PREPARING CHILDREN AND YOUTH FOR CIVIC LIFE IN THE ERA OF TRUTH DECAY

Insights from the American Teacher Panel

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This report presents results from a survey of social studies teachers across the United States that was designed to provide the first nationally representative data on how teachers and schools serving students in kindergarten through 12th grade promote the civic development of children and youth. It is the final report in a series that also consists of a technical document and four short reports or “Data Notes” (RAND Corporation, undated-a). This work is part of the RAND Corporation’s Countering Truth Decay initiative,¹ which studies the diminishing role of facts and analysis in public life. Through this initiative, RAND has invited researchers and engaged stakeholders to find solutions that counter Truth Decay and the threat that it poses to evidence-based policymaking. More information about Truth Decay is available on the RAND website (RAND Corporation, undated-b).

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Contents

Preface ........................................................................................................ iii
Boxes, Figures, and Tables ........................................................................ ix
Summary ................................................................................................. xiii
Acknowledgments ..................................................................................... xxix
Abbreviations ............................................................................................ xxxi

CHAPTER ONE
Introduction ............................................................................................. 1
Why the Time Is Right for a Renewed Focus on Civics in Schools .......... 4
Overview of Methods and Limitations...................................................... 13
Audience and Structure of the Report...................................................... 19

CHAPTER TWO
Supports for Civic Development in U.S. K–12 Public Schools .......... 21
School and Classroom Practices to Support Civic Development in the
   Era of Truth Decay ................................................................................ 21
Why Teachers Are Crucial in the Provision of Civic Education ......... 25

CHAPTER THREE
School and Classroom Practices to Promote Civic Development ...... 31
Respondents Reported Covering a Variety of Topics; Secondary
   Teachers Reported More Coverage Than Elementary Teachers ........ 32
Relative Emphasis on Promising Practices Differed; School Climate
   Reform Was the Most Commonly Reported Practice ......................... 36
Most Secondary Teachers Reported Emphasizing Civic-Related
   Topics, Even If They Did Not Teach Civics ...................................... 40
Summary ................................................................................................. 43
CHAPTER FOUR
Teacher Preparation and Beliefs .......................................................... 47
Most Respondents Reported Not Feeling Well Prepared to Support
   Students’ Civic Development ......................................................... 48
Most Respondents Indicated That Students’ Civic Development Was
   Important; Fewer Indicated That It Was “Absolutely Essential” .... 50
High School Social Studies Teachers Were at Least Somewhat
   Confident That Students Would Learn a Variety of Concepts
   Related to Civic Education ........................................................... 51
Low Trust in Institutions and Groups Was Particularly Evident
   Among Elementary Teachers of Social Studies and Teachers of
   Color ......................................................................................... 52
Teachers’ Reported Classroom Practices Were Associated with Their
   Preparation and Views Regarding the Importance of Civics ........ 54
Summary......................................................................................... 56

CHAPTER FIVE
Instructional Materials and Assessments to Support Civic
   Development.................................................................................. 59
A Plurality of Teachers Indicated That the Majority of Their Materials
   Were Ones They Found Themselves ............................................. 60
More Secondary Teachers Reported Using a Diverse Array of
   Assessment Methods to Evaluate Students’ Civic Development .... 62
Roughly One-Half of Respondents Reported a Need for Better Civics
   Instructional Resources................................................................. 65
Teachers’ Classroom Civics Emphasis Was Associated with the
   Source of Their Civics Instructional Materials ............................... 67
Summary......................................................................................... 68

CHAPTER SIX
State, District, and School Context for Civic Education ................... 71
Nearly One-Half of Elementary Teachers Were Unaware of State
   Standards Related to Civic Development ..................................... 72
Most Respondents Indicated a Need for More Non-Teaching Time
   and Community Partnerships ....................................................... 73
Pressure to Cover Other Subjects Was Widely Reported as an Obstacle to Civics Instruction .............................................. 74
Relatively Few Teachers Reported That School or District Leaders Asked Them to Limit Discussions About Political or Social Issues... 77
Teachers’ Perceptions Regarding Obstacles Were Unrelated to Their Emphasis on Civics Topics and Approaches ......................... 78
Teaching in a C3 Hub State Was Not Related to Teachers’ Civics Instructional Approaches .................................................... 79
Summary ........................................................................... 81

CHAPTER SEVEN
Teacher-Reported Student Behaviors Related to Civics ............... 83
Teachers Reported Problematic Student Behaviors Related to Media Use, Particularly at the Secondary Level ......................... 84
Most Teachers Reported at Least Some Instances of Bullying—and of Student Efforts to Mitigate the Negative Effects of Bullying…… 87
Teachers with Larger Percentages of English-Language Learners Reported More Bullying-Related Behaviors ....................... 88
Among Secondary Teachers, Negative Behaviors Based on Group Status Were Frequently Tied to Political Views .................... 88
Higher Reported Emphasis on Civics-Related Topics and Practices Was Associated with Higher Rates of Problematic Behaviors ...... 91
Greater Emphasis on Media Literacy Instruction Was Associated with Higher Levels of Problematic Media Behaviors ............... 91
Summary ........................................................................... 93

CHAPTER EIGHT
Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research ........................ 95
Implications ....................................................................... 96
Conclusion ....................................................................... 104

APPENDIX
Full Regression Results ....................................................... 107

References ........................................................................ 123
Boxes, Figures, and Tables

## Boxes

| S.1. | What Is Civic Development? | xiii |
| S.2. | About This Report | xiv |
| S.3. | Ten Promising Practices to Promote Civic Development | xvii |
| 1.1. | About This Report | 2 |
| 1.2. | What Is Civic Development? | 3 |
| 2.1. | Ten Promising Practices to Promote Civic Development | 22 |
| 3.2. | Civics Instructional Materials That Engage Students in Promising Practices: Facing History and Ourselves | 39 |
| 3.3. | Civics Instructional Materials That Engage Students in Promising Practices: Why America Is Free | 40 |
| 3.4. | Composite Measures of Classroom-Level Civics Emphasis | 44 |
| 4.1. | What Aspects of Teachers’ Preparation and Beliefs Were Related to Their Civics Instruction? | 55 |
| 5.1. | What Aspects of Teachers’ Instructional Materials and Assessments Were Related to Their Civics Instruction? | 69 |
| 6.1. | What Aspects of Teachers’ Perceptions of Contextual Factors Were Related to Their Civics Instruction? | 80 |
| 7.1. | Were Teachers’ Practices Associated with Teacher-Reported Student Behaviors? | 93 |
Figures

S.1. Conceptual Framework for Our Survey and Analyses ........ xvi
2.1. Conceptual Framework for Our Survey and Analyses .......... 27
3.1. Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting Moderate or Major Emphases on Each Broad Area in the Classroom ......................... 34
3.2. Weighted Percentages of Elementary Social Studies Teachers Reporting Moderate or Major Emphases on Promising Practices in Classrooms and Schools .............. 37
3.3. Weighted Percentages of Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting Moderate or Major Emphases on Promising Practices in Classrooms and Schools ................ 38
3.4. Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting Moderate or Major Emphases on Additional Classroom Practices and Topics Related to Civics .................................................. 41
4.1. Weighted Percentages of Social Studies Teachers Who Have Not Received Any Preservice or In-Service Training on How to Support Students’ Civic Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions .................................................. 49
4.2. Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting Priorities on Students’ Civic Development ........................................................ 51
4.3. Weighted Percentages of High School Social Studies Teachers Reporting Essential Civic Concepts to Teach and Confidence That Students Will Have Learned Those Concepts .................................................. 53
5.1. Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting the Sources of Their Materials ... 61
5.2. Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Using Each Approach to Assess Students’ Civic Development .................................................. 63
5.3. Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Indicating Whether Each Type of Assessment Helps Them Accurately Gauge Their Students’ Civic Knowledge, Skills, or Dispositions to a Moderate or Large Extent .................................................. 64
5.4. Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting a Need for Support Related to Their Materials and Assessments ...................... 65
5.5. Weighted Percentages of Social Studies Teachers Reporting Agreeing with Statements About Their Civics and/or Social Studies Instructional Materials .......................... 67
6.1. Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Indicating Moderate or Major Need for Each Resource to Support Their Social Studies Instruction ................................. 74
6.2. Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Indicating Each Condition as a Major Obstacle to Their Efforts to Support Students’ Civic Development ..................................................... 75
7.1. Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting Issues Related to Media Use as Problems for the Majority of Their Students ..................... 86
7.2. Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting the Number of Times That Each Action Occurred in the Past Month ............................. 87
7.3. Weighted Percentages of Teachers Reporting That Each Action Occurred Three or More Times in the Past Month, Comparing Teachers Who Serve More or Fewer English-Language Learners ................................................. 89
7.4. Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting the Number of Times Students Made Derogatory Remarks About or Engaged in Demeaning Behavior Toward Each of the Following Groups in the Past Month ........................................ 90

Tables

3.1. Ten Promising Practices and Related Survey Questions .......... 33
7.1. Scales Measuring Teachers’ Reports of Student Bullying and Media Behaviors ........................................ 92
A.1. Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Beliefs and Preparation to Promote Civic Knowledge ..................... 110
A.2. Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Beliefs and Preparation to Promote Civic Skills ......................... 111
A.3. Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Beliefs and Preparation to Promote Civic Dispositions ...................... 112
A.4. Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Source of Instructional Materials............................................ 113
A.5. Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Source of Instructional Materials, with Interaction Term ............... 114
A.6. Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Beliefs About Instructional Materials.................................... 115
A.7. Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Beliefs About Instructional Materials, with Interaction Term ........... 116
A.8. Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Perceptions of Obstacles ...................................................... 117
A.9. Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Whether Teacher Is in a C3 Hub State........................................ 118
A.10. Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Teachers’ Awareness of State Civic Education Standards ................. 119
A.11. Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Teacher-Reported Bullying-Related Incidents....................................... 120
A.12. Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Teacher-Reported Noninclusivity ............................................. 121
A.13. Regression Model Exploring Relationship Between Classroom-Level Media Literacy Emphasis and Teacher-Reported Problematic Media Behaviors..................... 122
Public schools that serve students in kindergarten through 12th grade (K–12) are responsible for not only promoting students’ readiness for college and careers but also educating students to engage civically and contribute to their communities and country as adults (Box S.1). Civic education refers broadly to the process through which schools and other institutions help students develop civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will prepare them for civic life. This education can occur through any of several activities that students experience in and out of school. In this report, we focus on one key group that is responsible for supporting students’ civic development: K–12 social studies teachers across the United States, including elementary (grades K–5) teachers who typically provide instruction in all core

**Box S.1**

**What Is Civic Development?**

- *Civic knowledge:* an understanding of government structure, government processes, and relevant social studies knowledge and concepts, along with U.S. and global history and the way history affects today’s government and society
- *Civic skills:* abilities that enable students to engage in democratic processes in an active and informed way, such as critical thinking, communication, and collaboration
- *Civic dispositions:* attitudes that are important in a democracy, such as a sense of civic duty and concern for the welfare of other people and one’s country and community

**SOURCES:** Hansen et al., 2018; Vinnakota, 2019.
Preparing Children and Youth for Civic Life in the Era of Truth Decay

subjects. Drawing on results from a nationally representative survey, we explore how these teachers address civic-related topics in their classrooms and schools, their beliefs about the importance of civic-related topics and skills, and the conditions they perceive as supporting or hindering civic education.

Civic education in public K–12 schools might be the most promising approach for equipping the nation’s youth to resist Truth Decay. Kavanagh and Rich, 2018, define Truth Decay as consisting of such trends as the blurring of boundaries between facts and opinions and the increasing influence of opinion and personal experience (rather than evidence) on public discourse and decisionmaking (Box S.2). The critical importance of identifying misinformation has been highlighted by recent events in which inaccurate information has proliferated, such as the 2020 presidential election and the coronavirus pandemic (Howard, 2020; Suciu, 2020). More than ever, children and youth are in need of civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions to identify inaccuracies communicated through the media and other sources. As part of their potential role in mitigating Truth Decay, schools are positioned to address such threats to democracy.

Box S.2
About the Countering Truth Decay Initiative

This research is part of the RAND Corporation’s Countering Truth Decay initiative (Kavanagh and Rich, 2018), which studies the diminishing role of facts and analysis in public life. Through this initiative, RAND has invited researchers and engaged stakeholders to find solutions that counter Truth Decay and the threat that it poses to evidence-based policymaking. Work in this initiative has identified four drivers of Truth Decay:

- cognitive biases
- the rise of social media and other changes to the information environment
- demands on the educational system that limit its ability to keep up with changes in the information ecosystem
- political and social polarization.

Although only the third driver mentions education explicitly, the K–12 public-school system can potentially address all four of these drivers. This report is one of a series that specifically investigates the state of civic education and media literacy in schools and considers how civic education could counter Truth Decay. More information about Truth Decay is available at the project website (RAND Corporation, undated-b).
and civic life as growing distrust in democratic institutions and democracy itself, increasing partisanship, and diminishing opportunities in many areas of the country for participation in organized civic activities (Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017).

Beyond these basic civic threats, several recent developments in U.S. public K–12 education and in American society make this an opportune time to reconsider how public education can help students develop the full set of knowledge, skills, and competencies they will need to thrive after graduation. These developments include the following:

- Federal and state accountability policies offer new flexibility for states to encourage civic-related practices in local school systems.
- A growing body of research indicates that schools can influence students’ long-term civic outcomes and that civic learning can contribute to career readiness.
- Social and emotional learning (SEL) strategies can promote civic development and are becoming widespread in schools.
- Growing calls for schools to address racial equity and justice have led to a rethinking of civics and social studies curricula, emphasizing the need for a broader, more equitable approach to civic education.

**Research Approach**

Using RAND’s American Teacher Panel (ATP), we present results from a survey administered in late 2019 to a nationally representative sample of K–12 public-school social studies teachers. Surveys were sent via email to a total sample of 1,600 elementary (grades K–5) and secondary (grades 6–12) teachers of social studies who were originally recruited to join the ATP through probability-based sampling methods. All teachers who taught social studies, whether exclusively or in addition to other subjects, were eligible for inclusion in the sample. Therefore, our elementary sample consists primarily of general-education teachers who are responsible for social studies along with other subjects. A total of 820 teachers provided survey responses, for a completion rate of 51.3 percent. The data were weighted using a model
for nonresponse that is intended to produce nationally representative estimates. The 20-minute survey addressed several topics that aligned to a conceptual framework shown in Figure S.1.

This report extends analyses presented in a series of RAND American Educator Panel Data Notes (RAND Corporation, undated-a). We summarize survey responses separately for elementary and secondary teachers. When relevant, we discuss differences in responses for subgroups of teachers after controlling for other school and teacher characteristics. We also describe relationships between teachers’ reports of their instruction and factors we hypothesized to be related to that instruction, as shown in Figure S.1. To identify subgroup differences and relationships, we ran regression models that controlled for a set of school- and teacher-level characteristics; therefore, these findings reflect the additional explanatory power of the predictor on the outcome rather than unadjusted relationships, although readers should keep in mind that we are unable to demonstrate causal relationships for any of the findings we discuss. Although a teacher survey from a single point in time can provide only a limited perspective on how schools are providing civic education, the results provide useful information across different types of schools about approaches to civic education, facilitators of and barriers to civic learning, and disparities in opportunities for civic learning across different types of schools. These findings are relevant to educators, education policymakers, and others who are interested in promoting civic development and countering Truth Decay.

Figure S.1
Conceptual Framework for Our Survey and Analyses

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1 Additional technical details can be found in Hamilton, Kaufman, Hu, et al., 2020.
Supports for Civic Development in U.S. K–12 Public Schools

Civic education scholars and advocates have identified several strategies through which schools might promote students’ civic development. Drawing on others’ recent work (Gould, 2011; Hansen et al., 2018; Huguet et al., 2019; Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017), we refer to these as the ten promising practices (Box S.3). How these practices might influence Truth Decay has not been examined directly, but many of them are likely to add value to efforts to mitigate it, given the relevance of civic education to the drivers of Truth Decay.

Although most of these practices could be adopted by teachers of any subject at both the school and the classroom levels, teachers of social studies (including elementary general-education teachers) are arguably the key emissaries of civic-related instruction and activities. Furthermore, these teachers are in a good position to provide informed perspectives not only about their own practices but also about the conditions that might hinder or support those practices and the civic-related behaviors in which students engage. Our conceptual framework, as shown in Figure S.1, draws on research to identify some of the main drivers of teachers’ civics instruction. Our survey findings are organized according to this framework.

**Box S.3**

**Ten Promising Practices to Promote Civic Development**

- Classroom instruction in civics, government, history, law, economics, and geography
- Discussion of current events and controversial issues
- Service learning
- Extracurricular activities
- Student participation in school governance
- Simulations of democratic processes and procedures
- News media literacy
- Action civics
- SEL
- Promotion of a positive school climate

**SOURCES:** Gould, 2011; Hansen et al., 2018; Huguet et al., 2019; Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017.
Findings

Here, we summarize the key findings from our survey. We start with the middle box in Figure S.1, describing school and classroom practices related to the teaching and learning of civics. We then present findings for each of the conditions on the left-hand side of the framework, followed by results that explore student behaviors as reported by teachers. As already mentioned, findings that describe differences based on school or teacher characteristics—and those that describe relationships between practices and other factors—were developed using regression models that included a common set of teacher and school covariates.

School and Classroom Practices to Promote Civic Development

We examined teachers’ responses to questions about their emphasis and their schools’ emphasis on civic education practices and topics. We found the following:

- Social studies teachers reported emphasizing several civics-related topics and engaging with students in many of the promising practices, such as discussions of current events, service learning, and simulations of the democratic process. The most-prevalent promising practices, according to teachers, were SEL and improving school climate—broad strategies that teachers might not think of as directly relevant to civic education.

- Relative emphasis on the ten promising practices differed between elementary and secondary teachers. Elementary teachers were less likely to indicate an emphasis on practices explicitly related to civics, though they did report similar emphasis to secondary teachers on SEL, climate, and conflict resolution. These differences are consistent with the developmental levels of students and with the fact that most elementary teachers are responsible for multiple subjects (whereas most secondary teachers specialize in one or two subjects) and do not have time or resources to offer civics instruction extensively.

- Most secondary teachers reported emphasizing several topics related to civic education, such as emigration and immigration;
drivers of inequality on the basis of race, gender, or other characteristics; and critical thinking. The high degree of emphasis on most civic topics in secondary schools is noteworthy in part because only one-third of those teachers reported teaching a course focused on civics; the others taught general social studies or courses on other topics, such as history, economics, or geography.

- Reported civic emphasis varied by several school and teacher characteristics. We observed differences in civic-related offerings between schools that scored low and high on a vulnerability indicator (i.e., schools with higher percentages of low-income students and students of color). In addition, teachers of color and those serving more English-language learners (ELLs) reported emphasizing many civic-related topics and approaches to a greater extent than other teachers.

**Teacher Preparation and Beliefs**

We unpacked additional aspects of teachers’ perceptions and experiences that might influence their decisions about what to teach and how to teach it. We found the following:

- Most social studies teachers reported not feeling well prepared to support students’ civic development, and between about one-third and a little over one-half of both elementary and secondary teachers indicated that they had not received any training to do so. Given that elementary teachers typically teach all subjects, they might be expected to receive less training in areas of civic education than secondary teachers; still, between 30 and 42 percent of secondary teachers also reported receiving no such training.
- Although the majority of social studies teachers indicated that students’ civic development was important, fewer indicated that it was an “absolutely essential priority.”
- Although high school social studies teachers were at least somewhat confident that students would learn an assortment of concepts related to civic education, teachers did not always regard those concepts as absolutely essential to teach. Teachers of color were more
likely than their white counterparts to regard it as essential to teach various concepts, such as good work habits; economic principles; and responsibilities of citizenship, such as voting and jury duty.

• Low trust in institutions and groups was particularly evident among elementary teachers and teachers of color, although we did not find trust to be related to the civic education topics or approaches that teachers reported emphasizing.

• Factors that appeared to be significantly related to teachers’ reports of their civics instruction were (1) having received at least some preservice or in-service preparation to support students’ civic development, and (2) personal views regarding the importance of students’ civic development.

Instructional Materials and Assessments to Support Civic Development

We considered the curriculum materials and assessments that teachers reported using for their instruction; we also considered the extent to which teachers’ use of instructional materials was related to the civic education practices in which they report engaging. We found the following:

• A plurality of teachers indicated that the majority of the material they used was information they found themselves, although a substantive portion also reported relying on materials provided by their school or district.

• More secondary teachers than elementary teachers reported using a variety of assessment methods to evaluate students’ civic development; student surveys were regarded as the least helpful assessment method.

• Although most teachers reported that district-provided materials were culturally appropriate and effective at promoting students’ civic development, roughly one-half or more teachers reported a need for (1) better civics resources from their school or district and (2) civics instructional resources that were more culturally relevant and appropriate for ELLs. Teachers of color and teachers who served more ELLs were more likely to report a need for many resources to support their social studies instruction.
• Teachers’ classroom emphasis on civics was associated with the source of their civics instructional materials. Specifically, elementary teachers who reported using more found materials were more likely to report emphasizing civic approaches. Additionally, teachers who reported more-positive perceptions of their school- or district-provided materials were more likely to report emphasizing particular civics topics.

State, District, and School Context for Civic Education

We summarized teachers’ perceptions regarding contextual conditions that might support or hinder civics instruction, including the following:

• Nearly one-half of elementary teachers were unaware that their states had standards that emphasized concepts and outcomes related to civics instruction, raising questions regarding the utility of state standards as a way to communicate about instructional priorities.

• Most social studies teachers indicated a need for more non-teaching time and community partnerships to support their efforts to promote students’ civic development. Community partnerships could be especially valuable for creating opportunities to offer engaging activities, such as service learning. Teachers of color reported a greater need than white teachers for resources to promote civic learning.

• Pressure to cover other subjects was widely reported as an obstacle to civic education, particularly among elementary teachers. This finding likely reflects the emphasis of state accountability and assessment systems on mathematics and English language arts.

• Relatively few teachers reported that school or district leaders asked them to limit discussions about political or social issues. However, roughly one in ten teachers did say that they were asked to limit discussions about politics, elections, or the President.

• Teachers’ perceptions regarding obstacles related to policies and supports (e.g., lack of support from district or school leadership, pressure to cover other content) were unrelated to their emphasis on civic topics and approaches but were positively associated with their reported emphasis on promoting students’ civic skills.
This finding is somewhat counterintuitive but might suggest that teachers who are committed to enhancing their students’ civic skills might be more aware than other teachers of potential obstacles to that effort.

**Teacher-Reported Student Behaviors Related to Civics**

We assessed teachers’ responses to questions about observable student behaviors related to civic development and found the following:

- Teachers (particularly at the secondary level) reported problematic student behaviors related to media use, such as making unfounded claims based on unreliable media sources, sharing hateful posts on social media, partaking in an unhealthy amount of media use, and demonstrating limited ability to evaluate the credibility of online information.

- Most teachers reported at least some instances of bullying among their students, although they also reported student efforts to mitigate the negative effects of bullying. Teachers with larger percentages of ELLs reported more bullying-related behaviors among students than those with fewer ELLs.

- Reported incidents in which students made derogatory remarks about, or engaged in demeaning behavior toward, members of specific groups were much more common among secondary teachers than elementary teachers. Among secondary teachers, derogatory comments and demeaning behaviors toward other students that were tied to political views occurred more frequently than incidents related to other group membership (e.g., racial or ethnic groups, gender minority status).

