

# National Civic Index for Quality Public Education

## Next Steps—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 Toolkit Introduction Next Steps section 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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## Steps to Measure Your Community's Civic Involvement in Support of Quality of Public Schools

We hope you have enough information to take the first steps in measuring the conditions in your community that are necessary to support quality public schools. If not, you will find the resources listed on the previous page to be very helpful.

If you are ready, here are your next steps:

1. Review the National Civic Index (NCI) Toolkit and share it with your organization's board of directors, program committee or members who would help you plan to administer the index in your community.
2. Develop a plan to administer the NCI. Include budget information, along with ideas as to how the index will integrate with current work, timelines, and the capacity of your organization to assume this project. Sources of funding could come from your own budget, involve *pro bono* help from a college or a community foundation, or may be granted to your group by your partner organizations.
3. Select a planning committee. Your committee should include at least one representative from each NCI category, including parents, business leaders, community members, elected officials, higher education faculty, media, students, and an assessment expert.
4. Identify the geographic range of the "community" that you wish to poll. This could be a school district, a county, a region of the state, a consortium of school districts, or an entire state. The number of people you poll will depend on the size of the "community" that you define.
5. Develop a news release and other communications to make the community aware that you will be measuring the level of their civic activity that leads to quality public schools for all children.
6. Select a polling firm to conduct the ready-made poll contained in the NCI toolkit. You may wish to select a sample size that allows you to disaggregate by gender, geography and region, race, ethnicity, income or other factors. Also, you may wish to add poll questions pertinent to issues in your own community that are not reflected in the NCI poll questions.

7. Conduct other research to obtain data that cannot easily be gathered by polling. These additional research areas are cited in the NCI.
8. Analyze the data collected from the poll and the research, share it with the planning committee, and decide on a composite score for each of the index categories. Your committee can either include the poll results AND the additional research (which will require your planning committee to make some judgments about the score for each category), or you can report the additional research as separate information.
9. Determine a score for each category. Determine the community's strengths and weaknesses. Your planning committee can determine next steps and how to engage the community in improving its score.
10. Develop a communications and news media plan to broadly disseminate the NCI results along with the recommendations for improvement. Use the NCI toolkit section on the media for guidance.
11. Have the planning committee develop and approve a plan that will engage the public in improving its score. The plan should identify roles for various community stakeholders, and include timetables and benchmarks for progress. Remember, you want the community to take responsibility for improving its score.
12. Monitor implementation of the communities' plan for improvement; and plan to re-evaluate and re-poll the community in several years to determine progress.