



We the People

PROJECT Citizen

Citizen Lyceum



From the Massachusetts Center for Civic Education

MACCE Newsletter

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The Importance of a Balanced Civic Education Learning

By Roger Desrosiers, President

There appears to be a surge of legislative concern about what and how civic education is being taught, a concern fraught with terrible negative consequences that will lead to a tilted version of what certain groups want to see embedded in civic learning. Simply put, this would lead to indoctrination, not education. Regardless of which point of view is represented, the dangers of cherry picking and selecting viewpoints that mesh with the political vantage points would make our democracy even more fragile if not fractured beyond its present polarization.

One of the endearing aspects of the We the People and Project Citizen programs has always been the nonpartisan approach in both the teaching but also in the opportunity for students to see the many different sides of the issues that have faced our nation and that currently confront it.

When I first taught the program in 1987, the appeal of the program was immediate. Students, who previously never really were expected to delve into issues, research them, express an opinion based on facts, were suddenly excited about the opportunity to discuss them, to disagree with each other and to simply learn more about the workings of government and thus reach conclusions not simply on a whim, but within a context established through the documents upon which our government was based.

Often students believe that their learning depends on pleasing their teacher with the “correct” answer. What happens when the teacher seeks a depth of learning from a student that comes from understanding, research, analysis and critical thinking? At first, bewilderment and confusion, often because the student is not accustomed to actually thinking through a question on its own merits. As the course progresses and the student realizes that the answer to various questions

depends on a thoughtful, reasoned response, students come to realize that they are empowered with the ability to think for themselves and their learning becomes authentic.

Students need to be allowed to critically think about the issues before them. They do not need to be told what to think. Many of you reading this who have gone to high school and even college know what I’m talking about. Later in life, many of you recognize that often the failings of education come from not having had the opportunity to genuinely learn. Our programs are some of the finest in the country because, if they are taught well, they give students the chance to eventually understand and form their own opinions based upon a strong foundation, not based upon a certain viewpoint.

If certain groups whether on the left or the right are successful in legislating what is taught in civic education classes, we will see the kind of brainwashing that in the 1950s and 1960s we railed against in Communist countries. What are we afraid of? Civil discourse is the best antidote to autocracy! It can be hard to do, but it can also be electric, enlightening! If you have the opportunity to witness what students do in a simulated congressional hearing, you would know what I mean. Recently, a young man (a sophomore in high school) helped us with our state competition and marveled at the conversations that took place. He stated, “I can’t even imagine this taking place in my high school. Everyone there simply disagrees. No one cares what anyone else thinks. I wish we had this in my high school.”

We need thoughtful, resourceful, enlightening, authentic learning to take place in our schools. We must have open dialogue, not closed information. We need to recognize that students have the ability to think and to differ robustly, but in civil discourse with respect for each other. Our youth can be the beacon for our democracy if we give them the chance. Let’s not limit their chance.



We the People

THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION

Congratulations to the students of Easthampton High School and to their teacher, Ms. Kelley Brown, on becoming the 2022 Massachusetts State Champions.



We the People, MA State High School 2022 Virtual Competition

As the Blizzard of January 29, 2022 whipped through New England, students from Auburn High School, Easthampton High School, Norwood High School, Salem Academy Charter School, and Williston Northampton School competed in mock Congressional Hearings virtually for the 2022 Massachusetts **We The People** State Finals.

We wish to thank our six facilitators who seamlessly helped navigate our students and judges through the competition. Their preparation and meetings with the judges, teachers and students before the competition and dealing with all the potential obstacles related to the weather on the day of the competition were incredible. We are also very appreciative of the 21 judges who helped us on this unusual day. They came from all sectors of education: the law, teaching, community activism, civic educators, civic organizations, the DESE, and a significant number of WTP alumni.

To our six teachers and 117 students who participated, we applaud their semester long hours and exceptional display of learning. We know that the outcome was a "labor of love" although they might not have always thought that along the way. We are so proud of the accomplishments of the students. They and their teachers worked very hard all year to get to this final assessment of the We the People curriculum.