- Teachers who reported a greater emphasis on civic-related topics and practices were more likely to report higher rates of problematic behaviors among their students. Similarly, greater emphasis on media literacy instruction was associated with teachers’ reports of higher levels of problematic media behaviors among students. Although we cannot determine the reasons for these relationships, they might indicate that teachers and schools respond to these behaviors by adopting strategies designed to mitigate them.
These relationships could also indicate that teachers who tend to emphasize civic education topics are also more likely to identify problematic behaviors among students.

**Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research**

Our survey results provide an overview of how teachers promoted students’ civic development as of the 2019–2020 school year and of several factors that might be related to those efforts; our results also shed light on ways in which civic learning opportunities could be inequitably distributed. By engaging in civic education practices, K–12 public schools can play a crucial role in mitigating Truth Decay and ensuring that graduates are prepared to thrive in college, careers, and civic life. Our findings suggest several implications that policymakers and practitioners who are committed to promoting civic development should consider.

**Inequity in Opportunities for Civic Development**

Civic education practices are widespread and varied, but disparities across schools serving different student populations suggest inequity in opportunities for civic development. Emphasis on some civic education instructional approaches and topics—such as media literacy and distinguishing facts from opinions—was reportedly lower in schools serving majorities of students of color or low-income students. Policymakers and others who support schools should explore ways to reduce these inequities.

**More-Targeted Training and Encouragement for Teachers**

Practices that focused on specific civic outcomes were less prevalent than practices supporting youth development more generally, suggesting the need for more-targeted training and encouragement for teachers to promote civic learning. We found that efforts to develop positive schoolwide climates, conflict resolution, and SEL were common across school levels. However, teachers’ self reports indicated that other promising practices, such as discussions about current events and simu-
lations of democratic processes, were less common. Those advocating more civic development in schools might consider encouraging these practices more in discussions and trainings with educators.

**Emphasis on Civic-Related Practices Among Elementary Teachers**

Relatively low emphasis on civic-related practices among elementary teachers is an area of opportunity. Elementary social studies teachers’ approaches would be expected to differ from those of secondary teachers, but the relatively low rates at which elementary teachers reported engaging in several of the promising practices suggest an opportunity to adopt new, engaging civic education curricula and activities that can be integrated into the other instruction these teachers provide. Teachers will need resources to do this, such as training and some degree of flexibility from state or district policies that they view as constraints.

**Clearer Guidance for Teachers**

Although social studies teachers reported prioritizing students’ civic development, lack of adequate preparation combined with low prioritization of several key concepts suggests a need for clearer guidance. Many teachers reported feeling unprepared to promote their students’ civic development and said they had received no training to do so. Most teachers said that students’ civic development was important but not essential, and many were unaware of state standards that focus on civics content. Teachers could benefit from guidance about the value of civics instruction for students’ lives and for improving society more broadly, the specific competencies that are important, and the availability of a variety of practices to promote civic development.

Furthermore, additional formal and informal civic-focused professional development could be valuable. Our findings suggest that professional development could be a mechanism to increase civic emphasis in the classroom. These data imply that teachers will benefit from both formal and informal opportunities to gather ideas on how to emphasize civic development in their classrooms. To be effective, such opportunities should be tailored to teachers’ specific teaching context, designed to offer opportunities for practice, and sustained over time.
A Diverse Teacher Corps
Teachers of color responded differently than white teachers to several survey questions, reporting greater instructional emphasis on certain topics (such as respect for and safeguarding of the environment; discussion of controversial issues and current events; and responsibilities, such as voting and jury duty). Compared with white teachers, they also indicated lower trust in government and organized religion and a greater need for resources to support civics instruction. These findings reinforce other work that suggests that there could be benefits to having a more-diverse teacher workforce, and that there is a need to ensure that teachers of color receive adequate instructional supports.

Different Instructional Materials
Teachers could benefit from greater access to instructional materials that incorporate the promising practices. Most teachers reported using civics instructional materials that they found or created themselves, and they reported a need for much more in terms of both materials and assessments to support students’ civic development. Despite generally favorable opinions about their school- or district-provided instructional resources, many teachers did not perceive these resources to be engaging or effective at promoting students’ civic development. These data paint a picture of instruction that relies heavily on found materials and that could benefit from additional resources to promote the full menu of civic skills, knowledge, and dispositions.

Most teachers also reported emphasizing “culture and cultural diversity” while expressing a need for more culturally relevant instructional materials. About two-thirds of teachers in the middle and high school grades also reported at least moderate emphasis on drivers of inequality on the basis of race, gender, or other characteristics, as did about one-third of elementary teachers. Most teachers described their civics materials as culturally appropriate for their students, although a majority expressed a moderate or major need for additional culturally relevant instructional resources. Together, these findings point to widespread support among U.S. social studies teachers for promoting cultural awareness and teaching in a culturally responsive way. These results also suggest that teachers would be enthusiastic about new guid-
ance and supports to address racial justice and equity in the wake of numerous recent events underscoring police brutality toward people of color and Black Lives Matter demonstrations.

**Leadership and Policy Supports**

State, district, and school leaders can all help address the obstacles to civic education that teachers identified. Teachers reported numerous obstacles to civics instruction. Some were related to their perceptions of students, such as lack of student interest, and might be addressed through stronger implementation of some of the promising practices that involve high-interest, engaging activities. Features of local or state policy also presented obstacles, according to teachers, such as lack of curriculum flexibility and pressure to cover other content. Teachers also said they need additional non-teaching time, community partnerships, and professional development. Efforts to increase schools’ emphasis on civics instruction need to take into account the many ways in which policies and practices at all levels of the education system can be redesigned to help ensure that teachers are able to prioritize their students’ civic development.

Teaching ELLs was associated with differences in instructional emphasis and in need for supports. Compared with their peers who served fewer ELLs, teachers serving more ELLs reported more emphasis on some topics and approaches, such as SEL, the environment, emigration and immigration, and drivers of inequality. These teachers also said they felt less prepared to promote civic development, and they identified more obstacles and needs and a higher rate of bullying-related student behaviors. The reasons for these differences are unclear but suggest that teachers might be targeting some practices toward the interests and needs of ELLs while feeling that they have less-than-adequate supports for those efforts.

**Student Behaviors**

The relative prevalence of students engaging in negative interactions with other students that centered on political views is consistent with other evidence of a growing partisan divide in the United States. One-third of secondary social studies teachers reported that once or twice in
the past month, students made derogatory remarks about, or engaged in demeaning behavior toward, students who expressed particular political views. Another 19 percent reported that this occurred three or more times in the past month. Although these findings could reflect the fact that we surveyed social studies teachers (a group that might have more opportunity to witness this type of interaction than other teachers because of the topics they cover in class), they also indicate that problematic behaviors related to partisanship are not uncommon among adolescents. Schools could benefit from instructional tools to address this challenge.

Student misuse of media was common, as were teachers’ and schools’ efforts to reduce it. More than 90 percent of both elementary and secondary social studies teachers agreed that schools should provide instruction on responsible social media use, and roughly two-thirds of secondary social studies teachers reported at least a moderate emphasis on media literacy in their classes. The prevalence of media literacy instruction might be a result of the frequency with which teachers said they observed students engaging in problematic behaviors, such as sharing hateful social media posts, making unfounded claims, engaging in unhealthy amounts of media use, and displaying a limited ability to evaluate the credibility of online information. Teachers’ support for media literacy bodes well for opportunities for schools to mitigate Truth Decay and promote more-constructive social interactions, but teachers could also benefit from guidance and resources to address media misuse.

A Broader Research Agenda

Our data provide a starting point for a broader research agenda. In this report, we present a nationally representative picture of how K–12 social studies teachers promote civic development in their classrooms and their schools, along with factors that could help improve these efforts. Future research should extend the work we presented in this report to gather the perspectives of educators in other roles; take a deeper look into the classroom through observations, interviews, or artifact reviews; explore issues around equity in a more comprehensive
way; and evaluate the effects of policies and supports, such as standards, professional development, and instructional materials. Research on civic education can benefit from an interdisciplinary approach that brings together researchers with different perspectives and that engages practitioners as full partners on the research to the extent possible.

We have provided a broad overview of what civic education looks like in K–12 public schools across the United States, and the findings suggest several ways that policies and supports could be modified or improved to help teachers prioritize their students’ civic development. Civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions will be crucial for students and graduates as they navigate the uncertain and challenging events with which they might be confronted. Students’ development of these attributes will also be a key component in a more expansive effort to mitigate the effects of Truth Decay.
This report describes insights we derived from teachers’ responses to a survey administered through the RAND American Teacher Panel. We are extraordinarily grateful to the U.S. public-school teachers who agreed to participate in the panel and take time out of their busy lives to respond to our survey. Their time and willingness to share their experiences are invaluable for this effort and for helping us understand more about how to better support their hard work in schools. We also appreciate the work of everyone on the American Educator Panels team who programmed and administered the survey and provided us with the data that made these analyses possible, especially David Grant, Casey Hunter, Claude Setodji, Matthew Strawn, and Christopher Young.

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AEP</td>
<td>American Educator Panels</td>
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<td>ATP</td>
<td>American Teacher Panel</td>
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<td>C3</td>
<td>College, Career, and Civic Life</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>exploratory factor analysis</td>
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<td>ELL</td>
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<td>ESSA</td>
<td>Every Student Succeeds Act</td>
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<td>K–12</td>
<td>kindergarten through 12th grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
<td>lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning</td>
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<td>SEL</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

U.S. public schools serving the nation’s youth in kindergarten through 12th grade (K–12) play a crucial role in preparing students not only to succeed in college and careers but also to contribute to their communities and country as adults. Horace Mann, one of the earliest proponents of taxpayer-supported education, emphasized the importance of preparing students to lead engaged and informed civic lives (Mann, 1855; Labaree, 1997). In Mann’s view, civic education should be a central element of public schools’ offerings. Although the phrase might conjure up images of high school students learning facts about government in a classroom setting, most educators and scholars of civic education today take a broader view. As we will discuss in more detail, civic education involves a variety of topics and activities that can occur throughout a student’s time in the K–12 education system and through nonschool activities (Box 1.1). It covers not only traditional social studies topics but also related competencies, such as media literacy, critical thinking, and relationship-building. In this report, we focus on one key group that is responsible for supporting civic education: K–12 social studies teachers across the United States, including elementary (K–5) teachers of all subjects. We examine how these teachers address civics in their classrooms and schools, their beliefs about the importance of civics-related topics and skills, and the conditions they perceive as supporting or hindering civic education.

1 Chapter Two provides a more detailed discussion of how the term civic education is defined and conceptualized.
Civic education can promote an array of student outcomes beyond learning of civics concepts and facts, as shown in Box 1.2. We use the term civic development to describe this set of outcomes. These outcomes are aligned with Horace Mann’s original vision, and for many youth, schools continue to be the primary institution that fosters the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they will need to thrive once they complete their formal K–12 schooling.

Civic education as conceptualized in Box 1.2 provides the primary means through which schools can mitigate Truth Decay. Kavanagh and Rich define Truth Decay as consisting of four related trends: “(1) increasing disagreement about facts and analytical interpretations of facts and data; (2) a blurring of the line between opinion and fact; (3) the increasing relative volume, and resulting influence, of opinion and personal experience over fact; and (4) declining trust in formerly respected sources of factual information” (Kavanagh and Rich, 2018, pp. x–xi). Subsequent work in RAND’s Truth Decay portfolio has discussed related trends, such as the effects of political partisanship on approaches to news consumption and a general reluctance to seek out differing viewpoints in the news (Pollard and Kavanagh, 2019) and a
shift among news sources toward greater reliance on subjectivity and opinion in reporting (Kavanagh, Marcellino, et al., 2019). Equipping youth with the cognitive tools and strategies to apply a critical lens to information consumption and to avoid the traps of excessive partisanship in their interpersonal communications could go a long way toward mitigating Truth Decay, and the K–12 public education system might provide the best hope of accomplishing this on a large scale.

Beyond concerns that are specific to Truth Decay, many recent calls for increased emphasis on civic education have highlighted numerous threats to democracy and civic life in the United States, such as the increasing polarization and partisanship that have hindered constructive debate about important policy issues, growing evidence of distrust in democratic institutions along with skepticism about the value of democracy itself, and a lack of opportunities for civic and community engagement in many parts of the United States (Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017). Public schools can provide youth with instruction and other experiences that have the potential to mitigate some of these threats.

Despite several trends that point to the value of promoting students’ civic development in schools, there is little evidence regarding the extent to which teachers engage their students in civics classes or the ways in which civic education efforts overall vary across schools. In this report, we address this gap by providing data from a nationally
representative sample of U.S. public-school social studies teachers who participated in a fall 2019 survey that asked about their civic education practices and the conditions that might support or hinder those practices. Our goal is to provide a snapshot in time of how public schools promote civic learning and to inform guidance about how to do this more effectively. In the next section, we describe the rationale for our effort to understand how schools address civics, including recent relevant trends beyond those discussed in the Truth Decay work. We then discuss our methods, limitations, intended audience, and the structure of the rest of this report.

Why the Time Is Right for a Renewed Focus on Civics in Schools

Today’s public schools look and feel quite different from those that Mann envisioned, and most people who work in or study schools would probably concede that schools have not lived up to his expectations when it comes to the provision of opportunities for civic development. In the decades after Mann’s call for citizenship education, numerous groups continued to advocate the importance of including civics as part of the compulsory school curriculum. For example, in 1908, a special commission of the American Political Science Association recommended the importance of debates “upon the issues of the day” in schools to prepare youth to be citizens (Youniss, 2011). In 1916, the National Education Association Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education deemed that social studies—history, geography, and civics—should be a major focus of public education (Heater, 2002). During this same period, John Dewey pushed for schools to shift from simply providing civic knowledge to giving students democratic experiences that included ample opportunities to make decisions on matters directly affecting them and by organizing schools as communities in themselves (Dewey, 1916; Ehrlich, 1999).

Despite this early focus on civic education as a key element of compulsory schooling, the goal of preparing students for civic life has increasingly been overtaken by other objectives. The 1957 launch of the Sputnik
satellite by the Soviet Union was a particular turning point, generating widespread concern that schools were failing to prepare U.S. students to lead the world in science and innovation and resulting in numerous reforms focused on what is now called STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) (Powell, 2007; Winthrop, 2020).

Recent debates about the role of civic education in schools (e.g., Vinnakota, 2019) have highlighted persistent concerns among practitioners, policymakers, and the broader public that schools are not adequately preparing young people for civic life. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Civics Assessment that was administered to 8th-graders in 2018, 24 percent of students’ scores were at or above the proficient level, and the results were largely unchanged from the previous administration of the NAEP Civics Assessment in 2014 (U.S. Department of Education, undated). Earlier NAEP Civics Assessment results show small increases in the performance of 4th-graders (from 1998 to 2010) and 8th-graders (from 2006 to 2014), but average differences in performance among racial or ethnic and socioeconomic subgroups persist—and, in some cases, have widened (Hansen et al., 2018).

Of course, NAEP does not measure all civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and it provides only a snapshot in time for selected grade levels. But civic education scholars and advocates have also pointed to other data that suggest a need to bolster civic education, such as surveys in which young people express lack of confidence in democracy (Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2017) and a tendency to evaluate the accuracy of information based in part on how that information aligns with their prior views (Kahne and Bowyer, 2017). Moreover, although national voter turnout among adults who are 18–29 years old has increased significantly over the past few years, participation rates in 2018 were lowest among this age group (Misra, 2019). Policymakers and educators have expressed concerns that the increasingly divisive nature of U.S. politics is making the work of civic education in schools simultaneously more challenging and important and that the media landscape has exacerbated this divisiveness (Vinnakota, 2019).
The aftermath of the 2016 presidential election brought these concerns to the fore, leaving many educators and researchers wondering how schools might support students in an increasingly contentious and polarized environment. For example, *Education Week* (“Citizen Z. . . .,” 2018) launched a project called Citizen Z: Teaching Civics in a Divided Nation in 2018 to investigate “the role of education in the current crisis.” Of course, examples of youth civic engagement abound (Cohen, Kahne, and Marshall, 2018), and the role that schools can (or should) play in supporting such engagement is a topic of disagreement (Hess and Rice, 2020).

Several groups of civic education advocates, scholars, researchers, and educators have convened over the past decade to explore ways to increase the amount and quality of civic education that schools provide. A prominent example is the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, which generated several reports, such as the *Guardian of Democracy* report (Gould, 2011) that laid out a compelling rationale for increasing attention to civic education and identified six of the ten promising practices that we discuss in greater detail in Chapter Two. More recently, numerous foundations collaborated to support a landscape analysis that explored the state of civic education in the United States and provided recommendations for building on the widespread support for civics instruction (Vinnakota, 2019). These and other reports have built a strong case for the need for schools to prioritize civic education, and they have also identified a lack of systematic data on how schools are doing this.

Much of the discussion regarding the need for improved civic education is related to the Countering Truth Decay initiative described at the beginning of this chapter. In their original Truth Decay report, Kavanagh and Rich, 2018, highlighted the importance of civic education and media literacy in schools to counter the diminishing role of facts and analysis in public life. Follow-on work by Huguet and colleagues, 2019, examined media literacy offerings in schools and considered ways in which further media literacy efforts might counter Truth Decay. Several recent reports on civic education, including the ones mentioned in the previous paragraph, highlight growing distrust in facts and institutions, increasing prevalence of social media,
and decreasing emphasis on critical thinking—all of which are potential drivers of Truth Decay. In this report, we build on these earlier works to incorporate a broader look at how the K–12 public education system addresses civic development—including media literacy, but also moving beyond it to examine a broader array of potential civic education practices in schools and classrooms, such as discussion of current and controversial events, service learning, and student participation in governance. These practices could help mitigate the serious threats to democracy and democratic institutions that we have described. Beyond these broad societal concerns, several developments and trends in the K–12 education system make this an opportune time to reexamine the role that schools play in promoting civic development and countering Truth Decay; we discuss some of the more prominent ones next.

**Federal and State Accountability Policy**

In recent decades, school activities have been shaped by policies that emphasize schools’ success at promoting the academic skills that students are likely to need in college and in well-paying careers. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—the federal legislation that determines how schools can spend their federal funds—and was perhaps the most prominent force behind this emphasis on a relatively narrow set of academic outcomes. Although federal education policies have required states to set rigorous academic standards for all subject areas since the 1990s, NCLB required states to test students in reading and mathematics each year from 3rd to 8th grade and once in high school and imposed considerable sanctions on schools where students did not make “adequate yearly progress” in those subjects according to the definitions in the law. As a result of these policies, schools across the United States have prioritized student performance on standardized tests in a small number of academic subjects that typically do not include social studies or civics (Hansen et al., 2018; Shapiro and Brown, 2018).

Critics of NCLB have argued that it presented a constrained view of schooling that resulted in a narrowing of curriculum and a lack of attention to schools’ broader mission, and research provides some
support for this view. (For more information about this research and related criticisms, see Hamilton, Stecher, and Yuan, 2012; and Koretz, 2017.) In a summary of key findings from convenings and interviews with practitioners, policymakers, funders, and other experts on civic education, Vinnakota found broad agreement among members of this group that “intense focus on basic reading and math skills and science education has come at the expense of social studies and social and emotional learning” (Vinnakota, 2019, p. 10).

Over the past few years, there has been a steady movement toward broader definitions of student success (Aspen Institute, 2019). This is evidenced by the most recent ESEA reauthorization, the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which requires states to include at least one noncognitive or nonacademic measure in their school accountability system and provides expanded funding opportunities for nonacademic interventions (Grant et al., 2017; Hall, 2017). ESSA’s accountability framework still emphasizes test scores in mathematics and English language arts but provides more flexibility for states to adopt measures of other outcomes.

Broader state policy also supports civic education in many states. For example, even before ESSA was passed, most states and Washington, D.C., required some form of civic learning, often in the form of high school graduation requirements or the adoption of social studies standards (Hansen et al., 2018). According to Hansen and colleagues, as of 2018, the majority of states (31) require students to take a half-year civics course in high school; ten states require students to take a whole-year civics course. One-half of all states provide credit for or require community service, and 17 states required a civics exam for graduation.

Many states also have aligned or are in the process of aligning their social studies standards with the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013), which was developed by a consortium of 15 professional organizations to encourage more focus on social studies in general and civics in particular. As also noted by Hansen and colleagues, 2018, 23 states used C3 standards in their learning standards or framework as of 2017, although other states might have done so since then. In addition, ten states—Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky,
New York, North Carolina, Virginia, and Washington—have elected to be C3 teacher state hubs. These state hubs bring together educators “to develop and share inquiry-based instructional materials and professional development opportunities” that support implementation of the C3 framework (C3 Teachers: College, Career & Civic Life, undated).

With the advent of ESSA, we might expect more states to use the C3 framework and adopt new civic education requirements or initiatives. For example, ESSA created the opportunity for some states to pilot innovative assessments for subjects beyond English language arts and mathematics. Louisiana is participating in the pilot project with a state test that combines English and social studies assessment (Kaput, 2018). More such innovations might be in some state pipelines, but we lack clear information on how ESSA might be encouraging states to develop new civic education standards, requirements, or assessments.

**Growing Evidence That Schools Can Promote Long-Term Civic Outcomes**

The research on the ways that K–12 schools can contribute to improved civic engagement among their graduates has been accumulating over the past couple of decades. Taking courses in civics and government, for example, is associated with increased likelihood of voting (Kawashima-Ginsberg and Levine, 2013). Another study that examined national data found that participation in community service in high school predicted voting and volunteering in adulthood (Hart et al., 2007). Some additional cross-section work indicates that civic education activities can foster increased commitment among high school students to engage civically. For instance, Kahne and Sporte, 2008, studied Chicago students and found that civic learning opportunities in the classroom, along with participation in service learning, were associated with students’ planned commitment to civic participation. Discussion of political or controversial issues, one approach to promoting civic learning, has been shown to predict adolescents’ civic knowledge and their appreciation for the value of political conflict (Campbell, 2008).

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2 For more-comprehensive reviews of research on how civic education influences student outcomes, see Gould, 2011; and Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017.
Research has also identified ways that schools can promote skills that are directly relevant to countering Truth Decay. Kahne, Hodgin, and Eidman-Aadahl, 2016, have argued for the need for schools to help students evaluate information so that they can participate effectively in civic life. McGrew and colleagues use the phrase “civic online reasoning” to describe one’s ability to “effectively search for, evaluate, and verify social and political information online” (McGrew et al., 2018, p. 166). McGrew, 2020, explored ways that schools might promote civic online reasoning, examining an intervention that consisted of eight lessons about how to evaluate digital content. Participation in these lessons resulted in improved ability to navigate digital information sources effectively, including ability to critique evidence presented via digital sources. Another study carried out in French secondary schools indicated possible benefits from an intervention that focused on evaluating sources that improved students’ ability to identify reliable sources of information (Perez et al., 2018).

Research on charter schools provides some additional relevant evidence regarding school effects on civic outcomes. A recent randomized controlled trial found that students who attended schools that were part of Democracy Prep, a charter school network with a strong civic mission, were more likely than other students both to register to vote and to vote (Gill et al., 2018). Another study found that attendance at charter high schools in North Carolina was associated with higher voting rates (McEachin et al., 2020), though the specific mechanisms by which charter schools produced those outcomes were unclear. These and other studies demonstrate that public schools can promote civic development in ways that have long-term effects.

