The Center for Educational Equity
TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

RESOURCES AND READINESS:
EXPLORING CIVIC EDUCATION ACCESS AND EQUITY
IN SIX NEW YORK HIGH SCHOOLS

Data Collection Questions

Note: The following is the full set of data-collection questions used in this pilot study; protocols for initial and follow-up interviews with different participants were built from the list. We plan to revise our research instruments and protocols prior to the implementation of a full study.

Access to Civic Knowledge

General
1. According to faculty, what knowledge do students need to be prepared for capable civic participation? Is this encompassed by the NYS Learning Standards?
2. What, if anything, is the school missing in order to be able to equip students with the knowledge they need to be prepared for civic participation?

Courses in Civics and Government
3. What specific courses in civics, government, and/or current events does the school provide to its students (required courses and electives)?
4. Do all students have access to all of these courses? What proportion completes them?
5. Does the single state-required Participation in Government course provide what is needed to ensure that all students can meet the standards for "Participation in Government and Civics"? If not, what else is needed? Other relevant info about PIG?
6. What percentage of classes in this area are taught by appropriately certified teachers? What percentage of those teachers have themselves fully mastered the content?

Other Social Studies Courses
7. What other courses in social studies and history does your school provide (required classes and electives)?
8. Do all students have access to all of these courses? What proportion completes them?
9. Do the state-required courses in social studies provide what is needed to ensure that all students can meet the standards of the New York State Grades 9-12 Social Studies Framework? If not, what else is needed? Other relevant info re NYS requirements in social studies?

Access to a Full Basic Curriculum
10. Does the school provide all students access to basic course offerings?
    - Four years of English language arts
    - (Four years of social studies)

- At least three years of science (biology, chemistry, and physics)
- At least three years of a least one language other than English
- At least three years of high school level math
- At least three years of career and occupational studies
- At least a year of health education
- At least three years of the arts and/or music
- Four years of physical education
11. What other advanced, honors, or AP classes and/or electives does the school provide?
12. What supports does the school provide for students who are struggling academically?

Access to Civic Skill Development

General
13. According to faculty, what skills do students need to develop to be prepared for civic participation? Are these represented in the New York State Learning Standards?
14. What, if anything, is the school missing in order to be able to equip students with the skills they need to be prepared for civic participation?
15. What opportunities does the school provide for students to develop the specific skills for civic participation set out in the NYS Social Studies Framework?
    - the basic verbal and mathematical skills necessary to understand complex civic issues?
    - the higher order skills needed for "democratic deliberation,"
        - critical thinking and problem solving skills?
        - collaboration skills?
        - self-directed learning skills?
        - library media, information literacy, and research skills?
        - the ability to engage in discussions about important issues and events with people who disagree with them?
        - The ability to come to decisions about action?
16. What resources, if any, is the school missing to ensure that all students develop these skills?
17. Do all of students develop these skills? Evidence?

Communication Skills
18. According to faculty, what communication skills do students need to be prepared for civic participation?
19. Do New York State standards promote the verbal and written skills needed preparation for civic participation (e.g., arguing, expressing, demonstrating, and persuading, verbal empowerment skills—the ability to articulate one's own interests, interact with elected officials and community partners, maintain one's integrity and autonomy, discern common ground for possible compromises)? If not, what is missing?
20. What resources, if any, are missing to ensure that all students attain the communication skills to be prepared for civic participation?

Media Literacy Skills
21. According to faculty, what media literacy skills do students need to be prepared for civic participation?
22. What opportunities does the school provide for students to develop these media literacy skills?
23. What resources, if any, are missing to ensure that all students develop these media literacy skills?

Creativity and Innovation Skills

24. According to faculty, what creativity and innovation skills do students need to be prepared for civic participation?
25. What opportunities does the school provide for students to develop creativity and the ability to innovate?
26. What resources, if any, are missing to ensure that all students develop these skills

Access to Civic Experiences

27. According to faculty what experiences/experiential learning opportunities do students need to ensure they are prepared for civic participation?
28. What opportunities for civic experiences does the school provide? Are these curricular, co-curricular/extracurricular, or extended-day activities?
    - Classroom discussion/debates
    - Community service/service learning
    - Civic action projects
    - School radio or TV station, YouTube channel, blog
    - Clubs (e.g., mock trial, Model U.N., speech and debate, school newspaper, student government)
    - Arts
    - Sports
    - School assemblies
    - Field trips
    - Internships
    - Other activities?
29. Do all students have access to these experiences? What proportion of students participates in these experiences?

