ used for general history classes in the 1960’s. Unfortunately, many of the regulations and standards for these topics became vague and less important as well. The Campaign for the Civic Mission in schools discusses this change in the 1960’s,

Until the 1960s, three courses in civics and government were common in American high schools, and two of them ("civics" and "problems of democracy") explored the role of citizens and encouraged students to discuss current issues. Today those courses are very rare. What remains is a course on "American government" that usually spends little time on how people can – and why they should – participate as citizens. This remaining course is usually offered in the 11th or 12th grade, which is both too little and too late. And, it completely misses the large number of students who drop out before their senior year and who are arguably in the greatest need of understanding their rights and responsibilities as citizens.<sup>11</sup>

It has been a long journey, that is continuing, to overturn the damage that has already been done to civic education. The 1970s saw a sharp decline in civics education.<sup>12</sup>

Between 1928 and 1972 the percentage of high school students enrolled in a civics

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<sup>11</sup> "Guardian of Democracy." Civic Mission of Schools. 2015. Accessed February 2016. [https://www.carnegie.org/media/filer\\_public/ab/dd/abdda62e-6e84-47a4-a043-348d2f2085ae/ccny\\_grantee\\_2011\\_guardian.pdf](https://www.carnegie.org/media/filer_public/ab/dd/abdda62e-6e84-47a4-a043-348d2f2085ae/ccny_grantee_2011_guardian.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Wilson, Jerry J., James Sadler, Noah Cohen-Vogel, and Connor Willis. "An Examination of Changes to State Civic Education Requirements, 2004-2016." *Peabody Journal of Education*. 94, no. 1 (January 28, 2019): 1-15.

course, “dropped by almost 40 percent.”<sup>13</sup> Mandated civic classes to graduate high school is only a step, how “Social studies” is taught in primary schools is critical as well. Today’s civic educators want to stray away from a biased, sensationalized type of civic education that was most often seen in the decades between the 40’s-60’s and try to find a more meaningful and inclusive type of class for students. This type of education would include what it means to be a citizen, what prevents one branch of government from getting too much power, what rights an American has and critical conversations about our most pressing problems in America. When looking at critiques of mandatory civic education it is important to remember our most recent history with it and why people would be apprehensive.<sup>14</sup>

One can define civic education in many ways. For one instance, the Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy describes it as “In its broadest definition, “civic education” means all the processes that affect people's beliefs, commitments, capabilities, and actions as members or prospective members of communities.”<sup>15</sup> John Rawls, a political and moral philosopher said that civic education should teach students...

...to be fully cooperating members of society and enable them to be self-supporting; it should also encourage the political virtues so that they want to honor the fair terms of social cooperation in their relations with the rest of society.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Niemi, Richard G., and Julia Smith. "Enrollments in High School Government Classes: Are We Short-Changing Both Citizenship and Political Science Training?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34, no. 2 (2001): 281-87. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1350244>.

<sup>14</sup> Quigley, Charles N. "Civic Education: Recent History, Current Status, and the Future." Center for Civic Education. February 26, 1999. Accessed December 7, 2016. [http://www.civiced.org/papers/papers\\_quigley99.html](http://www.civiced.org/papers/papers_quigley99.html).

<sup>15</sup> Crittenden, Jack. "Civic Education." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Stanford, CT: Stanford University, Metaphysics Research Lab., 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Rawls, John. "Political Liberalism." Columbia University Press, 2005. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198717133.013.38.

Today, civic education aims to promote engagement in the American democratic system.

The most relevant and modern definition to fit what civic education means in terms of education, comes from the National Center of Learning and Civic Education,

Civic education describes efforts to prepare students for effective, principled citizenship. Civic education can include instruction in history and government, civics lessons on the rights and duties of citizens in a democracy, discussion of current events, service learning, mock trials and elections, character education and other approaches.<sup>17</sup>

Every state has standards relating to the education of civics to be weaved into normal social studies courses. Forty states have mandated a semester long course for purely civics education.<sup>18</sup> Every state has different details on what this semester must include. Illinois law mandates that the “civics course content shall focus on government institutions, the discussion of current and controversial issues, service learning and simulations of the democratic process.”<sup>19</sup> The details of what this course needs to include in Illinois is vague and up to the teacher of the class to decide. This is the case in most other state mandates as well. With the announcement of the passing of this law in Illinois, it was even stated that “School districts are free to determine how to incorporate civics education into their current curricula in a way that best meets the needs for their students.”<sup>20</sup> Which leaves the field widely open to teacher and district interpretation.

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<sup>17</sup> Delander, Brady. "Florida and Tennessee: Accountability in Civic Education." *Journal of Research in Education*. February 28, 2014. Accessed February 26, 2016. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED561922>.

<sup>18</sup> Surbhi Godsay et al., "State Civic Education Requirements," *CIRCLE RSS*, September 2012, , accessed November 07, 2016, <http://civicyouth.org/>.

<sup>19</sup> Diane Rado, "Civics Class Required for High School Graduation Will Push the Envelope," *Chicagotribune.com*, August 07, 2015, , accessed November 07, 2016, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-civics-required-for-graduation-met-20150907-story.html>.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*



## CHAPTER TWO

### CURRENT DISCUSSION OF CIVIC EDUCATION

It is important to take a deep look at what other scholars have said and researched about civic education to be able to properly move forward with the best foundational knowledge. Two well-known education and political researchers; Amy Gutmann and Harry Brighouse, discuss the assessment of civic learning in this manner as well. Both, Gutmann and Brighouse believe mandatory civic education has great merit, if conducted properly. They differ in opinion on how civics should be taught and dictated by the state and or federal government.

Brighouse details a few problems with civic education, “Civic education is problematic because legitimacy deprives governments of the authority to condition the consent of future citizens. Such conditioning is especially troubling when, as Galston<sup>1</sup> advocates, it involves the teaching of a civic history which is “noble and moralizing.”<sup>2</sup> However, Brighouse details that this type of historic teaching can lead to problems with teaching morals and virtues. Brighouse’s main issue with how civic education is being administered to students, is that he believes, the students are not being taught how to think by themselves; to critique and question the world around them before they are being taught the virtues, like liberty and freedom, that are the foundation of America.

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<sup>1</sup> Galston, William A. "Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Diversity in the Liberal State." Cambridge University Press, 1991, 213-38. doi:10.1017/cbo9781139172462.010.

<sup>2</sup> Brighouse, Harry. "Civic Education and Liberal Legitimacy." *The University of Chicago Press* 104, no. 4 (July 1998): 719-45.

He believes that this is potentially dangerous and infringes on one's right to be their own person, if these American values are instilled at such a young, impressionable age. He believes this is a danger to students and society because,

Many of our most deeply held beliefs were not selected through careful and rational weighing of the reasons for holding one belief or another, but by internalizing impressions, by trusting the testimony of others, or by trusting our institutions or hunches.<sup>3</sup>

Basically, our deep seeded roots came from stories, family lineage, and propaganda. Which is not entirely as horrible as Brighthouse makes it out to be. There is something to be said for letting students think on their own before presenting these values that can be so infectious and persuasive, so they retain the want and ability to inquire and question our officials and society. However, these values are the foundation of what made and makes our country what it is, and that is important for students to learn. Brighthouse offers a solution that he admits is not foolproof. He would suggest an autonomy-facilitating education that complements political liberalism.<sup>4</sup> This type of education should present history as a social science, promote alternative ideologies, and always be engaged in disagreement and constructive conflict. These subjects would be presented in a prepared order to ensure students would learn to be free thinking, as well as gaining the needed civic knowledge. Brighthouse dictates an order should be first, to teach the traditional content. Second, teach students how to identify errors and fallacy within texts. Third, a background on different foundational beliefs in people, like religion and "anti-religion." Fourth and finally, he believes that teachers should then discuss their own diversity, the ways similar issues have been dealt with in the past, and how to

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<sup>3</sup> Harry Brighthouse, "Civic Education and Liberal Legitimacy," *The University of Chicago* (Chicago), July 1998, 728.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 735.

embrace differences to gain mutual understanding. It is a very understandable approach for how to teach civics as well as respect for others. Nonetheless, it seems a bit idealistic and would be pretty unachievable in some classrooms. Brighouse knows there is a need for civic education and determines it all depends on how it is taught if it will lead to a more informed public.

