

# National Civic Index for Quality Public Education

## Category Indicators—Text Only Version

Created by Public Education Network (PEN)

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*This text version of the Public Education Network's National Civic Index for Quality Public Education Category Indicators has been created for those who do not have access to a high-speed Internet connection, find this format easier to read, or want an easy reference or facilitation tool. There are slight modifications in the formatting of this version since it is not a web-based product; however, it contains the same content as the online version.*

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## National Civic Index Category Indicators

The National Civic Index Poll uses a two-step process to explore the conditions in your community that support quality public schools.

1. **Administer the Poll**—By using the poll, you will gather information through a survey tool and generate a report indicating the degree to which conditions that support public education are present or absent in your community
2. **Collect Additional Data**—Though the poll allows you to look at the conditions necessary to support quality public education, collecting additional information related to the conditions will add clarity as you begin to interpret the poll data.

When you combine the data from the Poll and the additional information collected, there is more clarity about why the community believes that the media does not provide adequate coverage of educational issues.

## Indicators for Educational Leadership of Locally Elected Officials

When **Elected Officials** support public education by 1) making it a community priority, 2) increasing the flow of information about educational issues to and from local elected officials, and 3) supporting partnerships between local elected officials and school leaders, they are adopting **Educational Leadership Roles**.

The following indicators demonstrate the conditions necessary to foster **Educational Leadership of Locally Elected Officials**:

Indicators Presented in the National Civic Index Poll Report	Additional Data to be Collected Regarding the Following Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Elected officials demonstrate a sustained commitment to education and make public education a top priority.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Elected officials advocate for adequate funding.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Elected officials effectively communicate with constituents on education issues.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Elected officials promote a clear agenda that advances student achievement.</li> </ul>	<p>No additional data is needed for this category.</p>

## Indicators for Commitment to the Values of Tolerance and Inclusiveness

When a community **Commits to the Values of Tolerance and Inclusiveness**, the public engages in activities to address issues that come from differences in culture, race, class, and language among school staff, student population, and community population, make sure that all students have a quality education, and encourage representation of all stakeholder groups in decision-making opportunities.

The following indicators demonstrate the conditions necessary to foster **Commitment to the Values of Tolerance and Inclusiveness**:

Indicators Presented in the National Civic Index Poll Report	Additional Data to be Collected Regarding the Following Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Schools provide the same educational opportunities to students of all backgrounds.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Schools provide quality services for special needs students (English language learners, special education students, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School board members reflect the diversity of the families in the school district.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Low income and racial/ethnic minority organizations have a say in school and school district decision-making.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The student population in local public schools reflects the diversity of the community.</li> </ul>

## Indicators for Active Parents

When **Parents Actively** engage in public education, they participate in activities to share information, become involved in a variety of ways, and participate in decision making.

The following indicators demonstrate the conditions necessary to foster **Active Parents**:

Indicators Presented in the National Civic Index Poll Report	Additional Data to be Collected Regarding the Following Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parents participate in school-related parent organizations.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parents stay informed about key education issues.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parents participate actively in their child's education, such as volunteering in the school, getting their child to school on time, or doing homework with their child.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Schools encourage active parent participation/contributions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parents participate in school district policy making, governance, and decision-making.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parents participate in school governance and decision-making.</li> </ul>

## Indicators for Strong Civic Organizations

When **Strong Civic Organizations** engage in public education, their membership and organizational priorities promote activities to involve the public in education reform, identify and advocate for important education issues, and build and help resource networks to last.

The following indicators demonstrate the conditions necessary to foster **Strong Civic Organizations**:

Indicators Presented in the National Civic Index Poll Report	Additional Data to be Collected Regarding the Following Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Local organizations create opportunities to gather citizen input on education issues and to inform community members about where candidates for elected office stand on these issues.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Local organizations provide help for those most in need and pay special attention to low-performing schools.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Local organizations share resources with schools, including expertise, funding, volunteers, and coordination of health and social services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community organizations define and advocate for public school accountability.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The public is actively involved in community organizations that partner with the schools.</li> </ul>

## Indicators for Utilization of School Performance Data to Improve School Quality

When communities **Utilize School Performance Data to Improve School Quality**, they take two approaches: Organizations, parents, family members, community members, business, and other groups engage in activities that include the presentation of data about local schools as well as prepare those involved to explore data in a meaningful way. By using data for these two purposes, communities are able to focus on the academic progress of all children and youth.

