



## Arizona Civics Coalition

# Inventory of Civic Education in Arizona School Districts

**Released:**  
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## **INVENTORY OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN ARIZONA SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

### **Purpose**

For more than 250 years, Americans have shared a vision of a democracy in which all citizens understand, appreciate, and engage actively in civic and political life. In recent decades, however, increasing numbers of Americans have disengaged from civic and political institutions and political and electoral activities including voting and being informed about public issues. Young people reflect these trends: they are less likely to vote and are less interested in political discussion and public issues than either their older counterparts or young people of past decades. As a result, many young Americans may not be prepared to participate fully in our democracy now and when they become adults.

Recognizing that individuals do not automatically become free and responsible citizens but must be educated for citizenship, scholars; teachers; civic leaders; local, state, and federal policymakers; and federal judges, have with the encouragement of the president of the United States, called for new strategies that can capitalize on young people's idealism and their commitment to service and voluntarism while addressing their disengagement from political and civic institutions. One of the most promising approaches to increase young people's informed engagement is school-based civic education.

### **Arizona Civics Coalition**

The Arizona Civics Coalition is a partnership of organizations and individuals who are committed to effective civic education for young people in Arizona. Funded by the national Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, Arizona Community Foundation and Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education, the Coalition advocates for civic education that enables all young Arizonans to acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives. A list of coalition supporters is attached at the back of this survey.

The survey is one part of an effort by the Arizona Civics Coalition, in partnership with Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism, to collect baseline data about civic education in Arizona. Other parts of the effort will include a similar Civics Inventory survey of school principals, a survey of public school students' civic engagement and attitudes toward civic education, and a telephone poll of registered Arizona voters measuring general civic engagement, public perceptions of civic engagement, and public will towards supporting the civic mission of schools.

The results of this data gathering effort will be compiled in an Arizona Civic Index report to be released in 2006. The Arizona Civic Index report will be discussed in community forums convened around the state, by Arizona Legislature's Ad Hoc Committee on Civic Education, and by the members of the Arizona Civics Coalition to produce public policy recommendations that will strengthen effective civic education in Arizona schools.

For more about the work of the Arizona Civics Coalition, visit [www.AZcivics.org](http://www.AZcivics.org).

## **Methods**

The Inventory of Civic Education in Arizona School Districts was developed by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education and based on a similar survey of New Jersey school districts conducted in 2004 by the New Jersey Center for Civic & Law-Related Education at Rutgers University.

The initial paper questionnaire was mailed in August 2005 to superintendents in 211 Arizona school districts (not including special districts or charter schools). District personnel were encouraged to complete and return the paper survey, or take an identical survey online on the Arizona Civics Coalition website. One reminder mailing was conducted in September to those districts not yet responding to the survey. The survey was concluded on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005.

A total of 99 school districts returned the questionnaire, representing a 47% response rate. However, the districts in the sample represent 74% of all children enrolled in public school in Arizona due to responses by several large districts. The districts participating in this survey are largely representative of the state as a whole in terms of enrollment, grade level, and region.

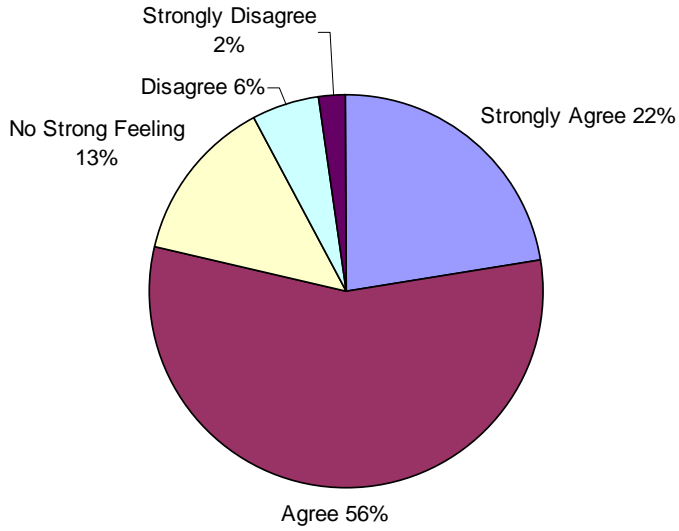
<b><u>Grade Level</u></b>	<b>All AZ</b>	<b>Sample</b>
High School District (9-12)	8%	12%
Elementary District (K-8/9)	47%	42%
Unified District (K-12)	45%	46%

<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b>All AZ</b>	<b>Sample</b>
Maricopa County	27%	30%
Pima County	7%	8%
All Others	66%	62%

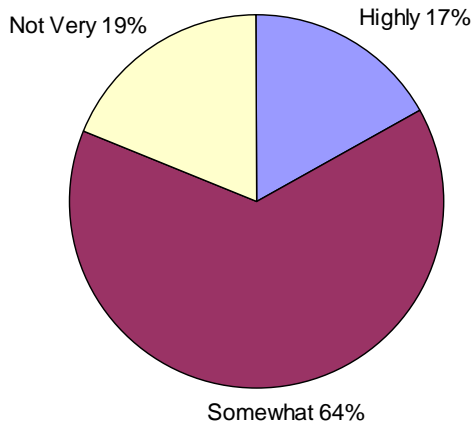
<b><u>Enrollment</u></b>	<b>All AZ</b>	<b>Sample</b>
10,000+	12%	20%
5,000 – 10,000	10%	12%
1,000 – 5,000	33%	31%
Under 1,000	45%	37%

**Civic Mission of Schools**

Do you feel it is the primary mission of public schools to educate students for citizenship?