Gutmann agrees with Brighouse on some points, especially on the aim of civic education,

The comprehensive liberal aim of educating children not only for citizenship but also for individuality or autonomy.... Political liberalism does not aspire to teach children how to think independently or to live autonomously unless individuality and autonomy are necessary to good citizenship.<sup>5</sup>

Gutmann agrees that the need to teach independence has fallen to the back burner. She focuses heavily on how this affects the teaching of social diversity. She states, "Some kinds of social diversity -- intolerant ways of life, for example -- are anathema to political liberalism. Civic education should educate all children to appreciate the public value of toleration." Gutmann makes a clear and accurate representation of how social diversity is being left out of civic education, and also the merits for including it. Even still, the idea of toleration, is one she pushes back on. Toleration is not nearly enough for our student citizens and said we also need mutual respect. Brighouse explains this contrast between respect and tolerance,

Mutual civic respect is contrasted with mere tolerance: when we are merely tolerant we refrain from coercing those with whom we disagree, but when we accord them civic respect we take them -- and their ideas -- seriously.<sup>6</sup>

Gutmann pushes back on skeptics who believe that civic education should not be taught

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<sup>5</sup> Amy Gutmann, "Civic Education and Social Diversity," *University of Chicago*, April 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Brighouse, Harry. "Civic Education and Liberal Legitimacy." *The University of Chicago Press* 104, no. 4 (July 1998): 719-45.

in our schools, that it is too political and undermines parental authority. She states,

We were (for example) to prevent schools from teaching children to deliberate about what constitutes privacy for the purposes of protecting individual liberty from governmental intrusions, we would be restricting deliberation about one of the most politically relevant issues in a liberal democracy.<sup>7</sup>

Gutmann discusses this ambiguity behind the partisanship of schooling. Schooling is not partisan because it encourages students to be able to think for themselves, even without the content relating directly to politics, most subjects we learn in school have direct relevance to our life or the society around us which is inherently related to politics. There is a commitment made to the students to teach them to be more than just a son or a daughter but as a future active and participatory citizen, which is that case Gutmann makes for civic education being essential to student learning.

If the minimal conditions of public reasonableness in the United States today include a well-reasoned appreciation of the constitutional principle of nondiscrimination, then liberal democratic government may teach children mutual respect even against the deeply held religious beliefs of parents. Indeed, democratic governments have a duty to do so.<sup>8</sup>

So indeed, the case is made that civic education is important, and especially necessary in this current climate. Illinois is a good representation of how current civic education is fairing. Larger metropolitan areas are doing well, but rural and some wealthy areas are pushing the idea of civic education out. They are doing the bare minimum to meet requirements, and many teachers still have not been trained in anything civics related, even in states that have had the mandate for more than a year.<sup>9</sup> Which leads to the main

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<sup>7</sup> Amy Gutmann, "Civic Education and Social Diversity," *University of Chicago*, April 1995, 574.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 578.

<sup>9</sup> "Civics Course Mandate," *Illinois Civic Mission Coalition*, June 2015, , accessed November 7, 2016, <chromeextension://ecnphlgnajanjnkcmdbpancdjoidceilk/content/web/viewer.html?file=https://www.illinoisicivics.org/file/general-docs/Civic-Education-Key-Messages.pdf>.

problems as well as the main solutions. Teachers need to be trained on a full state scale. Service learning programs need to be included as well as funded, as best as possible. Social studies needs to be seen as important again, which is the largest problem of all. If social studies keeps being put off for later, our youth will continue to learn less and less about our history, the history of our neighbors and absolutely nothing about how our democracy operates and how we need to operate inside of it as free-thinking citizens. We cannot keep pushing off our society for later, unless we really do want our democracy to fail. Gutmann, Quigley and Brighouse have all made great suggestions for how civic education should be mandated, however, it seems like not many education reformers are listening. Quigley recommended simulation for civic education,

The use of mock trials, moot courts, arbitration and mediation hearings, and other simulations of judicial procedures bring excitement into the classroom and stimulate interest in and appreciation for our system of justice. The extension of the use of simulations to include town meetings, legislative and administrative hearings, coalition building, and lobbying exercises has helped to develop an understanding of our political institutions and procedures as well as the development of participatory skills.<sup>10</sup>

While Gutmann details that, “Civic education should give children the skills and virtues that enable them to consider what constitutes fair terms of social cooperation among citizens.”<sup>11</sup> Brighouse, the most critical and speculative of the bunch insists,

...it could appear self-effacing to teach values prior to critical scrutiny. Autonomy-facilitating education depends on and promotes the idea that rational scrutiny of evidence and arguments is a more reliable means of truth acquisition than trusting the proclamation of the authorities.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Quigley, Charles N. "Civic Education: Recent History, Current Status, and the Future." Center for Civic Education. February 26, 1999. Accessed December 7, 2016. [http://www.civiced.org/papers/papers\\_quigley99.html](http://www.civiced.org/papers/papers_quigley99.html).

<sup>11</sup> Amy Gutmann, "Civic Education and Social Diversity," *University of Chicago*, April 1995, 574.

<sup>12</sup> Brighouse, Harry. "Civic Education and Liberal Legitimacy." *The University of Chicago Press* 104, no. 4 (July 1998): 722.

These three researchers can all work together to make a clear plan for civic education. We should involve simulation, practice and research along with instilling virtues that we can also be critical of.

A study published this year, 'An examination of Changes to State Civic Education Requirements, 2004-2016,' looks to close the gap existing in this literature about the process of civic education mandates within the states.<sup>13</sup> Wilson, Sadler, Cohen-Vogel, and Willis take a deep dive into these mandates and rate each state based on three different aspects of mandates across the nation. The three types they found and chose to group civics education into are: coursework, assessments and accountability. Coursework, of course, means that the state indeed has a required class for students to take. Assessments refers to whether students would be assessed on their civic knowledge within their class. Lastly, Accountability refers to if there are any state based assessments students must take related to civics. From this, the researchers developed a rating system. If a state had one of the three groupings in place or none at all, the state was rated 'weak.' If a state had two items in place, say classwork and assessment, the state was rated 'Moderate.' If the state had all three groupings in place, classwork, assessment, and accountability, the state received a 'Strong' rating. The researchers assigned these ratings over the 2004-2016 time period. They used benchmark years of 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016. Looking at their data for Illinois you see that in 2004, Illinois received a Moderate rating, as it had a class requirement as well as a state-based assessment on civics. Four years later in 2008, Illinois is still at Moderate but has dropped the state-based assessment and chose a class-based test instead. In the next

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<sup>13</sup> Wilson, Jerry J., James Sadler, Noah Cohen-Vogel, and Connor Willis. "An Examination of Changes to State Civic Education Requirements, 2004-2016." *Peabody Journal of Education* 94, no. 1 (January 28, 2019): 1-15.

four years at 2012, Illinois becomes Weak, only maintaining a civics class. By 2016, when Illinois accepts the mandate, it receives a Moderate rating once again which includes the class-based assessments. Overall, the study gave Illinois an ‘Inconsistent’ rating for this twelve-year period.<sup>14</sup> This new study is exciting; it shows the ebbs and flow of each state’s recent history with civic education. From this study, they found only 11 states to be in the ‘Strong’ category, 16 (including Illinois) were ‘Moderate’ and the remaining 23 states were ‘Weak.’<sup>15</sup> The study focuses greatly on the accountability of students, teachers, and schools to make sure students are not just receiving civic information but are retaining it and further, that they know how to apply it. Civic education is based in our social studies education. Students need to learn to think critically and inquire frequently into our officials and government. Our students should learn to question, especially with history, what narratives are not being told? What makes this “story” true? History is not facts, but stories that keep changing with more and more evidence that is found at random moments and therefore should be subject to questioning. We need to build up the importance of social sciences, change the way it is taught before we can really push civics education through to its full potential. In the time that we are doing this, it is very important to keep pushing for these efforts in civic education as well as service learning. They go hand in hand, and it is hard to succeed in civic education without service learning. Most of all it is important to make these changes to make it relatable and important to our youth. If it continues to be irrelevant to them, nothing will change. As Cornel West says, “We must be relentless in our efforts

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<sup>14</sup> Wilson, Jerry J., James Sadler, Noah Cohen-Vogel, and Connor Willis. "An Examination of Changes to State Civic Education Requirements, 2004-2016." *Peabody Journal of Education* 94, no. 1 (January 28, 2019): 7.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 9-10.

to connect with youth culture in order to impart hard-won wisdom about life's difficult journey -- and keep our fragile democratic experiment alive in the future."<sup>16</sup>

