

FCS Education: A Policy Approach



The Importance of Policy and Civic Engagement in FCS

On a daily basis, Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) teachers work with students in understanding policy concepts from simple classroom policies, procedures and guidelines to more formal workplace legal laws and responsibilities. The purpose of this brief is to draw attention to the role FCS teachers play in fostering policy education and civic engagement as they teach Career and Technical Education/Human Services courses.

Policies can best be described as basic guidelines and rules used to regulate and govern. They can be applied across organizations and institutions,

varying in complexity from simple procedural rules to more multifaceted state and federal codes and laws. Research indicates that students who demonstrate knowledge of policy tend to be more successful and active in school. As these students enter adulthood, they tend to continue this interest by embracing civic responsibilities such as voting (CIRCLE, 2012). Human Services courses provide students opportunities to explore policy and policy making as they address issues like consumer and work-based practices relating to finances, interpersonal relationships, nutrition and wellness, human development, and mental health.

Policies and Civic Engagement

As students learn to apply policies and voice their opinions, their FCS courses provide a framework for assisting them in making local and global policy connections. Over the last three major election cycles, more young people have taken an active role in civic engagement through voting. There has been an increase in voter eligibility among those aged 18 to 29 to a record number of 17 million (CIRCLE, 2012). Participation is a key component in ensuring that individuals and groups are included in the decision making process. Effective policies are not developed in isolation but involve stakeholders, those closest to the issues

(Braun & Williams, 2002; TEA, 2008; Bogenschneider et al., 2012). When individuals are involved, it leads to stronger civic engagement.

For sound and useful policies to function, collective action must be a basic principle in the process. It is through this shared visioning that synergy, decision-making, negotiation, teamwork, leadership, collaboration, and coalition building are developed. Civic engagement works best when individuals come together for the common good using collective resources to make a difference in solving problems at school as well as global issues.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS): 130.243. Dollars and Sense (1-6)

- * Consumer rights and practices
 - o Finances
 - o Food
 - o Clothing
 - o Shelter
 - o Health care
 - o Recreation
 - o Transportation

- * Decision-making skills
- * Positive interpersonal skills, i.e. conflict resolution, negotiation, teamwork, and leadership

130.244 Interpersonal Studies (9E)

- * Laws and public policies relating to families

130.245 Lifetime Nutrition and Wellness (3F and 6)

- * Regulated dietary allowances
- * Effective work habits i.e. problem solving, team building, and team skills

130.246 Counseling & Mental Health (4A-G)

- * Ethical behavior standards and legal responsibilities to mental health

130.247 Child Development (6H)

- * Legislation and policies affecting children

130.248 Child Guidance (1E)

- * Legal responsibilities and laws in caring for children





STATISTICS

- 47 million young people age 18 to 29 were eligible to vote in the 2012 elections.

<http://www.civicyouth.org>

Career Skills in Policy

- ✓ Communication:
 - Written
 - Verbal
 - Listening
- ✓ Multitasking
- ✓ Interpersonal -Teambuilding
- ✓ Research
- ✓ Critical Thinking -logic, reasoning and statistics
- ✓ Problem Solving

REFERENCES

Bogenschneider, K., Little, O. M., Ooms, T., Benning, S., Cadigan, K. & Corbett, T. (2012). The family impact lens: A family-focused, Evidence-informed approach to policy and practice. *Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies*, 514-531.

Braun, B. & Williams, S. (2002). We the people: Renewing commitment to civic engagement. *Journal Family Consumer Sciences*, 94, 8-19.

CIRCLE Analysis of Census CPS (2012). *Young people come to politics from a diversity of experiences*. Retrieved at <http://www.civicyouth.org>.

Texas Education Agency. (2008). *AchieveTexas: Implementation Guide*. Texas. Retrieved from <http://www.achievetexas.org/DocFiles/Implementa%20Guide%20Revised%202008.pdf>

All Images Microsoft Office Clip Art (2013). <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/images/>

ADDITIONAL WEBSITES

[CTE Websites Policy.docx](#)

WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO?

- ✓ Have students analyze the impact of the student code of conduct on the school environment and compare and contrast the school's code with work and civic codes and guidelines.
- ✓ Have students scan the media for local, state and national policy issues and report their findings to the class.
- ✓ Have students identify policy issues and debate the pros and cons for policy adoption.
- ✓ Have students interview policy makers at the local, state, national, and international level on policy development and implementation.
- ✓ Have students identify a policy and develop a contact list of key people to address policy questions and concerns.
- ✓ Have students write letters to policymakers "for and against" a policy issue. Integrate both quantitative and qualitative data to support varying positions.
- ✓ Have students write editorial letters addressing a current policy or an emerging issue.
- ✓ Have students research how policies are evaluated and then develop standards for evaluating policies.
- ✓ Have students work in teams to identify issues or concerns and then develop questions for stakeholders.
- ✓ Have students invite policy makers as guest speakers.
- ✓ Have students participate in giving mock testimonies before a governing policy body.
- ✓ Have students explore policy education opportunities through student leadership organizations (SLOs) and participate in policy events.
- ✓ Have students attend a school board meeting and/or city hall meeting.

In 2011, 56.8% Millennials discussed policy issues a few times a month or more.
<http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov>



<http://www.cte.sfasu.edu>