

Summary of Public Comments Received on the Current NAEP Civics Framework April 2026

In accordance with the Board policy on [Assessment Framework Development](#), the Governing Board conducted a public comment period on the NAEP Civics Assessment Framework to seek broad input upfront on whether and how the current framework should be updated. The comment window was open from February 13 – March 27, 2026. Commenters were asked to address three questions:

1. Does the NAEP Civics Assessment Framework need to be updated?
2. If the framework needs to be updated, why is a revision needed?
3. What should a revision to the framework include?

The purpose of seeking public comment upfront is to surface a broad range of views related to a given subject at the outset of the framework development process. This initial comment then can inform Board policy guidance and the selection of participants to represent multiple perspectives on the issues that are most relevant to the update.

Thirty-eight submissions were received from organizations and individuals. A summary of major themes is included below; the raw comments are available in a separate attachment.

Organizational Contributors

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (1)
Bill of Rights Institute (2)
Center for Civic Education (3)
Cicero Institute (4)
Defending Education (5)
Democratic Knowledge Project – Learn (DKP-Learn), Harvard University (6)
The Education Trust (edtrust) (7)
The Educating for American Democracy (EAD) Steering Committee (8)
Hawai'i Commission to Promote and Advance Civic Education (PACE) (9)
iCivics (10)
Illinois Civic Mission Coalition (11)
National Association of Scholars (NAS) and Civics Alliance (12)
National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (13)
The News Literacy Project (14)
Rock the Vote (15)
South Carolina Department of Education (16)
West Virginia Department of Education (17)

Individual Contributors (and Affiliations)

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Applegarth, Dennis	Nebraska School Board Resource Center (19)
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Fakoya, Elizabeth	<i>Affiliation not provided</i> (23)
Gardner, Tracy	<i>Affiliation not provided</i> (24)
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Rose, David	The American Civics Academy (33)
Rude, Hannah	<i>Affiliation not provided</i> (34)
Saavedra, Anna Volic, Ismar	Center for Civic Society, University of Southern California Wellesley College; Institute for Mathematics and Democracy (35)
Schulzki, Anton	National Council for the Social Studies (36)
Schwarzkopf, Sandra	<i>Affiliation not provided</i> (37)
Tinder, Rebecca	West Virginia Civic Education Foundation (38)

Summary

All 38 submitted comments recommended some level of revision for the NAEP Civics Framework, although the extent of proposed changes varied. Several commenters noted that much of the current framework is still relevant but that some revisions were needed for many different reasons, including to account for changes in civics education, digital information environments, student experiences, and the nation’s civic landscape since the current framework was developed in 1996. General themes that emerged across several comments are included below; however, this summary is not intended to be exhaustive of all issues that were raised in the raw comments.

Media and Information Literacy

Twenty of the 38 submitted comments explicitly addressed media and information literacy. Most comments noted that digital media, algorithms, misinformation, and artificial intelligence (AI) now shape civic life. Although there was broad agreement that media and information literacy matters, there was some disagreement about its scope and place in the NAEP framework.

Many commentors stressed that civic readiness in 2026 requires the ability to evaluate the credibility and purpose of information, distinguish journalism from opinion or propaganda, and recognize misinformation and manipulated content, skills they describe as essential for democratic participation in an era of information saturation. Several commentors called for deeper treatment of news literacy, including understanding the role of a free press, ethical journalism, and the mechanisms by which algorithms shape public discourse. Others highlighted that students must navigate not only media literacy but also data literacy, noting that modern civic arguments are often grounded in statistics that can be misleading without the ability to analyze and contextualize data. Taken together, the comments present an argument for NAEP to explicitly incorporate media and information literacy to ensure the assessment reflects the realities of contemporary civic engagement. However, there was also general caution in some comments about anything that could be used to promote ideological interpretations and encourage drift from the constitutional core of the framework.

Specific comments received on this topic include the following excerpts:

- “Today’s students navigate a civic environment shaped by rapid technological change and new forms of information exchange. Topics such as digital literacy, the saturation of social media in everyday life, and the proliferation of artificial intelligence are now central to how students across the country encounter civic information and engage with democratic institutions.” (1)
- “Students should be assessed on their capacity to evaluate the credibility of public and political information, identify bias and misinformation, and understand the role of media in a free society. This inclusion should remain nonpartisan and grounded in the skills of evidence-based reasoning and civic analysis.” (3)
- “The growth of misinformation has had clear impacts on civics education.” (7)
- “The ability to navigate information is now inseparable from civic participation. Students who cannot evaluate the credibility of a source, recognize manipulation in digital content, or distinguish fact from opinion are poorly equipped to engage in public life regardless of how well they understand constitutional structure. An updated NAEP framework should treat these skills as core components of civic competence, not supplementary additions. Assessing them is not a politically charged proposition; it is a recognition of what civic readiness actually requires in the world students already inhabit.” (9)
- “The framework should include.... Energetic significance applied to information literacy, the impact of digital technology, and the influence of information landscapes on how people engage in and interact with civic issues and institutions.” (10)
- “Massachusetts’ 2018 framework includes dedicated news/media literacy standards at grade 8, requiring students to evaluate digital information, distinguish news from opinion, and assess source credibility. Illinois’ 2022 standards embed source evaluation across