We also want to extend our thanks to Caroline Angel Burke and the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate for their willingness to once again host us this year. Because of the surge of the Omicron variant, it was necessary to return for a second year to a remote competition ten days before our event (not realizing then, that a blizzard would have derailed our plans anyways).

The Unit Awards for this year are as follows:

Auburn High School - Unit 5
 Easthampton High School - Unit 6
 Norwood High School - Unit 3
 Salem Academy Charter School - Unit 3
 Williston Northampton School - Unit 4

The top 3 teams this year were:

1st Place - Easthampton High School
 2nd Place - Williston Northampton School
 3rd Place - Auburn High School

Easthampton High School will have the opportunity to represent Massachusetts in the **We the People: The Citizen and Constitution National Finals** this April 23-25, 2022.

Congratulations to all of the schools and thank you for another successful State competition!

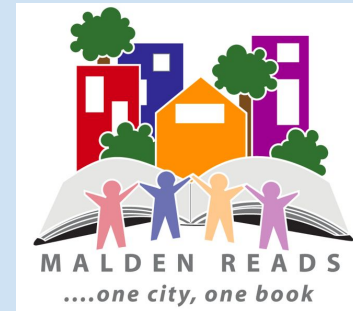


We the People

THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION



Piloting New Program in Malden PS



Malden Public Schools and Malden Reads team up for new program for 4th graders

This spring two fourth grade teachers at the Salemwood Elementary School in Malden will embark on a pilot program with some of the immigrant population within the most diverse public school district in the state of Massachusetts, Malden Public Schools. In collaboration with the Massachusetts Center for Civic Education (MACCE) through its *We the People* program and the community based organization Malden Reads program, these teachers will address fundamental issues surrounding student identity and understanding rules and laws as they govern them at home, at school, in their community, from their country of origin and from the United States. An initial understanding of democracy will provide a base knowledge for these students as they continue their learning in grade 5 and beyond.

The Director of Literacy and Title 1 for MPS, Victoria Mulkern, has supported and promoted this initiative from the outset. Teachers, Violet Walsh and Alan Rodriguez, are tireless for their passion and energy in preparing to pilot this program with their 17 recent immigrant students.

The role of each person within a system of government is essential, especially in a democracy. Students at the fourth grade level especially those who have experienced a different culture, are adapting to a new country and perhaps belonging to a new type of government bringing with them a flavor of experiences that they need to share and that they need to express in order to feel greater comfort and belonging.

Starting in early April for five weeks, these students will discuss their shared experiences, learn about rules and laws, governments, and democracy. Roger Desrosiers, President of the MACCE, has worked with the Malden teachers in developing lesson plans using the *We the People: the Citizen and Democracy* text, geared to grades 3 - 5 and Linda Zalk, Education Committee Chairperson for Malden Reads program will provide community support for these students with numerous activities.

In our next newsletter in late September, we will bring you the results of this pilot program. We plan to share the stories, the outcomes, the assessments of how these students have learned about themselves, their government, and their rights and responsibilities within a democracy. Stay tuned!

PCRP Cohort 3 - Candidates Needed!

The **Project Citizen Research Program**, a research grant from the U.S. Department of Education, has given the Center for Civic Education and its partners the opportunity to offer free professional development for middle and high school teachers new to the **Project Citizen** curriculum!

The Center for Civic Education, in partnership with Georgetown University, will be conducting a summer institute at the University of Massachusetts - Boston from **July 31 to August 5, 2022** for teachers of northeast United States.

Some of the benefits of joining the PCRP:

- **Free summer professional development**
- **Transportation/housing/food covered at UMASS - Boston**
- **A free set of books for use with your students**
- **Usable classroom resource to use**
- **Guidance of a Project Citizen Mentor**
- **A modest stipend**

Cohort 3 (2022-2023) is the final cohort of teachers in this program. Teacher applications are due on **May 31, 2022** with official notification by **June 7, 2022**.

Any teacher who is interested in applying for this fantastic program, please reach out to Ellen Barber-Morse by email at ellen.barber.morse@gmail.com or Roger Desrosiers by email at roger.desrosiers@masscivics.org

For More information about PCRP and how to apply, please click the links below:

**Free Professional Development for Teachers in
a Meaningful and Engaging Civics Curriculum**



**Teacher Agreement
Cohort 3, Academic Year 2022-23**



Project Citizen facilitator Ed O'Connell (left) and Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian speak with program participants at the Middlesex Jail & House of Correction on Friday, November 6, 2020.



