

Are Americans Clueless on Why We Celebrate July 4th?

In the last few years, we've seen an [extensive push](#) to require high school students to pass a U.S. citizenship test in order to graduate. The most recent data from the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) suggests that this might not be such a bad idea.

After testing 8th grade students in subjects such as U.S. history and civics, the [2014 NAEP report](#) revealed that scores have stagnated since 2010.

Stagnation wouldn't be so bad if 80 or 90 percent of students were measuring at proficiency levels. But in 2014, only 23 percent of students were able to achieve proficiency in civics, and only 18 percent met U.S. history proficiency standards.

Sadly, poor performance in history and civics is not a new trend. As demonstrated by a [Pew Research poll](#), many adults also struggle in these areas, particularly when it comes to questions about the various branches of government.

If we want the next generation to be effective and wise leaders, we must ensure that they have a thorough knowledge of American history and principles. Such knowledge and understanding is necessary for them to avoid the mistakes of the past and instead choose paths of success.

So how do we do this? A U.S. citizenship test requirement might be a good possibility. And according to scholar and author [Neal McCluskey](#), school choice might be another. Noting that private school students perform almost twice as well as public students on the NAEP history and civics exams, McCluskey suggests that non-public schools are able to teach these subjects more coherently and comprehensively, largely

because they don't have to bow to bureaucratic methods or mindsets.

In any event, if parents believe their child is not receiving a quality education in civics or history (or any other subject for that matter), should we not give them the opportunity and resources to move that child to a place where they can receive better instruction? It's not only for the good of the child, it's for the good of the country.

After all, we wouldn't want our nation to one day be run by those who can't even explain why we celebrate the 4th of July, would we?

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