all complexity levels, asking students to determine credibility ‘based upon their origin, authority, and context’. The NAEP framework has no equivalent.” (11)

- “In a world where misinformation and disinformation increase, a central priority for any revision should be the inclusion of media and information literacy as a core dimension of civic competence. Students must be prepared to assess the credibility of information, distinguish fact from opinion, and engage responsibly in digital civic spaces. Strengthening this dimension of the framework is essential to supporting informed and effective participation in democratic life.” (13)
- “We strongly encourage the Board to consider expanding and deepening the framework’s treatment of news literacy – particularly the role of a free and independent press in American democracy and the standards of quality journalism. The current framework calls for relevant intellectual and participatory skills. It also should include an understanding of the need for professional and ethical standards in the practice of quality journalism. Students can then apply this knowledge when determining for themselves the credibility of information and sources.” (14)
- “Students today must navigate a digital landscape characterized by a high volume of information and increasingly automated systems that influence how civic content is produced, distributed, and encountered. As a result, the ability to evaluate civic information critically, to distinguish fact from opinion, assess the credibility of sources, recognize misleading or synthetic content, and engage in evidence based civic reasoning, has become an essential civic competency.” (17, 22)
- “The framework...should include knowledge, skills, and dispositions that highlight the importance of media and information literacy, including evaluating sources and navigating misinformation.” (21)
- “Students are now inundated with misinformation, partisan bias, and algorithm-driven content, making it essential that civic education emphasizes critical evaluation of information, evidence-based reasoning, and media literacy.” (23)
- “The framework should intentionally include modern elements such as media and information literacy.” (25)
- “We also need to develop source analysis and source argumentation skills to evaluate the strength and credibility of the information that we are consuming.” (26)
- “The framework should include competencies related to: evaluating digital and media sources; understanding misinformation and algorithmic influence; and navigating competing truth claims in public discourse. These are now central to civic participation but are not explicitly emphasized in the current framework.” (27)
- “It is important that the revised framework measure young people’s information literacy, sometimes referred to as media literacy. Today, all of us have access to tremendous amounts of information that shape our understanding of public issues (and other things),

and this information has a tremendous impact on our ability to have civic participation and discourse. As we see all too often, misinformation and disinformation spread quickly and affect public sentiment on various issues. Therefore, including measures of information literacy or media literacy on NAEP Civics is an important goal.” (29)

- “Students today must navigate a digital landscape saturated with information, partisan distortion, and algorithmically curated content. The ability to evaluate civic information critically, distinguish fact from opinion, determine authentic from manufactured, and engage in evidence-based civic reasoning are now core civic competencies tied to media and information literacy.” (34, 38)
- “I believe that our students should be taught that civics include knowledge, skills, and dispositions that highlight the importance of media and information literacy, including evaluating sources and navigating misinformation.” (36)
- “Data literacy must be recognized as a distinct and essential civic skill in any updated framework; not as a subset of media literacy, but as its own foundational competency.... Media literacy asks: Where did this come from, and can I trust the source? Data literacy asks: What does this evidence actually prove and what does it not prove?” (37)

Constitutional Foundations

Fifteen of the 38 submitted comments explicitly addressed the importance of constitutional knowledge and foundations of the framework, either stating that it should be preserved or strengthened in the framework revision.

Commenters repeatedly emphasized that understanding the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and core constitutional principles such as separation of powers, federalism, natural rights, the rule of law, and consent of the governed is indispensable for civic literacy. Some argued that these principles must not only remain central but be made more explicit, with clearer articulation of the philosophical and historical foundations of the American political system. Some commentors also called for students to reason directly from primary constitutional sources, explaining claims, connecting evidence to structures like checks and balances, and understanding why the Constitution’s mechanisms were designed as they were.

A few commenters further stressed that constitutional knowledge is the prerequisite for all other civic competencies and should anchor civic reasoning, civic participation, and assessments. They urged NAEP to reinforce the Constitution as the “conceptual spine” of the framework, arguing that applied constitutional understanding is “more essential than ever” in a polarized and digitally complex era.