Classroom Activities

30. Do all students have access classroom to civic and political discussions? Discussion of cross-cutting issues (with people who disagree)?
31. Do social studies classes discuss current social problems and controversial issues?
32. Do teachers engage or avoid controversial topics? Why or why not?
33. Do all students have opportunities to engage in participatory politics?
34. Do all students have opportunities to apply civic learning and take informed action and apply civic skills to real world issues and events?
35. Do all students have
    - Access to qualified library media specialists and well-equipped school libraries?
    - Access to technology and high speed internet?
    - Opportunities to use various technologies and digital platforms?
    - Access to "Student Voices" or other such software/online programs that supplement to existing civic education curricula?
    - Access to inquiry-based instruction?
    - Access to experiences in the arts that foster self-expression, bolster community and cultural representation, and/or advance social change?
    - Access to internships and work experiences, especially in civic and community-based organizations, advocacy, social justices, and political organizations?

Civic Values and Dispositions

36. According to faculty, should the public schools promote certain moral values and civic traits and dispositions in order to prepare students to be capable civic participants? If so, what values and dispositions must schools promote to prepare students for civic participation?
    - Basic character values like honesty, compassion, responsibility, hard work, perseverance, courtesy, respectfulness, fairness, integrity?
    - Self-respect, personal autonomy, and agency?
    - Tolerance of disagreement and a willingness to listen, negotiate, and compromise?
    - Commitment to the public good?
    - Respect and appreciation for other peoples and cultures?
    - Patriotism (Defined traditionally? Defined more liberally/flexibly?)?
37. What civic values does the school seek to impart? How was this policy determined?
38. What challenges, if any, does the school face in transmitting these values and dispositions to students? (Resistance? Competing values? Trust issues?)
39. Does the school promote an understanding and appreciation of diversity (e.g., of values, cultures, identities, abilities, genders, sexualities, family structures, race/ethnicity, social and political views)?
40. Does the school confront the failure to achieve a just and equal society outside of school?
41. Do school staff other than teachers play a role in transmitting civic values and dispositions? Which ones and how?

Professional Development

42. Are teachers trained and comfortable with managing classes that focus on controversial issues?
43. What professional development does the school or district provides to enable administrators, teachers, and other school staff to prepare students for civic participation?

Integration of Civic Learning Across Academic Disciplines

44. Does the school integrate civic learning across the curriculum, providing access to civic knowledge, civic skills, civic values and dispositions, and civic experiences?
45. Do its classroom-based instructional practices help all students develop a sense of agency and self-efficacy in advocating for themselves and their positions on social/civic issues?
46. Do its classroom-based practices help all students learn to work together in teams?
47. Do classroom teachers, across the disciplines, help all students make connections between their studies and pressing civic/social issues in the neighborhood in which the school is located and/or with their own neighborhoods (for students who commute to school)?
48. Does the school align and coordinate the civic learning opportunities across content areas and grade levels?

Appropriately Differentiated Curriculum and Experiential Learning Opportunities

49. Does the school differentiate its civic learning curricula and related experiential learning opportunities to engage all students? If so, how? If not, what are the obstacles?
    - Students with disabilities
    - English language learners
    - Students with limited civic knowledge, skills, and behaviors
    - Students with advanced civic knowledge, skills, and behaviors

Access to Necessary Instructional Materials
50. Does the school to provide all students access to the instructional materials necessary for preparation for civic participation?
   - Access to print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, digital documentary, graphics)
   - Access to books, television appearances, articles, op-ed pieces, websites, policy statements, blogs, journal pieces, webinars
   - Access to databases and data analysis software
   - Paper based and electronic mapping

Access to Necessary Facilities
51. Does the school provide access to all students to the school facilities necessary for preparation for civic participation? (Library media center, auditorium, gymnasium and sports fields, art and music rooms; computer center?)

Embrace of Diversity
52. Describe the diversity of the school (students, staff, families, community)
53. What issues, if any, have arisen as a result of this diversity/differences within the school community? How has the school community handled them?
54. What activities and/or practices does the school engage in to promote an understanding and appreciation of diversity (e.g., racial/ethnic, religious, gender and sexual orientation, social and political views)? (classroom? schoolwide? community?)
55. What barriers, if any, impede the provision of these experiences or their success? (resources? fear of controversy or litigation? attitudes?)

School Climate, School Discipline, and Safety
56. Describe the school climate.
   - Level of trust/distrust in school community
   - Types of relationships between teachers and students
   - Democratic classroom practices/authoritarian classroom practices
   - Embrace of diversity/conflict
   - Positive bonding and bridging experiences/cliques
   - Classroom practices that promote the agency of all students/stereotyping, tracking
   - Availability of school counselors, social workers, psychologists, other support staff?
57. What proportion of teachers is caring, fair, and show respect to all of their students? Evidence?