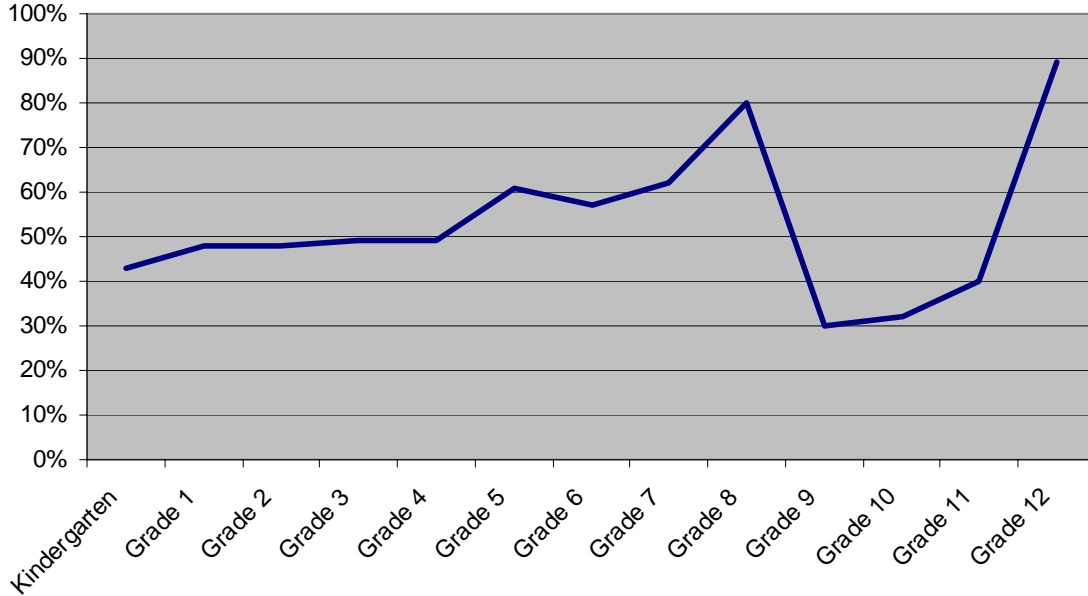
How satisfied are you that the civic education program in your district is creating informed, active and engaged citizens?



**Civic Education Courses**

Students receive civics instruction in the following grades:

**Civics Instruction by grade\***



\*Percentages are based only on those districts offering the listed grades.

Civics instruction is below 50% in grades K-4 and 9-11. Students get most civics instruction in 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

Measure	% Yes
District requires a civics course in grades 9-12.	100%
District has a civics elective in grades 9-12.	33%
Civics and Government is incorporated into another course.	81%
Civics is part of the K-8 course of study.	92%
Specific course where Arizona and Local Government are taught.	81%

**In-school and extra-curricular civics programs:**

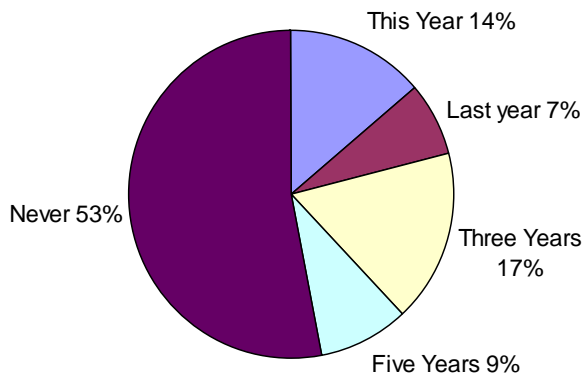
Measure	% Yes
District has a Character education program with a citizenship component.	63%
Projects or simulations are part of social studies curriculum.	68%
Students are involved in co- or extra-curricular civic education programs.	48%
District has Service learning programs linked to civics instruction.	38%
Community service or service learning a district graduation requirement.	33%
Students involved in student council.	85%
Students involved in classroom governance.	57%
District has school safety officer(s) (AZ School Safety program)	29%