Specific comments received on this topic include the following excerpts:

- “A revised framework would benefit from making constitutional principles more explicit as the conceptual spine across content areas. Doing so would not expand the scope of the

assessment, but would improve coherence and clarity, helping ensure that what is measured reflects the underlying logic of the constitutional system.” (2)

- “Preserve and strengthen the constitutional and foundational knowledge core.... It’s grounding in constitutional democracy – the historical and philosophical foundations of the Constitution, separation of powers, federalism, individual rights and responsibilities, the rule of law, and the responsibilities of citizenship – must remain central and non-negotiable.... Any revision that diminishes the framework’s commitment to deep constitutional knowledge would be a profound step backward at exactly the moment when that knowledge is most needed.” (3)
- “The NAEP Civics Assessment should focus entirely on measuring what students know about the foundations of the American political system, the United States Constitution, and the fundamental principles and ideas that underlie our republican form of government.” (5)
- “The existing framework’s emphasis on constitutional principles, the structure of government, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship remains essential and should be preserved.” (9)
- “The Framework should include the following: Foundations and Origins – Sustained focus on Intellectual origins (e.g., Locke) and the inspiration for/formation of a self-governing society; the Declaration of Independence, American values, and their evolving meanings; and founding tensions through the analysis of the Federalist Papers and the debates that shaped the early republic.” (10)
- “Despite its age, the NAEP Civics Framework retains meaningful alignment with modern state standards in several foundational areas. All three frameworks [NAEP, Massachusetts, and Illinois] place the **U.S. Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and Bill of Rights** at the center of civics education. (11)
- “Civics education should include, as primary categories, knowledge of our foundational documents of liberty (e.g., the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution), as well as of their intellectual sources. It also should focus upon America’s constitutional history. The NAEP Civics Assessment Framework should be updated to add these as primary categories of testable knowledge.” (12, 30)
- “A revised NAEP Civics Framework should preserve and strengthen its commitment to constitutional knowledge while also creating space to assess civic reasoning, discourse, and participation.” (18)
- “Applied knowledge of constitutional principles is increasingly vital for informed citizenship and an understanding of today’s political landscape. Foundational concepts such as separation of powers, federalism, natural rights, the rule of law, and the responsibilities of citizenship warrant sustained instructional attention and meaningful assessment. The framework should more explicitly reinforce its commitment to cultivating deep and enduring constitutional understanding.” (22)

- “An updated framework should preserve and strengthen its constitutional foundation while expanding how civic competencies are assessed.” (23)
- “Within the domain addressing the foundations of the American political system, the framework would benefit from more explicit articulation of core first principles. These include: the concept of natural or unalienable rights; the principle of consent of the governed; the purpose of government as the protection of rights; the distinction between liberty and license; the logic of limited government, including delegated and enumerated powers. These ideas are essential to understanding the architecture of the American constitutional system. Making them explicit within the framework would strengthen construct clarity and ensure consistent interpretation in item development.” (24)
- “A renewed civic education framework must remain firmly anchored in the enduring principles of the United States Constitution while deepening students’ understanding of how those principles function in a modern democracy. This includes a strong commitment to constitutional knowledge – such as the structure and functions of government, the protections of the Bill of Rights, and the philosophical foundations of constitutional democracy.” (25)
- “Any updated framework must maintain its commitment to deep knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the structure and functions of government, and the foundational principles of constitutional democracy. General grasp of the basics of civics is still ‘very weak’ amongst Americans so strengthening the constitutional knowledge core will reinforce the value of teaching these foundational concepts. The challenges and responsibilities of citizenship in the 21st century need to be added to the framework which in turn will strengthen foundational knowledge. Students should be able to recognize when governmental actions deviate from constitutional principles. (34)
- “Preserve and strengthen the constitutional **knowledge** core. Any updated framework must maintain its commitment to deep knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the structure and functions of government, and the foundational principles of constitutional democracy.” (38)

Political Ideology and Consensus in the Framework Process and Documents

Eleven of the 38 submitted comments directly referenced the importance of nonpartisanship in the process and products of the NAEP framework revision. Overall, the comments reflected a debate over how the NAEP Civics Assessment Framework should be revised, with commenters across the spectrum calling for a process that preserves nonpartisanship, avoids ideological bias, and maintains the integrity and credibility of NAEP. There was strong disagreement, however, with what constitutes “politicization” and “ideological bias” with contradictory examples and calls for groups and issues to embrace versus avoid.