Middlesex County House of Correction to Host a Program on Project Citizen for Women

As a result of the previous program's success with men at the Middlesex County House of Correction last year, plans are now underway to run **three** separate **Project Citizen** programs this spring and summer at the Middlesex County House of Correction in Billerica, Massachusetts. The first of these programs, to begin at the start of April, will be run in a new women's pre-release center created by Sheriff Peter Koutoujian at the Billerica facility. At least one of the remaining two programs will be run in a special unit for younger, first-time offenders. More information to follow on these first-in-the-nation programs.

Remembering Charles N. Quigley, Founder of the Center for Civic Education

Charles N. “Chuck” Quigley was born in New York City in 1929, however, his family soon moved to Los Angeles. He was the son of a Hollywood actor, though he chose to pursue a different career path. After attending UCLA, he taught elementary school in LA and the Lab School at UCLA, where he was also a graduate student in education. He began a curricular program entitled the *Law in a Free Society* Project which evolved into the nonprofit *Center for Civic Education*. In the 1970s the Center became a program of the State Bar of California. In the 1980s, as the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution approached, he was determined that there should be a new curricular and professional development program promoting the history, principles and values of the Constitution.



Remembering Charles N. Quigley,
Founder of the Center for Civic Education

Chuck was able to secure funding and to develop the *We the People* program. In collaboration with the National Bicentennial Commission, they disseminated the materials into every congressional district in the United States. *We the People* broadened the Center’s outreach and established it as one of the most influential civic education organization in the country. Chuck’s vision, mission and passion changed the direction of civic education as a learning experience for millions of students worldwide, not to mention the tens of thousands of teachers along the way. Chuck’s zeal for high quality K-12 civic education never wavered.

In light of the recent passing of Chuck Quigley, the Father of Modern Civic Education, many may wonder what does Modern Civic Education really mean. Many educators, like myself, remember the days when civics was mostly a course where rote learning was the norm. What were the three branches of government? their roles? Who were our leaders? And, a correct answer to a question like “What is the term of office for a U.S. Senator?” might satisfy a Boston Globe reporter or a wrong answer might be interpreted as an unsound civics course being taught in school. I remember in college, my young professor giving his first test with one question on the Articles of Confederation with 10 multiple choice answers and we were to choose which ones were correct. As a U.S. History teacher incorporating my teaching of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, I, unfortunately, found myself teaching in a similar vein, along the lines of how I learned, and my students were as dissatisfied as I was.

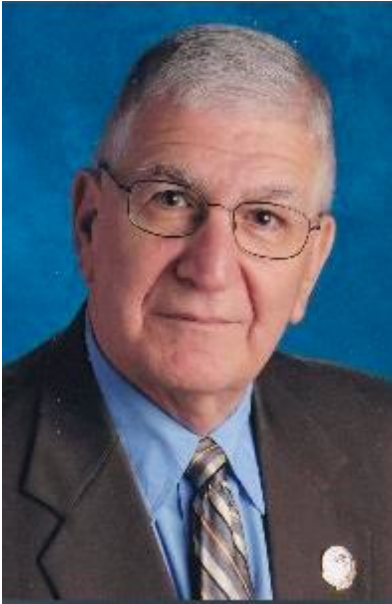
And, then, in 1987, I received a postcard in the mail that said that I could get a free set of books (30 student texts and a teacher’s guide) as part of the Bicentennial Commission’s five year program collaboration with the Center for Civic Education to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights. The Commission, chaired by former Chief Justice of the United States Warren E. Burger, would serve as a “history and civics lesson for all Americans.”

But, whoa! the format of the book was so engaging. Before it became the norm, every unit, lesson, topic heading was in the form of a question. Every picture and cartoon had a caption that was in the form of a question. **Inquiry was the basis of learning.** Students were now going to be **active learners**. Within each lesson there would be several activities called Critical Thinking Exercises or What Do You Think? questions, allowing students to take what they were learning and getting them to apply that learning to the present, to expand their knowledge to other possibilities beyond the realm of just learning the facts!