**Exemplary civics programs listed by School District Administrators:**

- AP classes: Government, Economics, American History, World History
- American History Honors Program
- Character Counts
- Character Education in grades K-6
- Junior National Honor Society
- Kids Voting
- Mock Trial
- Model Student Government Grades 6-8
- Pursuing Victory With Honor
- Student Council
- Close Up
- Model UN
- Students construct own American Projects
- Teen Court
- Peer Mediation
- Boys/Girls State
- Criminal Law Class
- We the People
- Project Citizen

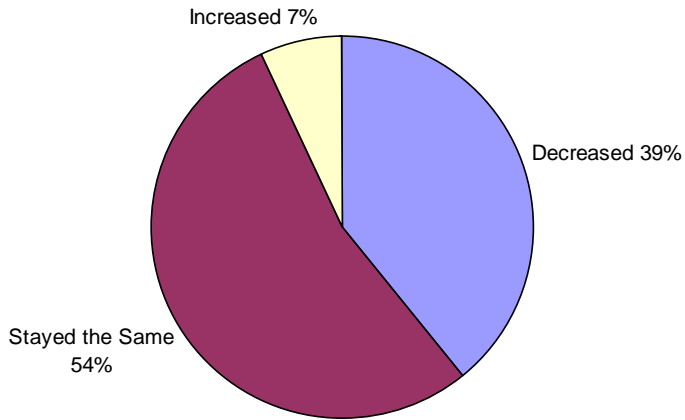
**Teacher Training**

Last time district offered any in-service workshops on civic education?

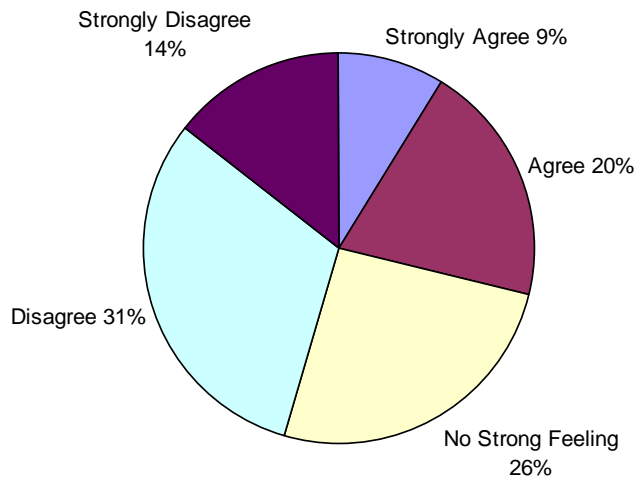


**Civics and Standardized Testing**

How has classroom instruction time devoted to civics, government and citizenship been affected by standardized exams?



Do you feel that civics and government should be tested on AIMS?



### **Improving Civic Education**

How helpful would each of the following be in improving the civic education program in your district?

	Very	Somewhat	Not at all
A state required course in civics/government	38%	27%	35%
A statewide assessment for civics/social studies	20%	36%	44%
Revised state social studies standards	38%	36%	27%
More administrative support for civic education	19%	42%	40%
More community support for civic education	30%	42%	28%
A larger number of elective course options	19%	41%	40%
Up-to-date, inexpensive, readily accessible and usable classroom materials	77%	21%	2%
Access to on-line materials and services	72%	21%	7%
Statewide professional development conferences and workshops for teachers	48%	42%	10%
Summer institute for teachers	36%	50%	14%
Networking opportunities with the teachers and administrators	36%	52%	13%



**The Arizona Civics Coalition unites community partners, educators, and youth to strengthen civic education for young Arizonans.**

The Arizona Civics Coalition is a partnership of organizations and individuals who are committed to effective civic education for young people in Arizona. There are no membership dues, but we do seek your involvement in Coalition activities. To join, please visit [www.azcivics.org](http://www.azcivics.org) or call (602) 340-7268.

**Supporting Organizations**

Arizona Community Foundation (ACF)  
Kids Voting Arizona (KVAZ)  
State Bar of Arizona (SBA)  
Arizona State University West School of Education  
  
Arizona State University Walter Cronkite School of Journalism  
Arizona Council for the Social Studies (ACSS)  
Arizona Supreme Court Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)  
Arizona Humanities Council (AHC)  
Arizona Department of Education  
Arizona State Library and Archives  
BJ Communications  
City of Phoenix Youth Town Hall  
City of Phoenix, Mayor Gordon  
Maricopa County Community Colleges Center for Civic Participation  
Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY)  
MOWW Arizona Youth Leadership Conference (AZYLC)  
Fannie Lou Hamer Project (FLHP)  
Community Initiatives YMCA  
Arizona Secretary of State  
Close-Up Foundation  
Arizona School Boards Association  
Arizona Historical Society  
Arizona League of Women Voters of Metro Phoenix

**Supporting Individuals**

Syd Golston, Phoenix Union High SD  
Tammy Waller, Deer Valley Unified SD  
Kathy Williams, Mesa Unified SD  
Elizabeth Hinde, Assistant Professor of Elementary Education ASU West  
Dr. Jay Cravath, PhD  
  
Cheri Bludau, Tucson Unified SD