Research has also shown the relevance of civic outcomes to college and career preparation, demonstrating to educators that civic education can support rather than detract from efforts to support students’ readiness to pursue higher education and achieve economic success. The authors of one prominent report write that “civic skills are workplace skills, so students who learn to work together to define and address problems should be more employable and productive” (Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017, p. 6). An analysis of employer surveys and job postings identified several attributes that are in high demand, such
as collaboration, teamwork, integrity, and conflict resolution (Yoder et al., 2020); these attributes overlap significantly with the civic outcomes discussed earlier. Even in more-advanced technical occupations, such as those in science and industry, employers seek a variety of non-technical skills that are interpersonal and managerial (Carnevale and Hanson, 2015).

**Widespread Embrace of Social and Emotional Learning in Schools**

As a result of research, advocacy, and a growing availability of instructional resources and supports, educators are increasingly adopting strategies to promote a broad set of competencies beyond academic achievement that are intertwined with students’ civic development. These can be categorized as *interpersonal* (e.g., collaboration, cultural awareness) and *intrapersonal* (e.g., self-regulation, responsible decision-making) competencies. The phrase *social and emotional learning* (SEL) is often used to describe programs and practices that aim to promote these competencies (Aspen Institute, 2019; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, undated). Of course, schools have always addressed some nonacademic skills and behaviors, and the SEL movement has much in common with earlier efforts related to character education (Finn and Hess, 2019). However, the intensive, deliberate emphasis on teaching these competencies explicitly is relatively new. Recent surveys indicate that majorities of both teachers and principals in K–12 schools across the United States are engaging in SEL and believe that doing so will have substantial benefits in several areas for students, including on academic performance (Atwell and Bridgeland, 2019; “Data: How District Leaders . . .,” 2020; Hamilton and Doss, 2020; Hamilton, Doss, and Steiner, 2019). This widespread emphasis on SEL aligns well with many of the goals of civic education (Gould, 2011), but educators do not always make the connection between SEL and civics. As Vinnakota points out:

> Knowledge about our political institutions is of little practical value to people who lack the social and emotional skills to interact productively with their neighbors. This is common sense, but these skills are rarely identified explicitly as “civic skills.” Many people
fail to associate acquiring and practicing skills like active listening, negotiating, critical thinking, and compromising with civic education. Similarly, citizens who lack a sense of personal agency or belonging to their community are unlikely to become productively engaged in that community. Still, many people who work in the critical areas of social and emotional learning, as well as leadership development, youth advocacy, and youth organizing—those who seek to instill “civic dispositions” (i.e., a sense of agency and responsibility for the larger community) in young people—do not think of themselves as civic educators per se (Vinnakota, 2019, pp. 8–9).

The near-universal enthusiasm for SEL can create opportunities for education leaders and policymakers to incorporate a broad assortment of programs and practices that promote civic development into schools.

**Concerns About How Schools Address Equity and Racial Justice**

Finally, growing calls for schools to promote equity and address structural racism have led many educators to reconsider both their social studies curricula and their approaches to helping students develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will enable them to engage effectively to address this and other societal challenges. We have noted the civics achievement gaps, and research has also documented extensive opportunity gaps when it comes to civic learning, with low-income students and students of color receiving fewer opportunities to participate in civic education practices in schools (Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2013; Rebell, 2018). Inequities in access to a well-rounded curriculum that includes civics can lead to unequal opportunities to become informed, engaged members of society (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019). Levinson, 2013, describes a “civic empowerment gap” characterized by disparities in markers of civic engagement, such as voting, among adults from different racial or ethnic and socioeconomic groups, and she points out the inequitable access to civic education among schools serving more- and less-advantaged student populations. Moreover, high school teachers across the United States have reported rising levels of hostility among students toward members of some racial and ethnic groups, especially in schools serving majority-white populations (Rogers et al., 2017), and students
Introduction

across the nation have recently called for new history curricula that provide a complete, accurate discussion of racial justice issues (Chang and Mehta, 2020; Gewertz, 2020).

Together, the shifting priorities for public education and the broader societal conditions that have contributed to them make this an opportune time to examine how schools are addressing civic education. This report draws on results from a survey of social studies teachers across the United States to provide the first nationally representative data on how schools promote civic development and on several of the conditions that might support or hinder those efforts. These survey data are intended to shed light on the prevalence of civic education practices and opportunities in K–12 schools throughout the country and on how those opportunities might vary depending on school or classroom context. The data also allow us to understand teachers’ perceptions of the barriers to, and facilitators of, civic education, so that we can offer recommendations for the field to help create the conditions that teachers need to do this work effectively.

Overview of Methods and Limitations

Using RAND’s American Teacher Panel (ATP), we present results from a survey administered in fall 2019 to a nationally representative sample of K–12 public-school social studies teachers. The ATP is part of the RAND American Educator Panels (AEP) and is a nationally representative panel of K–12 public-school teachers who were recruited through probability-based methods from a list that includes most U.S. teachers (up to 95 percent). The AEP is part of RAND Education and Labor, a division of the RAND Corporation.

Teachers in the ATP were eligible to be included in the sample for this survey if they reported teaching social studies, civics, or similar courses in their panel enrollment form or another previous survey. We screened teachers out of taking our civics education survey if they did not indicate teaching “social studies or social science (including general social studies, geography, history, government/civics, etc.).” Thus, elementary (K–5) general-education teachers who indicated teaching
several subjects were included, as long social studies was one of the subjects they reported teaching. A total sample of 1,600 teachers who met these criteria received email invitations to complete the survey; 820 teachers provided survey responses—a completion rate of 51.3 percent. All survey data presented in this report are weighted using a model for nonresponse that is intended to produce nationally representative estimates. For more information about ATP methods, including sample demographics, data collection, and survey weighting for this report, see our technical documentation (Hamilton, Kaufman, Hu, et al., 2020).

Using our conceptual framework (which is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two), the 20-minute survey addressed the following topics:

- school and classroom practices to address students’ civic development
- teachers’ beliefs related to civic education and their preparation to teach civics
- teachers’ instructional materials and assessments to support civic development
- state and school context for civic education
- students’ behavior and media use.

To develop our survey, we drew on and adapted items from several other surveys (with permission from their authors): a survey of U.S. school principals (Rogers, 2019); a survey of U.S. high school civics teachers (Farkas and Duffett, 2010); a teacher survey from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (Köhler et al., 2016); and items from the RAND American Life Panel, 2018.

To provide some real-world examples beyond our survey data, we also highlight a few civics curricula that schools have adopted. We provide brief vignettes that describe some of the key features of these curricula, drawing on interviews with developers and written documentation that those developers provided or that we obtained from websites. These examples are not intended to provide anything close to a comprehensive view of how schools promote civic development. Instead, they are illustrative of a few of the different curricula that are available to schools.
Analysis

The analyses in this report build on the previous descriptive snapshots of these data that we published in four short AEP Data Notes:


These Data Notes summarized some key findings for specific topics addressed in our survey; this report brings together key findings across survey topics. We specifically summarize responses separately for elementary (grades K–5) and secondary (grades 6–12) teachers; where relevant, we discuss differences in responses for subgroups of teachers when they are statistically significant for an outcome of interest after controlling for other school and teacher characteristics. We do not repeat any analyses already provided in our Data Notes but do occasionally reference those findings in this report.

In addition, we discuss relationships between teachers’ reports of their social studies and civics instruction and factors we surmised to be related to that instruction, such as teacher preparation and beliefs, instructional materials and assessments, and state and school context. We also look at connections between school and classroom civic practices and selected aspects of students’ civic behaviors as reported by teachers. To facilitate the analyses of relationships between instruction and other factors, we used exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) to inform the cre-

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3 All products from this series are available at RAND Corporation, undated-a.
ation of multi-item scales. The EFAs provided initial evidence regarding the extent to which individual items clustered together (and therefore could be considered to measure a common construct). Drawing on these results, we identified items to group into scales and used coefficient alpha to examine the internal consistency of each scale. We provide additional details about scale creation in the appendix, and we describe each of the scales in the chapters in which they are first presented.

Any significant findings we share in this report are ones that were significant in regression models that included several teacher- and school-level factors as independent variables. The specific variables used to capture teacher- and school-level characteristics in all models in this report were:

- **School vulnerability:** This is the average of two standardized variables—school-level percentage of students receiving a free or reduced-price lunch and school-level percentage of students of color for each reporting teacher, using information from the Common Core of Data. We combined this information into a single indicator because school-level free or reduced-price lunch participation and percentage of students of color were highly correlated and created collinearity problems in our regressions analyses.

- **Grade level:** Teachers were assigned as elementary or secondary teachers; if a teacher reported teaching both elementary and secondary grades, we assigned them to the grade span for which they taught the most grades. If they taught equal numbers of elementary and secondary grades, we assigned them to the secondary level.

- **Urbanicity:** Teachers were assigned as teaching at a city, town or rural, or suburban school based on school urbanicity data from the Common Core of Data.

- **English-language learners (ELLs):** Teachers were assigned as teaching high percentages of ELLs if they reported that more than 10 percent of students in their classes were ELLs.

- **Teachers of color:** Teachers were assigned as teachers of color if they reported being any race or ethnicity other than white. Teach-
ers who indicated white in addition to other races or ethnicities (a total of 35) were not classified as teachers of color.

- **Teaching experience:** Teachers reported their years of teaching experience.

Additional details about the survey and analytic methods, including methods for testing the significance of differences and more information about the variables used in regressions, are available in the technical document (Hamilton, Kaufman, Hu, et al., 2020).

In addition to asking closed-ended questions on the aforementioned topics in our 20-minute survey, we asked several open-ended questions, including follow-up questions asking teachers to describe any political or social issues about which they were told by district or school leaders to limit discussions (if they indicated being told to limit such discussions), and—at the end of the survey—any other information they would like to share about their experiences with or views on students’ civic education or development. We applied an emergent coding scheme to code these open-ended responses.

**Limitations**

Several limitations of these data and findings should be acknowledged from the outset. First, all of these data came from teachers’ self-reports, which can be subject to some threats to validity. In particular, much research has documented response biases that could arise from survey reports more generally and teachers’ survey responses in particular. Specifically, teachers tend to inflate or overestimate certain elements of their classroom practice that might be socially desirable (Kaufman, Stein, and Junker, 2016; Mayer, 1999; Spillane and Zeuli, 1999). In addition, although our survey asked teachers to report on their perspectives regarding civic education in their school and classroom across the entire school year, the survey was administered early in the academic year. This being the case, teachers might not have been able to provide a clear picture of civic education across the whole year.

Our main source of data for this report is self-reports of K–12 public-school teachers who teach social studies. We focused on social studies teachers with the rationale that these teachers would be most
likely to integrate civic education topics and approaches into their classrooms and be attentive to these approaches at the school level. Perspectives of school principals, students, and teachers from other subjects would provide a more holistic picture of civic education in schools, but we were not able to collect data from these sources for this report. In addition, teachers from private schools—which serve approximately 10 percent of prekindergarten through 12th-grade students—are not represented in this report, even though private schools also have a responsibility to provide instruction in social studies and civics (Rebell, 2018).

We also acknowledge a lack of consensus about the key components of civic education on which we focus in our survey. In particular, some areas of civic education that we examine—such as action civics (Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017) and service learning—might not be ones that all educators consider relevant to civic education. In addition, teachers responding to our surveys might interpret terms that we use to describe some of these approaches differently, given that they are not widely used. We aimed to define unclear terms within our surveys, but the definitions that we provided might not have been comprehensive or clear enough in some cases. At the same time, we have not addressed every aspect of teachers’ civics instruction in our survey. We investigated the topics that we described earlier, but we might have neglected to include questions in areas that matter for teachers’ instruction.

The brief vignettes we share in this report provide some richer descriptions of civics and instructional materials but cannot fully do justice to this complex topic and provide only a small sample of the many resources available to educators. Thus, these survey data and curriculum descriptions should be regarded as research that lays groundwork for future efforts that can more deeply explore civic education provided in schools and how civics instruction can prepare students to be successful and productive citizens.

Finally, several of our analyses explore relationships between teachers’ reports of their instruction and other survey topics, such as supports, barriers, and student behaviors, but these analyses cannot identify causal relationships. That is, we cannot determine the fac-
tors that drive or influence teacher instruction, nor does our analy-
sis provide evidence regarding how teacher instruction affects student
outcomes. Although we control for several teacher and school charac-
teristics when we examine relationships, we are unable to control for
everything that might be a factor. In particular, we do not have infor-
mation about teachers’ political party affiliation, which could influ-
ence responses to many of our questions. Our analyses allow us to
identify associations between teachers’ instruction and other factors,
and to rule out the effects of measured characteristics (e.g., urbanic-
ity) as drivers of those relationships, but our findings should be used
primarily to suggest areas that would benefit from additional study
and exploration. A related limitation is the risk of false positives in our
results, given the number of statistical significance tests we conducted
(i.e., a relationship we describe as statistically significant when no such
relationship is present in the broader population). Because our analyses
are exploratory and not intended to test specific hypotheses, we do not
adjust for multiple comparisons, but we do caution readers to avoid
making strong inferences using a single significant result.

**Audience and Structure of the Report**

This report is intended to provide educators, school and district lead-
ers, policymakers, education support providers, and researchers with
unique, nationally representative data on how schools and teachers pro-
mote civic development and the factors that are related to the civic
development that schools and teachers provide. We intend for the
findings in this report to inform the education community about (1)
civic education practices and approaches being undertaken across the
United States and (2) how those practices and approaches might best
be supported.

In the next chapter, we briefly review literature regarding what we
know about civic education in classrooms and schools and the condi-
tions that facilitate or hinder teachers’ efforts to promote civic learning,
which guided the development of our survey. We share our findings in
Chapters Three through Seven; we begin with a description of teach-
ers’ reported civic education practices in their classrooms and schools in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four, we present findings about teachers’ preparation and beliefs about civics. Chapter Five summarizes teachers’ perceptions regarding their instructional materials to teach civics. In Chapter Six, we discuss state and local contextual conditions that are potentially relevant to teachers’ approaches to civics. Although we do not have student outcome data, we did ask teachers to report their observations regarding a small set of student civic-related behaviors, and we describe these findings in Chapter Seven. In Chapter Eight, we share our conclusions and some implications for policy and practice.
In Chapter One, we described the civic mission of the first U.S. public schools and summarized some of the factors that have contributed to shifts in how civics is prioritized. In this chapter, we discuss current thinking about practices that schools can adopt to support students’ civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions, both in the classroom and outside it, and we describe the crucial role that teachers play in both providing instruction and responding to conditions that affect that instruction.

School and Classroom Practices to Support Civic Development in the Era of Truth Decay

Over the past decade, civic education scholars, advocates, and educators have collaborated to examine research on civics instruction and identify school and classroom practices that are likely to promote students’ development of key civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The Guardians of Democracy report produced by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools in collaboration with scholars from several organizations (Gould, 2011), described “Six Proven Practices” to promote students’ civic outcomes. Other organizations have adopted this framework to guide policy and practices (for example, see Whitehouse, Baumann, and Brennan, 2017). A 2017 report by Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg described four additional categories of practices to the list of six and briefly summarized research related to these four practices. Scholars and other experts have argued that these strategies
can help schools promote the development of engaged, informed, and responsible adults (Gould, 2011; Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017). Box 2.1 lists these ten categories of practices; the first six are the original “Proven Practices,” and the last four are the additional ones from the 2017 report.

Throughout our report, we refer to these ten practices as “promising practices” rather than “proven practices” to avoid suggesting that implementation of any of them is guaranteed to improve student out-

### Box 2.1

**Ten Promising Practices to Promote Civic Development**

1. **Classroom instruction in civics, government, history, law, economics, and geography.** The knowledge and skills that students develop through instruction on key social studies topics can help them become informed members of society. Stand-alone courses in these subjects are commonly offered in the secondary grade levels (i.e., grades 6–12). For younger students, classroom instruction in these areas could occur during social studies lessons or through content that teachers embed into instruction in other subjects.

2. **Discussion of current events and controversial issues.** By engaging students in age-appropriate discussions of local, national, or international current events or topics that might be controversial, teachers and other school staff can promote student interest in these topics while helping them develop communication and argumentation skills and such dispositions as political attentiveness and community involvement.

3. **Service learning.** This set of practices generally refers to community service that is combined with study and exploration of issues that are related to that service. Service learning is a graduation requirement in many states and districts.

4. **Extracurricular activities.** Students can acquire experiences relevant to civic development through a variety of activities, such as sports, music ensembles, debate clubs, and many others. Some descriptions of these promising practices emphasize the value of activities and organizations that are student-led and that therefore promote agency and initiative.

5. **Student participation in school governance.** As with the extracurricular activities category, opportunities for students to participate in student council or other school governing bodies can provide opportunities for them to develop leadership, agency, and other attributes and civic dispositions that might promote civic engagement as adults.

6. **Simulations of democratic processes and procedures.** Simulations can provide real-world experience that is tailored to students’ developmental levels and interests; this category includes school-based elections, mock trials, and such activities as Model United Nations and classroom-based and technology-supported simulations.
Box 2.1—Continued

7. **News media literacy.** Effective civic engagement depends on students’ *media literacy*, defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act on such platforms as social media or news-focused websites.

8. **Action civics.** This set of practices encourages students to identify community problems that they would like to solve and then develop and implement plans to address them. Following this work, students are typically expected to reflect on their work and its impact. These types of practices are intended to help students develop identities as citizens.

9. **SEL.** As we discussed in Chapter One, growing emphasis on SEL provides a way for schools to promote civic development, and educators are increasingly attending to students’ social and emotional competencies as they engage students in civic-related activities, such as by helping students channel their emotions constructively to advocate change.

10. **School climate reform.** *School climate* generally refers to the “quality and character of school life” (National School Climate Center, undated). Efforts to improve school climate can involve developing strong, supportive relationships both among students and between students and adults in the school; fostering greater appreciation for diversity; and promoting mutual respect and shared responsibility throughout the school.

**Sources:** AdvocacyLabs, 2020; Gould, 2011; Hansen et al., 2018; Huguet et al., 2019; Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017; National School Climate Center, undated.

Research has not yet provided clear evidence linking all of these practices to student achievement or other short- and long-term civic outcomes. Research on such practices as SEL points to wide variation in both approach and effectiveness. As the authors of the 2011 *Guardian of Democracy* report point out, high-quality implementation of these practices is important to ensuring their effectiveness.

Each of the promising practices listed in Box 2.1 can take any of several forms, and most of them can be enacted at both the classroom and school levels. Furthermore, classroom implementation of these practices does not need to occur in social studies classes. A science lesson, for instance, could incorporate aspects of media literacy or discussion of current events related to science, and a mathematics lesson might provide an opportunity to examine data that would help students understand the context in which elections take place. Simi-
larly, many English language arts state standards encourage teachers to incorporate nonfiction texts that could include civics content.

It is also crucial to acknowledge that although any of these practices could be offered in some form at any grade level, the features of these practices that are likely to lead to improved civic outcomes will depend on the developmental levels of students and, potentially, on other aspects of the school or classroom context. Perhaps most importantly, any effects of practices on civic outcomes will almost certainly depend on the quality and intensity of implementation of the practices, on which specific civic development outcomes are measured, and potentially on the characteristics of participating students. Kahne and Sporte, 2008, for instance, suggest that the positive relationships they found between some types of school-based civic education and students’ commitment to civic participation might be attributed in part to the fact that most participants in their study were low-income students or students of color—groups that often face barriers to civic engagement.

Although research has not examined the use of these practices for the explicit purpose of countering Truth Decay, many of them relate directly to drivers of Truth Decay (listed at the beginning of Chapter One). Carefully moderated discussions of current events and controversial issues—along with high-quality, cognitively complex instruction in history and related disciplines—could help mitigate cognitive biases that result in students overemphasizing preexisting beliefs over new information or failing to distinguish fact from opinion. Schools can help mitigate negative effects of social media and political polarization through such activities as thoughtfully designed lessons in media literacy and through efforts to reform schools’ climates. An additional driver of Truth Decay that Kavanagh and Rich, 2018, identified is demands on the education system (e.g., pressure from state accountability systems to focus on a narrow set of subjects or the requirements of other policies or initiatives), which could also affect the extent and depth of civic education. Efforts to mitigate those demands could contribute to improved civic education more broadly.

In this report, we cannot comprehensively document the myriad ways that schools are engaging in promising civic education practices, and we do not have data to link these practices to student civic out-
comes. Instead, we provide high-level data from a survey of K–12 social studies teachers, recognizing that this group provides only one perspective on a complex set of activities and that data from principals, teachers of other subjects, and students are needed to provide a more complete picture. Our focus on social studies teachers reflects the crucial role that teachers play in the civic development of K–12 students, a topic we discuss next.

Why Teachers Are Crucial in the Provision of Civic Education

Our focus on social studies teachers in this report complements and extends other available data and provides a new window into civic education in classrooms across the United States. In the past several years, surveys of school principals have generated insights regarding the state of civic education in K–12 schools. For example, Education Week administered a comprehensive survey in 2018 to more than 500 K–12 school principals across the United States to provide information on the time spent on civics instruction, civics topics emphasized in the classroom, civics activities and requirements, and challenges and other factors influencing civic education (Kurtz et al., 2018). Education Week’s findings documented that the most-common school-provided civic education activities were community service, student government, and mock elections. Rogers, 2019, also administered a survey to a nationally representative sample of more than 500 high school principals to examine how assorted social issues are perceived by students and educators. According to the principals surveyed by Rogers, schools are facing a rise in political incivility, which has been exacerbated by the increased flow of untrustworthy information.

We focus on reports of social studies teachers rather than school principals because of their critical roles as emissaries of any civic education school initiatives or curricula. We know from a large body of research that teachers are the greatest source of school-level variation in students’ achievement growth from year to year (Aaronson, Barrow, and Sander, 2007; Nye, Konstantopoulos, and Hedges, 2004;
Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain, 2005). No one is more crucial to students’ civic development in schools than teachers, who provide instruction to students day in and day out and who are most likely to present students with systematic and in-depth perspectives on various areas of civic education. Teachers also have much more information than principals do about the social studies and civic education topics and approaches being emphasized in classrooms. While some surveys have captured the extent to which social studies teachers address traditional social studies topics related to history, politics and government, and civic participation (Farkas and Duffett, 2010; Köhler et al., 2016), no studies that we know of have systematically examined how K–12 teachers across the United States and in a wide variety of schools report addressing assorted civic education topics connected with all the promising civic education practices we have already discussed. Furthermore, we do not know how various factors—ranging from teachers’ beliefs and preparation to their school context—are related to the civic education practices they do address.

Figure 2.1 offers a conceptual framework for the key factors that we hypothesize are important for teachers’ civics instruction and students’ civic development. This framework certainly does not capture all the complex variables that influence teaching and learning. However, we believe that it captures some of the main drivers of teachers’ civics instruction: teachers’ beliefs and experience, their instructional materials, and their school and district context.

In the subsequent chapters of this report, we present findings related to each component of this conceptual framework. In Chapter Three, we provide a national picture of school and classroom civic education practices in the United States, according to K–12 social studies teachers, and we discuss how these practices vary across different school contexts. We begin our presentation of results with a description of teachers’ practices because these are at the heart of understanding how schools are positioned to promote students’ civic development and to counter Truth Decay. Chapters Four through Six focus on findings related to each of the conditions on the left-hand side of Figure 2.1, along with results from our exploration of how these conditions related
to teachers’ reported practices. Here, we describe the specific conditions we measure in our survey.