### **Arguments for and Against the Mandate**

The main aim in passing this mandate in Illinois to “create a better environment to empower tomorrow’s voters and community members.”<sup>17</sup> The main question then is, how well is this mandate doing what it aims to do? In many cases in Illinois, this vagueness and openness of the law has been great, and many districts are really melding it to what their students need. One of the best cases so far has occurred in many schools in the Chicago Public School District (CPS). At West Chicago High School, the head of the social studies department said this when talking about the new civics class, “We’re talking about controversial issues all the time...there’s always the biggies: gun control, racial profiling, abortion... the big things that are on the news. We have a very formalized structure... we don’t just throw out explosive topics and go for it.”<sup>18</sup> CPS was already working on revamping their civics education program before the law was produced, and many companies have generously offered money to help train teachers and fund service learning projects. A Superintendent near Chicago also commented on the new law, “It’s important that kids understand our government system and are well-verse in topics around civics so I’m supportive of this. I don’t see it as being something

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<sup>16</sup> Cornel West, *Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight against Imperialism* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> "Civics Course Mandate," *Illinois Civic Mission Coalition*, June 2015, accessed November 7, 2016, <chromeextension://ecnphlgnajanjnkcmdbpancdjoidceilk/content/web/viewer.html?file=https://www.illinois.org/file/general-docs/Civic-Education-Key-Messages.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Diane Rado, "Civics Class Required for High School Graduation Will Push the Envelope," *Chicagotribune.com*, August 07, 2015, accessed November 07, 2016, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-civics-required-for-graduation-met-20150907-story.html>.



that's not relevant to what kids need to know."<sup>19</sup> This particular school also went from the required two years of social studies class to three years for high school students to graduate. We see, how in these types of schools, the openness of the law has really helped their students and relate it to topics most important to their students.

However, not everyone in the education sphere was happy about this addition to the curriculum. Many people were outraged by the new mandate and there was a lot of misunderstandings about it. Sixty percent of Illinois high schools already had required civics classes before this mandated law, which means, relatively nothing was added or change to the vast majority of the curriculums. This is also another reason why the mandate is not working to produce more productive citizens in most of Illinois. Brian Schwartz, from the Illinois Principals Association, for example, states, "We're not opposed to kids learning civics. We're opposed to the General Assembly prescribing more and more mandates without adequate funding."<sup>20</sup> Which is misguided and fair comment at the same time. The misguided part of this statement is that this new mandate, adds relatively nothing to a high schooler's caseload. They still must take two years of social studies, just like they had to before the mandate, the only difference, is that one of the classes goes from a general history course to a more focused civics course. The fair part of this comment is that there is not adequate funding which is shown in our survey's findings as well. Even with companies pledging to fund training of teachers and some service learning projects, this does not account for every high school

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<sup>19</sup> Corina Curry, "New Illinois Law Enforces Civics Requirements for High Schoolers," R.R.Star, September 8, 2015, accessed November 20, 2016, <http://www.rrstar.com/article/20150908/NEWS/150909562>.

<sup>20</sup> Diane Rado, "Civics Class Required for High School Graduation Will Push the Envelope," Chicagotribune.com, August 07, 2015, accessed November 07, 2016, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-civics-required-for-graduation-met-20150907-story.html>.

in the state. Another area of struggle with this mandate is the service learning component. Service learning is a huge part of whether mandated civics classes are successful or not and the mandate requires some service learning component. If students participate in both mental and hands on versions of what civics is and how to be engaged in their community, they are more likely to participate in society after high school.<sup>21</sup> The lack of service learning started earlier than this mandate however. In 2011, funding for service learning projects was vastly cut with the Learn and Serve America Act being completely removed from the federal budget. Twenty states still have standards relating to service learning, realizing its importance to civic education, but it has been almost impossible to fund those projects without federal help.<sup>22</sup> Even after a year, it is clear to see that many Illinois schools civics programs will not succeed in their mission to produce more civically minded individuals without service learning programs, and without full, comprehensive teacher training and implementation. These issues are still key problems in other states which have had mandated civic education for longer than Illinois has.

With the move to common core, many social studies standards have been left out and neglected. There are not any common core standards for any social studies class, and those teachers are made to adhere to the English standards, which shows how trivial social studies is becoming in our country.<sup>23</sup> Only nine states have necessary civic

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<sup>21</sup> Shelley Billig, et al., *The Impact of Participation in Service Learning on High School Students' Civic Engagement*. College Park, MD, 2005: CIRCLE Working Paper, 33.

<sup>22</sup> Surbhi Godsay et al., "State Civic Education Requirements," CIRCLE RSS, September 2012, accessed November 07, 2016, <http://civicyouth.org/>.

<sup>23</sup> "English Language Arts Standards » History/Social Studies » Grade 6-8," English Language Arts Standards » History/Social Studies » Grade 6-8 | Common Core State Standards Initiative, accessed November 07, 2016, <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/6-8/>.

assessments, that are not just multiple choice, to graduate high school. It is essential that these assessments are not multiple choice like many standardized tests, because one cannot simply show that they have learned about civics and what it means to be a participant in our society through picking a predetermined answer.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the new mandate, an Implementation Campaign was made to make sure these classes were effective and viable. The campaign was meant to implement the mandate of the civics course in high schools, as well as integrate new Illinois Social Science standards addressing civics, and make sure teachers were being trained properly.<sup>25</sup> Yes, the class has been implemented and put into Illinois high schools. The other two missions of this Implementation Campaign are sorely lacking. There have been no new social studies standards in the past year for Illinois and many teachers have still not received any training or professional development on the topic.<sup>26</sup>

So far, civic education has not been very successful on the large scale of our nation. There is a feeling of separation between the public and the state which will only widen without civic education. Despite of preliminary results of the effects of mandatory civic education, it must be pursued if we are to become the informed public our democracy relies on.

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<sup>24</sup> Amy Gutmann, "Civic Education and Social Diversity," *University of Chicago*, April 1995.

<sup>25</sup> "Civics Course Mandate." Fast Facts on Civic Education. June 2015. Accessed November 7, 2017. <https://www.illinoiscivics.org/resources/about-the-icmc>.

<sup>26</sup> Diane Rado, "Debate over Civics: Should It Be Required for Graduation in Illinois?," *Chicagotribune.com*, 2015, accessed December 10, 2016, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/politics/ct-civics-law-met-20150602-story.html>.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

In my survey, I ask Illinois civics teachers about their prior experience teaching civics, how they were prepared for the mandate, what trainings they received, if they felt confident teaching civics and other such questions.<sup>1</sup> I first started pulling together questions I thought were pertinent to this study in a google form just to get a basic template for what the survey might look like. I made sure to a few basic questions to such as, class size, demographics and county, to get a foundation of where their answers were coming from. After I put together questions I believed would help show insight into how teachers were being prepared in Illinois; I sent a draft of my survey and my proposal for research to the Institutional Review Board associated with Loyola. They accepted some time later and I rewrote my survey into their Opinio software. This was the final form of my survey and how the participants received my survey.

I sent the Opinio link to the survey in emails to Principals or Assistant Principals of these high schools across Illinois to hopefully pass on to their in-house civics' teachers. Due to this method, it is important to note that many civics teachers might not have received the survey from their administration and those that did, only certain people chose to complete it. Often, this can lead to people who feel strongly for or against the topic participating, and those left in the middle choose not to participate.

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<sup>1</sup> The full survey given to participants can be found in Appendix A

However, from these results there were indeed answers that were indifferent, just something to note that could skew results. The survey was sent to seventy-eight high schools in Illinois spanning sixty-five of the one hundred two Illinois counties. The survey returned eleven responses. Of course, this is not quite the number of responses that would have been conducive to a thorough look at teacher preparedness. However, we can think of this as

a pilot for perhaps a larger study to be done in the future. The results do tell some interesting stories. Some agree with my hypothesis that because there is not adequate funding or uniform standards, the class will ultimately fail, but others are just the opposite: hopeful and optimistic.

### Findings

This pilot study received responses from eleven different high school teachers in seven different counties. The average class size for these teachers was between twenty to thirty students with demographics being described as follows:

Figure 1. Question 3, Demographics from Survey

#### Question 3

To the best of your knowledge what are the racial/ethnic demographics of your school's student body (to the nearest 10%)?

