

Dear Valued Social Studies Educators:

Georgia iCivics continues to work hard in Georgia this summer and fall, weathering heat and hurricanes alike, and we wanted to bring everyone the news of all the recent 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!

### Happenings

- The 53rd Annual Georgia Council for Social Studies Conference was held on October 12-13 at the Classic Center in Athens, Ga. More than 700 educators and friends of social studies chose from an array of keynote and breakout sessions about “Inspiring Excellence Through Inquiry,” the theme for the 2017 conference. In addition to our iCivics display in the vendor hall, Dr. Jane Brailsford, iCivics Master Trainer, presented a mini-session: “Trigger Students’ Curiosity for Civics and American Government with iCivics” in the main hall. New and veteran users of iCivics came to the presentation and to the iCivics table to find out what is new for teachers and students on the iCivics.org website. Volunteers Kathy O’Neal and Sunny Rogers from the Georgia Family Connection Partnership, (GaFCP), Judge Dorothy Beasley, and attorney Todd Alley helped introduce teachers to iCivics and discussed how members of the State Bar of Georgia are available as classroom speakers on topics the teacher chooses and how teachers can sign up to have a local lawyer available for their school or classroom. More than 175 educators stopped by the iCivics vendor table to pick up materials and talk about iCivics and the opportunities for free training and for the State Bar of Georgia Speakers Bureau for schools across the state. Ninety-Seven of them signed up to connect with us and to receive the newsletter. Another mega-success for Georgia’s social studies teaching community and iCivics! Funding was provided by the Georgia Bar Foundation and Georgia Center for Civic Engagement.
- US Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor is now a champion of iCivics! She has appeared with retired Justice O’Connor to speak on iCivics and was slated to come to Emory University in September for a public discussion on the topic, but unfortunately the event was postponed due to hurricane complications. Justice Sotomayor wrote the tribute to Justice O’Connor, largely regarding her work on iCivics, in Time Magazine’s article of the 100 Most Influential People. We expect Justice Sotomayor to reschedule her event at Emory and will keep you posted!
- New Georgia Standards of Excellence: There exists a correlation between iCivics and the new Georgia Standards of Excellence that can be immediately used and implemented by teachers. This can be found at:  
<https://www.icivics.org/search/teachers?authority=292595&strand=292596&grade=292597>.
- 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](http://www.iCivics.org) in mind when exploring options for texts and teaching materials and tell others about iCivics.
- Georgia Center for Civic Engagement (Dr. Randell Trammell) on “CiviKids” for grades 2-5. In anticipation of upcoming collaboration with the Georgia Center for Civic Engagement (GCCE), Dr.

Randell Trammell briefed the Committee on GCCE's 100-year history and ongoing work as related to coordinating directly with the State Department of Education in several respects. GCCE has conducted a precursor program for elementary schools which could feed and complement the iCivics program. The GCCE and Dr. Trammell will be outstanding partners with iCivics!

### **Update from Our iCivics Partners at the Georgia Family Connection Partnership (GaFCP)**

GaFCP is proud to be partnering with the iCivics Committee to make training opportunities available for educators and community partners in all 159 Georgia counties. With existing partners in every county, GaFCP hopes to help the Committee expand teachers' access to the training, as well as introduce iCivics to new users, such as after-school, scouting, and GED program participants.

The most recent training took place in September, when 10 educators from Salem, Heritage, and Rockdale high schools and the Rockdale Career Academy were trained on the iCivics curriculum and learned about opportunities to collaborate with other community members, including volunteer lawyers and after-school program leaders, to expand students' civic knowledge.

GaFCP has been working to improve Georgia's civic health since 2013, when they co-authored the first-ever Georgia Civic Health Index. The data in that publication showed that Georgia's civic health, on average, is lower than the national average on most metrics. By partnering to expand the use of iCivics in classrooms and in other community settings, GaFCP hopes to expand civic knowledge, which could lead to improved civic participation in the future. GaFCP is also working with local Family Connection Collaboratives and communities to collect county-level data, assess local trends, and implement targeted strategies to improve civic health. So far, that work is taking place in Bibb, Camden, Cook, Fayette, Stephens, and Washington counties. In partnership with the National Conference on Citizenship, GaFCP also hopes to release a second edition of the statewide Georgia Civic Health Index in 2018. For more information on GaFCP's local civic health work or the Georgia Civic Health Index, contact Rebecca Rice at [rebecca@gafcp.org](mailto:rebecca@gafcp.org).

