EVENT BRIEFING MEMO: Civic Learning Meeting
Robert R. McCormick Foundation ★ 205 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 4300 ★ Chicago, IL 60601

EVENT DATE AND TIME: Thursday, June 28, 2018 | 3:00pm- 4:30pm
HOST: Robert R. McCormick Foundation | Shawn Healy, Director of the Democracy Program
Commissioner Lead: Jeanette James
Commissioner Co-Lead: Ed Allard

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:
Illinois House Bill 4025 passed into law in August 2015. The legislation requires all public high schools, throughout two years of social studies coursework, to include at least one full semester of civics education. The intent is to create “competent and responsible citizens” by providing students with skills and knowledge. Beyond just learning about government and current events in the classroom, students will be introduced to service learning.¹

The purpose of this meeting is:
➢ To discuss the impact of Illinois’ efforts to expand civics education.

PARTICIPANTS:
Participants include:
● Shawn Healy, Director of the Democracy Program, Robert R. McCormick Foundation
● Jessica Marshall, Director of Social Science and Civic Engagement, Chicago Public Schools
● Jill Bass, Chief Education Officer, Mikva Challenge
● Sonia Matthew, Civic Learning Manager, Robert R. McCormick Foundation
● Carolyn Pereira, Founder, Illinois Civic Mission Coalition and the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago
● Scott McFarland, Executive Director, Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service
● Mary Ellen Daneels, Social Studies Teacher, Community High School
● Maryam Judar, Executive Director/ Community Lawyer, Citizen Advocacy Center
● Megan Everett, Veterans Program Director, Robert R. McCormick Foundation
● Eliza Bryant, Director, Academic Programs and Enrichment, Big Shoulders Fund

*Bios and additional information on participants and organizations can be found on page 3 of this memo.

AGENDA:
3:00pm – 3:05pm  Welcome Remarks
3:05pm – 3:20pm  Roundtable Introductions
3:20pm – 4:20pm  Open Discussion
4:20pm – 4:30pm  Closing remarks

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
The questions below are provided for guidance only and are not intended to serve as a protocol or script for the meeting.
PARTICIPANT BIOS

Shawn Healy, Director of the Democracy Program, Robert R. McCormick Foundation

Shawn Healy, the McCormick Foundation Civics Program’s resident scholar, serves as the in-house content expert and voice of program through public speaking and original scholarship. Before joining the McCormick Foundation, he served as a social studies teacher at the high school level, where he taught American Government, Economics, American History and Chicago History to juniors and seniors at Community High School in West Chicago. He also served as the faculty sponsor of the Junior State of America chapter and the Fed Challenge Team. Healy previously taught at Sheboygan North High School in Wisconsin from 1999-2001 and also coached football, basketball and track. A 2001 James Madison Fellow from the State of Wisconsin, he holds an MA from the University of Illinois at Chicago in political science and earned a bachelor’s degree with distinction in Political Science, History and Secondary Education from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Healy is currently a doctoral candidate within the Political Science Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago specializing in American and urban politics.

Jessica Marshall, Director of Social Sciences and Civic Engagement at Chicago Public Schools

Jessica Marshall is the Director of Social Science and Civic Engagement for the Chicago Public Schools where her work focuses on re-imagining and expanding civic learning opportunities to reach all students. Chicago has emerged as a national leader in K-12 civic education, expanding initiatives that build student voice and ensuring all students have access to a dynamic and research-based civics curriculum designed by and for CPS educators. She has served on the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition and the Illinois State Social Studies Task Force. Jessie began her career in education in 2006, as a teacher in the South Bronx, NY. She returned to Chicago to serve at Alcott College Prep where she led civic education initiatives that earned the school designation as an Illinois Democracy School. Jessie, a proud Chicago native and CPS graduate, earned a BA in Sociology and Latin American Studies from Dartmouth College and an MS in Special Education from City College - City University of New York.

Jill Bass, Chief Education Officer, Mikva Challenge

Jill Bass earned a BA in Political Science and Literature from State University of New York at Binghamton in 1990 and received her Masters in Instructional Leadership from University of Illinois at Chicago. Jill was previously a Teacher/Civic Engagement Program Director at North Lawndale College Prep, an Instructional Coach at Kaplan and a Program Manager at Urban Teacher Residency United. Jill taught in Chicago and New York City public schools for 13 years and was a Mikva teacher for much of that time. Jill has been a professional developer, curriculum writer, educational consultant, and instructional coach. At Mikva, Jill directs the Center for Action Civics, overseeing curriculum development, teacher training, and the marketing of Action Civics philosophy in Chicago and beyond.
Sonia Matthew, Civic Learning Manager, Robert R. McCormick Foundation

Sonia Mathew is the Civic Learning Manager for the Democracy Program at the Robert R. McCormick Foundation. In this role, she manages the Democracy Schools Initiative and assists with programmatic and grantmaking efforts to strengthen the state’s civic education system. She also co-leads the racial equity committee at the Foundation. Prior to joining the Foundation, Sonia was a social studies teacher at North Lawndale College Preparatory Charter High School. She also has experience in the nonprofit sector and worked with Urban Teacher Residency United, Mikva Challenge, and Public Allies Chicago. She completed her BA in Political Science at the University of Michigan and her MA through the Social and Cultural Foundations in Education program at DePaul University.