	Text input
1	Caucasian and other 10% African American 50% Hispanic 40%
2	25% Euro-American 25% African American 20% Asian American 30% Latinx
3	90% White 5% Hispanic 1% African American 4% Other/Prefer not to answer
4	99% white
5	1/3 white 1/3 black 1/3 Hispanic
6	50% caucasian, 20% latinx, 10% asian/Pacific island, 10% African American
7	50% White 15% Black 15% Asian 20% Latino
8	White 60 Latino 20 Asian 10 African American 10
9	65% White 10% African American 8% Hispanic 11% Asian 6% Other; Mixed Race, Native American, Pacific Islander
10	White ~93% others~7%

As these responses show, there was a pretty good distribution of races, even for our small sample size. There were 10 out of 11 responses to this question, showing that one participant chose not to answer. The highlighted responses are from schools that have a non-white majority, meaning they have a 60% or higher minority population. I will refer to these responders by the order in which they completed the survey, #1, #2, and #5 when needed. Doing this will help us see if there are any patterns between the responses from Caucasian (White) majority schools and schools that are minority student dominant. Participant #1 stated their school has 90% minority students and 10% white. Participant #2 stated 75% of their students are from minority races and 25% are Caucasian. Participant #5 stated an equal distribution; two thirds being minority students and one third being white students. It is important to note that these responses are most likely estimates and may not be entirely accurate. The first pattern I noticed is that all three of the minority majority schools are from Cook County. Two white majority schools are from Cook County as well, but the other six schools are located in different counties.

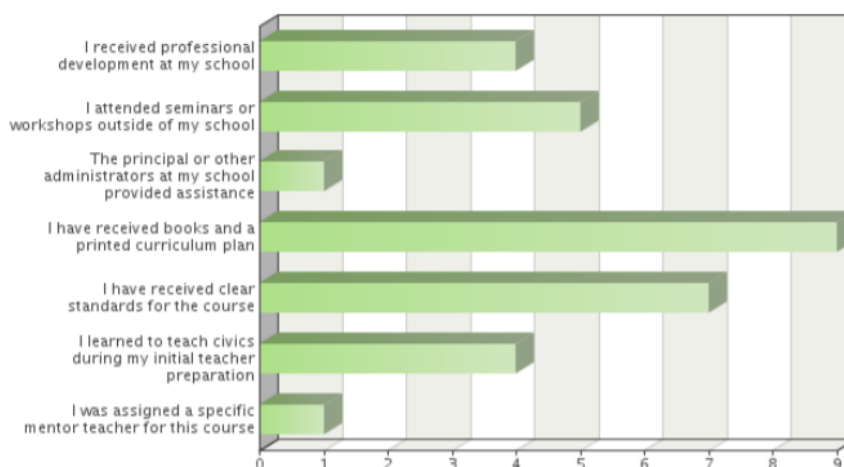
Looking at question 4, most of the participants (6 of 11) have been teaching for over 16 years with some teaching for slightly less time and the rest as newer teachers. Most of these teachers also responded that they had only taught civics for the past year (again, 6 of 11) which makes sense, since the mandate just past last year. However, the results ranged to teaching civics for one year to 10+ years. Looking at our minority school responses; all three responded that they had only taught civics for a year and there was no civic class option prior to the mandate. Four of our participants said there was a civic class at their high school prior to the mandate while the rest, 7 said there was no prior class. This finding is interesting due to the larger study that said 60% of Illinois

high schools already had a civics class where here we are almost seeing the exact opposite of that statistic.<sup>2</sup> However, we must keep in mind our small sample. The next item we asked teachers was “How were you prepared to teach high school civics in Illinois?” Options were provided as you can see below.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 2. Question 8, Feelings of Preparedness from Survey

### Question 8

How were you prepared to teach high school civics in Illinois? (Please check all that apply)



We see that most teachers (9) received at least books and a curriculum plan, where barely any teachers (1 each) received help from their principal, administrators or a mentor teacher. This is also reflected in the result that only 4 of 11 received professional development at their school and 5 of 11 attended something similar outside the school. When looking at prominently minority schools, two of the three (participants #1 & #2) reported only receiving a curriculum plan and books. While the other (participant #5)

<sup>2</sup> "Civic Education Implementation Plan." Civic Education Implementation Plan. Accessed February 24, 2018. <https://www.illinoiscivics.org/resources/civic-education-implementation-plan>.

<sup>3</sup> All raw data from the survey can be found in Appendix B.

reported a curriculum plan as well as outside of school workshops and clear standards for their civics course. One of the main problems with new mandated classes or even styles of teaching is inadequate training which comes from the school's administration. The possible problems here might be lack of funding to train teachers or perhaps the school believing their teachers do not need training and are already adequately prepared. Of course, these are just speculations but from these findings it does not look like all of our participants received the support they should have when implementing a new mandate. As we look to the next question on the survey, it shows us the training these teachers wished they would have received but did not. Four teachers wished they had a professional development session at their school. Three wanted to attend seminars or workshops outside of their school as well as assistance from the principals or administrators. Last, two teachers wanted to receive clear standards for the class, been taught when they were in school to become a teacher and would have liked a mentor teacher to help them along. From this we can conclude that there are areas of training that could be improved upon due to these results of the trainings teachers did not have but wanted.

The next set of questions asked teachers their opinion on a few items. Participants responded on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. For this series of questions, questions 10 through 18, there are no clear patterns or differences between out minority majority schools and our white majority schools. When asked if they thought the civic education mandate was a good step forward, most participants, 6, strongly agreed, 3 agreed, 1 indifferent, 1 disagreed. The 1 indifferent and 1 disagree response comes from two of our three minority race majority schools (participant #2 and #5 respectively), which could be an insight into how they



were prepared to teach civics in those schools. However, there were too few responses to really get an accurate read or interpretation on this front. When prompted with the statement “My school has fully implemented the mandated civics class and curriculum.” Nine of the participants strongly agreed, 1 agreed and 1 disagreed which can be seen as 10/11 schools these teachers work at have implemented the mandated civics class which was supposed to be fully implemented by January of last year (2018). However, the 1 disagree is concerning and it comes from one of the majority minority race schools that was surveyed. I would stretch to say there might be a significant portion of schools who have still not been able to fully implement the curriculum. This is backed up by our next question; seven of the participants also noted that all the schools they are familiar with have implemented the civics course, however there were 2 participants who disagreed, meaning they know of schools that have yet to implement.

Most of the teachers who participated (6) agreed that they were satisfied with their training. Three of those being strongly agree, three just agreeing. Two were indifferent and three disagreed (1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree). Although our sample size is small, it is still significant to note a third of our participants were unsatisfied with the training they received. Even still, 10 of the participants strongly agreed that they were confident in their ability to teach civics, with the last participant agreeing. Six teachers strongly agreed with the statement “I have the resources and services I need to teach civics.” Four agreed and 3 were indifferent. It is worth noting the responses from our three minority race schools. Participant #1 and #2 responded ‘indifferent’ and Participant #5 responded ‘Strongly Agree.’ Two of the three indifferent votes came from minority majority schools and may suggest they could take more resources, but they are currently fine with what they have, or they might not know what services and resources

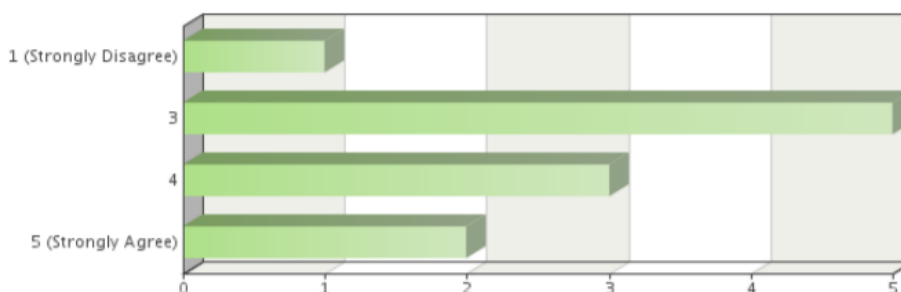
could or should be available according to the mandate.<sup>4</sup> Again, there are too few responses to make a definitive statement on this topic, but it is worth noting.

The next question asked about standards for the course. When posed with the statement, “I am very familiar with the civics standards my students are supposed to meet.” Three strongly agreed, 5 agreed, and 3 were indifferent. Since social science still derives all its state standards from the Common Core Language Arts standards, it is predictable that teachers are for the most part familiar with these standards. The notion that social science and civics should have its own unique set of standards is another problem, but it is an optimistic result that most teachers, at least in our study, are familiar with the standards their students are supposed to be meeting. The next two questions are the crux of what makes this mandate succeed or fail. The first, asking about the civics learning component which is detailed as one of the most important parts of the mandated class.

