



DEMOCRACY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE “CIVIC AUDIT FOR ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOLS”

- You are invited to establish a teacher team in your high school and become a model Illinois Democracy School.
- Each school in which a team of teachers participates is eligible to receive to \$3,000 for participation in all aspects of the pilot project.

The Illinois Civic Mission Coalition has developed and has begun field testing the “Civic Audit for Illinois High Schools.” The Audit, when completed, will provide teachers and principals a blueprint to better understand how current curriculum, service learning and extracurricular activities are providing civic learning experiences for their students. The Audit is a self-guided assessment tool in six parts.

The Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago is the convenor of the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition and is researching the variety of curricular approaches to civic learning in Illinois high schools.

The Coalition was formed to address the recommendations of the Civic Mission of Schools report issued in 2003 by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and the Carnegie Corporation of New York in, which found, among other things, that most young Americans have a poor understanding of representative democracy and their role in it. One of the conclusions reached is that “a richer, more comprehensive approach” to school-based civics education is important “...especially now, as our nation faces new and complex challenges including terrorism, war, and the forces of globalization and economic change.”

The Coalition believes that the development of an specific democracy course(s) for high school students that include a number of elements - classroom instruction,

extracurricular and service learning opportunities and simulation experiences - can be a way to make civics education richer and more comprehensive.

The Democracy School Initiative is a project of the Coalition. Democracy Schools are ones where the rights, obligations, and tensions of citizenship in a constitutional democracy are taught and where students explore America's historic ideals and principles and their relevance to problems and controversies that matter in the present. The synthesis of these objectives ideally would result in the creation of a specific democracy course. A democracy school is also one in which parents, students and the community collaborate to encourage and provide relevant extracurricular and service learning opportunities.

The "Civic Audit for Illinois High Schools" is being made available to schools throughout the metropolitan Chicago area as way to assist them in identifying existing opportunities for civic learning.

CRFC will provide a resource person to each school to assist completing the audit between mid-March and the end of the school year.

AUDIT PILOT PROJECT TIMELINE	2006
Applications due to CRFC	February 15 th
Audit implemented	March 10 th – end of school year
Completed audit returned to CRFC	June 16 th
Summer Institute	July 12 th – July 14 th
Official Democracy Schools announcement event	Fall (October or November)