This program, *We the People*, which eventually became ***We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution***, would last beyond the five year period because teachers who were using the program knew how powerful it was. The U.S. Department of Education funded the program after the initial five year period through 2011 because of the tireless efforts of Chuck Quigley and his able lieutenants (Assistant Directors, John Hale and Mark Molli) and a large network of hundreds of state and congressional district coordinators who worked with the congressional offices of both the Senate and the House on both sides of the aisle. The programs were always going to be nonpartisan, non ideological. Students needed to learn about their government and how it came to be, how the principles of government were discussed, argued over, disagreed with and eventually decided upon despite opposition. And, thus students were urged “to take, to defend and to evaluate” their position on different historical and contemporary issues through civil discourse as they continue to do today.

So much more can be said about the legacy that Chuck Quigley has left behind. But, the reality is that he has transformed the teaching of civic education. Today, we hear about engaging students, about active learning, about practicing democracy, about critical thinking, about inquiry. Each of these were at the forefront of everything that the Center did with their programs and their materials and they continue to be. The outcomes that they sought from students were never about rote learning, but about thoughtful, meaningful, life changing understanding about what our government is all about, its principles and values, its shortcomings and its resilience, its opportunities and its evolution. To listen to students engage in a simulated congressional hearing is to be refreshed about learning and to realize that democracy is alive and well. This is the legacy that Chuck Quigley has left us! A democracy that is alive and well, if we can keep it!!!

-written by Roger Desrosiers



The Loss of a Friend and Colleague here in New England

At the end of February, Michael "Mike" Trofi, the We the People and Project Citizen State Coordinator for the State of Rhode Island died unexpectedly. For many educators in Massachusetts, he was a friend, a mentor, a celebrated professional development host, who promoted civic education throughout our New England region. "Personally, I knew Mike for 35 years as a fellow WTP teacher and fellow state coordinator. He was a great personal friend!" said Roger Desrosiers.

Mike ran numerous weeklong summer institutes at Salve Regina College in Newport, RI for either the We the People or Project Citizen programs. His hospitality, his promotion of Rhode Island history, the lobster feast that started off each institute, the visits to the "cottages", the great scholars, and his gracious style will always be remembered by those fortunate to have been a part of the experience.

Mike was helpful in the peace process with the Irish at the turn of the century. He ran Project Citizen institutes bringing together 10 teachers from Northern Ireland and 10 teachers from the Republic of Ireland. The teachers brought the experience back home and they paired up as they worked with their students on projects. The collegiality among these teachers demonstrated incredible professionalism and the spirit of cooperation that Mike always encouraged.

During his over 20 years as State Coordinator, Mike supported civic education at the Rhode Island State House working with state representatives as well as with the national congressional delegations, and working with urban schools. He was able to bring grants to the New England region to expand civic education, namely the James Madison Legacy Program, and lately, the Project Citizen Research Program to the Northeast Region (for teachers from Washington, DC to Maine). Mike was deeply involved with these programs by also serving as the site coordinator for each of these grants.

Mike will be greatly missed - a giant sequoia, an icon of civic education has left us! As Robin Knippers, the We the People and Project Citizen State Coordinator of NH stated, "Rest in Peace, Mike! Save us all a seat at the largest Civics Conference yet to be held when we all meet together again one day!"

Kelley Brown Honored by the Daughters of the American Revolution

This March, Kelley Brown, teacher at Easthampton High School, was awarded the Massachusetts State Daughters of the American Revolution Award for Outstanding Teacher of American History at the Betty Allen Chapter in Northampton, MA. It was also announced at the ceremony that Ms. Brown will receive the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution award for Outstanding Teacher of American History at their National Convention in Washington DC on June 30th. It is a wonderful recognition of the work and dedication to her students and to the teaching of American History and Civic Education.