- Of particular importance to the Committee is the Partnership's willingness to provide its staff to be trained in iCivics, who can then spread the iCivics word at no expense to this Committee. Kathy O'Neal, a mostly-retired GaFCP trainer with high interest in increasing civics education for all Georgians, is the prime candidate to help deliver iCivics trainings statewide, and to help teach others at GaFCP to lead the trainings. The Partnership is also creating a Georgia iCivics training manual to help provide consistency as new trainers are added to the ranks. With partners in all 159 counties in Georgia, GaFCP plans to begin their training efforts with the six cohort counties who are already working to improve their communities' civic health: Bibb, Camden, Cook, Fayette, Stephens, and Washington counties. To schedule an iCivics training through GaFCP, contact Kathy O'Neal at [kgo333@cox.net](mailto:kgo333@cox.net) and copy me at [edavis@hptylaw.com](mailto:edavis@hptylaw.com).
- We are pleased to report that the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Bar Foundation [Len Horton - Executive Director, Georgia Bar Foundation, and Katherine (Kitty) Cohen of Eversheds Sutherland] overwhelmingly approved Georgia iCivics Committee's request for funding to enable Dr. Jane Brailsford to attend and train at the Social Studies Expo! We will be applying for a Fellows grant

from the Georgia Bar Foundation in the new year as well. We cannot thank the Georgia Bar Foundation, Len Horton, Kitty Cohen and The Georgia Center for Civic Engagement enough for their generous support of iCivics!!

- A meeting was held on June 28, 2017, in Fayette County hosted by Judge Jason Thompson, State Court Judge for Fayette County State Court, with the following members in attendance: Elizabeth Turner from Georgia Family Connection Partnership (GAFCP) Becky Ryckley from the Fayette County School System, Evelyn Davis and Shiriki Cavitt. We kicked off the meeting with introductions and then Judge Thompson offered to serve as the liaison between the School System and the iCivics Committee to assist in getting the word out about the iCivics program (in particular the volunteer portion of the program) and also to serve as a primary point person for gathering attorneys or at least to send out emails and other correspondence to solicit volunteers in Fayette County to serve as volunteers in the classrooms. We also discussed working on a date for training and potentially planning an iCivics gaming competition for some of the students where we would get local attorneys to help plan a celebratory event for the winners of the competition. We also discussed whether there could be the option for organizing some sessions with local volunteer attorneys to volunteer and interact with the different organizations like the Boys and Girls Club or the various gifted programs in the Fayette School System (e.g. interacting with the debate teams or other student groups with specialized interests in civic activities). Great things are happening in Fayette County!
- Training in Rockdale County: Nine Rockdale County 9th-grade government teachers from three high schools (Heritage, Rockdale, and Salem HS), and 1 staff member from the Rockdale Career Academy attended iCivics training on Sept. 19 at the Rockdale Career Academy in Conyers. Training and discussions were held on: Overview of Civic Health data in Georgia and the need for civics education; the importance of civics education; using iCivics and getting acquainted with the resources; all the upgrades in iCivics; and use of technology for the classroom. Impressions from the educators in attendance: kids need to know where they fit in; kids need to understand government, not just math and sciences; important to have active voice; will be voting soon - need to be informed; need to know history and how things have developed and how to change things that need to be changed. Lots of good work in and invaluable feedback from Rockdale County!

### **Upcoming Events and Opportunities**

- 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 Bar Foundation, Georgia Center for Civic Engagement, and the Georgia Family Connection Partnership, we will no doubt be successful! We welcome any ideas for funding sources, so please let us know.
- 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 and award ceremonies 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. Additionally, let us know if you would like training.

*“A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to Farce or Tragedy or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own Governors must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives.” -James Madison, 1765*

Warmest Regards,  
Evelyn Fletcher Davis  
Chair, iCivics Committee