**What Does a Good Civic Education Look Like?  
The Minimum Requirements for a Robust Civic Education**

Americans have been emphasizing STEM education for decades. According to the National Report Card on Education, the results have been mixed, at best. Despite our national emphasis on STEM, we are not making substantial progress in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In some key areas, we are going in the wrong direction.

But the situation is even worse when it comes to educating Americans in civics, history and government. Too few Americans are getting a solid enough education in these subjects to give them the basic tools that a democracy needs to operate much less thrive. No democratic nation can survive without a critical mass of civically literate citizens. The conclusion is irresistible that America needs better civic education if democracy is going to endure.

It’s fair to ask what good civic education looks like because civic literacy does not just happen. The answer is that a good civic educational in the United States requires a robust curriculum, staffed by well-trained and adequately funded teachers who can impart not only basic civic knowledge and critical thinking but also impart a sense of excitement at being a citizen in a democratic nation.

What follow is a set of minimum requirements for an improved civic education throughout the United States. We need:

* A basic and unbiased understanding of the civic history of the nation. Whitewashing our history is not education. It is propaganda and propaganda has no place in good education. We have to free our curriculum from woke, anti-woke and any other ideologically driven influences.
* A basic understanding of America public institutions and roles as they have evolved in our history. In other words, basic civics requires understanding of what our institutions do in practice and how that has changed over time.
* Understanding political thought and values and how they interact. Examining terms like liberty, equality and justice and how they interact with each other is crucial to basic civic education.
* A grasp of the relative roles of the Individual and the government in society. We need to examine what individual rights are and their limits in a democracy. We need to impart a basic knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of citizen participation in a democracy.
* Understanding American political institutions in a comparative framework in very helpful. Other countries do democracy differently. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each kind of democratic government.
* Understanding our political economy and its structures. The economy influences politics and vice versa. We need to teach what our economic system is and how and why it operates in the way it does.
* Understanding international geography, politics and global interdependence. They are facts and understanding them matters.
* Understanding the tools and consequences of political change.
* Imparting the skills of basic logic, fact and bias recognition and media-savviness.
* Learning and practicing the skills of critical thinking.

Our schools can accomplish this only if they get sustained public support. We need to provide our schools with enough money to provide a comprehensive civic curriculum. We need to elevate civics to a major part of the curriculum and emphasize it as much as we do STEM education. We need to train and hire a small army of highly qualified and fairly compensated teachers and give them the freedom to do their job.

These tasks will not be easy to accomplish. It will require more and better teacher training and bigger education budgets. As expensive as those might be, the costs of not accomplishing them will be even more expensive and damaging to our democracy.