Figure 3. Question 17, Service Learning in classes from Survey

### Question 17

My civics class has a strong service learning component



<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary and Office of Postsecondary Education, *Advancing Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy: A Road Map and Call to Action*, Washington, D.C., 2012.

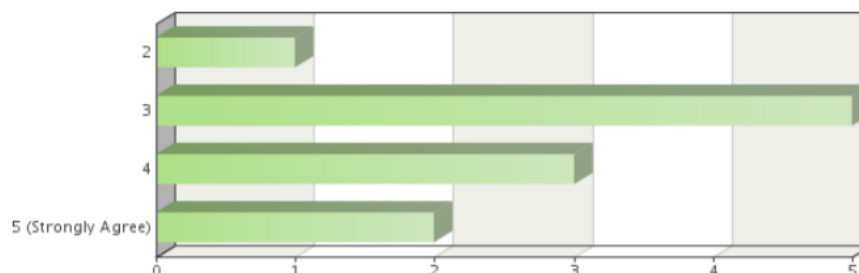
In this graph we can see that 1 person strongly disagreed with the notion of their civics class having a “strong service learning component.” Five are in the middle at neither disagreeing or agreeing. Three agree with the statement and 2 strongly agree. This result is concerning due to how many of our participants are in the middle at neither agreeing or disagreeing which does not give us much insight as to service learning in these civics classrooms. Alongside this, we have another question that resulted in a high amount of indifferent results. This result is also concerning because it deals with how the teachers views the way civics is being taught at their school and if they are pleased with it or not.

In the responses to Question 18, five teachers were in the agree category (2 strongly agree, 3 agree) which is less than half of our participants. The same number of participants, 5, neither agreed or disagreed and one participant disagreed. Again, there is a slight pattern here with teachers that reported teaching at a high minority race school. Participants #2 and #5 responded indifferent or a ‘3’ on the scale and Participant #1 responded disagreeing. It is hard to gather much from this result besides the fact that more than half of the participants, 6, did not agree with being pleased with how civics is taught at their school and all three of our high minority schools are in this category. From this, we can gather that there is something that could be better about the way some civics classes are being taught in Illinois and this might be an area for future research. What components make a ‘better’ civic engagement class? What does it meant to be a ‘good’ civics class? In other words, what components should these classes possess to make teachers pleased with the way civics is taught in their schools? Or what are the components of their current classes making them feel indifferent or unhappy with the way it is taught? Nevertheless, this question gave some interesting results, especially for a small sample size like this

Figure 4. Question 18, feelings about the way Civics is taught from Survey

**Question 18**

I am very pleased with the way civics is taught at my school.



The last three questions of the survey were open response questions. The first of these questions state “What would you say your school has done well in regard to implementing civics education?” One response boasts about a mandatory service project for all students as part of the class. Two responses discuss the amount of training and professional development sessions they went to and how it helped them prepare. One teacher discusses the relief of the mandate because now they can devote more time to civics and history since they are not together in one class anymore. Three participants did not respond. The last four responses are somewhat vague and just describe things such as “receiving materials and state standards.” The second open ended questions is “What would you say your school could potentially work on to improve civic education?” Which is a counterpoint to the previous question. Again, three participants chose not to respond. One participant stated, “It is fine.” Three responses detail that they would like more “opportunities for service learning” projects. A couple responses are vague such as “as in all courses, always strive to improve,” and also an interesting detailed response about the certification process and that they need to get endorsed in civics because when they became a teacher it was not included under the history umbrella, now it is a part of

history certification, and there are not many resources or opportunities for teachers to obtain this and now can be let go do to their lack of endorsement. As expected, the problems teachers will have with this mandate as shown by these 11 participants will be that there are not enough opportunities or resources for service learning and that the mandate could push out some veteran teachers due to endorsement changes. The last question was a space for the participants to add anything else they wanted to. Four teachers responded detailing issues with how the course is one semester and does not fit into their school's current curriculum, or how they question the legitimacy of this mandate due to prior experiences at other schools who gave little to no time to it and it was implemented in name only. Teachers also expressed the need to reevaluate social science and civics standards to make sure every teacher and school is held accountable. The teachers' exact words were brief and will be placed at the end of the appendix.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE CONCLUSION

Although it has been about 3 years since Illinois joined this mandate, it still seems that there are only small promises of hope in very specific schools who have the extra resources. Most of the studies done since the mandates have pointed out that even if the state mandates a civics class it does not mean there is any accountability for it. Also, classes vary in size, duration, resources, teachers' ideologies, and form of assessments. Some classes still do not require any sort of assessment, even including service learning projects and thus there is no real way to see progress or effectiveness. There were not many patterns when comparing white majority schools and other besides one notion worth mentioning. All the responding teachers from minority majority schools had not taught civics for more than a year and none of them received any more than books and a set of standards. This is of note because this might be an indicator of some resource disparity among the demographics of schools. One study by Jason Giersch and Christopher Dong pushed the notion that a teacher's ideology and the 'openness' of their classroom has greatly affected civics courses in America as well as abroad.<sup>1</sup> This could very well be a possibility. However, since the mandate is still fairly new here we have not seen many effects yet. After the results of this pilot study into how teachers were prepared to teach civics, it seems to be ominous for the rest of Illinois.

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<sup>1</sup> Giersch, Jason, and Christopher Dong. 2018. "Required Civics Courses, Civics Exams, and Voter Turnout." *The Social Science Journal* 55 (2): 160–70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2017.09.002>.

However, we will not be able to know for certain until we push forward with more and more research. Within the current political climate, it can be easy to feel as if civic education will fade more and more into the background at precisely the moment where it needs to shine. However, some responses can give us hope as to the future of civic education in Illinois. Some teachers were prepared seemingly well and are doing great things with their classes. Hopefully more resources and funding are made available to America's schools that need it, but that is often not the case and those teachers will have to make do with what they were given, which may not be enough to push the youth to become civic-minded citizens. To allow our democracy to thrive and keep the liberties we love and use daily and hopefully pass them on to the rest of Americans, civic education should be at the forefront of everyone's minds. It is too soon to be certain where the future of civic education is headed, but our country needs it to be bright.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Since this was just a pilot study there is room for expansion on this topic. At the end, it leaves us with many questions that can be explored further. For future studies I would consult greatly the most recent studies: one by Wilson, Sadler, Cohen-Vogel and Willis<sup>2</sup> and the other by Giersch and Dong.<sup>3</sup> The first study on accountability of the mandate really furthers the literature on civics education. I'd love to see a study like this one on teacher preparation stemming from this research, just on a broader scale. Maybe looking into teachers' own civic education or their different pedagogies and how that

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<sup>2</sup> Wilson, Jerry J., James Sadler, Noah Cohen-Vogel, and Connor Willis. "An Examination of Changes to State Civic Education Requirements, 2004-2016." *Peabody Journal of Education* 94, no. 1 (January 28, 2019): 1-15.

<sup>3</sup> Giersch, Jason, and Christopher Dong. 2018. "Required Civics Courses, Civics Exams, and Voter Turnout." *The Social Science Journal* 55 (2): 160-70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2017.09.002>.

affects what is taught in the classroom. The Giersch and Dong is a needed study on the correlation between civics education and voter turnout. The study dives deep into the content of civics education classes across the globe. There is opportunity to push this research forward as well, looking at global civic education and how it is being implemented across countries. I also believe a focused version of this study on the United States would really move this scholarship forward. I would have liked to be able to dive deeper into the content of teachers' classrooms in Illinois and the United States as well to see how much the teaching ideology differs from class to class. This could also translate to another study about teachers who changed content areas to teach civics and the endorsement processes in each state and if resources are available for teachers to do so. I would highly suggest giving ample amount of time to contact and receive results from teachers. I received minimal results over 6 months. I could only imagine the results over a 2- or 4-year study like the Wilson, Sadler, etc. Or even the ability to contact many more teachers directly would give future studies much more to go on in terms of findings. I have not seen a study like this on how teachers are prepared to implement these classes which I believe is extremely important and needs to be explored further. I also believe the idea of funding and resources needs to be explored. What states are funding their civic education? Does this include service learning? Where are the disparities, if any? There are also some details that could be explored such as what types of preparation is best in making a good, well-rounded civics class? With this, some foundational questions need to be addressed, such as, what are civics classes trying to achieve? What standards should they all be trying to teach? Giersch and Dong's study on accountability nailed it right on the head. Without any accountability for these



classes; schools, students or teachers, how will we know if this civic education mandate is succeeding?