**Teacher beliefs and preparation:** Teachers bring a diversity of beliefs and backgrounds into their classroom instruction, such as years of teaching, experiences with changing academic standards, and views regarding what student outcomes schools should prioritize. They also have experienced different amounts of preservice and in-service preparation for their instruction. Teachers in elementary education programs, for example, typically have less interest and knowledge about social studies and might even have had negative or uninteresting past experiences with social studies instruction compared with their counterparts who chose to pursue certification in social studies to teach at the secondary level (Fritzer and Kumar, 2002; Owens, 1997). Preservice programs for elementary teachers generally offer much less guidance for social studies instruction than programs for secondary social studies teachers, and elementary teachers also are less likely to have majored in a social studies topic in college than their secondary counterparts (Hawkman et al., 2015; Parker, 2005). These differences will inevitably influence the instruction that teachers provide. Numerous studies have documented the complex ways in which teachers’ preparation and experiences likely influence their instruction (Minor et al., 2002; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992), although there is relatively little research about social studies teachers compared with that on teachers of other subjects. In Chapter Four, we consider how teachers’ preparation and the emphasis they place on civic education and particular civic education topics are related to their reports of their civic education instruction.
We also consider a less examined aspect of teachers’ beliefs: their trust in particular institutions and groups. As noted earlier, Kavanagh and Rich, 2018, documented declining trust in various institutions, from media to government, among individuals across the United States. Kavanagh et al., 2020, found widespread distrust in media and government institutions among individuals in U.S. households. But we have less information about teachers’ trust in such institutions or groups, although—as noted in Chapter One—our recent AEP Data Note described survey data (which we also draw on for this report) that provided some basic information on teachers’ trust (Kaufman, Hamilton and Hu, 2020a). That Data Note indicates that majorities of teachers tend to report distrust in most institutions, from religion to the federal government, but it did not explore how trust might be related to teachers’ instruction; we explore that relationship as part of this report.

**Instructional materials and assessments:** A growing body of research has connected use of particular curricula to student learning (Borman, Dowling, and Schneck, 2008; Koedel and Polikoff, 2017; Smith et al., 1993; Zucker et al., 2008), although we lack large-scale studies of social studies curricula. RAND studies have, however, documented the various ways in which teachers use curricula in their classrooms and their reliance on instructional materials that they have created or found themselves (Kaufman, Doan, et al., 2020; Opfer, Kaufman, and Thompson, 2016). One of the recent AEP Data Notes that described the same survey data we are exploring in more depth in this report noted that the plurality of teachers reported using “materials I found myself” for the majority of the materials they use to teach social studies (Kaufman, Hamilton and Hu, 2020b). Teachers’ methods of assessing their students’ learning are also important; classroom assessment strategies that provide timely, curriculum-aligned feedback to teachers and students can benefit student learning (McManus, 2008). In Chapter Five, we explore teachers’ use of instructional materials (including assessments) and consider whether teachers’ reports about the materials they use is related to the practices they emphasize in their classrooms.

**State and local context:** A variety of contextual conditions in teachers’ schools and districts and at the state level can serve as both affordances and challenges for teachers’ instruction. State standards, for
example, could influence curricula and instruction provided in schools, although much evidence indicates that standards—in themselves—do not necessarily lead to more standards-based instruction (Coburn, 2001; Coburn, 2004; Cohen and Ball, 1990; Kaufman, Opfer, et al., 2018; Spillane and Zeuli, 1999). The political environment in which teachers provide instruction can also affect what they teach—for example, by creating pressures for teachers to avoid or address potentially politically divisive content (Rogers, 2019). And, of course, the resources provided by schools and districts, from adequacy of materials to professional learning supports, likely have large and small impacts on teachers’ instruction. Although we cannot capture all possible contextual factors, we explore the ones we regard as most critical in Chapter Six.

**Student behaviors in schools:** Finally, Chapter Seven focuses on the right-hand side of Figure 2.1, providing results from a few survey questions that gauged teachers’ perspectives on this topic. These data are limited to teachers’ perspectives on student behavior rather than reports from students themselves. However, we have striven to measure behavioral outcomes in some way, given that civic education is likely to affect both student achievement and students’ behavioral outcomes. We consider two outcomes that (1) could be supported by teachers’ civics instruction and (2) teachers are likely to be well positioned to report on: student engagement with media and how students treat other students. Unfortunately, we did not have access to student achievement data that we could link to teachers’ survey reports (which might shed light on how teachers’ instruction—and related factors—drive student learning). We hope that these data and findings set the stage for greater examination of teachers’ civics instruction and how it supports student learning, along with other possible short- and long-term outcomes that could reflect students’ civic development in school and beyond.
In this chapter, we discuss the state of civic education in U.S. schools by sharing data on what civics topics and activities teachers reported emphasizing in their classrooms, as well teachers’ perspectives on what civic-related activities were happening in schools more broadly. Throughout this chapter, we also share short snapshots (Boxes 3.1–3.3) of existing social studies curricula or instructional tools that attempt to integrate some of the promising civic development practices we discussed in Chapter Two. These vignettes illustrate more vividly how curriculum developers envision these promising practices taking shape within classrooms.

As noted in the preceding chapters, we conceptualize civic education as encompassing specific civics and social studies content areas and topics. But, as importantly, civic education also includes instruction that cultivates students’ civic skills and dispositions through the “promising practices” we highlighted in Chapter Two as ones that can support the development of engaged, informed, and responsible adults. Thus, in our findings on school and classroom civic education practices, we highlight:

- broad social studies content areas (e.g., civics and government, history)
- civics-related activities and approaches connected with the ten promising practices (e.g., media literacy, simulations of the democratic process)
- additional civics-related topics that teachers indicate emphasizing (e.g., voting, responsible internet use).
The results in this chapter address the box in the middle of our framework—the school and classroom practices that might promote students’ civic development. In the presentation of findings that follows, we display survey results for elementary and secondary teachers separately. Because most elementary teachers oversee instruction in all the core academic subjects but most secondary teachers specialize in social studies, we would expect differing responses to questions about practices. We also discuss significant differences by other school (e.g., urbanicity, poverty) and teacher (e.g., race or ethnicity) characteristics where relevant.

Our survey included questions about teacher and school-level activities that align with the ten promising practices, though we did not limit the survey to these practices. Table 3.1 lists the ten promising practices and the survey items related to each; Figures 3.1–3.3 show survey results for these practices.

**Respondents Reported Covering a Variety of Topics; Secondary Teachers Reported More Coverage Than Elementary Teachers**

First, we examine teachers’ reports regarding the extent to which their instruction emphasized each of several social studies topics (i.e., topics included as part of the first promising practice shown in Table 3.1). Topical emphasis is likely to depend on the curriculum that teachers are using and, especially at the secondary level, the courses they are teaching. Figure 3.1 shows the percentages of elementary and secondary teachers reporting a moderate or major emphasis on each topic. Although the percentages were generally higher for secondary teachers
### Table 3.1
Ten Promising Practices and Related Survey Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promising Practice</th>
<th>Teachers’ Reports on the Emphasis That They Place on the Following Content and Approaches in Their Classroom</th>
<th>Teachers’ Reports on the Emphasis That Their School Places on the Following Content and Approaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Classroom instruction in civics, government, history, law, economics, and geography</td>
<td>History, culture and cultural diversity, civics and government, geography, economics, law</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Discussion of current events and controversial issues</td>
<td>Discussion of current events</td>
<td>Discussion of controversial issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Service learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Service learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extracurricular activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other extracurricular activities that support civic development (e.g., sports, clubs, debating groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Student participation in school governance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student participation in school governance (e.g., through student council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Simulations of democratic processes and procedures</td>
<td>Simulations of the democratic process (e.g., debates or mock elections)</td>
<td>Simulations of the democratic process (e.g., debates or mock elections)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. News media literacy</td>
<td>Media literacy</td>
<td>Media literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible internet use (e.g., privacy, source reliability, social media)</td>
<td>Responsible internet use (e.g., privacy, source reliability, social media)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distinguishing facts from opinions in written text or other media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Action civics</td>
<td>Student-centered or project-based approaches to civic education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting knowledge of Americans’ rights and responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. SEL</td>
<td>SEL</td>
<td>SEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing students’ skills in conflict resolution</td>
<td>Developing students’ skills in conflict resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. School climate reform</td>
<td></td>
<td>Efforts to promote a positive school climate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
than for elementary teachers, the responses show that teachers in both grade spans addressed multiple topics. Higher percentages of elementary teachers reported emphasizing culture and cultural diversity than any other topic; more than one-third reported a major emphasis on it. Among secondary teachers, history was the most commonly emphasized topic; 92 percent reported at least a moderate emphasis, but nearly as many (88 percent) indicated at least a moderate emphasis on culture and cultural diversity. Overall, majorities of secondary teachers...
said they placed a moderate or major emphasis on all six topics in their classroom instruction.

As we discussed in Chapter One, we examined the extent to which several school and teacher characteristics were associated with responses to each survey question using regression models that controlled for all characteristics simultaneously, which provides evidence regarding the extent to which a specific characteristic is related to responses above and beyond the effects of the other characteristics. These regression models indicated that elementary teachers were significantly less likely than secondary teachers to report an emphasis on all the topics in Figure 3.1. Among the other school and teacher characteristics we examined in our regression models, teachers of color (i.e., those who reported a racial or ethnic background other than white) reported greater emphasis on two topics—law and geography—than did their white counterparts, holding other teacher and school characteristics constant. We also observed a positive association for more years of teaching experience with teachers’ greater emphasis on three topics—civics and government, culture and cultural history, and geog-

Box 3.1
Civics Instructional Materials That Engage Students in Promising Practices: HistoryMaker VR

Schools are increasingly adopting instructional tools that rely on sophisticated technology to promote active student engagement. HistoryMaker VR, developed by Schell Games, offers a virtual reality environment in which middle school students can embody historical figures and create their own staged performances. Students have access to virtual props, and they can record their performances to share with others. The developers prioritized creating a highly engaging and immersive experience, drawing on research that suggests the value of such experiences for promoting learning. Such experiences are particularly reflective of one of the promising practices we discussed in Chapter Two: simulations of democratic processes and procedures. Rather than serving as a stand-alone curriculum, HistoryMaker VR is a tool that teachers and students can use to engage in a variety of individual or group activities. For instance, students can participate in debates, taking on the roles of historical figures, or teachers could assign students to write a speech that a particular figure might give about a relevant topic and then assess that speech to gather evidence of the student’s understanding. Thus, this tool could be used to promote student knowledge of history and such skills as communication and critical thinking. More information is available at Schell Games, undated.
the magnitudes of the coefficients were small, however, and the effects appear to be driven in large part by the responses of teachers with a high number of years of experience.

Relative Emphasis on Promising Practices Differed; School Climate Reform Was the Most Commonly Reported Practice

Figures 3.2 and 3.3 provide responses from elementary and secondary teachers, respectively, to questions about the other nine promising practices. The figures have separate bars for classroom and school-level practices. As reflected by the figures, teachers were asked about some practices at both the classroom and school levels, whereas teachers were asked about other practices at just the school level or just the classroom level, depending on where that practice is most likely to be utilized. At the elementary level, reported emphasis on climate and SEL was nearly universal. Not surprisingly, relatively few elementary teachers reported emphasizing specific, politically charged topics (such as immigration) or cognitively complex activities (such as discussion of controversial issues). Furthermore, 64 percent of elementary teachers reported moderate or major emphasis on distinguishing facts from opinions in written text or other media. Inability to make that distinction is a key characteristic of Truth Decay (Kavanagh and Rich, 2018), but a full one-third of elementary teachers indicated no or only a slight emphasis on distinguishing facts from opinions.

Figure 3.3 suggests broad coverage of the promising practices in middle and high school classrooms and schools, though one practice—simulations of the democratic process—was the only one for which fewer than a majority of teachers reported moderate or major emphasis at the classroom and school levels. This is the type of practice that educators might be likely to adopt once or a few times per year, so the relative lack of emphasis on it does not necessarily mean that schools are not offering this opportunity to students. A majority—82 percent—said they placed at least moderate emphasis on distinguishing facts from opinions in written text or other media. Like their elementary counterparts, nearly all teachers in the secondary grades reported
Figure 3.2
Weighted Percentages of Elementary Social Studies Teachers Reporting Moderate or Major Emphases on Promising Practices in Classrooms and Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promising Practice</th>
<th>Major Emphasis</th>
<th>Moderate Emphasis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efforts to promote a positive school climate (school)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing students’ skills in conflict resolution (school)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing students’ skills in conflict resolution (classroom)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and emotional learning (school)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and emotional learning (classroom)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting knowledge of Americans’ rights and responsibilities (classroom)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-centered or project-based approaches to civic education (classroom)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible internet use (school)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguishing facts from opinions in written text or other media (classroom)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media literacy (school)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media literacy (classroom)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulations of the democratic process (school)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulations of the democratic process (classroom)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student participation in school governance (school)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular activities that support civic development (school)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service learning (school)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of current events (school)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of current events (classroom)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of controversial issues (school)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of controversial issues (classroom)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: This figure illustrates responses to the following survey items: “How much emphasis have you placed or do you anticipate placing on each of the following [topics or activities and approaches] in your classroom this school year (2019–20)?” and “To your knowledge, how much emphasis is your school placing on each of the following activities and approaches related to students’ civic development this school year (2019–20), apart from how you address civic development in your classroom?” Response options for all items: No emphasis, Slight emphasis, Moderate emphasis, Major emphasis. Media literacy was defined as “approaches for accessing, analyzing, evaluating, creating media and participating with media.” SEL was defined as “programs or practices to promote development of interpersonal competencies like teamwork or intrapersonal competencies like emotion management.”
Figure 3.3
Weighted Percentages of Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting Moderate or Major Emphases on Promising Practices in Classrooms and Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Percentage of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efforts to promote a positive school climate (school)</td>
<td>63% Major emphasis, 31% Moderate emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing students’ skills in conflict resolution (school)</td>
<td>28% Moderate emphasis, 41% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing students’ skills in conflict resolution (classroom)</td>
<td>29% Moderate emphasis, 39% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and emotional learning (school)</td>
<td>43% Major emphasis, 34% Moderate emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and emotional learning (classroom)</td>
<td>33% Moderate emphasis, 37% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting knowledge of Americans’ rights and responsibilities (classroom)</td>
<td>43% Major emphasis, 29% Moderate emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting knowledge of Americans’ rights and responsibilities (school)</td>
<td>22% Moderate emphasis, 41% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-centered or project-based approaches to civic education (classroom)</td>
<td>35% Major emphasis, 42% Moderate emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible internet use (school)</td>
<td>45% Major emphasis, 37% Moderate emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible internet use (classroom)</td>
<td>25% Moderate emphasis, 42% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media literacy (school)</td>
<td>20% Moderate emphasis, 45% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media literacy (classroom)</td>
<td>0% No emphasis, 100% Moderate emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulations of the democratic process (school)</td>
<td>7% Moderate emphasis, 33% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulations of the democratic process (classroom)</td>
<td>16% Moderate emphasis, 29% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student participation in school governance (school)</td>
<td>20% Moderate emphasis, 37% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular activities that support civic development (school)</td>
<td>34% Moderate emphasis, 37% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular activities that support civic development (classroom)</td>
<td>0% No emphasis, 100% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service learning (school)</td>
<td>20% Moderate emphasis, 36% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service learning (classroom)</td>
<td>0% No emphasis, 100% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of current events (school)</td>
<td>18% Moderate emphasis, 43% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of current events (classroom)</td>
<td>42% Moderate emphasis, 38% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of controversial issues (school)</td>
<td>12% Moderate emphasis, 40% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of controversial issues (classroom)</td>
<td>28% Moderate emphasis, 40% Major emphasis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: This figure illustrates responses to the following survey items: “How much emphasis have you placed or do you anticipate placing on each of the following [topics or activities and approaches] in your classroom this school year (2019–20)?” and “To your knowledge, how much emphasis is your school placing on each of the following activities and approaches related to students’ civic development this school year (2019–20), apart from how you address civic development in your classroom?” Response options for all items: No emphasis, Slight emphasis, Moderate emphasis, Major emphasis.
a moderate or major emphasis on promoting a positive school climate. However, secondary social studies teachers reported less classroom and school-level emphasis on SEL and conflict resolution and more emphasis on discussion of controversial issues than elementary teachers did.

Several of these practices appear to be less common, according to teachers, in schools that are high on our vulnerability indicator (i.e., schools that serve higher percentages of students of color and low-income students). For instance, teachers in more-vulnerable schools reported less schoolwide emphasis than other teachers on student participation in school governance and responsible internet use. Teachers in vulnerable schools also reported placing less emphasis on discussions of controversial issues in the classroom. Some of those differences might be the result of disparities in such resources as support for students’ robust involvement in school governance and adequate access to

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**Box 3.2**

**Civics Instructional Materials That Engage Students in Promising Practices: Facing History and Ourselves**

Facing History and Ourselves (Facing History) offers curriculum resources and professional development for secondary schools, with a focus on encouraging students to engage in rigorous study of both history and human behavior. The program is designed to help students develop critical thinking skills, become more humane and ethical, and participate effectively in a democracy. As noted on the program’s website:

By integrating the study of history, literature, and human behavior with ethical decision making and innovative teaching strategies, our program enables secondary school teachers to promote students’ historical understanding, critical thinking, and social-emotional learning. As students explore the complexities of history, and make connections to current events, they reflect on the choices they confront today and consider how they can make a difference (Facing History, undated).

Facing History offers modules that help students explore and understand challenging historical periods and events, such as a case study on the rise of the Nazi party, and it connects these lessons to other academic and SEL goals and to issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Its developers have worked with C3 and several states to incorporate standards-aligned content. The Facing History curriculum and other resources enable teachers to engage with their students in several of the promising practices described in Chapter Two, such as action civics, discussions of current and controversial events, SEL, and media literacy. More information is available at Facing History, undated.
devices at school that would allow for greater emphasis on discussions about internet use. Responsible internet use, in particular, is directly related to mitigating Truth Decay. These results point to inequitable access to instruction that might counter Truth Decay and prepare students to engage responsibly with the information ecosystem.

A few other teacher and school characteristics were related to reported emphasis on these approaches. Teachers of color reported more schoolwide and classroom emphasis on discussion of controversial issues than other teachers. In addition, teachers with more ELLs reported more schoolwide emphasis on simulations of democratic processes and safeguarding the environment than did other teachers, and they reported more classroom emphasis on student-centered or project-based approaches to learning and SEL.

**Most Secondary Teachers Reported Emphasizing Civic-Related Topics, Even If They Did Not Teach Civics**

Our survey included a few items about classroom-level civics topics and activities that do not fall neatly within any of the ten promis-
ing practices but are frequently used in civics curricula. Figure 3.4 shows results for these items. Majorities of teachers reported emphasizing critical thinking—especially at the secondary level, where 71

Figure 3.4
Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting Moderate or Major Emphases on Additional Classroom Practices and Topics Related to Civics

![Bar chart showing weighted percentages of elementary and secondary social studies teachers reporting moderate or major emphases on additional classroom practices and topics related to civics.](image)

NOTE: This figure illustrates responses to the following survey item: “How much emphasis have you placed or do you anticipate placing on each of the following [topics or activities and approaches] in your classroom this school year (2019–20)?” Response options: No emphasis, Slight emphasis, Moderate emphasis, Major emphasis.
percent reported this as a major emphasis and another 25 percent reported it as a moderate emphasis. Most of these topics appear to be more common in secondary than in elementary classrooms. For example, 68 percent of secondary teachers reported at least moderate emphasis on emigration and immigration, and 68 percent reported emphasis on drivers of inequality on the basis of race, gender, or other characteristics. The corresponding percentages for elementary teachers were 28 percent and 33 percent, respectively. Elementary teachers reported a greater emphasis than secondary teachers on one topic: respect for and safeguarding of the environment. To some degree, most of these topics require a level of cognitive sophistication that makes them challenging to address with younger students, though there are ways to make them developmentally appropriate for elementary classrooms. The high degree of emphasis on most civics topics in secondary schools is noteworthy in part because only one-third of those teachers reported teaching a course focused on civics; the others taught general social studies or courses on other topics, such as history, economics, or geography. Thus, these findings suggest that secondary social studies teachers address civic-related topics even in non-civics courses.

The only item in Figure 3.4 for which we asked teachers to indicate extent of school-level emphasis was “respect for and safeguarding the environment,” and teachers’ responses to this item are not provided in the figure. As with the classroom-level emphasis on this topic, we found elementary teachers were more likely than secondary teachers to report an emphasis at the school level (77 percent at the elementary level versus 63 percent of secondary teachers).

We observed several differences stemming from school and teacher characteristics in addition to grade-level differences. Being a teacher of color was associated with more classroom emphasis on the global community and international relations, respect for and safeguarding the environment, and immigration and emigration. Teachers who taught more ELLs indicated more emphasis than other teachers on respect for and safeguarding of the environment, emigration and immigration, responsible internet use, and drivers of inequality. Emphasis on respect
for and safeguarding the environment and drivers of inequality were positively associated with teacher experience.

**Summary**

The survey findings we presented in this chapter provide a broad overview of the variety of ways that K–12 social studies teachers across the United States are working to promote their students’ civic development in their classrooms, and how their schools are addressing this development. Teachers reported covering numerous topics related to civics and adopting varying strategies to engage students in such activities as discussions of current events, service learning, and simulations of the democratic process that could help develop civic skills and dispositions in addition to knowledge. Some schools offered more of these activities than others; in most cases, these differences—particularly the differences between elementary and secondary schools—were not surprising and are consistent with what we might expect given how instruction in these two sets of grade levels is generally structured and the types of content and activities for which younger and older students are ready. We did see a few differences in civic-related offerings between schools that scored low and high on our vulnerability indicator (i.e., schools with higher percentages of low-income students and students of color), which raises concerns about the extent to which schools are providing equitable opportunities for students to develop civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Teachers of color and those serving more ELLs reported emphasizing many civic-related topics and approaches—more than their white counterparts and those teaching fewer ELLs. Teachers with more experience also appeared to address more civics topics and approaches. Thus, teacher and school characteristics might be closely intertwined with the civics instruction in which students participate, although we do not have clear explanations for these trends.

In the next several chapters, we examine the conditions that might support or hinder the kinds of activities and practices discussed in this chapter, and we further explore disparities across different types
of schools. To facilitate those analyses, we combined individual items to create three composite measures, or scales, as discussed in Box 3.4.

**Box 3.4**

**Composite Measures of Classroom-Level Civics Emphasis**

We created three multi-item composites, or scales, that capture different aspects of civics instructional emphasis, drawing on results from the EFAs discussed in Chapter One (additional details are provided in the appendix). In subsequent chapters, we explore the extent to which various teacher- and school-level factors predict the extent of emphasis on civic education as reflected by these scales. The items corresponding to each scale are shown here. The first scale measures teachers’ reported emphasis on several topics traditionally related to civics (e.g., voting, the Constitution). The second and third scales are measures of a set of activities and approaches that are directly related to promoting students’ civic development, using the definitions of civic development and promising practices that we discussed earlier. We separated these second and third scales from each other because our analysis suggested that these items better reflected two scales than one (i.e., the two items in the third scale clustered together and were empirically different from those in the second scale). While the second scale captures practices that are likely to be addressed in civics and social studies classrooms, the third scale addresses broader skills related to students’ civic development that might be addressed in social studies classrooms but also could be covered outside a traditional social studies or civics classroom environment.
### Classroom Civics Emphasis Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Name and Overall Internal Consistency</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Civics topics emphasis (alpha = 0.83)      | • Voting and elections  
• The global community and international relations  
• Respect for and safeguarding of the environment  
• Emigration and immigration  
• The Constitution and political system  
• Responsible internet use (e.g., privacy, source reliability, social media)  
• Drivers of inequality (on the basis of race, gender, class, immigration status, etc.) |
| Civics instructional approaches emphasis (alpha = 0.87) | • Discussion of current events  
• Discussion of controversial issues  
• Simulations of the democratic process (e.g., debates or mock elections)  
• Media literacy  
• Student-centered or project-based approaches to civic education  
• Promoting knowledge of Americans’ rights and responsibilities  
• Distinguishing facts from opinions in written text or other media |
| Civics-related skills emphasis (alpha = 0.73) | • SEL  
• Developing students’ skills in conflict resolution |

**NOTES:** The civics topics emphasis scale is based on the following survey item: “How much emphasis have you placed or do you anticipate placing on each of the following topics in your classroom this school year (2019–20)?” The other two scales are based on the following survey item: “How much emphasis have you placed or do you anticipate placing on each of the following [topics or activities and approaches] in your classroom this school year (2019–20)?” Response options for all scales: No emphasis, Slight emphasis (i.e., addressed in a few classes), Moderate emphasis (i.e., addressed in some classes), Major emphasis (i.e., addressed in most classes).