Specific comments received on this topic include the following excerpts:

- “The NAEP Civics Assessment must continue to avoid ideological bias and reflect broad national consensus about the knowledge and skills required for citizenship in a constitutional democracy. Assessment items should measure reasoning, analysis, and applied understanding and not ideological alignment. The assessment must also counter the pull of presentism, or measuring more narrow knowledge of present day issues, and instead give every effort to measure enduring principles that can frame any contemporary topic in an evergreen manner. The nonpartisan credibility of NAEP is one of its most important civic assets, and it should be vigorously protected in the revision process.” (3)
- “All participants should... pledg[e] to conduct the revision in good faith, pledging to deliver a final product that is free of political bias and divisive ideologies. To this end, we recommend that NAGB reject consultants and reviewers from organizations that openly support identity politics and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives...” (5)
- “[T]he Board should hold firm to its own policies ensuring a balanced process and resist pressure to minimize its own independence and align the framework with the narrow ideological position of [certain] organizations.... The Nation’s Report Card in civics can be a powerful tool for understanding how well we are preparing the next generation as an engaged populace, but only if the framework behind it is honest and inclusive.” (7)
- “*The Roadmap to Educating for American Democracy* (2021)... [was created using an] extensive, philosophically pluralist, and deliberative process (involving more than 300 people)... [The EAD Roadmap] tells a full and complete narrative of America’s plural, yet shared story; that analyzes and celebrates the compromise needed to make our constitutional democracy work; that cultivates civic honesty and reflective patriotism that leaves space to both love and critique this country.” (8)
- “The existing NAEP Civics Assessment Framework has been **politicized**, above all by aligning with ‘action civics’ – vocational training in progressive activism that replaces classroom civics education. The NAEP Civics Assessment Framework currently measures student knowledge of *intellectual skills*, *participatory skills*, *civic dispositions*, and *civic skills*. All these phrases serve as euphemisms for action civics. [The framework] also reveals politicization by radical language, such as: referring to America as a *constitutional democracy* or a *democracy* rather than as a *republic*; and referring to patriotic language and symbols by the dismissive adjective *emotional*. The NAEP Civics Assessment Framework should be updated to remove all politicized language and all alignment with politicized pedagogy.” (12, 30)
- “NCSS underscores the importance of maintaining a broad, inclusive, and nonpartisan vision of civic education. The NAEP Civics Framework plays a significant role in shaping how civic learning is understood nationally. It is essential that the framework reflect the complexity of democratic life and avoid narrowing civics to a limited or ideologically driven conception of citizenship.” (13)

- “NAGB should ensure that the NAEP Civics Assessment Framework includes no politicized language or content. For example: refer to the United States exclusively as a *republic*, never as a *constitutional democracy* or a *democracy*; refer to *patriotic* language and symbols, not *emotional* language and symbols; include no material that aligns with action civics, including *service-learning*. Carefully inspect language referring to *volunteering, building coalitions, advocating, deliberating on public issues, holding public officials accountable, petitioning, and participating in civic and advocacy groups*, to see if it euphemizes action civics; seek the best civics education rather than a ‘broad consensus,’ since the ‘broad consensus’ now includes dedicated proponents of politicizing civics education; define *equality* exclusively as *equality of opportunity*, so as to avoid giving countenance to the oppressive ideology of equity; craft the framework without worrying about *bias* or *contextual information*, since these frequently serve as euphemisms for politicized content and pedagogy.” (30, 12)
- “For years, American students have been subjected to a uniformly negative view of their country, her institutions and history. NAEP is obligated to create structures that are objective, non-politicized, and historically accurate. A nation that fails to imbue its young people with a love of country, despite its shortcomings, is a nation that commits suicide. The new NAEP Civics Framework should not contribute to this disheartening self-destruction.” (32)
- “[T]he oppression thesis is clearly a means of promulgating a political position for which there is no compelling theory or evidence. There are, in contrast, very strong theoretical arguments and ample empirical evidence that the West and America were built by cooperation.... [I]t is national suicide to continue to pretend that there is nothing wrong with the curricular content of American civics education and related disciplines like history and political science. The oppression thesis is actively undermining the very goals of civics education.” (33)
- “I believe.... most importantly, that all civics classes maintain a broad, inclusive, and nonpartisan vision of civic education. I would hope that the NAEP Civics framework would reflect these points.” (36)
- “We should all support the goal of a broad, inclusive, and nonpartisan vision of civic education. Teaching students to ask what evidence proves, who is represented in data, and what a number actually means is not a partisan act. It is the most foundational act of democratic preparation we can offer.” (37)

Application of Content Knowledge Including Skills, Dispositions, and Civic Participation

Twenty-six of the 38 comments discussed some aspect of the application of content knowledge, including assessment of skills, dispositions, and/or civic participation. Many commenters argued that the existing skills and dispositions in the framework should be preserved or strengthened, but some expressed concerns about the susceptibility to politicization when straying from strict measurement of content knowledge. There was

strong support for the importance of civic participation but a lack of consensus about how to capture such participation in an assessment.

