

Who is Educating for American Democracy?

Educating for American Democracy (EAD) is a coalition of educators that aims “to transform teaching of civics and history to sustain our constitutional democracy and meet the needs of a diverse 21st century K-12 student body.”

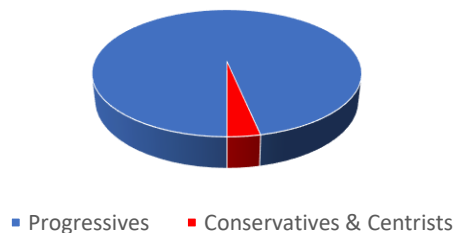
Educating for American Democracy: A Roadmap for Excellence in History and Civics Education for All Learners was originally a project proposed by a non-profit organization, iCivics. In 2019, iCivics received a \$650,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to create the roadmap as part of the NEH’s “More Perfect Union” initiative. The NEH put out a press release with the following quote:

“As the United States looks toward our 250th anniversary as a nation in 2026, it is critical that our K-12 educational system teaches the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and the democratic principles on which the country was founded,” said NEH Chairman Jon Parrish Peede. “The National Endowment for the Humanities is pleased to be working with the Educating for American Democracy team to identify ways to improve the teaching and learning of American history and government so that all students gain an appreciation of the workings of the world’s oldest constitutional democracy.” (National Endowment for the Humanities, 2019)

“The Educating for American Democracy Roadmap demonstrates that an ideologically, demographically, and professionally diverse group agrees about content and pedagogy.” (Educating for American Democracy, 2021) The phrase “content and pedagogy” means that they are creating resources and training for implementing their ideological curriculum into schools. Since EAD wants to “transform” the field of civic education, it’s important to understand the ideology that is behind it.

While there are a few genuine conservatives and centrists (about 10) among the over 300 participants in Educating for American Democracy, the critical mass and thus the dominant and driving force within the project is overwhelmingly progressive.

Political Affiliations of Contributors to Educating for American Democracy



Educating for American Democracy’s *Pedagogy Companion to the EAD Roadmap* explains that “EAD teachers focus on inclusion and equity in both content and approach” instead of the traditional American concept of equality. (Educating for American Democracy, 2021, p. 5)

In fact, EAD's ideology is most clearly seen in the constant push for "equity" which has recently come to mean a rejection of equality. Shelby Steele explained in a Wall Street Journal article that this new push for "equity" is a strategy and has no actual meaning. He explains that the Biden administration is promising to "fix America morally, and aligning himself with the strategy of black people to gain power by focusing on victimization. He's saying, 'America must tackle that problem and create programs that help minorities achieve equity' – whatever that may be." (Varadarajan, 2021)

The term 'equity' actually signifies the acceptance of Marxist teachings. It's the belief that there are systems of oppression and the goal is to have equality of outcomes for any group that falls victim to that systemic oppression.

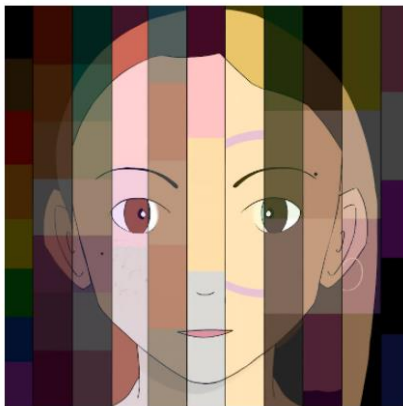
The Executive Director of iCivics, Louise Dubé, sat down for an interview with Rick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute.

"The protests in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd shed light on just how far we still need to go in order to create a truly equitable civic education. It's not just about access and inclusion. It's about realizing that we have been teaching civics primarily from one perspective, that of the white male. We need to make sure that we are teaching civics from the perspective of all Americans, and that means giving better historical context to what we are teaching so that we no longer gloss over systemic racism, but give students the tools to address it.

Louise Dubé's overarching theme in the interview is that the field of civic education is "undergoing a transformation in leadership and a rethinking about how diversity and equity must be addressed". (Hess, 2020)

What do students learn through Educating for American Democracy?