Each teacher’s score on each scale is that teacher’s mean score for all the items on that scale. Teachers who completed at least one-half of the items on the scale were assigned a scale score using the items to which they responded. Those who completed fewer than one-half were not assigned a scale score.
Several factors are likely to influence the classroom- and school-level practices we discussed in Chapter Three. As we noted earlier, our survey addresses a subset of these factors. In Chapter Three, we examined some of the demographic factors—e.g., teacher ethnicity and experience, school poverty—associated with teachers’ reports of their civics instruction. In this chapter, we unpack additional aspects of teachers’ perceptions and experiences that might influence their decisions about what to teach and how to teach it. These are represented by the top box on the left-hand side of our framework. First, their preparation and preservice experiences are likely connected with their civics instruction. Elementary teachers, in particular, might have received more-general pedagogical training and might not feel prepared to teach civics, which could affect the extent to which they address civics topics. Second, as discussed in one of the Data Notes (Kaufman, Hamilton and Hu, 2020a), the sources of information that teachers view as trustworthy—e.g., news, social media—could give us a window into the sources of data that teachers might be drawing on for their instruction. Third, teachers’ instruction is likely driven by their beliefs about what
civic education topics should be prioritized and taught. In this chapter, we explore teacher preparation and beliefs, and we consider how they are connected with the civics instruction teachers report providing.

**Most Respondents Reported Not Feeling Well Prepared to Support Students’ Civic Development**

We asked teachers to tell us, on a scale from “not prepared at all” to “very well prepared,” how prepared they felt to promote their students’ civic development within their classes. A little more than 60 percent of all teachers indicated they felt “somewhat prepared,” and only 19 percent responded that they felt “very well prepared.” In contrast, in prior surveys, about 50 percent or more of English language arts and mathematics teachers across grade levels have reported feeling well prepared to address academic standards for the subjects they taught (Hamilton, Kaufman, Stecher, et al., 2016; Kaufman, Hamilton, et al., 2016).

Unsurprisingly, elementary teachers reported feeling much less prepared to address civic education than their counterparts teaching 6th through 12th grade. About one-quarter of all elementary teachers indicated they felt that they were “not prepared” or “not very well prepared” to teach civic development, compared with fewer than 10 percent of secondary teachers. And only 13 percent of elementary teachers reported feeling “very well prepared,” compared with 35 percent of secondary teachers.

Teachers serving higher percentages of ELLs also were substantially less likely to report feeling prepared to promote civic development. It could be that teachers of these populations perceived greater challenges in supporting civic development for students who have potentially emigrated from other countries and are learning English. But, as noted in Chapter Three, teachers with more ELLs also reported addressing civic education topics and approaches more than their counterparts with fewer ELLs. The reasons for these patterns are unclear, though it might be that these teachers feel less prepared because they are addressing more civic education topics than other teachers and, thus, their lack of preparation is more evident to them.
Figure 4.1 provides more-detailed data on the training that teachers reported receiving to provide civic education. As reflected in the figure, between about one-third and more than one-half of teachers reported receiving no preservice or in-service training on how to support students’ civic knowledge, skills, or dispositions. Although elementary teachers might be expected to receive less training in these areas of civic education than secondary teachers (given that they typically teach all subjects), it is somewhat surprising that between 30 and 42 percent of secondary teachers also reported receiving no such train-

![Figure 4.1](image-url)

**Figure 4.1**

Weighted Percentages of Social Studies Teachers Who Have Not Received Any Preservice or In-Service Training on How to Support Students’ Civic Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of teachers</th>
<th>Civic knowledge (understanding of history, government, economics, and other related social studies topics)</th>
<th>Civic skills (abilities that students need for citizenship, such as critical thinking, media literacy, and collaboration/teamwork)</th>
<th>Civic dispositions (attitudes related to citizenship, such as appreciation for diverse views and experiences and a recognition of the importance of activities like voting)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary teachers</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary teachers</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City teachers</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban teachers</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural/town teachers</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: This figure illustrates responses to the following survey item: “Have you received preservice training in your teacher preparation program or in-service professional development on how to support each of the following aspects of students’ civic development?” Comparisons between elementary and secondary teachers—and between rural or town and suburban teachers—were significant at the $p < 0.05$ level in regressions where the outcome was teachers’ reporting that they received no training and predictors included elementary versus secondary and urbanicity, along with additional school- and teacher-level variables.
ing. Those from town and rural areas were significantly more likely than suburban teachers to report that they received no training when accounting for other variables in regression models.

**Most Respondents Indicated That Students’ Civic Development Was Important; Fewer Indicated That It Was “Absolutely Essential”**

After teachers received a full definition of civic development at the beginning of our survey—defined in terms of civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions as worded in Box 1.2 of this report—teachers were asked about the extent to which students’ civic development was “a priority” for them. The majority of teachers of social studies subjects indicated that students’ civic development was important. But Figure 4.2 shows that fewer than one-half—46 percent altogether, 39 percent of elementary teachers and 63 percent at the secondary level—indicated that students’ civic development was an “absolutely essential priority.”

It could be that teachers who receive more preservice or in-service training related to students’ civic development could perceive that development as more of an essential priority. That could explain the higher percentage of secondary social studies teachers placing a priority on civic development relative to elementary teachers, given that secondary social studies teachers have likely received more training specific to social studies than their elementary peers, who typically teach all subjects. Yet, in our regression analyses accounting for assorted demographic variables, teachers’ reports about whether they had received any preservice or in-service training in students’ civic development were not a predictor of whether they regarded students’ civic development as absolutely essential. This does not mean that training might not make a difference for how teachers regard the importance of students’ civic development. We did not ask teachers questions about the amount of training they received, only if they had received any. It might be that teachers who received substantially more training related to students’ civic development would be more likely to regard that development as essential.
High School Social Studies Teachers Were at Least Somewhat Confident That Students Would Learn a Variety of Concepts Related to Civic Education

In addition to asking all teachers about the priority they placed on students’ civic development, we asked high school social studies teachers about which among a variety of civics concepts they felt were essential to teach and whether they were confident that students would learn these concepts by the time of their graduation. These were items originally asked of high school social studies teachers through an American Enterprise Institute survey in 2010 (Farkas and Duffett, 2010). One of the previously released Data Notes on this topic summarized our find-
ings comparing responses to our survey in 2019 with responses to the American Enterprise Institute survey in 2010 (Hamilton, Kaufman, and Hu, 2020b). Those results suggest that teachers’ support for teaching this array of civic education concepts remained mostly the same from 2010 to 2019, with some small decreases in support for certain topics, although—paradoxically—teachers’ confidence that students would learn these topics by graduation increased from 2010 to 2019 in almost all cases.

In Figure 4.3, we display the percentage of high school social studies teachers who indicated the concept in question was absolutely essential to teach, followed by the percentage of teachers who indicated they were very or somewhat confident their students would learn each concept by graduation. Interestingly, teachers’ confidence that students would learn most concepts did not track with their perceptions of how important each concept was. For example, although only about one-third of teachers indicated it was essential for students to know such facts as the location of the 50 states and such dates as the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the majority felt that students would learn such facts by the time they graduated.

Teachers of color were more likely than their white counterparts to regard various concepts—such as being able to identify the protections guaranteed by the Bill of Rights and responsibilities of citizenship (e.g., voting and jury duty)—as essential to learn. Teachers of color did not report more confidence that students would learn these or other concepts by graduation, although teachers in schools with higher poverty and more students of color—using our vulnerability indicator—were somewhat more likely to be very confident that students would learn the Bill of Rights and “facts” by graduation.

**Low Trust in Institutions and Groups Was Particularly Evident Among Elementary Teachers of Social Studies and Teachers of Color**

We also asked teachers about another aspect of their beliefs: their trust in institutions and groups. Trust is an essential aspect of Truth Decay;
Figure 4.3
Weighted Percentages of High School Social Studies Teachers Reporting Essential Civic Concepts to Teach and Confidence That Students Will Have Learned Those Concepts

![Graph showing weighted percentages of high school social studies teachers reporting essential civic concepts to teach and confidence that students will have learned those concepts.]

To be tolerant of people and groups who are different from themselves
- Absolutely essential for high schools to teach: 80%
- Very or somewhat confident students will learn by the time of graduation: 92%

To have good work habits, such as being timely, persistent, and hardworking
- Absolutely essential for high schools to teach: 76%
- Very or somewhat confident students will learn by the time of graduation: 87%

To embrace the responsibilities of citizenship, such as voting and jury duty
- Absolutely essential for high schools to teach: 66%
- Very or somewhat confident students will learn by the time of graduation: 82%

To see themselves as global citizens living in an interconnected world
- Absolutely essential for high schools to teach: 66%
- Very or somewhat confident students will learn by the time of graduation: 81%

To identify the protections guaranteed by the Bill of Rights
- Absolutely essential for high schools to teach: 65%
- Very or somewhat confident students will learn by the time of graduation: 91%

To understand such concepts as federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances
- Absolutely essential for high schools to teach: 53%
- Very or somewhat confident students will learn by the time of graduation: 81%

To follow rules and be respectful of authority
- Absolutely essential for high schools to teach: 53%
- Very or somewhat confident students will learn by the time of graduation: 90%

To be knowledgeable about such periods as the American Founding, the Civil War, and the Cold War
- Absolutely essential for high schools to teach: 43%
- Very or somewhat confident students will learn by the time of graduation: 88%

To understand economic principles, such as supply and demand and the role of market incentives
- Absolutely essential for high schools to teach: 43%
- Very or somewhat confident students will learn by the time of graduation: 75%

To develop habits of community service, such as volunteering and raising money for causes
- Absolutely essential for high schools to teach: 40%
- Very or somewhat confident students will learn by the time of graduation: 85%

To be activists who challenge the status quo of our political system and seek to remedy injustice
- Absolutely essential for high schools to teach: 37%
- Very or somewhat confident students will learn by the time of graduation: 70%

To know facts (e.g., the location of the 50 states) and dates (e.g., Pearl Harbor)
- Absolutely essential for high schools to teach: 32%
- Very or somewhat confident students will learn by the time of graduation: 83%

NOTE: This figure illustrates responses to the following survey items: (1) “How important do you think it SHOULD be for your high school to teach students each of the following? Use a one to five scale where 1 is ‘not important at all’ and 5 is ‘absolutely essential’”; and (2) “How confident are you that by the time they graduate, most students from your high school have actually learned the following?”
public trust and confidence in such institutions as government and the media has dropped in recent years (Kavanagh and Rich, 2018; Kavanagh et al., 2020). We hypothesized that teachers’ trust in various institutions and their willingness to accept the recommendations of various groups could be related to the extent to which teachers engage in some civic practices, such as helping students critically evaluate information or supporting their media literacy.

We recently released an AEP Data Note summarizing our findings in regard to teachers’ trust in institutions and groups (Kaufman, Hamilton, and Hu, 2020a). Our key findings were as follows:

- Fewer than one-half of social studies teachers expressed trust in nearly all the institutions we asked about, from news sources to the government.
- Although majorities of social studies teachers indicated a willingness to accept recommendations of doctors, scientists, scholars, and religious leaders, fewer indicated a willingness to accept recommendations of government officials, business leaders, lawyers, and journalists.
- Elementary teachers and teachers of color were significantly less likely to indicate trust and willingness to accept recommendations from particular institutions and groups.

These findings suggest that social studies teachers—like most teachers in the United States—do not have a great deal of trust in many public institutions, although we did not share any findings regarding how trust might be related to the civics topics, civics approaches, or civic skills that teachers report emphasizing.

**Teachers’ Reported Classroom Practices Were Associated with Their Preparation and Views Regarding the Importance of Civics**

As noted in Box 4.1, teachers who reported more emphasis on civics topics, civics approaches, and civic skills—as measured through the scales discussed in Chapter Three—were significantly more likely to report receiving at least some preservice or in-service training related
Box 4.1
What Aspects of Teachers’ Preparation and Beliefs Were Related to Their Civics Instruction?

The following teacher factors were significantly related to more teacher-reported emphasis on civics topics, civics approaches, and civic skills:

- receiving at least some preservice or in-service training to support students’ civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions
- indicating that students’ civic development is “absolutely essential,” as opposed to not important or less of a priority.

Regression Coefficients from Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Teacher Preparation and Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom-Level Emphasis on Civics Topics, Civics Approaches, and Civic Skills (Dependent Variables)</th>
<th>Teacher Beliefs and Preparation (Independent Variable)</th>
<th>Any Significant Relationship Between Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on civics topics (e.g., voting, the Constitution, drivers of inequity)</td>
<td>No preservice or in-service training to support students’ civic knowledge, skills, or dispositions</td>
<td>Negative for civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions ( p &lt; 0.01 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belief that students’ civic development is “absolutely essential”</td>
<td>Positive ( p &lt; 0.01 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on civics instructional approaches (e.g., discussion of current and controversial events, media literacy)</td>
<td>No preservice or in-service training to support students’ civic knowledge, skills, or dispositions</td>
<td>Negative ( p &lt; 0.05 ) for civic knowledge and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belief that students’ civic development is “absolutely essential”</td>
<td>Positive ( p &lt; 0.01 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on civics-related skills (SEL, conflict resolution)</td>
<td>No preservice or in-service training to support students’ civic knowledge, skills, or dispositions</td>
<td>Negative for civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions ( p &lt; 0.05 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belief that students’ civic development is “absolutely essential”</td>
<td>Positive ( p &lt; 0.01 )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: Teachers were asked separately about the preservice and in-service training that they received to support students’ (1) civic knowledge, (2) civic skills, and (3) civic dispositions. Models were run separately to examine relationships among independent variables and teachers’ emphasis on civics topics, civics approaches, and civic skills. Independent variables reflecting teachers’ training and beliefs were included in the same model. Full regression models and details about the scales are provided in the appendix.
to supporting students’ civic knowledge, skills, or dispositions—and to report noting that students’ civic development is absolutely essential. For example, teachers who reported not receiving any preservice or in-service training for civic knowledge, skills, or dispositions were—on average—nearly two-tenths of a point (on a four-point scale) less likely to indicate an emphasis on civics topics, civics approaches, and civic skills that we asked about in our survey, taking into account several other teacher- and school-level factors. Similarly, teachers who indicated that students’ civic development was absolutely essential were roughly between two-tenths and three-tenths of a point more likely to indicate an emphasis on civics topics, civics approaches, and civic skills. These relationships might be unsurprising, but they underscore the intertwined nature of teachers’ perspectives on civic development, their preparation to support students’ civic development, and any actual instruction they provide in these areas.

We also examined relationships between teachers’ trust in institutions and groups and teachers’ reported emphasis on civics approaches. We reasoned that teachers’ trust would be most likely to affect how they addressed such issues as current or controversial events, media literacy, and the like. But we found no significant relationships between teachers’ reported trust in institutions and groups and their reports about their civics instruction. These results do not necessarily mean that trust has no impact on teachers’ civics instruction. But the low trust that teachers reported does not appear to be associated with the civics topics, civics approaches, and civic skills that they report emphasizing in the classroom.

**Summary**

Our findings paint a somewhat concerning picture of teachers’ lack of preparation and training to address students’ civic development, and of teachers’ inclination to prioritize civic education as important but not essential. Most teachers of social studies at both the elementary and secondary levels did not indicate feeling well prepared to support students’ civic development, and between about one-third and one-half
of teachers reported receiving no preservice or in-service training at all related to students’ civic development. Although most teachers reported that students’ civic development was important, a minority indicated that it was an absolutely essential priority. We observed a clear trend of elementary teachers reporting less preparation and training to address students’ civic development and placing a somewhat lower priority on addressing that civic development, although a substantial portion of secondary social studies teachers also reported no training in civics knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

High school teachers regarded some civic education concepts as more important to teach than others. Tolerance, good work habits, and responsibilities of citizenship topped the list of concepts that teachers reported as most essential, and knowledge of facts ranked at the bottom. At the same time, high school teachers’ confidence that students would learn many of these concepts by graduation seemed almost universally high, even for concepts they did not think were important to teach.

We also asked teachers about their trust in institutions and groups, and we found low trust in general and particularly among elementary teachers.

Lastly, we found that teachers’ preparation and beliefs were often connected to what they reported teaching. In particular, teachers who received no training in civic education—and those who did not regard civic development as absolutely essential—were less likely to report addressing certain civics topics, civics approaches, and civic skills in their classrooms.

These data suggest that students’ civic development is not always regarded as a critical element of students’ instruction at the elementary level; nor is it always regarded as critical by social studies teachers themselves, who might be expected to focus at least part of their instruction on students’ civic development. At the same time, when teachers did report getting training, that was associated with placing a greater emphasis on civic education in the classroom, which implies that increased emphasis on civic education in preservice and in-service training could lead to its increased emphasis in the classroom.
Factors beyond teachers’ own preparation and beliefs can influence their instruction. As discussed in our recent Data Note (Kaufman, Hamilton, and Hu, 2020b), teachers’ civic education textbooks and other instructional materials could be related to the instructional practices in which they engage. As demonstrated by Opfer and colleagues, 2018, and Kaufman, Opfer, and colleagues, 2018, teachers’ use of instructional materials in mathematics and English language arts that were closely aligned with their state standards was significantly related to the extent of their standards-aligned practices, using survey self-reports.

In this chapter, we highlight findings from our previously released Data Note alongside additional data on how teachers report assessing students. Importantly, we also examine the extent to which teachers’ use of instructional materials and assessments for civics is related to the civic education practices in which they report engaging.

Our recently released Data Note summarized some findings regarding the instructional materials teachers use to teach civics
Preventing Children and Youth for Civic Life in the Era of Truth Decay (Kaufman, Hamilton, and Hu, 2020b). Our key findings were as follows:

- Teachers tended to report that they found the majority of their instructional materials themselves rather than using materials provided to them by their school or district.
- Most secondary teachers reported spending at least three hours per week searching for or developing their own materials; majorities of elementary teachers spent less than an hour or one to two hours doing so.
- Although most teachers had positive perceptions of their social studies and civics instructional resources, a substantial proportion did not perceive these resources to be engaging or effective at promoting students’ civic development.

In this chapter, we delve into more detail regarding findings from our survey on the instructional materials that teachers reported using for their civics and social studies instruction, and what assessments they reported using. We then consider their reported greatest needs regarding materials and assessments.

A Plurality of Teachers Indicated That the Majority of Their Materials Were Ones They Found Themselves

As illustrated in our Data Note, teachers create and find a fair proportion of the materials they use to teach social studies, although most also rely on district or school-provided materials (Figure 5.1). The plurality of teacher respondents indicated that the largest proportion of their instructional materials were ones they found themselves, although they also indicated that a fair proportion of their materials were ones provided by their school or district. About 30 percent of elementary teachers reported that one-half or more of their materials were ones they created from scratch; 44 percent of secondary teachers indicated the same.

As also indicated in our Data Note, we did not find a clear relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their materials and whether
teachers indicated finding their own materials, which suggests that teachers might seek their own materials—at least in part—because of their own beliefs about how social studies should be taught. That is, they might believe that part of their responsibility as teachers is to develop at least some of their own social studies materials. At the same time, given our findings in the previous chapter that teachers do not necessarily place a high priority on civic education and have not received a great deal of training to provide instruction related to civic topics, skills, and dispositions, it is hard to imagine that all of what teachers find and create is presenting high-quality and comprehensive opportunities for students to learn civic education content.
More Secondary Teachers Reported Using a Diverse Array of Assessment Methods to Evaluate Students’ Civic Development

Assessments could inform teachers on how well students have mastered civic education content and, thus, what content to emphasize through their instructional materials. However, many of the civic skills and dispositions that are part of a comprehensive view of civic education are challenging to assess through traditional means. Some civic education instructional tools and curricula include innovative assessment approaches. For example, teachers can use HistoryMaker VR, which we briefly described in Chapter Three, to engage students in simulations and to monitor students’ performance in that environment for formative assessment purposes. The Stanford History Education Group has created “History Assessments of Thinking,” or HATs, which are designed to engage students in deep reasoning about history using primary-source documents rather than simply to elicit knowledge of facts (Stanford History Education Group, undated-b). This same group has created performance assessments for media literacy as part of its Civic Online Reasoning curriculum (Stanford History Education Group, undated-a). Although many high-quality assessment resources are freely available for teachers to use, teachers might not know about them, or they might feel constrained from using them because of limited time, district-mandated curriculum and assessment policies, or other factors.

As seen in Figure 5.2, more secondary teachers than elementary teachers reported use of several different assessment methods for assessing students’ civic development, although teachers across grade levels appear to rely on a diverse variety of methods for student assessment. Although observations were—by far—the most popular assessment method reported by elementary teachers, majorities of secondary teachers reported using such assessment methods as real-world or hands-on performance assessments, technology-based performance assessments or simulations, and more-traditional multiple choice and open-ended assessments of students’ civic knowledge and skills.
When asked which of these methods helps them accurately gauge their students’ civic knowledge, skills, or dispositions, most teachers tended to respond positively about every assessment they reported using. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that teachers would not be expected to use assessment methods they did not think were helpful. Figure 5.3 captures teachers’ responses about whether each assessment approach helps them to a moderate or large extent, and it only illustrates the responses of teachers who said they used each approach. The

Figure 5.2
Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Using Each Approach to Assess Students’ Civic Development

![Figure 5.2](image-url)

**NOTE:** This figure illustrates responses to the following survey item: “Which of the following approaches have you used or anticipate using to assess your students’ civic development this school year (2019–20)?”
only assessment method that all teachers were somewhat less enthusiastic about were student surveys; that said, between 50 and 60 percent of teachers indicated that such surveys help them gauge student civic knowledge, skills, or dispositions at least to a moderate extent.

Figure 5.3
Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Indicating Whether Each Type of Assessment Helps Them Accurately Gauge Their Students’ Civic Knowledge, Skills, or Dispositions to a Moderate or Large Extent

NOTE: This figure illustrates responses to the following survey item: “To what extent does information from each type of assessment help you accurately gauge your students’ civic knowledge, skills, or dispositions?” Response options: Not at all, To a slight extent, To a moderate extent, To a large extent.
Roughly One-Half of Respondents Reported a Need for Better Civics Instructional Resources

Teachers’ reported need for curriculum and assessment-related supports might shed some light on why they are likely to report finding or creating a lot of their materials and why they use some assessments more than others. Figure 5.4 illustrates teachers’ reports regarding their needs for various supports related to their materials and assess-

Figure 5.4
Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting a Need for Support Related to Their Materials and Assessments

![Bar chart showing weighted percentages of teachers reporting a need for various supports related to their materials and assessments.]