Carolyn Pereira Founder, Illinois Civic Mission Coalition and the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago

Carolyn Pereira served as the Executive Director of the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago since its founding in 1974 and retired in 2010. CRFC provides civic engagement programs for elementary, middle, and secondary students so that they have multiple opportunities to practice the skills that everyone needs to keep our democracy strong. As a response to the Civic Mission of Schools report Pereira formed the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition representing education, government, business, foundations, and non-profit civic groups. Most recently, she served on the C3 National Framework Task Force and the Illinois Social Studies Task Force to revise the social studies standards.

Scott McFarland, Executive Director, Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service

Scott McFarland earned his B.A., as well as received his Teacher’s Certification in History and Secondary Education from Western Illinois University. Scott holds a Master’s degree in Public Administration from University of Illinois Springfield as well as a Doctorate in Public Administration also from University of Illinois Springfield. Scott has served as a Board of Education Member at the Springfield Public School District 186, Policy Chair at America’s Service Commissions (ASC), and was a Chair for States for Service. As the current Executive Director at Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, Scott’s roles include: assisting the Governor appointed Commission with business matters, assisting in Illinois AmeriCorps program funding and administration, overseeing the Department of Human Services’ AmeriCorps*VISTA Project as well as planning and coordinating the Illinois National Community Service Recognition Day.

Mary Ellen Daneels, Social Studies Teacher, Community High School

Mary Ellen Daneels is a National Board Certified teacher who has taught at West Chicago Community High School for 26 years. She has been recognized as the Law-related Educator of the Year from the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Chicago, Teacher of the Year by the 19th District of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Civic Education Teacher from the Center for Civic Education. Mary Ellen has presented on service learning, simulations, and the use of controversy in the classroom at the
local, state, and national level as well as provided professional development workshops in Estonia, Angola, and Belarus. A member of the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition, Mary Ellen has advocated for civic education before federal and state lawmakers. She serves on the Board of Directors for the National Council of the Social Studies and recently worked on a task force to revise Social Studies standards in the state of Illinois.

**Maryam Judar, Executive Director/ Community Lawyer, Citizen Advocacy Center**

Maryam Judar serves as executive director and community lawyer at the Citizen Advocacy Center, a non-profit, non-partisan, community-based legal organization with a mission to build democracy in the 21st century. In addition to implementing long-range strategy to achieve CAC's mission and providing leadership in developing programs, she answers legal questions, helps community groups organize; monitors local governments for abuse of power, and speaks out against anti-democratic laws, policies, and practices. Ms. Judar has empowered dozens of individuals and community groups to use various laws and civic skills to advocate for greater accountability of government entities. As an appointed member of the Illinois Task Force on Civics Education, she was a vociferous advocate for quality civics education. She has reported on how the decentralized nature of local electoral boards causes systemic barriers to voter access to the ballot and suppresses voter choice. Her work with students from Benedictine University resulted in amendments to the Illinois Open Meetings Act to codify public comment. She also coordinated the CAC’s census and local redistricting efforts, including working with government entities and community members to increase participation in the census and monitoring and speaking out against the redistricting process at the local level that protected political, rather than public, interests. Ms. Judar clerked for the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit after graduating from University of California, Los Angeles School of Law.

**Megan Everett, Veterans Program Director, Robert R. McCormick Foundation**

Megan is the current Veterans Program Director at the Robert R. McCormick Foundation. Before her time at the McCormick Foundation, she had experience working as the Director Appointee for the Illinois Veteran Advisory Council, and a Political Partner at the Truman National Security Project. Additionally, Megan was part of the Advisory Council Member at the Advisory Council on Veterans Affairs for the City of Chicago in which she served and advised the Mayor of the City of Chicago and the Commission on Human Relation on how best to meet and forecast the needs of the military members and veterans of the City of Chicago. Megan received a B.A. from Cornell University, an MBA from Penn State University, and a M.A. in Public Policy and Administration from Northwestern University.

**Eliza Bryant, Director, Academic Programs and Enrichment, Big Shoulders Fund**

Eliza Bryant hails from New York but became a proud Maroon at the University of Chicago and has not left Hyde Park since, except when hunting for NY pizza. Eliza holds a Master of Arts in Teaching from the Urban Teacher Education Program (UChicago UTEP) and a Bachelor in History from the University of Chicago. Eliza is a true lover of math and puts her prior teaching in Chicago Public Schools and instructional coaching expertise to work making sure Big Shoulders Fund schools have access to high-quality curricula and professional development.