Specific comments received on this topic include the following excerpts:

- “The Civic Dispositions section of the NAEP Civics Assessment Framework may be a particularly appropriate place to address...topics such as digital literacy, the saturation of social media in everyday life, and the proliferation of artificial intelligence.” (1)
- “While large-scale assessment cannot directly measure participation, it can assess whether students understand how civil society functions, the role of voluntary associations in a constitutional republic, and the norms that sustain productive civic collaboration.” (2)
- “*Elevate participatory and deliberative competencies with authentic assessment dimensions.* The framework should develop innovative assessment approaches for civic participation skills – including the ability to identify public problems, research and evaluate policy alternatives, engage governmental processes, and deliberate constructively across differences to build consensus.” (3)
- “[T]he framework’s emphasis on ‘participatory skills’ and ‘action civics’ puts the cart before the horse. Civic knowledge must precede civic action. The revised framework should focus squarely on measuring students’ understanding of the Constitution, the principles of republican self-government, and the nation’s foundational documents – not on assessing activist dispositions.” (4)
- “[T]he revised NAEP Civics Assessment Framework should eliminate questions that focus on ‘participatory skills,’ also known as ‘action civics.’ On the surface, the participatory skills component is a well-intentioned effort to encourage children and young adults to exercise their constitutional rights in the public sphere responsibly. Yet, this aspect of the framework puts the proverbial cart before the horse.” (5)
- “The NAEP exam addresses knowledge, skills, and dispositions. We think the first two are particularly important in a national exam, while the last might be better left to the states, in order to support a pluralism of views about how to approach civic dispositions.” (6)
- “[The framework should reflect] the breadth of civic knowledge and engagement that matters to diverse state constituencies.... [others have] urged NAGB to align the framework with specific ideological curricula... and to strip participatory and ‘action civics’ from the framework entirely. The suggestion is that civics should be learned but not practiced.” (7)
- “The NAEP framework should include a domain that addresses civic discourse, encompassing students’ ability to engage with perspectives different from their own, to articulate reasoned disagreement respectfully, and to participate in structured deliberation.” (9)

- The framework should include.... **Informed and Engaged Civic Participation:** Energetic significance applied to information literacy, the impact of digital technology, and the influence of information landscapes on how people engage in and interact with civic issues and institutions; the dispositions and principles required for cultivating a commitment to democratic forms of government; and comparative governance and America’s role in an interconnected world. (10)
- “A defining feature of both the C3 Framework and Illinois’ 2022 standards is Dimension 4: **Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action**. This requires students to apply their civic learning by participating in democratic processes – such as deliberating, presenting arguments to external audiences, and implementing civic actions in school or community settings.” (11)
- “[A revision of the framework should]: *Remove Questions on Participatory Skills and Civic Dispositions.... Remove Inquiry Format.... Reform Civic Participation Category:* The current category ‘What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?’ focuses excessively on how citizens should influence government or hold government to account. While this matters, it underplays tests on how citizens can *participate* in government – as aldermen and mayors, as school board members and judges, as jurors and members of the National Guard, as policemen, firemen, and members of the Border Patrol. At least half the questions in this category should focus on different forms of civic participation in government. This category also should include questions on civil society, including assessment of knowledge of *Robert’s Rules of Order*.” (12, 30)
- “[T]he framework [should] reflect the importance of inquiry, real-world application, and local civic engagement.” (13)
- “[T]he updated framework should reflect the knowledge students need to understand how government functions and how to participate in it effectively.” (15)
- “The framework’s attention to civic dispositions should reflect students’ capacity for civil discourse and civic engagement. Students should be prepared to engage respectfully with others, consider multiple viewpoints, and participate thoughtfully in civic life consistent with the norms of a constitutional republic.” (16)
- “[A] revised NAEP Civics Framework should...create[e] space to assess civic reasoning, discourse, and participation. An assessment focused primarily on content knowledge provides an incomplete picture of student learning.” (18)
- “Assess civic participation skills, not just knowledge recall. The framework should create opportunities to assess students’ capacity to identify public problems, evaluate policy alternatives, engage governmental processes, and deliberate across perspectives.” (22, 38)
- “Equally important is the connection between civic knowledge and civic participation.... [it is important to] move beyond memorization to genuinely applying constitutional

principles in high-level discussions, defending positions, and responding to questioning with depth and confidence.” (23)