NOTES: IEP = individualized education plan. This figure illustrates responses to the following survey item: “How much of a need do you have for any of the following resources in greater quality or quantity to support your civics and/or social studies instruction?”
ments. As can be seen in the figure, nearly one-half or more of teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels reported a moderate or major need for better district- or school-provided materials to teach civics and for resources that were more culturally relevant and met the needs of ELLs.

These data paint a slightly different picture than what we reported in our Data Note (Kaufman, Hamilton, and Hu, 2020b) regarding teachers’ perceptions of their materials. Specifically, in that Data Note, majorities of teachers reported agreeing that their materials were culturally appropriate and promoted students’ civic development (see Figure 5.5, which originally appeared in our Data Note). Yet, although more than three-quarters of teachers indicated that their district and school provided materials that were culturally appropriate, more than one-half also reported needing resources that were more culturally relevant. Similarly, although roughly two-thirds of respondents agreed that their provided materials effectively promote students’ civic development, between 53 and 63 percent of teachers indicated a need for better resources to teach civics. These data suggest that many teachers still need more than what they have been given even though district- and school-provided resources might be adequate for some teachers.

Teachers did not indicate needing assessments as much as other types of instructional resources. Nonetheless, between one-third and one-half of elementary and secondary teachers did report needing assessments that help them better understand students’ civic knowledge and skills.

Teachers in some subgroups reported more need for materials and assessments to support their social studies instruction than others. For example, teachers serving more ELLs reported significantly more need for culturally relevant resources and instructional resources to meet the needs of that student population. Teachers of color were more likely to report a need for numerous resources to support their social studies and civics instruction: curricula or curriculum guidelines, standards for student civic learning, assessments to help them better understand students’ civic knowledge and skills, and instructional resources to support ELLs and students with Individualized Education Plans or 504 plans.
Teachers’ Classroom Civics Emphasis Was Associated with the Source of Their Civics Instructional Materials

We examined relationships among teachers’ use of found materials, perceptions of their materials, and reports of their civics instruction. Our EFA and subsequent reliability analyses suggested that the five items in
Figure 5.5 reflecting teachers’ perceptions of their materials could be combined into a scale, which we then created (alpha = 0.85).

Because we suspected that elementary teachers’ reliance on found materials might be substantively different from those at the secondary level, we included an interaction term for teachers’ grade levels and the materials they used for their instruction. As seen in Box 5.1, we found that teachers who reported using more instructional materials provided by their school or district were more likely to report an emphasis on the civics topics we asked about in our survey (such as voting, the Constitution, and drivers of inequality), although the magnitude of that relationship was small. On the other hand, elementary teachers who reported using more instructional materials that they found themselves were more likely to also report emphasizing civic approaches tied to the promising practices we discussed earlier. That said, we did not see the same greater emphasis on civics approaches among secondary teachers who used materials they found themselves, possibly because secondary teachers generally use materials they find themselves much more in general. It could also be that elementary teachers’ curriculum materials—which might be outdated or not aligned with newer definitions of civic education—do not address those approaches as well as the materials that teachers reported finding themselves do, although we have no clear idea of the qualities of the materials that teachers find themselves and use for their instruction. We did not observe any differences in the significance of the relationship between teachers’ emphasis on civics topics and their use of school or district-provided materials depending on whether they were elementary or secondary teachers.

**Summary**

As already discussed in our Data Note series, teachers tended to report using materials they found themselves more than materials provided by their school or district, although roughly one-half of teachers’ lesson materials are provided to them. Just as teachers appeared to rely on several different materials for the instruction they provide, they also used a variety of assessments to evaluate students’ civic development,
Box 5.1
What Aspects of Teachers’ Instructional Materials and Assessments Were Related to Their Civics Instruction?

Teachers who reported more emphasis on civics topics were more likely to report positive perceptions of their district- or school-provided instructional materials. Elementary teachers who reported more emphasis on civics approaches were more likely to report that one-half or more of their instructional materials were ones they found themselves.

Regression Coefficients from Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Topics and Approaches and Source of Instructional Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom-Level Emphasis on Civics Topics, Civics Approaches, and Civic Skills (Dependent Variables)</th>
<th>Teachers’ Reports of the Source of the Majority of Their Materials (Independent Variable)</th>
<th>Any Significant Relationship Between Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on civics topics (e.g., voting, the Constitution, drivers of inequity)</td>
<td>Teachers who report using one-half or more materials they found themselves</td>
<td>No relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers with more-positive perceptions of their school- or district-provided materials</td>
<td>Positive $(p &lt; 0.05)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on civics instructional approaches (e.g., discussion of current and controversial events, media literacy)</td>
<td>Teachers who report using one-half or more materials they found themselves</td>
<td>Positive $(p &lt; 0.01)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers with more-positive perceptions of their school- or district-provided materials</td>
<td>No relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on civics-related skills (SEL, conflict resolution)</td>
<td>Teachers who report using one-half or more materials they found themselves</td>
<td>No relationship</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teachers with more-positive perceptions of their school- or district-provided materials</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: Models were run separately to examine relationships among independent variables and teachers’ emphasis on civics topics, civics approaches, and civic-related skills. Full regression models and details about the scales are provided in the appendix.
although secondary teachers reported relying on a much greater array of assessment methods than did elementary teachers. No single assessment method appeared to edge out the others in terms of whether teachers felt that it helped them accurately gauge students’ civic knowledge, skills, or disposition.

Most teachers reported that their district- and school-provided materials were generally adequate in terms of cultural appropriateness, effective promotion of students’ civic development, and other areas. But, at the same time, nearly one-half or more teachers reported a need for better resources to teach civics, as well as those that were more culturally relevant and met the needs of ELLs. Teachers of color and those with more ELLs were more likely than their colleagues to report needs for many resources to support their social studies and civics instruction, such as more instructional coaching and materials to meet the needs of their students.

Lastly, our data suggest that elementary teachers’ reliance on found materials was related to more reported emphasis on civics approaches, whereas teachers’ positive perceptions of their district- and school-provided materials were associated with more emphasis on civics-related topics and knowledge areas.
In this chapter, we examine selected features of the state and district context that might influence school and classroom civic practices. As we discussed earlier, K–12 academic standards that states might have adopted for social studies and civics are likely to influence school and district leaders’ decisions about curricula. Numerous district contextual factors also could act as supports or obstacles to teachers’ civics instructional efforts, including the instructional resources and professional learning opportunities that teachers receive for civics instruction. Lastly, teachers might receive messages from parents or from school or district leaders about content that they should refrain from covering to avoid creating controversy or exposing children to material that families might consider problematic. In light of disagreements—often related to political affiliations—about the inclusion of hot-button issues in classroom discussions (Hess and Rice, 2020), it is likely that many teachers have been asked to limit coverage of some topics. In this chapter, we present teachers’ perspectives on all these factors and explore their relationship to the civics topics and activities in which teachers report engaging.
Nearly One-Half of Elementary Teachers Were Unaware of State Standards Related to Civic Development

We asked teachers whether their state "adopted any standards related to students’ civic development (for example, standards for social studies or civics instruction)." Majorities of both elementary and secondary teachers responded "yes" to this question, though the percentage was higher for secondary teachers (83 percent) than for elementary teachers (56 percent). Ten percent of elementary teachers and 5 percent of secondary teachers responded "no," and the remaining 34 percent and 12 percent of elementary and secondary teachers, respectively, marked "I don’t know." According to data from 2017, all states have adopted social studies standards that emphasize some aspects of civic development, including current events (all 50 states), service learning (11 states), simulations (27 states), and news media or media literacy (39 states). Only 11 states do not emphasize any of these areas beyond current events (Hansen et al., 2018). Forty states require either a half-year or whole-year civics course as of 2018 (Shapiro and Brown, 2018). Thus, our findings suggest fairly widespread lack of awareness that civic education is emphasized to at least some extent in all state social studies standards, especially at the elementary level. Because elementary teachers are typically responsible for ensuring that students meet state standards in subjects that are tested in states’ accountability systems, it is possible that they lack information and resources that would make them aware of other standards that do not involve high-stakes tests. We found even lower rates of awareness of state SEL standards in a separate study (Hamilton and Doss, 2020).

For teachers who marked "yes" to whether their state has adopted any standards related to students’ civic development, we asked “How much does your district and/or school expect you to address your state’s standards related to students’ civic development in your teaching?” Fewer than 3 percent of secondary teachers and fewer than 6 percent of elementary teachers responded “I don’t know” or “not at all.” Slightly more than one-fourth of elementary teachers and roughly one-half of secondary teachers said they were expected to address state standards extensively, and the remaining teachers indicated that they
were expected to address them “to some degree, but not extensively.” Although we did not observe statistically significant differences across school subgroups other than grade level for the question about whether the state had standards, we did find significant differences by urbanicity for the question regarding expectations that teachers address these standards. Teachers in city schools were less likely than their suburban counterparts to say that they were expected to address standards extensively.

Most Respondents Indicated a Need for More Non-Teaching Time and Community Partnerships

We reported in Chapter Five that majorities of both elementary and secondary social studies teachers indicated at least a moderate need for better instructional materials to teach civics (Figure 5.4). In Figure 6.1, we present findings regarding other needs that teachers identified. Majorities of teachers at both levels expressed at least a moderate need for more non-teaching time in the school day and for partnerships with community organizations to provide students with opportunities to volunteer or otherwise engage with these organizations. This interest in community partnerships aligns with guidance from civic education advocates who call for increasing collaboration between schools and other entities (Vinnakota, 2019). Nearly one-half of both elementary and secondary social studies teachers said they needed additional professional development and standards for civic education, and, as we illustrated in Figure 5.4, many teachers also indicated a need for curriculum guidance.

We observed relatively few differences in teachers’ reported needs as a function of school or teacher characteristics, though there were a few exceptions. Teachers of color reported a greater need than white teachers for each of the resources (other than more non-teaching time in the school day) shown in Figure 6.1.
Pressure to Cover Other Subjects Was Widely Reported as an Obstacle to Civics Instruction

Additional evidence regarding the conditions that teachers perceive as limiting their civics instruction is illustrated in Figure 6.2, which shows the percentages of elementary and secondary social studies teachers who rated each of several conditions as a major obstacle to their efforts.
to support students’ civic development. More than one-half of elementary teachers reported that pressure to cover other content was a major obstacle, compared with only one-fifth of secondary teachers. This difference is consistent with most elementary teachers’ responsibilities to cover all academic subjects and the pressure that many of them face to ensure high scores on accountability assessments in mathematics and English language arts. Secondary teachers, many of whom are only
responsible for social studies, generally do not experience that type of accountability-related pressure. Secondary teachers did, however, report low levels of student interest and engagement as an obstacle to a larger extent than elementary teachers.

Teachers with more ELLs were more likely to indicate pressure to cover other subjects as an obstacle, whereas teachers of color were less likely to indicate this as an obstacle. Teachers with more ELLs were also more likely to report several other conditions as obstacles, such as lack of support from school leadership and families and high levels of student disciplinary problems. Finally, scoring high on our vulnerability indicator was associated with greater likelihood of reporting lack of clear guidance about what and how to teach and lack of support from families as obstacles.

At the end of our survey, we provided space for teachers to share additional information about their experiences or views related to civics. Several teachers used this space to elaborate on their concerns about limited time and emphasis for social studies, such as the following:

There needs to be a larger emphasis on civics education. We are not provided with standards or curriculum for any kind of social studies.

———

The major obstacle [to civic education] is lack of time during the week to integrate this into our lessons. Right now, I teach social studies twice a week, every other week.

———

[T]he pressure of district and state tests and a very cramped pacing calendar make it extremely difficult to dive into these [civic education] topics in class.

These comments reinforce findings from some of the literature discussed in Chapter One, which highlighted the lack of attention to social studies in many local and state policies.
Relatively Few Teachers Reported That School or District Leaders Asked Them to Limit Discussions About Political or Social Issues

An additional factor that might hinder teacher ability to engage in civic education is the potentially controversial nature of the content they might cover. We asked teachers to indicate whether “district or school leaders ever directed you to limit discussions about political and social issues in class.” Approximately 17 percent of elementary teachers and 20 percent of secondary teachers we surveyed said yes. We did not identify any school-level or teacher characteristics associated with the likelihood that teachers’ leaders directed them to limit discussions about political or social issues in class.

We asked teachers who marked “yes” to this question to provide more information about the political or social issues about which they were asked to limit discussion. We coded these responses by topic and found that the majority of teachers who provided responses said they had been asked to limit discussions related to politics, elections, or the President. This amounted to roughly 11 percent of teachers in our entire sample who reported being asked to restrict discussion of these topics. The following quotes are examples of the comments we received about this topic:

Teachers are told if they in any way state their opinion about politics, the teacher can be fired. I think it scares teachers because they worry they may unintentionally say something and get in trouble.

Teachers aren’t supposed to share their own political beliefs. Period.

During the last presidential election, we were told that [we were] not allowed to discuss any of it, but could discuss prior elections as examples.
There is a fine line between teachers promoting their own political views to their students—which almost everyone would agree is inappropriate—and engaging students in thoughtful, balanced discussions about current events—including elections and the federal government. Striking this balance is challenging but can lead to valuable learning opportunities if done well.

**Teachers’ Perceptions Regarding Obstacles Were Unrelated to Their Emphasis on Civics Topics and Approaches**

Some of the conditions listed in Figure 6.2 are related to policies or supports from school, district, or state leadership; others reflect challenges associated with students or families. Our EFA and subsequent reliability analyses suggested that the five items related to policy and supports could be combined into a scale that we then created. The obstacles related to policy and supports (alpha = 0.74) are as follows:

- lack of support from district (central office) leadership
- lack of support from school leadership
- lack of clear guidance about what and how to teach
- lack of flexibility in the curriculum teachers are required to teach (i.e., need to cover specific content in a specific time frame)
- pressure to cover other content, such as reading and mathematics.

This scale is based on the following survey item: “Please indicate the extent to which each of the following conditions is an obstacle to your efforts to support students’ civic development” (Response options: N/A—condition does not exist in my school, Condition exists but is not an obstacle, Condition exists and is a minor obstacle, Condition exists and is a major obstacle). The composite is a simple average of all five items, excluding “N/A—condition does not exist in my school” and missing values. Teachers who missed answers for more than one-half of the items were not assigned a score on the composite. A total of 463 teachers received scores on the composite.
Our regression analyses (Box 6.1) indicated that scores on this composite were not significantly associated with teachers’ civics topics emphasis or their civics instructional approaches, but we did see a significant positive relationship between this composite and the civic-related skills emphasis, a scale that measures emphasis on SEL and conflict resolution (see the appendix for details). In other words, teachers who reported more obstacles related to policy and supports also reported greater emphasis on SEL and conflict resolution after controlling for other school and teacher characteristics. This relationship is somewhat counterintuitive but could reflect a complex combination of factors that our models do not account for, such as challenges associated with students’ behaviors that might be related to both the policy environment and the emphasis on SEL and conflict resolution. Together, these results suggest that teachers who perceive many obstacles to civics instruction still might be engaging in that instruction as much as other teachers do.

Teaching in a C3 Hub State Was Not Related to Teachers’ Civics Instructional Approaches

In a separate analysis, we examined whether being in a C3 hub state was associated with the extent to which teachers reported engaging in each of the three sets of practices (for details, see the appendix). In Chapter One, we described the C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards and listed ten states (Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, New York, North Carolina, Virginia, and Washington) that are considered state hubs and have committed to developing and sharing instructional materials and professional development opportunities that support C3 framework implementation (C3 Teachers: College, Career & Civic Life, undated). These activities might be expected to influence teachers’ civic education practices, so we estimated a set of regression models to explore whether being in a C3 hub state was associated with each of the three classroom emphasis measures. As shown in Box 6.1, C3 hub status was not significantly associated with any of the instruction measures after controlling for teacher
Box 6.1
What Aspects of Teachers’ Perceptions of Contextual Factors Were Related to Their Civics Instruction?

Teachers who reported more emphasis on civics skills reported greater obstacles related to policy and supports. Teachers who reported more emphasis on civics topics and approaches were more likely to say that their state had standards that addressed civic development.

Regression Coefficients from Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Contextual Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom-Level Emphasis on Civics Topics, Civics Approaches, and Civic Skills (Dependent Variables)</th>
<th>Contextual Conditions</th>
<th>Any Significant Relationship Between Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on civics topics (e.g., voting, the Constitution, drivers of inequity)</td>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions of obstacles related to policy and supports</td>
<td>No relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching in a C3 hub state</td>
<td>No relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers’ awareness of state civic standards</td>
<td>Positive ($p &lt; 0.01$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on civics instructional approaches (e.g., discussion of current and controversial events, media literacy)</td>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions of obstacles related to policy and supports</td>
<td>No relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching in a C3 hub state</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: Models were run separately to examine relationships among independent variables and teachers’ emphasis on civics topics, civics approaches, and civic-related skills. Full regression models and details about the scales are provided in the appendix.
and school characteristics, though the coefficients were all directionally positive. However, some states have become C3 hubs much more recently than others. Furthermore, the emphases on particular social studies approaches and activities related to C3 standards in these hubs might not match up well with the items we asked about in our survey. In addition, standards in other subjects—particularly math and English language arts—almost certainly play a larger role in at least elementary teachers’ instructional planning than these lower-stakes standards.

We did find that teachers who reported being aware that their state had adopted standards related to students’ civic development were significantly more likely (accounting for other factors) to indicate emphasizing civic topics and civic development approaches in their instruction than were teachers who said their state had not adopted standards or did not know. Future research on activities like those in which C3 hubs engage could shed light on how they support teachers’ civic education approaches and students’ civic development; future research also could examine how other state and local policies, such as standards and assessments in other subjects, influence teachers’ ability to align their work with the C3 framework.

Summary

State and local policies and other conditions can serve as supports for, or barriers to, teachers’ emphasis on civics in their classrooms. Teachers reported needing numerous supports at greater levels, including additional instructional materials, non-teaching time, and partnerships with community organizations that could supplement students’ civic-related opportunities. Teachers also indicated several barriers, including pressure to cover other subjects, and this pressure was reportedly greater among elementary than secondary teachers. Although relatively few teachers said they had been asked to limit discussions of specific topics, about one in ten said they had been asked to limit discussion of politics, elections, or the President.

One policy that is nearly ubiquitous is state standards detailing specific civic outcomes that schools are expected to promote. Nearly
one-half of elementary teachers and one-fifth of secondary teachers were unaware of these state standards, although teachers who were aware of them were more likely to report emphasizing civic development topics and instructional approaches. These results suggest an opportunity to enhance the role that standards can play in sending a message about the value of civic development. We also found that perceptions regarding obstacles related to policies and supports were mostly unrelated to teachers’ reported practices. Whether this is because those obstacles do not have a significant impact or because they are confounded with other covariates in our regression models is unclear, but the finding suggests the need for additional investigation of how policies and supports can influence instruction in civics.
Our final set of results addresses some student behaviors that are indicators of students’ civic knowledge, skills, or dispositions. These are related to the outcomes shown on the right-hand side of our framework. We examine teachers’ perspectives on two categories of behaviors: (1) how students engage with media and (2) students’ interactions with other students. We selected these two areas because they include student actions that are likely to be observed by teachers and because they are closely related to some important debates about the role that schools can play in helping youth develop key civic competencies. Media use is directly related to Truth Decay (specifically, the “changes in the information ecosystem” driver that focuses on changes in the way news is reported and consumed, among other trends), and we asked teachers about specific aspects of media use that pertain to students’ likelihood of consuming and sharing misinformation and to students’ media-use behaviors that might cause social harm (e.g., posting hurtful comments about other students on social media). Students’ behaviors toward other students—particularly those from specific racial, ethnic, or other groups—are highly relevant to recent calls for schools to create welcoming climates and to promote equity and justice for all students. These two categories are only
a few of many sets of outcomes that relate to civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Clearly a much broader set of measures would be needed to gauge students’ civic development, and methods other than a teacher survey would be required.

Because we collected all the survey data at the same time, we have no way of determining whether these student behaviors preceded teachers’ uses of practices or vice versa. There are several potential explanations for any relationships between student behaviors and teachers’ practices. Teachers might adopt certain practices in response to observed behaviors, or their use of those practices might lead to changes in student behaviors. It is also possible that any relationship between what teachers report doing and what they report students doing is the result of other factors, such as demographic or resource differences across schools. Our survey is intended to provide a nationwide picture and to suggest hypotheses that might be tested in subsequent research, but it cannot support causal conclusions about relationships.

Because we published a Data Note (Hamilton, Kaufman, and Hu, 2020a) that presented responses to questions about media literacy, we do not present a full set of results on that topic here. Instead, we summarize key findings from those analyses. We then present results for a set of questions that elicited teachers’ reports about student behavior toward other students in specific subgroups. We conclude the chapter with an exploratory analysis of relationships between these two sets of student outcomes and teachers’ reported emphasis on civics topics and practices.

**Teachers Reported Problematic Student Behaviors Related to Media Use, Particularly at the Secondary Level**

In response to a question that asked teachers to indicate the frequency with which they observed each of several student media-related behaviors over the preceding month, secondary teachers reported these behaviors at greater rates than did elementary teachers. Among secondary social studies teachers, 87 percent said their students had made
unfounded claims based on unreliable media sources at least once in the past month, compared with 46 percent of elementary teachers. Corresponding percentages for “students shared hateful posts on social media” were 59 and 19 percent. These differences are unsurprising, given differences in access to, and use of, media across grade levels. (For additional details, see Hamilton, Kaufman, and Hu, 2020a.)

We also asked teachers about the extent to which each of several issues related to media literacy was a problem for the majority of their students. We observed a similar pattern of differences between elementary and secondary teachers here; secondary teachers reported somewhat more media use problems among their students, though majorities of teachers in both age groups reported that an “unhealthy amount of media use” was at least a moderate problem (Figure 7.1). Roughly two-thirds or more of secondary teachers rated each of the items in Figure 7.1 as a moderate or major problem. One finding that is directly relevant to Truth Decay is that 90 percent of secondary teachers rated “limited ability to evaluate the credibility of online information” as a problem, with 39 percent calling it a major problem.

We observed no clear patterns in responses of teachers from particular subgroups other than those related to grade level. Together, our findings indicate that teachers perceive numerous challenges related to students’ engagement with media. It is likely that the actual prevalence of problematic student engagement with media is higher than what we report here because teachers are only reporting on what they were able to observe.