Perhaps it would be best to learn from the students who have already been exposed to the curriculum created by Educating for American Democracy. The following quotes and artwork are from actual students in the eighth grade (Educating for American Democracy, 2021):



"This represents the multiple stories of our country. How there are so many different people with different experiences, and everyone's story is unique. I drew the face in each of the gaps between the lines as a different person to show how diverse and unique everyone is from each other. Then I added the LGBTQ+ flags overtop to represent the different sexualities and gender identities as well. Assumptions about people are unfair to those people, everyone of the same group isn't the same. Everyone is their own person and has their own stories. Any many people may only know their story, but we need to look at different points of view and see more than our single story."



“In my abstract and mixed media piece, I wanted to focus on the feelings of frustration a person of color feels in the American education system, constantly being ignored and spoken over. While internally we know that we are complex individuals, hence the bright & bold colors in the face, with complex stories and experiences, we are always silenced and our struggles simplified. America is further from the shiny land of opportunity many see it as, and while we will continue to strive for that vision everyday, we cannot do that by ignoring the other side of the story; the struggles of people of color and our voices being toned out. It can be hard to clear our heads of the idea of warped privilege, but our one way road to achieving that picture-perfect vision of democracy is through listening to people of color - the foundation of America.”



“My piece, titled *The Bigger Cage*, shows a bird climbing out of an open cage with the shadows of bars falling across the scene. This piece represents black men and women being promised freedom only to be barred from their rights by Black Codes and Jim Crow laws. Yes, they are freed from slavery but only into a bigger cage, they can flap their wings a bit more but are trapped just the same. *The Bigger Cage* fits into design challenge 5: Balancing Time and Theme. This piece represents a problem that still affects many Americans today. Teachers can use this to talk about how slavery and the laws that restricted African Americans after the emancipation of slavery still affect the lives of African Americans today. This can also help students ask important questions and think about how they can be a better person and help them notice and stop racism around them.”



“American history needs to reflect world history. Teachers can help their students see that people from all over the world influence American history, including Indigenous peoples whose lands we stole, people forced into slavery, and those who have migrated to this land over centuries. This is all part of America’s hard history and influences perspectives and decisions that are made today. My artwork is made out of fabric, representing my passion for sewing. I arranged it into four panels showing people originally distant and self-centered, holding on tight to their own pieces of the world, then eventually coming together for the good of everyone to have a more equitable world.”

Educating for American Democracy centers it’s curriculum around what is known as “action civics” or “new civics” even though they seem to avoid using those phrases. Dr. Thomas K. Lindsey and Lucy Meckler with the Texas Public Policy Foundation wrote published a study in September 2020 called “*Action Civics, “New Civics, “Civic Engagement, and “Project-Based Civics”: Advances in Civic Education?*” that examines the origins, nature, and educational effects of the change in civic education.

The study examines the origins, nature, and educational effects of a movement in civic education that goes by a number of names—“New Civics,” “Action Civics,” “Civic Engagement,” and “Project-Based Civics.”

A few key points from the Texas Public Policy Foundation’s study:

- Action Civics’ defenders point to what they deem to be the failure of the “dominant, book-learning approach to civics education.”
- Critics contest Action Civics’ claim that content-based civic education should be replaced by “doing civics.”
- Critics further contend that Action Civics is simply a pseudonym for “teaching kids how to protest.”

(Dr. Thomas K. Lindsay, 2020)

In 2017, David Randall with the National Association of Scholars created a report concerning a growing problem that they were seeing in colleges and universities. They were concerned with the increase of action civics and civic engagement and made four recommendations to state legislators across the country:

1. Mandate a course in traditional American civics as a graduation requirement at all colleges and universities that receive public funding. If the institution itself is unwilling or unable to offer such a course, students must be permitted without penalty to meet the requirement by taking a qualified civics course at another institution.
 2. Establish a public body to set the guidelines for the required civics course, which should at a minimum teach the history, nature, and functions of our institutions of self-government, and which should aim to foster commitment to our form of self-government. The public body should also be charged with reviewing and approving civics textbooks to be used in these courses.
 3. Require that the traditional civics requirement be met only through classroom instruction. Service learning, civic engagement, or analogous extra-curricular activities will not be accepted as a substitute, supplement, or alternative.
 4. End funding for service-learning and civic engagement programs and bureaucracies.
- (Randall, 2017)

As John Fonte put it in his article *A Trojan Horse for Woke Education*, “The Educating for American Democracy project working with the progressive educational establishment and the Biden Administration to “harmonize” and “redefine” citizenship education serves as a Trojan Horse in the ongoing undertaking to “fundamentally transform the United States of America.” It must be stopped.