- **“Maintain the Boundary Against Assessing Personal Beliefs While Expanding Knowledge of Civic Virtue.** The framework rightly avoids assessing students’ personal values or political positions. That boundary should remain firm. At the same time, the framework can assess students’ understanding of why civic dispositions such as respectful deliberation, adherence to lawful processes, civic responsibility, and informed participation are considered important in a constitutional republic. The focus should remain on knowledge and explanation rather than endorsement.” (24)
- “[T]he framework must move beyond memorization to assess civic participation skills. Students should be able to identify public problems, evaluate policy alternatives, engage in governmental processes, and deliberate across diverse perspectives.” (25)
- “Reframe Civic Dispositions in a Pluralistic Manner. Civic dispositions should be reconceptualized to reflect: Respect for disagreement; Capacity to engage across difference; Recognition of competing conceptions of the common good.” (27)
- “A revised NAEP Civics Assessment Framework should incorporate inquiry-based elements from the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework. This includes assessing students’ ability to develop questions, evaluate sources, use evidence to construct arguments, and apply their learning to real-world civic issues.” (31)
- “*Civic knowledge and civic participation are inseparable....* The framework should reflect what recent research has demonstrated in the regards to the development of civic knowledge and skill are mutually reinforcing.” (34)
- “[C]ivics include[s] knowledge, skills, and dispositions that highlight the importance of media and information literacy, including evaluating sources and navigating misinformation.” (36)
- “I strongly urge the National Assessment Governing Board to: Assess students’ capacity to construct civic arguments from evidence, not merely to identify whether a source is credible; Affirm real-world civic engagement and inquiry-based project learning as legitimate expressions of civic knowledge, not peripheral enrichment activities.” (37)

Contexts and Stimuli

Fifteen of the 38 submitted comments addressed the contexts and/or stimuli of the assessment content. Several commenters argued that the assessment contexts of the NAEP Civics Framework must be modernized to reflect the profound shifts in how Americans access information, participate in civic life, and experience democratic institutions. Some argued that “authentic” assessment contexts should mirror real civic scenarios, ensuring that the assessment measures how students apply civic

understanding in the world they actually inhabit. Other commenters stated that the current framework already allows too much leeway for assessment stimuli and that the revision should instead include only primary sources and historical documents to avoid political ideology.

Specific comments received on this topic include the following excerpts:

- “While the core principles of civic knowledge remain unchanged, the contexts in which students apply them have shifted significantly. The Civics Dispositions section of the NAEP Civics Assessment Framework may be a particularly appropriate place to address these developments. Expanding this section to incorporate competencies related to evaluating digital information, understanding the influence of AI, and engaging constructively in a polarized civic climate would better reflect the realities students face today. These additions would ensure the assessment remains relevant and would not require restructuring the framework’s foundational concepts.” (1)
- “*Reflect contemporary forms of civic participation while anchoring in enduring democratic processes.* The framework should recognize evolving forms of civic engagement, especially in the digital space, while maintaining emphasis on the foundational processes of constitutional democracy: voting, jury service, petitioning, community problem-solving, and deliberation in the public sphere.” (3)
- “The NAEP Civics framework’s stated focus on employing ‘authentic stimulus materials’ produces pedantic distractions that are counterproductive to the task of authentically measuring civic knowledge. There is no need for test items to feature an ‘exciting array of materials,’ such as newspaper articles, hypothetical cases, sample ballots, real-world scenarios, or song lyrics. Obviously, younger generations and middle-aged standardized testing writers seldom agree on what constitutes ‘exciting’ fodder for a test question, a disconnect that creates more problems than it solves.” (5)
- “[Since 1998,] civic life in the United States has changed in ways the current framework cannot capture. Americans access political information through starkly different sources and formats.” (7)
- “Assessment items grounded in authentic civic contexts (a local zoning debate, a contested ballot measure, a community response to a public health decision) would test not just what students know but whether they can transfer that knowledge to situations that look like actual civic life.” (9)
- “The Framework should strive to reflect the evolving demographic composition of our nation’s K-12 student population so that all students can see themselves and feel proud of our history and progress.... The Framework should move beyond an individualistic frame of participation toward community service and collaborative problem-solving. The span of options for informed participation should include not just following the news, voting, and contacting public officials, but also, for example, working with a faith-based youth group or a school-based affinity club to advance a cause that students consider important.” (10)