The high percentage of teachers reporting that their students have limited ability to evaluate the credibility of online information might stem from the lack of focus on media literacy education in schools, but it also might stem from larger structural problems related to Truth Decay more generally. As we have noted, the credibility of online information—even from sources that might have been perceived as reliable in the past—has potentially declined in recent years, which makes it all the more difficult for anyone to discern what is true and accurate. These data just underscore the importance of providing more support to students in K–12 schools to help them make critical judgments on the accuracy of online information.
Figure 7.1
Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting Issues Related to Media Use as Problems for the Majority of Their Students

NOTES: This figure illustrates responses to the following survey item: “To your knowledge, how much are each of the following issues a problem for the majority of your students?” Bars might not sum to 100 because of rounding.
Most Teachers Reported at Least Some Instances of Bullying—and of Student Efforts to Mitigate the Negative Effects of Bullying

Figure 7.2 shows the percentages of elementary and secondary teachers reporting the number of bullying-related incidents of which they were aware within the past month. As with the behaviors related to media use that we discussed earlier, it is likely that teachers’ reports underestimate the actual number of incidents because they only reported on

Figure 7.2
Weighted Percentages of Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Teachers Reporting the Number of Times That Each Action Occurred in the Past Month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Elementary—3 or more times</th>
<th>Elementary—1–2 times</th>
<th>Secondary—3 or more times</th>
<th>Secondary—1–2 times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A student informed you that she/he was bullied by another student</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A parent informed you that his/her son or daughter was bullied by other students</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You witness students’ bullying behavior</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students from immigrant families expressed concerns due to immigrant-related policies or political rhetoric</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A student helped another student who was being bullied</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students defended other students who were the target of derogatory remarks or demeaning behavior</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: This figure illustrates responses to the following survey item: “Please indicate how frequently each of the following occurred among students in your classroom in the past month, to your knowledge.” Response options: Never, 1–2 times, 3–5 times, More than 5 times.
what they witnessed or heard about. Figure 7.2 shows that elementary teachers were more likely than teachers of older students to report that a student told them about being bullied, which probably reflects differences in how younger and older students interact with teachers and peers (rather than differences in bullying incidents). The results also suggest that teachers frequently observed students coming to other students’ assistance.

**Teachers with Larger Percentages of English-Language Learners Reported More Bullying-Related Behaviors**

Although we observed relatively few differences by teacher or school characteristics in teachers’ responses to questions about bullying, teachers who reported that more than 10 percent of their students were ELLs were more likely than other teachers to report incidents of bullying and to report that students tried to help address bullying. As shown in Figure 7.3, for example, 21 percent of teachers with more ELLs reported witnessing students’ bullying behaviors at least three times in the past month, compared with 14 percent of other teachers. Similarly, the percentages of teachers who reported that students helped other students who were being bullied were 26 and 15 percent, respectively, for these two groups. Not surprisingly, given the relationship between language and immigration status, reports that students from immigrant families expressed concerns were more common among teachers with more ELLs. We do not know the reasons for the higher reported rates of bullying among teachers serving ELLs, but these responses suggest that this is a group of teachers that might benefit from guidance or other resources to mitigate this problem.

**Among Secondary Teachers, Negative Behaviors Based on Group Status Were Frequently Tied to Political Views**

We asked teachers to indicate whether students had made derogatory remarks about or engaged in demeaning behaviors toward members
of each of the groups listed in Figure 7.4. Secondary teachers reported observing these incidents at much greater frequency than elementary teachers across all of the groups about which we asked. According to our survey results, the most-frequent targets of derogatory remarks or demeaning behaviors at the secondary level were students who expressed particular political views; nearly one-fifth of secondary teachers reported that such incidents occurred three or more times in the past month. Because we only surveyed social studies teachers, it is possible that this finding is a result of the likelihood that political views are a topic of discussion—and therefore ripe for criticism—in social studies classes. Teachers of other subjects might have less opportunity than social studies teachers to witness these kinds of discussions.
Nonetheless, the frequency with which social studies teachers reported problematic responses to students’ expressions of political viewpoints is consistent with the trends related to rising polarization that we discussed in Chapter One. Figure 7.4 also shows that majorities of secondary teachers reported at least one incident of derogatory remarks or demeaning behavior toward female students and toward students in specific racial or ethnic groups.

NOTE: LGBTQ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning. This figure illustrates responses to the following survey item: “Please indicate how frequently students have made derogatory remarks about, or engaged in demeaning behavior toward, each of the following groups in the past month.” Response options: Never, 1–2 times, 3–5 times, More than 5 times.
Higher Reported Emphasis on Civics-Related Topics and Practices Was Associated with Higher Rates of Problematic Behaviors

We created three scales to measure students’ behaviors. The items corresponding to each scale are shown in Table 7.1.

Our regression analyses indicated positive relationships between each of the three sets of practices and bullying-related behaviors after controlling for school and teacher characteristics (summarized in Box 7.1; see the appendix for detailed results). We observed similar results for frequency of incidents in which students mistreated other students because of group status, which we refer to as noninclusivity. In other words, teachers who reported greater levels of problematic interpersonal interactions also indicated more emphasis on civics-related practices. As we discussed earlier in this report, these analyses cannot tell us the reasons for this relationship, but it suggests two broad possibilities: Teachers are emphasizing civics in response to problematic student behaviors, or teachers who typically emphasize more civics topics and approaches pay greater attention and/or have greater awareness of bullying activities. There also might be an additional factor that influences both practices and outcomes that we were not able to measure.

Greater Emphasis on Media Literacy Instruction Was Associated with Higher Levels of Problematic Media Behaviors

We created a separate scale to measure problematic media behaviors; items are listed in Table 7.1. When we included that scale in a regression model that predicted teachers’ emphasis on media literacy, we found a similar result to the one described earlier: Teachers who reported higher levels of problematic media behaviors also reported more emphasis on media literacy instruction (see the appendix for detailed results). Again, whether this relationship indicates that teachers adopted media literacy practices in response to these behaviors is not clear.
Table 7.1
Scales Measuring Teachers’ Reports of Student Bullying and Media Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Name and Overall Internal Consistency</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Bullying behaviors (alpha = 0.79)          | • A student informed you that she/he was bullied by another student.  
• A student helped another student who was being bullied.  
• A parent informed you that his/her son or daughter was bullied by other students.  
• You witnessed students’ bullying behaviors. |
| Noninclusivity (alpha = 0.84)              | • Students from specific racial or ethnic groups  
• Immigrant students  
• LGBTQ students  
• Girls or women  
• Boys or men  
• Special education students  
• Students living in poverty  
• Students who express particular political views (liberal or conservative) |
| Problematic media behaviors (alpha = 0.93) | • Unhealthy amount of media use  
• Poor approaches for protecting data and keeping it private  
• Sharing too much personal information online  
• Communicating and developing unhealthy relationships through digital media  
• Treating others disrespectfully or unkindly online  
• Limited ability to evaluate the credibility of online information |

NOTES: See Figures 7.1, 7.2, and 7.4 for information about question stems and response options. To create the bullying scale, we recoded each item to 1 if the incident happened at least once and 0 if it never happened. The scale is a sum of these four binary items. Teachers who omitted individual items were not assigned a scale score. To create the noninclusivity scale, we used the same approach as for the bullying scale, recoding each item to 1 if the incident happened at least once and 0 if it never happened. The media behaviors scale is a simple average of scores on each item, excluding “I don’t know.” Teachers who answered fewer than one-half of the items were not assigned a scale score.
Teacher-Reported Student Behaviors Related to Civics

Summary

Although our ability to document students’ civic-related behaviors through a teacher survey is limited, teachers are probably in a better position than any other group of adults to observe and report on what students do during the school day, so their responses regarding media literacy and students’ interpersonal behaviors are informative. We sus-
pect that teachers are more likely to underreport rather than overreport these behaviors because students often engage in activities without teachers knowing about them. This is probably more true for secondary than elementary teachers because middle and high school students are more independent and have more freedom than most elementary students during the school day. In addition, because our sample is limited to social studies teachers and many secondary teachers in our sample only see students during those classes, their reports regarding student behaviors that are more or less likely to occur in social studies classes than in other school contexts will not provide a full picture of what students do throughout the day.

Despite these limitations, our results clearly indicate a need for interventions or other supports to address problematic use of media and to foster more-respectful relationships in at least some schools. Secondary teachers, in particular, reported high incidences of problematic student media use and somewhat more bullying of students from specific groups compared with their elementary counterparts. The finding that teachers with higher proportions of ELLs in their classes reported more bullying warrants additional investigation to identify the reasons for that difference and to develop strategies for addressing it. The relative prevalence of students engaging in negative interactions with other students that centered on political views is also concerning and builds on a growing body of evidence (discussed earlier in this report) of worsening partisanship across the country.
This report provided an overview of how social studies teachers across the United States are promoting student civic development through their instruction and how their schools are doing this beyond the classroom context. We also documented a variety of factors that might be related to teachers’ classroom emphasis on civic education: teachers’ preparation and beliefs, their instructional materials, contextual factors and conditions that might facilitate or hinder civics instruction, and student behaviors. We presented some descriptive findings on these factors, and we also explored relationships between them and teachers’ civics instruction, although our analysis cannot provide any causal information about the direction of those relationships. Our findings indicate that at the time of our survey, most teachers prioritized schools’ roles in promoting civic development and were engaged in assorted practices to do so. But we also identified several challenges that will need to be addressed if schools are to carry out the civic mission that their founders intended. We also observed disparities in practices and supports across schools serving different student populations, suggesting that some supports might need to be targeted to particular types of schools.

This work identifies ways that the K–12 public education system is providing instruction that might counter Truth Decay, and it highlights potential barriers to this effort. Kavanagh and Rich, 2018, identified several drivers that influence Truth Decay, and they point to a wide array of institutions that need to engage and collaborate to mitigate this threat to our society. Schools cannot do this alone, but they can exert a significant influence because of the large number of youth
they serve, the intensity of their interactions with students at a formative stage in their lives, and the centrality of civic development to their missions. Civic education covers numerous concepts and activities that are directly related to Truth Decay, so an understanding of how schools promote civic development is crucial for identifying opportunities to mitigate Truth Decay.

The data we presented in this report come from a survey administered at a single point in time, so they should be viewed as a snapshot that can inform future data collection and research to better understand how to create the conditions that will promote civic development among children and adolescents across the United States. In the rest of this chapter, we highlight some of our key findings and describe their implications for policy, practice, and future research.

Implications

Civic education practices are widespread and varied, but disparities across schools serving more- and less-vulnerable student populations suggest inequity in opportunities for civic development. Social studies teachers across the United States reported emphasizing various civics topics and activities in their classrooms, and they indicated that their schools were also engaging in civics-related activities beyond the classroom. We found broad coverage of most of the ten promising practices that civic education scholars and advocates have identified as being important for promoting students’ civic development. At the same time, teachers in schools serving larger percentages of students of color or students receiving subsidized meals reported emphasizing some of these practices to a lesser extent than teachers in other schools. We specifically observed less emphasis among these groups of teachers—according to their self-reports—on approaches that feature service learning, student participation in school governance, discussion of controversial issues, and on topics or activities directly related to Truth Decay—media literacy, responsible internet use, and distinguishing facts from opinions in written text or other media. The reasons for these differences are unclear and probably stem from numerous factors, including inequitable access
to such resources as high-quality curriculum materials or opportunities for community partnerships. Given the importance of civic learning for student success and the development of thriving communities, it will be crucial to address these inequities through guidance, curriculum resources, or other supports.

**Practices that promote specific civic outcomes were less prevalent than practices emphasizing more general youth-development outcomes.** The ten promising practices provide a mix of practices that are squarely focused on civics—such as discussions of current events and simulations of the democratic processes—and practices that schools and teachers might enact for reasons other than a desire to promote civic outcomes. We found that practices in the latter category—including efforts to develop positive schoolwide climates, conflict resolution, and SEL—tended to be more common at both the elementary and secondary levels than practices that directly addressed civics. If civic education is to have the desired effect on Truth Decay and on related democratic outcomes, it will be important for educators to embrace the civic missions of schools when enacting SEL and related approaches so that the civic goals inform schools' strategies for implementing these practices. Majorities of teachers noted students' difficulty in assessing the credibility of online information, which stands to reason given potential declines in accuracy and credibility of information sources that might have previously been regarded as trustworthy. More discussions of current events and credible information sources for learning about those events within K–12 social studies classrooms could help address such challenges.

**Relatively low emphasis on civics practices in elementary schools is an area of opportunity.** We anticipated large differences in instructional emphasis between elementary and secondary teachers as a result of the developmental levels of the students they teach and the fact that most elementary teachers, unlike most secondary social studies teachers, are responsible for instruction in a large number of subjects. At the same time, there are many opportunities for elementary teachers to incorporate civic learning into their instruction in social studies and other topic areas or during other times of the day (e.g., morning meetings or “circle time”). Several of the promising practices, such as discus-
sion of current events, simulations, and media literacy, lend themselves to developmentally appropriate activities that could engage younger students, potentially promoting several aspects of civic development while building skills that align with standards in mathematics, English language arts, or other subjects. But our analysis also suggested that teachers—particularly at the elementary level—likely need much more training and support to address students’ civic development. In addition, elementary teachers reported facing pressure to address other subjects besides social studies. Thus, policymakers at the state and district levels should consider how social studies and civic development can be amply emphasized in standards, curriculum frameworks, district or school missions, and leader messages, especially at the elementary level.

Although social studies teachers reported prioritizing students’ civic development, lack of adequate preparation combined with low prioritization of several key concepts suggests a need for clearer guidance. Most teachers said that students’ civic development was important but not essential, and many indicated a lack of training and preparation in this area. Only about one in five social studies teachers reported feeling well prepared to address students’ civic development. In contrast, in prior research, one-half or more teachers reported feeling well prepared to address English language arts and mathematics state standards in their classrooms (Hamilton, Kaufman, Stecher, et al., 2016; Kaufman, Hamilton, Stecher, et al., 2016). At the high school level, teachers provided varying ratings of the importance of several civic education topics and outcomes. The relatively low importance ratings for historical knowledge, understanding of economic principles, and habits of community service suggest that many high school social studies teachers are either conceptualizing civic development in a narrower way than many civic education experts do, or they believe that students should develop these attributes through some means other than formal schooling. We also found relatively low awareness of state standards for civics content, although awareness of such standards was related to more teacher-reported emphasis on civic development topics and instructional approaches. These data provide further evidence that teachers could benefit from increased guidance about the wide variety of standards and competencies that are impor-
tant for students’ civic development, and ways to incorporate those standards and competencies into their instruction.

**Additional formal and informal civics-focused professional development could be valuable.** The relatively low rates at which teachers reported participating in civics-related training are consistent with our finding that many teachers expressed a need for additional professional development related to civics. Teachers who did report relevant preparation also reported using civics practices to a higher degree than other teachers. Together, these findings point to professional development as a potential mechanism to increase civics emphasis. To be effective, such development should not rely exclusively on workshops or other one-shot events but should be tailored to teachers’ specific teaching context, offer opportunities for practice, and be sustained over time (Garet et al., 2001; Kraft, Blazar, and Hogan, 2018; Kretlow and Bartholomew, 2010; Wei et al., 2009). Teachers also might benefit from informal opportunities to collaborate and learn from their colleagues, and this is a common way that teachers engage in professional learning (Hamilton and Doss, 2020). Ideally, professional development should help teachers incorporate civics into their instruction in ways that enhance teaching and learning of other academic subjects rather than detract from it.

**Teachers of color indicated emphasizing multiple civics topics and approaches more than white teachers did, and they provided significantly different perspectives than their white peers in other areas, highlighting the value of a diverse teacher corps.** Even after accounting for other teacher- and school-level characteristics, including the racial or ethnic composition of the student body, we found that teachers of color differed from their white counterparts in several ways. They reported greater instructional emphasis on the global community and international relations, respect for and safeguarding the environment, emigration and immigration, and discussion of controversial issues. They placed a higher priority on students learning several civics-related concepts—specifically good work habits, economic principles, civic responsibilities (such as voting and jury duty), and content related to law and geography. They were also less likely to indicate trust in multiple institutions and some groups. Lastly, they noted a greater need than did white teachers for numerous resources to support students’
civics and social studies instruction. These results suggest that teachers of color place more of an emphasis than their white peers on some aspects of students’ civic development, which might reflect differences in their experiences and perspectives, such as greater awareness of racial biases and violations of rights. Regardless of the reason for the difference, our results bolster others’ arguments (Goldhaber, Theobald, and Tien, 2019; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019) for the need to diversify the teacher workforce and to ensure that teachers of color are receiving adequate supports for instruction.

**Teachers could benefit from greater access to instructional materials that incorporate the promising practices.** Most teachers reported using civics instructional materials they found or created themselves. Although they also reported relying on district- and school-provided materials to some extent, they reported a need for much more in terms of both materials and assessments to support students’ civic development, particularly to address needs of students of color and ELLs. In addition, despite generally favorable opinions about their instructional resources, many teachers did not perceive these resources to be engaging or effective at promoting students’ civic development. These data paint a picture of instruction that might vary considerably according to teachers who are providing it. Teachers might support the needs of their students through found materials, but it is not clear that school- or district-provided materials always promote the full complement of civic skills, knowledge, and dispositions. In addition to implying a need for districts and schools to improve their civics-related materials, our finding that teachers use a lot of found materials suggests that repositories of civic education materials linked to promising practices could be something many teachers would find useful for their instruction.

**Most teachers reported emphasizing culture and cultural diversity while expressing a need for additional culturally relevant instructional materials.** Majorities of both elementary and secondary teachers indicated at least a moderate emphasis on culture and cultural diversity in their social studies classrooms, though it is unclear what this looks like in practice. Roughly two-thirds of secondary teachers also reported at least moderate emphasis on drivers of inequality on the basis of race, gender, or other characteristics, compared with roughly
one-third of elementary teachers. Although most teachers agreed that their civics materials were culturally appropriate for their students, a majority expressed a moderate or major need for additional culturally relevant instructional resources. Together, these findings point to widespread support among U.S. social studies teachers for promoting cultural awareness and teaching in a culturally responsive way. This is encouraging information in light of recent Black Lives Matter demonstrations and calls for schools to address racial justice. Of course, our survey cannot tell us precisely how teachers are approaching these topics, but the fact that so many teachers report emphasizing them while wanting more-appropriate materials suggests, at a minimum, that they are likely to be open to ideas for new strategies to tackle this crucial issue.

State, district, and school leaders can all help address the obstacles to civics that teachers identified. Survey results, including open-ended comments, identified several obstacles to promoting civic development. Some of these related to students, such as lack of interest and disciplinary problems, and might be mitigated through the provision of research-based strategies to improve school and classroom climate. Several of the promising practices are well suited to improving engagement, and there are curriculum programs that can help with this goal as well. Other obstacles reflected aspects of local or state policy, including lack of curriculum flexibility and pressure to cover content other than civics. Helping teachers integrate civics content and activities into their academic instruction is a particularly promising strategy that could reduce the need for teachers to devote instructional time exclusively to civics. This integration might include lessons or curricula that engage students in writing about civics topics or that promote quantitative literacy in the context of news articles about current events. These efforts would further benefit from ensuring that state and local math and English language arts standards provide ample opportunity for teachers to help their students meet those standards using materials that simultaneously promote civic outcomes. Teachers also told us about what they need to support their instruction; the larger areas of need were more non-teaching time, community partnerships, more and better curriculum resources, and professional
development. Efforts to increase schools’ emphasis on civics need to take into account the many ways in which policies and practices at all levels of the education system—from tight schedules that inhibit sustained attention to civics to state-level accountability systems that send messages (even if inadvertent) about what subjects matter most—will need to be rethought if teachers are going to be able to make their students’ civic development a priority.

Teaching ELLs was associated with differences in instructional emphasis and in need for supports. Teachers who indicated that more than 10 percent of the students they taught were ELLs differed in their responses to several survey questions from those who taught fewer ELLs. The former group reported more emphasis on such topics and approaches as SEL, the environment, emigration and immigration, and drivers of inequality. At the same time, they reported feeling less prepared to promote civic development and identified greater obstacles, such as pressure to cover other subjects, lack of family support, and student disciplinary problems. They also indicated greater need for resources to meet the needs of ELLs. Finally, these teachers reported more bullying-related student behaviors than other teachers and, unsurprisingly, were more likely to report that “Students from immigrant families expressed concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families due to policies or political rhetoric related to immigrants.” Collectively, these findings imply that although teachers of ELLs might be offering their students more opportunities to engage in some activities that promote civic development, they also might need even more support and guidance to address challenges related to these students’ civic development. These somewhat contradictory findings could reflect several factors that we were unable to measure in our survey and point to a need for more-detailed data collection to understand the needs and practices of these teachers. At minimum, the findings suggest that teachers in schools or classrooms with more ELLs perceived an increased value in emphasizing some aspects of civic development and therefore might need more supports and resources to serve those populations. Curricular resources to support the civic development of ELLs might be especially important, given that 50 percent of all elementary teachers and 45 percent of all secondary teachers
we surveyed across the United States reported a need for more instructional resources to meet the needs of these students.

The relative prevalence of students engaging in negative interactions with other students that centered on political views is consistent with other evidence of a growing partisan divide in the United States. One-third of social studies teachers in the middle and high school grades reported that once or twice in the past month, students made derogatory remarks about or engaged in demeaning behavior toward students who expressed particular political views. Another 19 percent reported that this occurred three or more times in the past month. Kavanagh and Rich, 2018, identified growing partisanship as a condition that can promote Truth Decay, and many of the civic education reviews we discussed in Chapter One noted the potential value of civic education as a way to tackle this problem. It is noteworthy that teachers reported frequent (i.e., three or more times) negative behaviors related to political views to a greater extent than such behaviors related to other student characteristics. As we mentioned in Chapter Seven, this finding might reflect the fact that we surveyed social studies teachers, a group that might have more opportunity to witness this type of interaction than other teachers because of the topics they cover in class. Nonetheless, the result provides evidence that problematic behaviors related to partisanship are not uncommon among adolescents and that schools might benefit from instructional tools to address them.

Student misuse of media was common, as were teachers’ and schools’ efforts to reduce it. Majorities of both elementary and secondary teachers endorsed the idea that schools should provide instruction on responsible social media use. And media literacy instruction was prevalent, at least at the secondary level, where approximately two-thirds of social studies teachers reported at least a moderate emphasis. Most teachers also reported that their schools engaged in efforts to promote media literacy and responsible internet use outside the classroom. This apparent enthusiasm for media literacy might be a result of the frequency with which teachers said they observed students engaging in problematic behaviors, such as sharing hateful social media posts, making unfounded claims, engaging in unhealthy amounts of media use, and displaying a limited ability to evaluate the credibility of online
information. Teachers have their hands full when it comes to ensuring that their students are using and interpreting media appropriately, so media literacy should clearly continue to be an emphasis of schools’ broader civic education efforts. Numerous media literacy curricula are available, and curriculum and support providers should continue to provide schools with access to these resources, along with guidance regarding how to engage families in this effort. Teachers’ support for doing so bodes well for opportunities for schools to mitigate Truth Decay and promote more-constructive social interactions.

**Our data provide a starting point for a broader research agenda.** This report presents a first, nationally representative picture of how K–12 social studies teachers promote civic development in their classrooms and in the schools where they teach, along with factors that could help improve these efforts. However, this work was exploratory and does not provide clear evidence of the factors that influence civic development in schools. In addition, because our research relies on teacher self-reports, it cannot provide a definitive picture of all the civic-learning opportunities that might be happening in classrooms and schools. There is much that we need to learn about the nature of civic development in schools and how it can support student outcomes. Future research should extend the work we presented in this report to gather the perspectives of educators in other roles (e.g., principals, teachers of other subjects, out-of-school-time program instructors); take a deeper look into the classroom through observations, interviews, or artifact reviews; explore issues around equity in a more comprehensive way; and evaluate the effects of policies and supports, including standards, professional development, and instructional materials. Research in civic education can benefit from an interdisciplinary approach that brings together researchers with different perspectives and that engages practitioners as full partners on the research to the extent possible.

