

2025 MCAS Sample Student Work and Scoring Guide

Grade 8 Civics

Question 10: Constructed-Response

Reporting Category: Rights & Responsibilities

Practice Category: Explanations and Reasoning

Standard: [8.T4.13](#) - Examine the influence of public and private interest groups in a democracy, including policy research organizations (e.g. Pew Research Center, Brookings Institute, Heritage Foundation) in shaping debate about public policy.

Item Description: Analyze a source to explain the role of policy organizations in the development of public policy.

This item can be found in the released item sets on the [MCAS Resource Center](#).

Question

Explain one reason it is important to a democracy for policy organizations, such as the ones mentioned in Source 3, to provide the information they collect to the federal government.

Source 3

When changes to the nutritional guideline rules for school meals were being proposed, policy organizations researched school nutrition programs. From their research, they found the following information:

- About 70% of parents thought that schools should follow healthy nutritional guidelines.
- Concentration and thinking skills improved in students who ate healthy meals in school.
- Many principals reported that their schools would need more money to provide healthy meals for students.

Continue to the following page to see the sample student responses for this question.

Score Point 1A*

It is important for policy organizations to share their findings with the federal government because it can give critical information that could affect lawmakers decisions. Opinions, statistics, and outcomes can be reported to show trends in the data being compared to decide changes to policies. For example, one piece of important data could be that concentration and thinking skills were reported to be improved in students who ate healthy school lunches. This information could be compared to the skills of students who do not eat healthy school lunches and could affect new policies made around school lunches. Democracy relies on the opinions of the people and their representatives, which is why information collected about the subject should be shared with the government to compare possible options.

Score Point 1B*

It is important to a democracy for policy organizations such as the ones mentioned in Source 3 to provide the information they collect to the federal government because it helps the government tweak and change parts of their laws and acts to be better according to the people of the nation.

Score Point 0

One reason it is important to a democracy for policy organizations to provide information they collect to the federal government is because the government is in control of the federal laws, and if these companies don't go along with those laws, they could get in trouble. They could also need to provide the information because the government wants to make sure that the companies are still taking good care of the childrens food and safety.

*Letters are used to distinguish between sample student responses that earned the same score (e.g., 1A and 1B).