

Dear Valued Teachers and Social Studies Coordinators:

Georgia iCivics was off-and-running in early 2017 and has continued with a full head of steam into the summer break, and we wanted to bring everyone the news of all the accomplishments and developments. iCivics continues to be recognized nationwide as one of the most powerful and successful learning platforms and continues to grow as a force in Georgia classrooms and communities! Recent developments regarding funding for training by the State Bar will make community, school district, and classroom teacher involvement and ownership of Georgia iCivics more important than ever, and we hope you will take full advantage of every opportunity available to you!

Happenings

- *New Partnerships!* Georgia iCivics has now partnered with Georgia Family Connection Partnership (GAFCP), a non-profit organization founded in 1991 with groups in every Georgia county, that utilizes data on community and family well-being in individual counties and works with community partners to bring funding and action together to achieve desired outcomes. (Go to: www.gafcp.org) The Georgia Legislature provides an annual appropriation to each Georgia county to support collaboration among multiple sectors, including among community and school leaders, to maximize resources and to help the community improve in needed areas. Recently GAFCP has turned its attention toward improving Georgia's "civic health" and recognizes that Georgia iCivics is an outstanding vehicle to do just that! In May, GAFCP published an article on its website and through social media on the benefits, accomplishments, and opportunities for improving Georgia's civic health that are offered through Georgia iCivics. (To read the article, please go to: <http://gafcp.org/2017/05/15/free-icivics-training/>)
- *Training!* In May and June we trained educators in the Canton-Cherokee County-Cobb County area, in the Dublin area, and in the Savannah-Chatham County area. All training was well-attended by teachers, RESA members, and GAFCP leaders. Also in June, Georgia iCivics Committee leaders met with Fayette County Superior Court Judge Jason Thompson, Fayette County School District leaders, GAFCP leaders and others to discuss implementing iCivics into Fayette County classrooms, use of attorney volunteers to assist in civics instruction, conducting Fayette County teacher training, and organizing an iCivics game competition for students in the county. With the help of civic leaders like Judge Thompson, Georgia iCivics will continue to grow, expand, and strengthen in Georgia!
- *Rave Reviews for iCivics in Georgia!* Recently, Gary Avelar, 8th grade social studies teacher and assistant basketball coach at Columbia Middle School in Grovetown, Georgia, was introduced to iCivics and "I was hooked." He then introduced his students to it and it was a hit! His students "gained a better understanding of the concepts" and "thoroughly enjoyed it as well." Gary plans on finding more ways to incorporate iCivics into his classroom teaching next school year. Way to go, Gary—keep up the great work and thanks for your feedback!
- *More Accolades for National iCivics!*
 - iCivics was the subject of Chapter 2 of the book *Power Play: How Video Games Can Save the World*, by Asi Burak and Laura Parker. While the book title may sound far-fetched, the book's chapter on iCivics details how former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, wanting

desperately to increase the civic knowledge and involvement in our nation, came up with the ideas with others of an interactive game platform as a way to make a “dry” topic interesting and engaging to students of all ages. The result of that desire, iCivics, now reaches more than 5 million students and is in use in all 50 states. Justice O’Connor called it “the most important thing I have ever done . . . more so even than serving 25 years on the highest court in this nation.” According to Power Play, more than just being widely utilized, iCivics has been shown both anecdotally and empirically to improve students’ understanding of civics and civics test scores.

- In part because of her work in creating iCivics, Justice O’Conner was named one of *TIME Magazine’s* 100 Most Influential People in 2017! What’s more, her tribute in *TIME* was written by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who joined the iCivics Board in 2015 to continue the Court’s commitment to help iCivics reach every student in America. (You can read the article here: <http://time.com/collection/2017-time-100/4736341/sandra-day-oconnor/>)
- The recognition continued with Louise Dube, Executive Director of iCivics, winning the 2017 DVF People’s Voice Award and \$50,000 to continue to reach iCivics’ goal of energizing children to get involved in their communities and the government by learning, in classes on civics, how they are structured and operate and thrive through “we the people.” Dube is one of five women recognized in 2017 by the Diane von Furstenberg and Diller von Furstenberg Family Foundation to recognize and support extraordinary women who are dedicated to transforming the lives of other women; women who have had the courage to fight, the power to survive, and the leadership to inspire.