APPENDIX A  
SURVEY GIVEN TO PARTICIPANTS  
QUESTIONS IN NUMERICAL ORDER

## Implementation of Civics Education

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Zoe Prevatt for a Masters Thesis under the supervision of Dr. Noah Sobe in the Department of Cultural and Educational Policy at Loyola University Chicago. You are being asked to participate because you are a Civics Education teacher in the State of Illinois.

This survey is being used to determine how teachers were prepared for the Civic Education Mandate in Illinois. If you decide to participate in the survey, you will be asked various questions about how you were prepared to teach civics. The survey will only take 5-10 minutes of your time. The survey does not ask for your name nor the name or precise location of your school. No one will be made aware of your participation or nonparticipation.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.

Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Your participation in this online study involves risks similar to a person's everyday use of the Internet.

If you have any questions about this survey, please feel free to contact me, Zoe Prevatt at [zprevatt@luc.edu](mailto:zprevatt@luc.edu) or my supervisor, Noah Sobe at [nsobe@luc.edu](mailto:nsobe@luc.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Your participation in this survey indicates your consent to participate in this research.

1. What county is your school located in?

Adams ▾

2. What is the average class size at your school?

- 20  
 30  
 40+

3. To the best of your knowledge what are the racial/ethnic demographics of your school's student body (to the nearest 10%)?

4. How many years have you been a teacher?

1-3 Years ▾

5. How many years have you taught civics?

1 ▾

6. Was there a civics class option at your school prior to the 2015 high school civics mandate passed by the Illinois state legislature?

- Yes
- No

7. Did you teach high school civics classes in Illinois prior to 2015?

- Yes
- No

8. How were you prepared to teach high school civics in Illinois? (Please check all that apply)

- I received professional development at my school
- I received professional development at a previous school
- I attended seminars or workshops outside of my school
- The principal or other administrators at my school provided assistance
- I have received books and a printed curriculum plan
- I have received clear standards for the course
- I learned to teach civics during my initial teacher preparation

9. Was there any training that you did NOT receive but wish you had? (Please check all that apply)

- I received professional development at my school
- I received professional development at a previous school
- I attended seminars or workshops outside of my school
- The principal or other administrators at my school provided assistance
- I have received books and a printed curriculum plan
- I have received clear standards for the course
- I learned to teach civics during my initial teacher preparation
- I was assigned a specific mentor teacher for this course

10. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. (1=Strongly Disagree, 3= Neutral, 5= Strongly Agree)

The 2015 Illinois high school civic education mandate was a good step forward.

- 1   2   3   4   5   N/A
- Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

11. My school has fully implemented the mandated civics class and curriculum.

- 1   2   3   4   5   N/A
- Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

12. All of the Illinois high schools that I am familiar with have fully implemented the mandated civics course and curriculum.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

13. I am satisfied with the training I received to teach civics.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

14. I am confident in my ability to teach civics.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

15. I have the resources and services I need to teach civics.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

16. I am very familiar with the civics standards my students are supposed to meet

1 2 3 4 5 N/A  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

18. I am very pleased with the way civics is taught at my school.

1 2 3 4 5 N/A  
Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree

19. What would you say your school has done well in regards to implementing civic education?

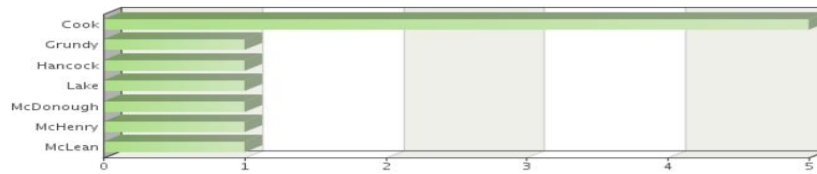
20. What would you say your school could potentially work on to improve civic education?

21. In the box below, please feel free to share any additional reflections on your training to teach civics or the implementation of civics in Illinois high schools since 2015.

APPENDIX B  
SURVEY RAW DATA  
RESULTS IN NUMERICAL ORDER

**Question 1**

What county is your school located in?



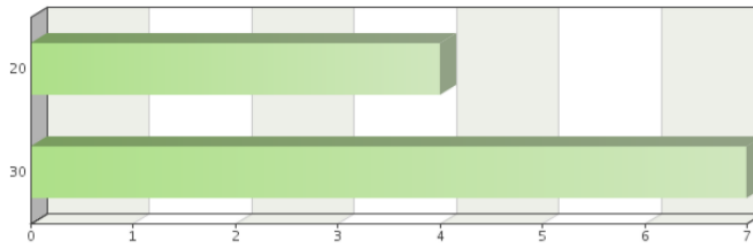
Frequency table

Items	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
Cook	5	5	45.45%	45.45%	45.45%	45.45%
Grundy	1	6	9.09%	54.55%	9.09%	54.55%
Hancock	1	7	9.09%	63.64%	9.09%	63.64%
Lake	1	8	9.09%	72.73%	9.09%	72.73%
McDonough	1	9	9.09%	81.82%	9.09%	81.82%
McHenry	1	10	9.09%	90.91%	9.09%	90.91%
McLean	1	11	9.09%	100%	9.09%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	35	Minimum:	16	Variance:	439.4	
Median:	32	Maximum:	64	Std. deviation:	20.96	

Total answered: 11

**Question 2**

What is the average class size at your school?



Frequency table

Choices	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
20	4	4	36.36%	36.36%	36.36%	36.36%
30	7	11	63.64%	100%	63.64%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	1.64	Minimum:	1	Variance:	0.25	
Median:	2	Maximum:	2	Std. deviation:	0.5	

Total answered: 11

**Question 3**

To the best of your knowledge what are the racial/ethnic demographics of your school's student body (to the nearest 10%)?

Text input

---

Caucasian and other 10% African American 50% Hispanic 40%

---

25% Euro-American 25% African American 20% Asian American 30% Latinx

---

90% White 5% Hispanic 1% African American 4% Other/Prefer not to answer

---

99% white

---

1/3 white 1/3 black 1/3 Hispanic

---

50% caucasian, 20% latinx, 10% asian/Pacific island, 10% African American

---

50% White 15% Black 15% Asian 20% Latino

---

White 60 Latino 20 Asian 10 African American 10

---

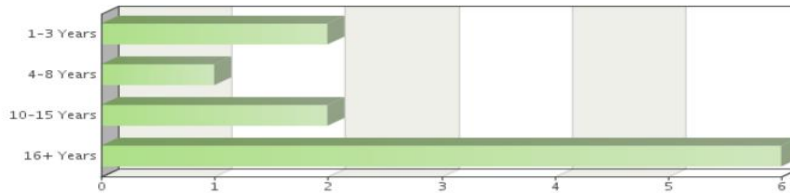
65% White 10% African American 8% Hispanic 11% Asian 6% Other; Mixed Race, Native American, Pacific Islander

---

White ~93% others~7%

**Question 4**

How many years have you been a teacher?



Frequency table

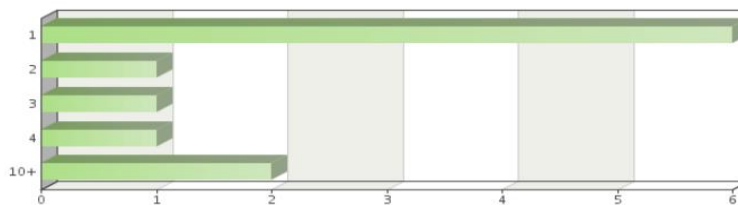
Items	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
1-3 Years	2	2	18.18%	18.18%	18.18%	18.18%
4-8 Years	1	3	9.09%	27.27%	9.09%	27.27%
10-15 Years	2	5	18.18%	45.45%	18.18%	45.45%
16+ Years	6	11	54.55%	100%	54.55%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	3.82	Minimum:	1	Variance:	2.76	
Median:	5	Maximum:	5	Std. deviation:	1.66	

Total answered: 11



**Question 5**

How many years have you taught civics?