At the award ceremony, Ms. Brown was able to reflect on her students and the work that she performs to "create young citizens that are capable of self-government through the We the People program." Ms. Brown is deeply involved with the local community and often invites community members to engage with her class to learn how to discuss and debate in a healthy atmosphere. Ms. Brown feels that the We the People "program is, by far, the most important thing I do- evidenced by the many students that return from college to help me each year." Congratulations to an extraordinary teacher!





CALENDAR

Date	Event description, link
April 22-26, 2022	We the People High School National Finals
Spring 2022, TBD	We the People Middle School State Showcase
June 6 to Aug 7, 2022	MACCE/FSU graduate level course for professional development
July 31 to Aug 5, 2022	Project Citizen Research Program - Cohort 3

Podcast

Recently, Kelley Brown and some of her students joined WHMP Radio for a podcast to discuss the **We the People** program and its impact on students through civic education. Click the image right to listen.



COMING SOON!!!

MACCE is collaborating with an Elementary School Educator to create **LESSON PLANS on Slavery and the Civil Rights Movement** using the Level 1 *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* textbook. The lessons will feature the role African Americans play in the formation of the United States which will follow the Massachusetts Framework for Grade 5.

More to come later this year, so check our website for news on when it will be available for Grade 5 educators.

www.masscivics.org

MACCE/FSU Graduate Course

The Graduate Level course, *Understanding the Fundamental Principles, Values, and Institutions of American Government*, will again be offered this summer by Framingham State University, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Center for Civic Education. This course is offered as either a 3 credit Graduate level course, or can be used for 45 Professional Development Hours.

If you are interested in learning more about the course, please click on the button below.



Framingham
State University

Actively Learn

We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution is available as an enhanced ebook edition for your 21st-century classroom. The enhanced ebook is perfect for blended learning, 1:1 classrooms, and differentiated instruction.

Actively Learn is available as age appropriate interactive ebooks for the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

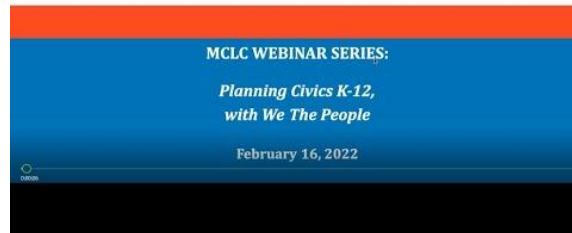
By purchasing *We the People* on **Actively Learn**, you are purchasing a subscription to **Actively Learn Social Studies**, which gives you access to all three levels of *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution* for one low price: just \$9.00 per user, per year.

Order directly through **Actively Learn**.

As a non-profit organization, we rely on the support of the organizations and individuals within our community and state to help us promote civic awareness in our schools. Your funds will help provide professional development resources, textbooks, learning opportunities and help us continue the work we do to promote civic education for all people.



MACCE Webinar for Administrators



On February 16, 2022, MACCE delivered a presentation to Administrators, Teachers, and other civic educators on the topic of “Planning Civics K-12 with We the People.” This Webinar was hosted by the Massachusetts Civic Learning Coalition (MCLC). Over 70 people from around the Commonwealth joined us for the live webinar. Thanks to the MCLC, we can also provide you with a recording of the webinar (link above).

More about the webinar:

Civics serves as the backbone of the MA History and Social Science Curriculum Framework. It spans all the grades so that students will develop an understanding of civics and the motivation to engage in civic life at the earliest ages and support that learning throughout the full extent of each students’ academic career. Making this happen poses some challenges. What is a developmentally appropriate way to engage students in the early grades? How can we build an effective progression of content and skills as students advance through the grades? How can we best prepare students to succeed with the civics projects expected at grade 8 and high school? District administrators will join Roger Desrosiers, President of the Massachusetts Center for Civic Education, to share models developed by *We the People* and *Project Citizen* to address these challenges.

Many thanks to the teachers and administrators from across Massachusetts who collaborated with us on this webinar. Their efforts and presentations helped to display the diversity and curriculum at the heart of *We the People* and *Project Citizen*.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please feel free to contact MACCE at roger.desrosiers@masscivics.org

Best,

Roger Desrosiers, President of Massachusetts Center of Civic Education and
Massachusetts State Coordinator for ***We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution***
rodesros@gmail.com or roger.desrosiers@masscivics.org