What do teachers learn from Educating for American Democracy?

Educating for American Democracy created their Roadmap to “support a diversity of curricula, materials, lessons, and assessments and to work across a variety of state social studies standards. It will break new ground by presenting an integrated framework for what, why, and how to teach history and civics. As such, it is meant to inspire and inform the authors of state standards, curricula, textbooks, and other materials, as well as teachers themselves to rethink and reprioritize civics and American history education.” (Educating for American Democracy, 2021)

In the Introduction of the Roadmap, the very first section is titled **America’s Constitutional Democracy Requires Better Civic and History Education.**

Fact Check:

The United States of America is a Constitutional Republic. We are a republic of states bound together under the rights and responsibilities laid out in the Constitution.

On page 9 of the Roadmap, EAD states:

“They [people exposed to “successful” civic education] acquire and share the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effective participation.”

Considering the very next line says, “equity is essential”, the type of civic education they consider “successful” is questionable at best.

On page 11 of the Roadmap, EAD states:

“Making civic education equitable is not just a matter of equitably distributing money and other material resources. Intellectual and cultural resources are equally important goods also requiring equitable provision.”

While intellectual and cultural resources are an important part of understanding history, and should be included in history classes, they are not a necessary part of a civic education. Civics is the study of the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen.

On page 12 of the Roadmap, EAD states:

“The American public is ready for change. A Pew Research Institute study reports that 61 percent of Americans think the country needs significant change in its design and structure. In a separate survey, when a representative sample of Americans was presented with a list of reforms that might improve American community—from ranked choice voting to regulation of digital media to easier access to voting to national service to civic education—only the last garnered support from a majority.”

If the American public is truly ready for change, those changes must be made in the Legislative Branch. (U.S. Const. art. I, §8)

Educating for American Democracy’s 10-year goal is laid out on page 18:

- 60 million students will have access to high-quality civic learning opportunities, where high-quality is defined as excellence in teaching of civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic dispositions; also, a diverse supermajority will be actively engaged in earning civic learning credentials;
- 100,000 schools will be “civic ready” (have a Civic Learning Plan and resources to support it in place), prioritizing excellence in teaching of civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic dispositions; and
- 1 million teachers will be EAD-ready (having received excellent pre- and in-service professional development).

A list of the Educator Resources will be included later in this document.

Page 20 lists the roles of the different levels in our federal system as they implement Educating for American Democracy.

Every Local Education Agency Should:

1. Develop a Civic Learning Plan that lays out its goals, key performance indicators

- for measuring progress, and operational plan for achieving civic excellence.
2. Ensure that every educator has access to ongoing professional learning and is making progress towards becoming EAD certified.
 3. Develop and deliver curricula and learning resources aligned with the EAD Roadmap, either under existing state-level frameworks or in response to revised state-level frameworks.
 4. Establish student credentialing benchmarks at appropriate grade-level junctures.
 5. As appropriate, public charter schools and charter school networks should participate in these processes.

Every State Level Authority Should:

1. Require a Civic Learning Plan from every LEA.
2. Aggregate the LEAs' Civic Learning Plans to allow comparisons and assessments of progress.
3. Integrate the Civic Learning Plan data within state accountability systems as a component of school performance indicators.
4. Adopt social studies standards that align with the EAD Roadmap.
5. Support educator professional development by building networks across LEAs, and by promoting pre-service civic learning.
6. Require EAD training as part of educator preparation or licensure requirements.
7. Accredit schools for excellence in EAD civics.
8. Implement a new Prince Hall Fellowship modeled after the successful James Madison Fellowship program. Humanities and social sciences graduates—with recruitment directed energetically toward people of color—who have preparation in EAD as well as pedagogy would receive a stipend for the first five years in the profession to incentivize them to join the teaching profession.
9. Participate in the NAEP history and civics assessment.