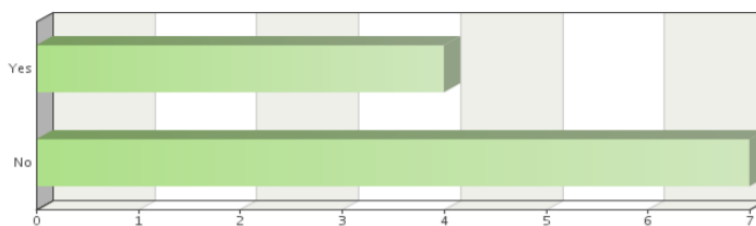
**Frequency table**

Items	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
1	6	6	54.55%	54.55%	54.55%	54.55%
2	1	7	9.09%	63.64%	9.09%	63.64%
3	1	8	9.09%	72.73%	9.09%	72.73%
4	1	9	9.09%	81.82%	9.09%	81.82%
10+	2	11	18.18%	100%	18.18%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	3.18	Minimum:	1	Variance:	12.36	
Median:	1	Maximum:	10	Std. deviation:	3.52	

Total answered: 11

**Question 6**

Was there a civics class option at your school prior to the 2015 high school civics mandate passed by the Illinois state legislature?



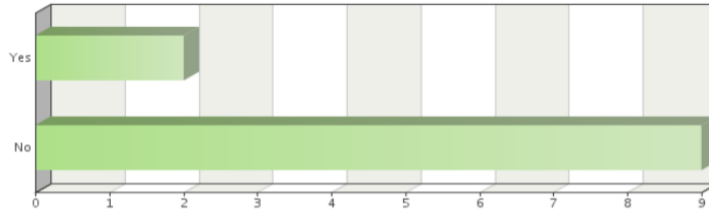
**Frequency table**

Choices	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
Yes	4	4	36.36%	36.36%	36.36%	36.36%
No	7	11	63.64%	100%	63.64%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	1.64	Minimum:	1	Variance:	0.25	
Median:	2	Maximum:	2	Std. deviation:	0.5	

Total answered: 11

**Question 7**

Did you teach high school civics classes in Illinois prior to 2015?



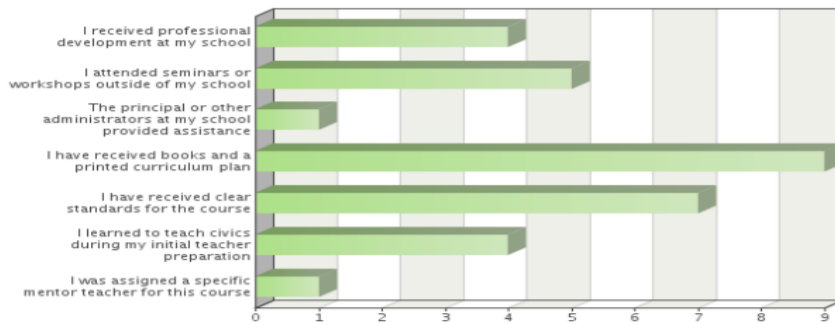
**Frequency table**

Choices	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
Yes	2	2	18.18%	18.18%	18.18%	18.18%
No	9	11	81.82%	100%	81.82%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	1.82	Minimum:	1	Variance:	0.16	
Median:	2	Maximum:	2	Std. deviation:	0.4	

Total answered: 11

**Question 8**

How were you prepared to teach high school civics in Illinois? (Please check all that apply)



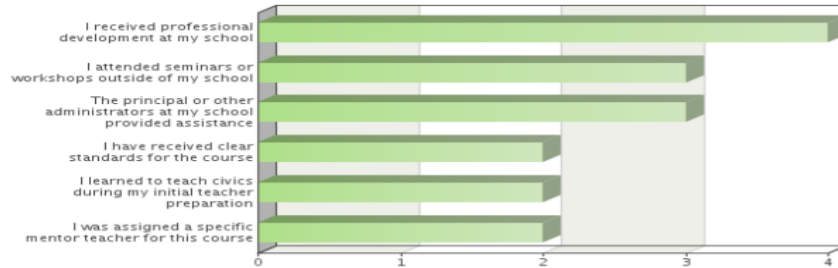
**Frequency table**

Choices	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency by choice	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
I received professional development at my school	4	4	12.9%	36.36%	36.36%	36.36%	36.36%
I attended seminars or workshops outside of my school	5	9	16.13%	45.45%	81.82%	45.45%	81.82%
The principal or other administrators at my school provided assistance	1	10	3.23%	9.09%	90.91%	9.09%	90.91%
I have received books and a printed curriculum plan	9	19	29.03%	81.82%	172.73%	81.82%	172.73%
I have received clear standards for the course	7	26	22.58%	63.64%	236.36%	63.64%	236.36%
I learned to teach civics during my initial teacher preparation	4	30	12.9%	36.36%	272.73%	36.36%	272.73%
I was assigned a specific mentor teacher for this course	1	31	3.23%	9.09%	281.82%	9.09%	281.82%
Sum:	31	-	100%	-	-	-	-
Not answered:	0	-	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	4.71	Minimum:	1	Variance:	3.81		
Median:	5	Maximum:	8	Std. deviation:	1.95		

Total answered: 11

**Question 9**

Was there any training that you did NOT receive but wish you had? (Please check all that apply)



**Frequency table**

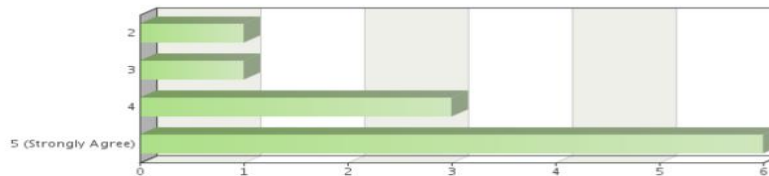
Choices	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency by choice	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
I received professional development at my school	4	4	25%	36.36%	36.36%	50%	50%
I attended seminars or workshops outside of my school	3	7	18.75%	27.27%	63.64%	37.5%	87.5%
The principal or other administrators at my school provided assistance	3	10	18.75%	27.27%	90.91%	37.5%	125%
I have received clear standards for the course	2	12	12.5%	18.18%	109.09%	25%	150%
I learned to teach civics during my initial teacher preparation	2	14	12.5%	18.18%	127.27%	25%	175%
I was assigned a specific mentor teacher for this course	2	16	12.5%	18.18%	145.45%	25%	200%
Sum:	16	-	100%	-	-	-	-
Not answered:	3	-	-	27.27%	-	-	-
Average:	4.19	Minimum:	1	Variance:	6.43		
Median:	4	Maximum:	8	Std. deviation:	2.54		

Total answered: 8

**Question 10**

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. (1=Strongly Disagree, 3= Neutral, 5= Strongly Agree)

The 2015 Illinois high school civic education mandate was a good step forward.



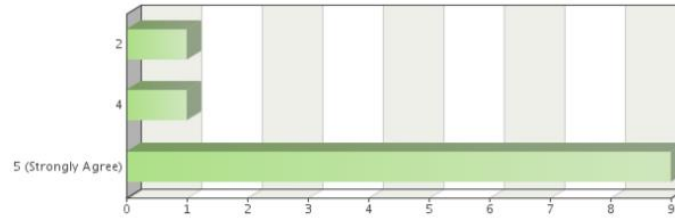
**Frequency table**

Levels	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
2	1	1	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%
3	1	2	9.09%	18.18%	9.09%	18.18%
4	3	5	27.27%	45.45%	27.27%	45.45%
5 (Strongly Agree)	6	11	54.55%	100%	54.55%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	4.27	Minimum:	2	Variance:	1.02	
Median:	5	Maximum:	5	Std. deviation:	1.01	

Total answered: 11

**Question 11**

My school has fully implemented the mandated civics class and curriculum.



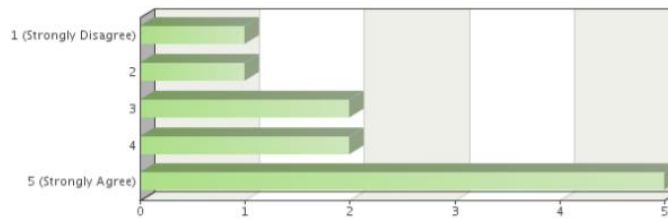
**Frequency table**

Levels	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
2	1	1	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%
4	1	2	9.09%	18.18%	9.09%	18.18%
5 (Strongly Agree)	9	11	81.82%	100%	81.82%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	4.64	Minimum:	2	Variance:	0.85	
Median:	5	Maximum:	5	Std. deviation:	0.92	

Total answered: 11

**Question 12**

All of the Illinois high schools that I am familiar with have fully implemented the mandated civics course and curriculum.