- “The framework envisions civic participation through traditional mechanisms – voting, attending public meetings, writing letters, and joining organizations. It does not account for modern forms of civic engagement such as online petitions, social media advocacy, digital organizing, crowdfunding for civic causes, or engaging with government through digital platforms.” (11)
- “*Confine Text-based Stimulus Materials to Historical Examples*: The current NAEP Civics Assessment Framework now allows text-based stimulus materials to include contemporary documents. This allows questions that align with action civics: ‘For example, students may be asked to take a position regarding a community planning issue after examining a map and reading about the proposed change.’ Text-based stimulus materials only should include historical documents, which allow no prompts for action civics.” (12, 30)
- “Students should have opportunities to engage with authentic public issues, apply their knowledge in meaningful contexts, and develop the habits of participation that sustain pluralistic democratic societies.” (13)
- “[The framework should include] use of modern civic scenarios in assessment contexts, ensuring that test items reflect realistic conditions under which citizens learn about issues, deliberate, and make judgments, while maintaining NAEP’s neutral and nonpartisan stance.” (17)
- “**Incorporate contemporary civic content where evidence supports it.** The newly updated fifth edition of *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* modernizes civic content by expanding attention to contemporary civic participation, media and information literacy in civic contexts, and the impact of technology on democratic processes – while preserving a strong constitutional foundation. This work can serve as a useful model and resource for revising the NAEP framework.” (22)
- “**Elevate Primary-Source Reasoning as an Explicit Expectation.** The framework appropriately supports the use of text-based stimuli. However, it would be beneficial to make explicit that students should be able to reason directly from foundational civic documents.”
- “*Misalignment with Contemporary Civic Learning Contexts.* The current framework emphasizes general categories of knowledge and participation but does not adequately address how civic understanding is shaped in a highly mediated, polarized, and institutionally constrained environments. Research increasingly shows that civic learning is not simply an individual cognitive outcome, but the product of interactions among teachers, institutions, and broader ideological contexts.” (27)
- “*Include diverse civic voices.* Authentic sources should reflect the full range of communities in the United States and represent diverse civic voices.... Students should have opportunities to examine the multiple ways individuals and groups express their

civic voices and to use their own civic identities to make meaningful connections between civic knowledge and civic participation.” (34).

Suggestions for Additional Civics Content Knowledge

Eleven of the 38 submitted comments provided specific suggestions for additional content knowledge to be incorporated into the framework to more fully reflect the complexity of American governance, historical development, and civic life.

Recommendations included: incorporating constitutional principles in foreign affairs; newer scholarly insights on the administrative state, social movements, and Reconstruction; and deeper attention to institutional evolution, including shifts in governmental powers, the role of courts, and the practical operation of federalism at federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal levels. Some commenters urged strengthening interdisciplinary connections with history, geography, economics, and quantitative reasoning, including the mathematical foundations of democratic processes. They also called for comparative perspectives on federalism, greater attention to the military’s role in democratic governance, clearer treatment of budgets and bureaucratic structures, and richer coverage of civil society and bottom-up collective action.

Specific comments received on this topic include the following excerpts:

- “Additional questions related to foreign affairs should be included, insofar as they assess students’ understanding of the constitutional mandates dictating the proper use of state power in such contexts, including treaties, international commerce, declarations of war, and the appointment of ambassadors.” (5)
- “The fields of political science, law, and history have all built substantial new knowledge in the last fifty years on subjects ranging from the rise of the administrative state as something akin to the fourth branch of government, social movements and American institutional transformation, and slavery and Reconstruction, among other areas.” (6)
- “The framework should include.... **Institutional Evolution**: Nuanced analysis of not just the text of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, but how rights and responsibilities are interpreted by courts and applied in the real world; how voting, the rule of law, and the three branches have shifted in power and function over time; how wars and expansion have expanded and changed the nation’s geography, borders, and governance; and increased emphasis on the critical role of state and local governments, including the extent to which such control is indicative of the American experience.” (10)
- “The NAEP framework focuses almost exclusively on the national level of American government, with limited attention to state-level civic structures or how federalism operates in practice.” (11)
- “Civic learning is most powerful when it is connected to the other social studies disciplines. History, geography, and economics provide essential context for

understanding civic issues and for developing evidence-based reasoning. A revised civics framework should reflect these interdisciplinary connections rather than treating civics as an isolated field of study.” (13)