The Federal Government Should:

1. Establish civic readiness as an aim in the mission of the Department of Education, while also recognizing state-level leadership in pursuit thereof.
2. Build a robust national data infrastructure for history and civics; part of that infrastructure would be a regularly updated public collection of all the data Civic Learning Plans generate, and state civic excellence progress measure.
3. Revise the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) frameworks for civics and U.S. history, which were written in the 1980s, to align with the EAD; deploy the tests in all 3 NAEP grades (4, 8, 12); and provide state-level as well as national data every two years.
4. Prioritize innovation and research in educational funding for history and civics, particularly linking higher education to K–12.
5. Include a K–12 outreach requirement in federal research grants in the humanities and social sciences related to civics and history.
6. Fund demonstration projects in schools/districts to engage the community, educators, administrators, and students in developing civic excellence, and evaluate progress.
7. Ensure that the Bureau of Indian Education implements the relevant standards, professional development, and accountability responsibilities of state authorities for schools within its jurisdiction.

On page 21, EAD expands the requirements by saying that “State-level authorities also should require EAD training as part of the requirements for licensure as a history or civic educator. Working in concert with the higher education institutions that train preservice educators, state-level authorities could help establish and accredit programs. In addition, state-level authorities should adopt programs that recruit college graduates in the humanities and social sciences to teach history and civics and diversify the educator pipeline for history and civic education.”

Is it common practice for teachers to be required to receive accreditations from companies who are attempting to change the way a subject is taught to teach said subject?

On page 22, EAD declares,

“To those who believe in America’s principles and promise, what we have inherited is painfully imperfect. It is our task not to abandon but to improve it. Our constitutional democracy is at stake. We have no time to waste.”

In addition to, once again, mislabeling our form of government EAD also takes the opportunity to engage the reader with fear and urgency.

On page 24, EAD states:

“For much of American history, most schools presented U.S. history and civics largely from the perspective of white, Protestant, propertied men. Although there were important exceptions (often developed by and within communities of color), mass-market textbooks and state standards generally presented history and civics in this narrow way. Unity, consensus, and coherence were favored to degrees that made these presentations of the American past blinkered, if not fundamentally false.”

We, as Americans, are constantly evolving and growing as a nation. We work together to right the ship when we realize we have blown off course. Our history classes have, until relatively recently, focused almost exclusively on the “perspective of white, Protestant, propertied men.” This is the type of education reform needed and we, LaSOS, believe it is important to include more history from the perspective of a more diverse perspective. When it comes to the study of the rights and responsibilities of the citizens of America, we are equal in all ways under the law.

Pages 25-26 give EAD’s reason for the continual use of the term “Constitutional Democracy”. They acknowledge that the Constitution uses the word “Republic” to refer to our form of government when the United States pledges that it will “guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government” (U.S. Const. art. IV, §4). They go on to claim that the Federalist Papers prove that our Founding Fathers used the word “republic” to represent a “government by its citizens in mass, acting directly and personally, according to rules established by the majority”. This explanation by Thomas Jefferson is the definition of a democracy; therefore, the Jefferson meant that the United States is supposed to be a democracy. The company that wants to be in charge of teaching the next generation of teachers and children how to be good citizens, believes that the last 250 years of this great nation were a mistake.

On page 27, EAD explains,

“The K–12 civic curriculum draws on the disciplines of political science, law, public policy, communications, sociology, and philosophy, with political science as the traditional anchor. Combining these fields, civics encompasses various forms of behavioral and social

science, philosophical inquiry, and constitutional and legal analysis. Civics generally explores principles, institutions, and phenomena that occur across time.”
Civics is the study of the rights and responsibilities of a citizen. A person, regardless of their immutable characteristics, has equal rights and responsibilities under the United States Constitution.

PAGE 31 FROM PAIGE’S TEXTS