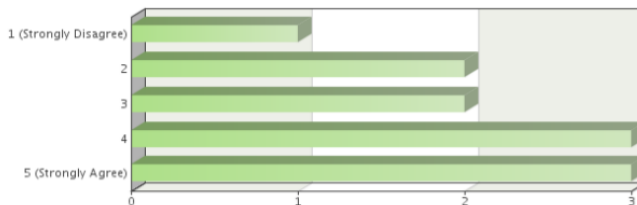
**Frequency table**

Levels	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
1 (Strongly Disagree)	1	1	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%
2	1	2	9.09%	18.18%	9.09%	18.18%
3	2	4	18.18%	36.36%	18.18%	36.36%
4	2	6	18.18%	54.55%	18.18%	54.55%
5 (Strongly Agree)	5	11	45.45%	100%	45.45%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	3.82	Minimum:	1	Variance:	1.96	
Median:	4	Maximum:	5	Std. deviation:	1.4	

Total answered: 11

**Question 13**

I am satisfied with the training I received to teach civics.



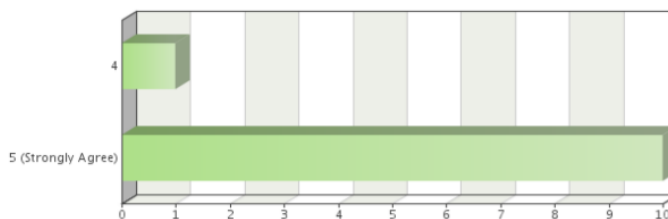
**Frequency table**

Levels	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
1 (Strongly Disagree)	1	1	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%
2	3	4	27.27%	36.36%	18.18%	27.27%
3	2	6	18.18%	54.54%	18.18%	45.45%
4	3	9	27.27%	81.81%	27.27%	72.73%
5 (Strongly Agree)	3	11	27.27%	100%	27.27%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	3.45	Minimum:	1	Variance:	1.87	
Median:	4	Maximum:	5	Std. deviation:	1.37	

Total answered: 11

**Question 14**

I am confident in my ability to teach civics.



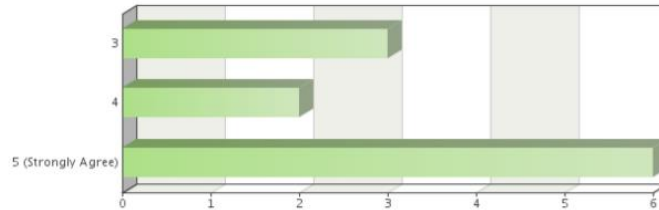
**Frequency table**

Levels	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
4	1	1	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%
5 (Strongly Agree)	10	11	90.91%	100%	90.91%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	4.91	Minimum:	4	Variance:	0.09	
Median:	5	Maximum:	5	Std. deviation:	0.3	

Total answered: 11

**Question 15**

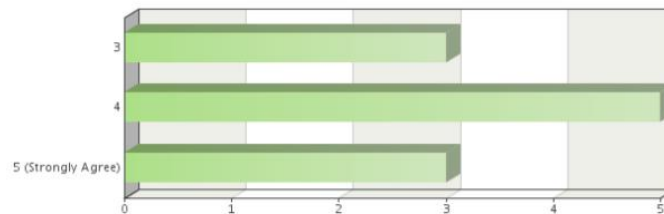
I have the resources and services I need to teach civics.

**Frequency table**

Levels	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
3	3	3	27.27%	27.27%	27.27%	27.27%
4	2	5	18.18%	45.45%	18.18%	45.45%
5 (Strongly Agree)	6	11	54.55%	100%	54.55%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	4.27	Minimum:	3	Variance:	0.82	
Median:	5	Maximum:	5	Std. deviation:	0.9	

**Total answered: 11****Question 16**

I am very familiar with the civics standards my students are supposed to meet

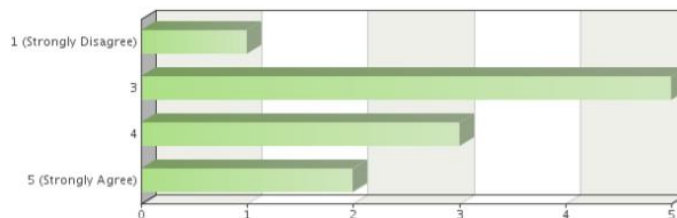
**Frequency table**

Levels	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
3	3	3	27.27%	27.27%	27.27%	27.27%
4	5	8	45.45%	72.73%	45.45%	72.73%
5 (Strongly Agree)	3	11	27.27%	100%	27.27%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	4	Minimum:	3	Variance:	0.6	
Median:	4	Maximum:	5	Std. deviation:	0.77	

**Total answered: 11**

**Question 17**

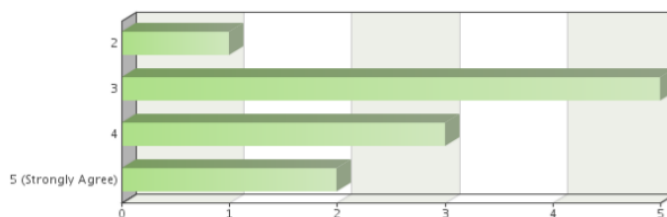
My civics class has a strong service learning component

**Frequency table**

Levels	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
1 (Strongly Disagree)	1	1	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%
3	5	6	45.45%	54.55%	45.45%	54.55%
4	3	9	27.27%	81.82%	27.27%	81.82%
5 (Strongly Agree)	2	11	18.18%	100%	18.18%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	3.45	Minimum:	1	Variance:	1.27	
Median:	3	Maximum:	5	Std. deviation:	1.13	

**Total answered: 11****Question 18**

I am very pleased with the way civics is taught at my school.

**Frequency table**

Levels	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
2	1	1	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%	9.09%
3	5	6	45.45%	54.55%	45.45%	54.55%
4	3	9	27.27%	81.82%	27.27%	81.82%
5 (Strongly Agree)	2	11	18.18%	100%	18.18%	100%
Sum:	11	-	100%	-	100%	-
Not answered:	0	-	0%	-	-	-
Average:	3.55	Minimum:	2	Variance:	0.87	
Median:	3	Maximum:	5	Std. deviation:	0.93	

**Total answered: 11**

### Question 19

What would you say your school has done well in regards to implementing civic education?

Text input

We are given a great deal of freedom to bring in outside resources and to be creative.

Consulted with teachers in how to implement the state mandate.d

Service Project for all students

We received the CPS curriculum and copland effectively

yes

Simulations and opportunities for students to get involved

Our Unit District has provided opportunities for teachers to receive PD in order to teach the Civics Curriculum via the C3 Framework. As an aside, we have always taught the Civics curriculum, it simply fell under the umbrella of US History. Separating the two made for a DEEP sigh.. We could now spend time on all academic points instead of 'racing' to get through all the curriculum.

Made it a required course to graduate.

It is school-wide. We are a Democracy School and take that very seriously.

### Question 20

What would you say your school could potentially work on to improve civic education?

Text input

Everyone is doing their own thing, and there is virtually no training or collaboration.

It is fine.

Improving service project and moving the course to the 11/12th grade level instead of 9th

Expoure, time, and revision will be key.

as in all courses, always strive to improve

Service learning outside of campaigning.

Endorsements. Because I received my BS in History, via ISU, in 1999. I am now technically 'unqualified' to teach Civics. Imagine that. In 2004, the State of IL moved to Content Specific Tests. That meant, you sat for each content area that you intended to teach. When I took the test, it was one LARGE test and you received endorsements in all areas that you scored well in. Civics was bundled with US History at that point. US History was my BS and MS degree. I have since been audited via ISBE and they are now asking, no demanding, that I sit for a test for curriculum that I've been teaching for 19 years. We simply broke the US History curriculum in two: US and Civics. I'm not bitter or anything.. I've written letters. I've made a million calls. Nope, as of 2020 I have an invalid license and can no longer teach Civics. Funny, no one mentioned this when they took my money for renewal in 2017. Grrrrr.. There HAVE to be others that this affects.

More opps for service learning



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## VITA

Zoe Prevatt was born in Illinois and raised in La Grange Park. Before attending Loyola University Chicago, she attended Illinois State University in Bloomington Normal, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in History & Social Science Education, with Distinguished Teaching Portfolio, in 2015.

While at Loyola, Ms. Prevatt earned an internship with United States Senator Mark Kirk in 2016 where she served immigrants and veterans in Illinois. She also participated in an Education Law class within Loyola's Law School where she earned great marks.

Currently, Ms. Prevatt is a middle school teacher in Chicago Public Schools at a school on the southside of Chicago. She currently resides on the south side of Chicago.