- “The framework also should discuss how other nations approach federalism/subnational governance and such concepts as preemption and the role of states as ‘laboratories of democracy’ Greater emphasis should be placed on how the US political structure was shaped by Greek, Roman, British and other antecedents.... There is little discussion in the current Framework of the role of the military in US political life, both for good and ill, and its governance and role in a democracy.... The new framework should highlight the budget process, including the national debt and deficit.... The new framework and specifications can highlight how federal, state, local, tribal and territorial bureaucracies are organized and operate including discussing key federal departments and agencies and how they are funded and overseen.” (20)
- “The major topics that need attention and expansion... are: 1) Social movements: How do groups of people organize and make change from the bottom up? What have social movements accomplished in the USA, and how have they failed? What do their participants do? 2) Civic society: What are the various kinds of nonprofit groups that exist in our society (e.g., religious congregations, voluntary associations, foundations, unions, and political parties)? How do they differ? What do they do? How can one belong?” (28)
- “The NAEP Civics Assessment should explicitly include Tribal Governments as a level of government, alongside federal, state, and local governments, and recognize Tribal Nation treaties as legally binding agreements under the Article VI Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution.” (34)
- “The NAEP Civics Framework would benefit from inclusion of concepts related to the mathematical foundations of democracy.... At the intersection of quantitative and civic literacy, many of our electoral and legislative systems are fundamentally mathematical.” (35)
- “[It is important to connect] civics with history, geography, and economics.” (36)
- “I strongly urge the National Assessment Governing Board to.... Connect civic standards with the skills students will need to engage with data in economics, history, geography, and the sciences – disciplines that share the same evidentiary habits of mind.” (37)

Other Aspects of Framework Document Beyond Content/Application/Contexts:

Twelve of the 38 submitted comments provided specific suggestions for other aspects of the framework document, including assessment design and reporting. Several commenters urged the Board to be committed to high expectations and rigor.

Specific comments received on this topic include the following excerpts:

- “One area for improvement is accessibility for educators. The NAEP Civics Assessment Framework is a long, dense, and complex technical document.” (1)
- “A revised framework would benefit from greater attention to opportunity-to-learn indicators. Information about students’ exposure to primary sources, participation in structured civic discussions, engagement in simulations of constitutional processes, and involvement in experiential civic learning can help provide a clearer picture of the conditions under which learning occurs.” (2)
- **“Tests with a meaningful definition of proficiency and that are comparable over time.** We would recommend that relationships be tested between knowledge items and actual civic participation, in order to achieve stronger indicators of real civic readiness. This could address the current challenge of the definition of proficiency being arbitrary.” (6)
- “The Governing Board should also examine the assessment’s methodology to ensure that its item types and formats can capture the full range of civic competencies the framework will describe.... Expand constructed-response items.... Use scenario-based and document-based tasks.” (9)
- “[V]arious implementation and reporting decisions have, we believe, limited the influence of the Nation’s Civic Report Card.... [including] not providing full insights into the cut score. We therefore believe that any revision should require that... clearer definitions be provided for what the basic and proficient levels of knowledge mean in terms of conceptual understanding.” (10)
- *“Strengthen Testing Rigor:* NAGB should establish rigorous baselines for proficiency. It should do so not least by examining its classical school and home school samples to establish a properly rigorous baseline for proficiency. NAGB should also use computerized assessments to seek and grade for especially advanced proficiency. Computer technology now allows assessments to determine fine graduations among elite performers.” (12)
- “A revision to the NAEP Civics Assessment Framework should [include]: Continuity with prior frameworks, so that revisions enhance relevance without altering achievement levels, reporting categories, or the fundamental constructs being measured, preserving the ability to interpret trends over time.” (17)
- “In an age where reading and math proficiency nationwide are at a pathetic level, and history and civics scores are undoubtedly not far behind, maintaining high standards is more important than ever. I urge you in the strongest possible terms to adopt civic standards that are academically rigorous and challenging.” (19)
- “Consider Rebalancing Content Weights at Grade 8. At grade 8 in particular, modestly increasing the weight assigned to foundational principles and constitutional design may strengthen the coherence of the assessment. A slight reallocation from comparative or international content to domains focused on constitutional structure could preserve

breadth while reinforcing the central importance of American constitutionalism at this developmental stage.” (24)

- “Preserve Trend Measurement While Allowing Conceptual Innovation. Any revision should carefully maintain trend lines where possible, but not at the expense of conceptual relevance. A modular approach could allow new domains to be introduced alongside legacy measures.” (27)
- “*Declining NAEP scores demand a rigorous response.* The appropriate answer to declining civics scores is not to lower expectations – it is to ensure the framework reflects the most current and rigorous research and understanding of what civic competence requires, and that schools have the tools to deliver it.” (34, 38)

Other Recommendations Beyond the NAEP Civics Framework

Finally, several comments were received that went beyond the scope of the framework update but were related to other aspects of policy and/or operations for the NAEP Civics assessment. These comments included the following suggestions:

- Administer assessments at additional grades beyond grade 8 (in addition to calls for restoring the grade 4 and 12 assessments which have not been given since 2010, there were a couple of suggestions to add assessments at grade 5 or 6)
- Administer and report NAEP Civics at the state level
- Administer Civics every two years along with Reading and Mathematics
- Provide more disaggregation of NAEP Civics results by student groups
- Sample more home-schooled and classical-schooled students to report results separately for these groups