The following indicators demonstrate the conditions necessary to foster **Utilization of School Performance Data to Improve School Quality**:

Indicators Presented in the National Civic Index Poll Report	Additional Data to be Collected Regarding the Following Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Information about school performance is widely communicated and readily available in a form and language that the community can understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Schools make parents and the community full partners in developing and supporting strategies for student academic progress.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Information about school performance is explained to the community through a variety of channels, including the school district, local government, nonprofit organizations, and the media.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teachers and school staff are properly trained in how to use data to engage parents and the community to improve student achievement.</li> </ul>

## Indicators for Youth Involvement

When communities provide opportunities for **Youth Involvement**, youth are engaged in activities to increase their participation political and civic events and to address their academic and social needs.

The following indicators demonstrate the conditions necessary to foster **Youth Involvement**:

Indicators Presented in the National Civic Index Poll Report	Additional Data to be Collected Regarding the Following Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community and schools provide students with the education and skills to effectively participate in the political and civic process.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Schools encourage students to participate in school and local district governance through such activities as student council, student advisory boards, and/or student members of the school board.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Youth regularly engage in community service and volunteer activities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Youth are perceived as assets and contributors to the community.</li> </ul>	<p>No additional data is needed for this category.</p>

## Indicators for Partnerships with Higher Education

When community groups, schools, and others **Partner with Higher Education**, these efforts result in greater support for quality public education, shared institutional resources, and coordinated efforts for students across institutions.

The following indicators demonstrate the conditions necessary to foster **Partnerships with Higher Education**:

Indicators Presented in the National Civic Index Poll Report	Additional Data to be Collected Regarding the Following Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Higher education institutions partner with school districts to resolve school improvement challenges, including bolstering the quality of teaching and learning, and supporting schools that need special assistance.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> College or university students provide support to local schools through volunteering, service-learning, and internships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Institutions of higher learning provide shared use of college facilities, college faculty, and courses.</li> </ul>

## Indicators for Knowledge of and Voting for School Boards

When communities create activities to increase **Knowledge of and Voting for School Board**, they increase public participation in school board activities, establish relationships with individual board members, and strengthen networks between the school board, local leaders, and the community.

The following indicators demonstrate the conditions necessary to foster **Knowledge of and Voting for School Boards**:

Indicators Presented in the National Civic Index Poll Report	Additional Data to be Collected Regarding the Following Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Individuals monitor school board decisions and policies.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Individuals vote regularly in school board elections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Individuals have the means to regularly address the school board or discuss school board policies.</li> </ul>

## Indicators for Active Business Community

An **Active Business Community** participants purposefully in supporting public education and engages in activities that allow them to share their resources to support education in innovative ways.

The following indicators demonstrate the conditions necessary to foster **Active Business Community**:

Indicators Presented in the National Civic Index Poll Report	Additional Data to be Collected Regarding the Following Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Local business leaders work closely with other community and civic leaders to identify school needs and address critical school issues.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Local businesses offer paid time and other incentives for their employees to be regularly involved in school activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Local business leaders provide resources and expertise to school boards and district administrations around school improvement.</li> </ul>

## Indicators for Media Coverage

When **Media Coverage** is used to support quality public education, community organizations, schools, families, businesses, and others foster improved and increased local media coverage of education and initiate strategies to establish and maintain open communication between educators, local elected officials, the public, and media sources.

The following indicators demonstrate the conditions necessary to foster **Media Coverage**:

Indicators Presented in the National Civic Index Poll Report	Additional Data to be Collected Regarding the Following Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The local media reports on the education positions of candidates for school board, mayor, state legislator, and other key offices.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The local media provides in-depth reporting about how elected officials vote and the extent to which they keep their promises.</li> </ul>	<p>No additional data is needed for this category.</p>