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

- *Social Studies Expo 2017!* Preparations have begun for the iCivics presentation at the 53rd annual Georgia Council for Social Studies Conference to be held on Oct. 12-13 at the Classic Center in Athens, Ga! We will once again have a vendor booth and will make a classroom instruction presentation. Save the dates!
- *The House Will Study Civics Education!* The Georgia Legislature created The Civics Education Study Committee by HR 634, which was passed by the House without debate on March 30, the final day of the 2017 legislative session. The bill, sponsored by House Majority Whip Christian Coomer, an attorney from Cartersville, charges the study committee with “furthering Georgia’s students’ civic literacy” by reviewing state standards and making recommendations to the state Board of Education, State School Superintendent Richard Woods and others on what children should be taught. According to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, “Coomer, the House’s majority whip, said he decided to have the committee do homework on civics education. ‘The committee will look at, does the state of Georgia have sufficient curriculum for students to get a basic education in civics?’ he said. Georgia YMCA executive director Randell Trammell said civics education is overlooked, ‘It’s a serious issue,’ Trammell, founder of the Georgia Center for Civil Engagement, quickly added. The Georgia iCivics Committee hopes to introduce the Study Committee to the resources and benefits of iCivics which can be used to further the Legislature’s goals of improving civic literacy in Georgia.

- **Funding for Training Needed!** On July 1st of this year, the State Bar of Georgia discontinued its funding for iCivics training and outreach in Georgia. Fear not! The State Bar will continue to support iCivics with attorney volunteers and the State Bar iCivics Committee will continue to work with teachers, schools, districts, communities, and other leaders and organizations to bring iCivics and iCivics training to you. The iCivics Committee will be working with community and corporate leaders to raise funds for continued training and awareness on iCivics, and with partners like the Georgia Family Connection Partnership, we will no doubt be successful!
- **Reminder on Textbooks!** Textbooks are now a local matter in Georgia. There is no longer an approved list from the state and no longer textbook adoption fairs statewide. iCivics offers totally a free textbook resource for teachers. Keep www.iCivics.org in mind when exploring options for texts and teaching materials.
- **iCivics Educator Network!** iCivics continues to look for excited and engaged educators, curriculum developers, teacher trainers, and social studies and technology specialists who want to take their relationship with iCivics to the next level! Join our network of individuals across the country who are just as passionate about educating the next generation of citizens as we are. As an iCivics Educator Network member you will have opportunities to:
 - Participate in iCivics professional learning opportunities
 - Develop and lead teacher trainings
 - Write blog posts for iCivics.org
 - Respond to media requests
 - Test new iCivics products... and so much more. Sound fun? Apply Today! Visit <https://www.icivics.org/our-network>.
- **Sign Up Now!** When you sign up as a teacher on iCivics, you get timely updates on new teaching content, games, and contests for your students. Please be sure to go <https://www.icivics.org/register> to register today! Don't miss out!

Final Thoughts

As a reminder the iCivics Committee can also provide attorneys in the classroom to assist teachers in setting up gaming competitions or help with lesson plans. This can be done on any day during the school year that fits in with a block of your instruction. Please let us know if you want us to provide this for you.

Thank you for all that you do for our children and our communities. Please let us know how you are using iCivics and your successes in doing so as this helps us in advocating for continued support of Georgia iCivics.

"The practice of democracy is not passed down through the gene pool. It must be taught and learned anew by each generation of citizens." -Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

Warmest Regards,
Evelyn Fletcher Davis
Chair, iCivics Committee