**Conclusion**

Civic education has not been central to most of the recent policy debates about how to improve K–12 schools, but it is certainly relevant
to addressing many of the major challenges facing American society. Civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions overlap with many of the attributes that employers say they need, so there is a clear economic case to be made for promoting civic development. This is an important message for educators who are bombarded with new requirements and programs and who often cite lack of time for civics as a barrier. More importantly, civics has substantial value beyond its utility in preparing students for college or careers, as demonstrated by recent events. The coronavirus pandemic has led to widespread concerns about the consumption and distribution of misinformation and about Americans’ trust in government and other institutions. The protests sparked by the killing of George Floyd have revealed an urgent need to ensure that students are receiving high-quality history instruction and are developing an appreciation for the diverse experiences and viewpoints of their fellow Americans. And concerns about the integrity of elections and the extent to which prospective voters are able to exercise their rights to participate in democracy further highlight the necessity of civic-related competencies. Educators will play a crucial role in the coming years in ensuring that young adults develop the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that will equip them to succeed as individuals and to contribute to a thriving democratic society.
In this appendix, we provide the full regression results for the findings presented in Chapters Three through Seven. We also describe our approach to creating the multi-item scales we use in the regression models. Additional methodological information about the survey sampling, administration, weighting, and approach to creating summary statistics is provided in a separate technical document (Hamilton, Kaufman, Hu, et al., 2020).

Scale Development

To facilitate our analyses of relationships between teachers’ instructional emphasis and their perceptions regarding other factors, we created multi-item composites, or scales, that are intended to measure the constructs of interest. To inform scale development, we conducted an EFA on each relevant set of items (e.g., we conducted EFAs on all of the items that addressed teachers’ emphasis on individual civics activities or approaches). We used both a principal-component factor method and a principal-factor method with varimax rotation (both methods produced similar results), and we inspected the eigenvalues to determine the number of factors to retain, generally relying on the criterion of minimum eigenvalue of 1.

The items that make up each scale are listed in the relevant chapters. To create the scale scores, we combined across items using the approaches described here.
Civics topics emphasis scale: The composite score is the average of all seven items on the scale. Teachers who completed at least one-half of the items on the scale were assigned a scale score using the items to which they responded. Those who completed fewer than one-half were not assigned a scale score. This composite score has 816 observations. Minimum value is 0 and maximum value is 3.

Civics instructional approaches emphasis scale: The composite score is the average of all seven items on the scale. Teachers who completed at least one-half of the items on the scale were assigned a scale score using the items to which they responded. Those who completed fewer than one-half were not assigned a scale score. This composite score has 816 observations. Minimum value is 0 and maximum value is 3.

Civics-related skills emphasis scale: The composite score is the average of the two items on the scale. Teachers who completed one or both of the items on the scale were assigned a scale score. This composite score has 816 observations. Minimum value is 0 and maximum value is 3.

Perceptions of civics instructional materials: This composite score is the average of all five items asking teachers about their agreement or disagreement with statements about their instructional materials, excluding “Not applicable” and “Don’t know.” Teachers who completed at least three out of five items were assigned a scale score using the items to which they responded. This composite has only 662 observations. Minimum value is 1 and maximum value is 4.

Obstacles related to policy and supports scale: This composite score is the average of all five items on the scale, excluding “N/A—condition does not exist in my school” and missing values. Teachers who completed at least one-half of the items on the scale were assigned a scale score using the items to which they responded. Those who completed fewer than one-half were not assigned a scale score. Due to data availability, this composite score has only 463 observations. Minimum value is 1 and maximum value is 3.

Bullying behaviors scale: This composite was created by coding and summing up binary items. Each categorical item was recoded into a binary variable, with 1 indicating bullying behavior happening one
time or more per month and 0 indicating bullying behavior never happened. The composite score is the sum of the four binary items on the scale. Only teachers who responded to all items were assigned a scale score. This composite score has 798 observations. Minimum value is 0 and maximum value is 4.

**Noninclusivity scale:** This composite was created by coding and summing up binary items. Each categorical item was recoded into a binary variable, with 1 indicating derogatory comments or demeaning behaviors happening one time or more per month and 0 indicating these behaviors never happened. The composite score is a sum of the eight binary items on the scale. Only teachers who responded to all items were assigned a scale score. This composite score has 798 observations. Minimum value is 0 and maximum value is 8.

**Problematic media behaviors scale:** This composite score is the average of all six items on the scale, excluding “I don’t know” and missing values. Teachers who completed at least one-half of the items on the scale were assigned a scale score using the items to which they responded. Those who completed fewer than one-half were not assigned a scale score. This composite score has 737 observations. Minimum value is 1 and maximum value is 4.

**Full Regression Results**

Tables A.1–A.13 provide the complete results for our regression analyses.
Table A.1
Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Beliefs and Preparation to Promote Civic Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Emphasis on Civic Topics Scale</th>
<th>Civics Instructional Approaches Scale</th>
<th>Civic Skills Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have not received training for civic knowledge</td>
<td>-0.189*** (0.0543)</td>
<td>-0.126** (0.0549)</td>
<td>-0.124** (0.0581)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher indication that students’ civic development is absolutely essential</td>
<td>0.271*** (0.0539)</td>
<td>0.310*** (0.0558)</td>
<td>0.241*** (0.0540)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>-0.0181 (0.0658)</td>
<td>-0.0470 (0.0658)</td>
<td>0.0622 (0.0660)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-0.457*** (0.0517)</td>
<td>-0.543*** (0.0533)</td>
<td>0.589*** (0.0575)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>-0.0631 (0.0621)</td>
<td>-0.0308 (0.0635)</td>
<td>0.0309 (0.0694)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>-0.0133 (0.0653)</td>
<td>-0.0612 (0.0660)</td>
<td>-0.0677 (0.0697)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>0.126** (0.0522)</td>
<td>0.120** (0.0540)</td>
<td>0.116** (0.0585)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>0.149** (0.0761)</td>
<td>0.126 (0.0801)</td>
<td>-0.0274 (0.0703)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>0.00486* (0.00285)</td>
<td>0.00188 (0.00289)</td>
<td>-0.00430 (0.00320)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.596*** (0.0817)</td>
<td>1.670*** (0.0836)</td>
<td>1.843*** (0.0935)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>0.226</td>
<td>0.251</td>
<td>0.156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.
Table A.2
Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Beliefs and Preparation to Promote Civic Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1) Emphasis on Civic Topics Scale</th>
<th>(2) Civics Instructional Approaches Scale</th>
<th>(3) Civic Skills Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have not received training for civic skills</td>
<td>−0.168*** (0.0545)</td>
<td>−0.103* (0.0544)</td>
<td>−0.195*** (0.0585)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher indication that students civic development is absolutely essential</td>
<td>0.278*** (0.0539)</td>
<td>0.315*** (0.0560)</td>
<td>0.238*** (0.0536)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>−0.0181 (0.0665)</td>
<td>−0.0469 (0.0663)</td>
<td>0.0619 (0.0662)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>−0.475*** (0.0505)</td>
<td>−0.557*** (0.0520)</td>
<td>0.587*** (0.0568)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>−0.0606 (0.0628)</td>
<td>−0.0297 (0.0638)</td>
<td>0.0375 (0.0685)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>−0.0157 (0.0645)</td>
<td>−0.0639 (0.0654)</td>
<td>−0.0588 (0.0700)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>0.123** (0.0525)</td>
<td>0.117** (0.0543)</td>
<td>0.114* (0.0580)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>0.147* (0.0759)</td>
<td>0.124 (0.0797)</td>
<td>−0.0251 (0.0705)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>0.00501* (0.00282)</td>
<td>0.00202 (0.00287)</td>
<td>−0.00460 (0.00316)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.589*** (0.0821)</td>
<td>1.663*** (0.0839)</td>
<td>1.871*** (0.0931)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations | 742 | 742 | 742
R-squared     | 0.222 | 0.248 | 0.167

NOTES: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.
Table A.3
Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Beliefs and Preparation to Promote Civic Dispositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1) Emphasis on Civic Topics Scale</th>
<th>(2) Civics Instructional Approaches Scale</th>
<th>(3) Civic Skills Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have not received training for civic dispositions</td>
<td>−0.192*** (0.0517)</td>
<td>−0.0973* (0.0528)</td>
<td>−0.118** (0.0561)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher indication that students’ civic development is absolutely essential</td>
<td>0.271*** (0.0541)</td>
<td>0.314*** (0.0563)</td>
<td>0.242*** (0.0541)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>−0.00445 (0.0662)</td>
<td>−0.0399 (0.0665)</td>
<td>0.0706 (0.0667)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>−0.477*** (0.0501)</td>
<td>−0.559*** (0.0521)</td>
<td>0.576*** (0.0581)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>−0.0522 (0.0621)</td>
<td>−0.0264 (0.0637)</td>
<td>0.0374 (0.0695)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>−0.0143 (0.0646)</td>
<td>−0.0653 (0.0658)</td>
<td>−0.0691 (0.0701)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>0.129** (0.0523)</td>
<td>0.120** (0.0542)</td>
<td>0.117** (0.0586)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>0.142* (0.0753)</td>
<td>0.120 (0.0796)</td>
<td>−0.0324 (0.0702)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>0.00538* (0.00277)</td>
<td>0.00229 (0.00286)</td>
<td>−0.00395 (0.00323)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.610*** (0.0826)</td>
<td>1.667*** (0.0837)</td>
<td>1.850*** (0.0924)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations | 742 | 742 | 742
R-squared     | 0.227 | 0.248 | 0.156

NOTES: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.
### Table A.4
Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Source of Instructional Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1) Emphasis on Civic Topics Scale</th>
<th>(2) Civics Instructional Approaches Scale</th>
<th>(3) Civic Skills Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher reports using one-half or more materials found him/herself</td>
<td>0.0859 (0.0571)</td>
<td>0.236*** (0.0569)</td>
<td>0.0775 (0.0635)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>–0.0484 (0.0692)</td>
<td>–0.0929 (0.0692)</td>
<td>0.0354 (0.0682)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>–0.544*** (0.0520)</td>
<td>–0.605*** (0.0523)</td>
<td>0.522*** (0.0575)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>–0.0706 (0.0645)</td>
<td>–0.0276 (0.0637)</td>
<td>0.0260 (0.0713)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>–0.0387 (0.0680)</td>
<td>–0.0738 (0.0674)</td>
<td>–0.0848 (0.0718)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>0.113** (0.0557)</td>
<td>0.100* (0.0557)</td>
<td>0.105* (0.0589)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>0.155** (0.0758)</td>
<td>0.137* (0.0772)</td>
<td>–0.0203 (0.0706)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>0.00718** (0.00288)</td>
<td>0.00437 (0.00288)</td>
<td>–0.00248 (0.00338)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.625*** (0.0830)</td>
<td>1.620*** (0.0842)</td>
<td>1.881*** (0.106)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Observations | 742 | 742 | 742 |
| R-squared | 0.165 | 0.216 | 0.121 |

NOTES: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.
Table A.5
Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Source of Instructional Materials, with Interaction Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1) Emphasis on Civic Topics Scale</th>
<th>(2) Civics Instructional Approaches Scale</th>
<th>(3) Civic Skills Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher reports using half or more materials found him/herself</td>
<td>(-0.0139) (0.0870)</td>
<td>(0.0766) (0.0875)</td>
<td>(0.0474) (0.104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary = 1</td>
<td>(-0.636***) (0.0943)</td>
<td>(-0.751***) (0.0947)</td>
<td>(0.494***) (0.111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction term: Elementary by instructional materials scale</td>
<td>(0.128) (0.111)</td>
<td>(0.205^*) (0.111)</td>
<td>(0.0387) (0.129)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>(-0.0495) (0.0693)</td>
<td>(-0.0946) (0.0696)</td>
<td>(0.0351) (0.0682)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>(-0.0680) (0.0649)</td>
<td>(-0.0234) (0.0640)</td>
<td>(0.0268) (0.0713)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>(-0.0343) (0.0681)</td>
<td>(-0.0667) (0.0673)</td>
<td>(-0.0835) (0.0720)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>(0.114^*) (0.0556)</td>
<td>(0.101^*) (0.0554)</td>
<td>(0.105^*) (0.0590)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>(0.157^*) (0.0756)</td>
<td>(0.139^*) (0.0766)</td>
<td>(-0.0199) (0.0706)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>(0.00708^*) (0.00287)</td>
<td>(0.00420) (0.00286)</td>
<td>(-0.00251) (0.00336)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>(1.697***) (0.0968)</td>
<td>(1.737***) (0.0965)</td>
<td>(1.903***) (0.117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>0.166</td>
<td>0.220</td>
<td>0.121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: *** \(p < 0.01\), ** \(p < 0.05\), * \(p < 0.1\). Standard errors in parentheses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1) Emphasis on Civic Topics Scale</th>
<th>(2) Civics Instructional Approaches Scale</th>
<th>(3) Civic Skills Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of instructional materials provided by school or district scale</td>
<td>0.109** (0.0522)</td>
<td>0.0874* (0.0517)</td>
<td>0.0578 (0.0557)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>0.0105 (0.0757)</td>
<td>-0.0419 (0.0748)</td>
<td>0.0453 (0.0738)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>-0.569*** (0.0555)</td>
<td>-0.654*** (0.0566)</td>
<td>0.527*** (0.0624)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>-0.0793 (0.0702)</td>
<td>-0.0555 (0.0705)</td>
<td>0.00812 (0.0778)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>-0.0805 (0.0749)</td>
<td>-0.118 (0.0762)</td>
<td>-0.0781 (0.0800)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>0.102* (0.0596)</td>
<td>0.0850 (0.0611)</td>
<td>0.133** (0.0656)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>0.194** (0.0800)</td>
<td>0.173** (0.0852)</td>
<td>0.00186 (0.0766)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>0.00578* (0.00315)</td>
<td>0.00291 (0.00336)</td>
<td>-0.00274 (0.00385)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.427*** (0.168)</td>
<td>1.609*** (0.169)</td>
<td>1.753*** (0.201)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations: 614
R-squared: 0.181 0.209 0.132

NOTES: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.
Table A.7
Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Beliefs About Instructional Materials, with Interaction Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1) Emphasis on Civic Topics Scale</th>
<th>(2) Civics Instructional Approaches Scale</th>
<th>(3) Civic Skills Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of instructional materials provided by school or district scale</td>
<td>0.0815 (0.0669)</td>
<td>0.0939 (0.0672)</td>
<td>0.125 (0.0784)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary = 1</td>
<td>−0.678** (0.277)</td>
<td>−0.628** (0.272)</td>
<td>0.790** (0.309)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction term: Elementary by instructional materials scale</td>
<td>0.0373 (0.0932)</td>
<td>−0.00881 (0.0927)</td>
<td>−0.0900 (0.104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>0.0110 (0.0757)</td>
<td>−0.0420 (0.0748)</td>
<td>0.0441 (0.0737)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>−0.0784 (0.0701)</td>
<td>−0.0558 (0.0703)</td>
<td>−0.00583 (0.0774)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>−0.0808 (0.0750)</td>
<td>−0.118 (0.0762)</td>
<td>−0.0775 (0.0798)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>0.100* (0.0594)</td>
<td>0.0852 (0.0607)</td>
<td>0.136** (0.0651)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>0.193** (0.0800)</td>
<td>0.173** (0.0854)</td>
<td>0.00497 (0.0766)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>0.00574* (0.00316)</td>
<td>0.00292 (0.00336)</td>
<td>−0.00265 (0.00385)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.509*** (0.214)</td>
<td>1.590*** (0.212)</td>
<td>1.555*** (0.251)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations | 614 | 614 | 614
R-squared     | 0.181 | 0.209 | 0.133

NOTES: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.
### Table A.8
Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Perceptions of Obstacles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasis on Civic Topics Scale</td>
<td>Civics Instructional Approaches Scale</td>
<td>Civic Skills Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstacles scale</td>
<td>–0.0307 (0.0654)</td>
<td>–0.0647 (0.0616)</td>
<td>0.121** (0.0609)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>0.0466 (0.106)</td>
<td>0.0213 (0.0992)</td>
<td>0.103 (0.0738)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>–0.445*** (0.0715)</td>
<td>–0.515*** (0.0697)</td>
<td>0.530*** (0.0743)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>–0.0868 (0.0838)</td>
<td>–0.0290 (0.0794)</td>
<td>0.127* (0.0702)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>–0.0472 (0.0983)</td>
<td>–0.0829 (0.0942)</td>
<td>–0.122 (0.0847)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>0.117 (0.0750)</td>
<td>0.108 (0.0738)</td>
<td>0.0114 (0.0652)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>0.172* (0.0929)</td>
<td>0.134 (0.0962)</td>
<td>0.0249 (0.0801)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>0.00526 (0.00419)</td>
<td>0.00321 (0.00412)</td>
<td>–0.00294 (0.00384)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.701*** (0.162)</td>
<td>1.878*** (0.154)</td>
<td>1.784*** (0.159)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>0.108</td>
<td>0.137</td>
<td>0.167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:** *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. Standard errors in parentheses.
Table A.9
Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Whether Teacher Is in a C3 Hub State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1) Emphasis on Civic Topics Scale</th>
<th>(2) Civics Instructional Approaches Scale</th>
<th>(3) Civic Skills Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C3 hub state</td>
<td>0.0885 (0.0596)</td>
<td>0.111* (0.0606)</td>
<td>0.0389 (0.0598)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>−0.0269 (0.0683)</td>
<td>−0.0565 (0.0682)</td>
<td>0.0508 (0.0680)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>−0.547*** (0.0514)</td>
<td>−0.625*** (0.0521)</td>
<td>0.517*** (0.0579)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>−0.0673 (0.0649)</td>
<td>−0.0315 (0.0646)</td>
<td>0.0254 (0.0718)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>−0.0390 (0.0681)</td>
<td>−0.0798 (0.0693)</td>
<td>−0.0861 (0.0719)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>0.123** (0.0559)</td>
<td>0.117** (0.0571)</td>
<td>0.113* (0.0602)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>0.157** (0.0769)</td>
<td>0.138* (0.0799)</td>
<td>−0.0188 (0.0715)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>0.00692** (0.00293)</td>
<td>0.00375 (0.00302)</td>
<td>−0.00271 (0.00340)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.659*** (0.0775)</td>
<td>1.766*** (0.0758)</td>
<td>1.927*** (0.0888)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations 738  738  738
R-squared 0.165  0.195  0.120

NOTES: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.
### Table A.10
Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Teachers’ Awareness of State Civic Education Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1) Emphasis on Civic Topics Scale</th>
<th>(2) Civics Instructional Approaches Scale</th>
<th>(3) Civic Skills Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher said state adopted standards related to students’ civic development</td>
<td>0.250*** (0.0576)</td>
<td>0.216*** (0.0577)</td>
<td>0.105 (0.0654)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>−0.0327 (0.0659)</td>
<td>−0.0653 (0.0654)</td>
<td>0.0455 (0.0674)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>−0.484*** (0.0532)</td>
<td>−0.574*** (0.0545)</td>
<td>0.542*** (0.0588)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>−0.0806 (0.0622)</td>
<td>−0.0458 (0.0632)</td>
<td>0.0194 (0.0715)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>−0.0363 (0.0680)</td>
<td>−0.0780 (0.0684)</td>
<td>−0.0854 (0.0716)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>0.127** (0.0541)</td>
<td>0.121** (0.0555)</td>
<td>0.113* (0.0601)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>0.187** (0.0751)</td>
<td>0.163** (0.0786)</td>
<td>−0.00742 (0.0720)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>0.00607** (0.00287)</td>
<td>0.00302 (0.00300)</td>
<td>−0.00304 (0.00334)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.486*** (0.0929)</td>
<td>1.629*** (0.0914)</td>
<td>1.856*** (0.111)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations: 742
R-squared: 0.191 0.211 0.123

NOTES: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. Standard errors in parentheses.
Table A.11

Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Teacher-Reported Bullying-Related Incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1) Emphasis on Civic Topics Scale</th>
<th>(2) Civics Instructional Approaches Scale</th>
<th>(3) Civic Skills Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying scale</td>
<td>0.0329* (0.0181)</td>
<td>0.0416** (0.0187)</td>
<td>0.0515** (0.0211)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>–0.0517 (0.0684)</td>
<td>–0.0861 (0.0681)</td>
<td>0.0252 (0.0669)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>–0.565*** (0.0515)</td>
<td>–0.648*** (0.0519)</td>
<td>0.497*** (0.0588)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>–0.0730 (0.0642)</td>
<td>–0.0380 (0.0646)</td>
<td>0.0258 (0.0714)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>–0.0428 (0.0677)</td>
<td>–0.0839 (0.0685)</td>
<td>–0.0889 (0.0714)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>0.108* (0.0554)</td>
<td>0.0999* (0.0564)</td>
<td>0.0937 (0.0590)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>0.154** (0.0771)</td>
<td>0.134* (0.0814)</td>
<td>–0.0226 (0.0722)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>0.00707** (0.00294)</td>
<td>0.00394 (0.00302)</td>
<td>–0.00250 (0.00341)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.617*** (0.0864)</td>
<td>1.712*** (0.0876)</td>
<td>1.824*** (0.106)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>0.166</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>0.129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.
### Table A.12
Regression Models Exploring Relationships Between Classroom-Level Civic Education Emphasis and Teacher-Reported Noninclusivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1) Emphasis on Civic Topics Scale</th>
<th>(2) Civics Instructional Approaches Scale</th>
<th>(3) Civic Skills Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noninclusivity scale</td>
<td>0.0477*** (0.0107)</td>
<td>0.0499*** (0.0108)</td>
<td>0.0183 (0.0115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>−0.0424 (0.0663)</td>
<td>−0.0740 (0.0655)</td>
<td>0.0417 (0.0678)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>−0.448*** (0.0539)</td>
<td>−0.523*** (0.0561)</td>
<td>0.549*** (0.0630)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>−0.0688 (0.0641)</td>
<td>−0.0344 (0.0647)</td>
<td>0.0274 (0.0719)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>−0.0420 (0.0656)</td>
<td>−0.0829 (0.0665)</td>
<td>−0.0886 (0.0717)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>0.0941* (0.0547)</td>
<td>0.0878 (0.0560)</td>
<td>0.0979 (0.0600)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>0.158** (0.0755)</td>
<td>0.139* (0.0797)</td>
<td>−0.0209 (0.0707)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>0.00807*** (0.00288)</td>
<td>0.00496* (0.00298)</td>
<td>−0.00225 (0.00342)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.503*** (0.0873)</td>
<td>1.609*** (0.0881)</td>
<td>1.874*** (0.100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>0.185</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>0.120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:** ***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.
Table A.13
Regression Model Exploring Relationship Between Classroom-Level Media Literacy Emphasis and Teacher-Reported Problematic Media Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1) Media Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student media problems scale</td>
<td>0.170*** (0.0518)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability indicator</td>
<td>–0.118 (0.0956)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>–0.364*** (0.0900)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 1, city</td>
<td>0.00597 (0.101)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location = 2, town and rural</td>
<td>–0.123 (0.107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLs</td>
<td>0.202** (0.0855)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers of color</td>
<td>0.0818 (0.113)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience</td>
<td>–0.00674 (0.00469)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.297*** (0.204)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations 676
R-squared 0.120

NOTES: *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.


Public schools that serve students in kindergarten through grade 12 are responsible for not only promoting students’ readiness for college and careers but also educating students to engage civically and contribute to their communities and country as adults. Civic education refers broadly to the process through which schools and other institutions help students develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will prepare them for civic life. Researchers conducted a nationally representative survey of elementary (kindergarten through 5th grade) and secondary (6th through 12th grade) teachers offering social studies in U.S. public schools. Results from this survey demonstrate how social studies teachers in U.S. public schools promote students’ civic learning, teachers’ beliefs about the importance of civic-related topics and skills, and which conditions they perceive as supporting or hindering civic education. This report, which is part of the Truth Decay initiative, extends analyses presented in other reports in the series.