Local Criteria
For the
State Seal of Civic Engagement

What is the State Seal of Civic Engagement and Why is it important?

The California State Seal of Civic Engagement is an opportunity to:

⭐ Engage youth as active partners in school and community change

⭐ Support youth to develop ways to communicate effectively and to work together in more equitable ways

⭐ Encourage youth to participate in civics education and support our democracy

⭐ Empower youth to become strong collaborators for educational change

THE POWER OF DEMOCRACY

On September 10, 2020, the State Board of Education adopted criteria and guidance to award a State Seal of Civic Engagement (SSCE) to California students who demonstrate excellence in civics education and participation, and an understanding of the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, and the democratic system of government. By adopting these criteria, California joined a small but growing number of states that formally recognize and promote student civic engagement with seals to affix to student transcripts, diplomas, or certificates of completion.

The SSCE can be awarded to California students in 11th and 12th grade who participate in and demonstrate excellence regarding civics education by meeting five criteria. **Local educational agencies (LEAs) have the opportunity to develop criteria as they consider their own local context to ensure maximum accessibility for all students, at all grade levels, including those in alternative school settings.**

HOW DID SCCOE CENTER EQUITY WHILE DEVELOPING LOCAL CRITERIA FOR STUDENTS?

Equity Through Lived Civics

The Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) is committed to providing students in SCCOE Special Programs with the opportunity to engage in a Lived Civics approach. Lived Civics promotes structured learning experiences that are co-constructed and create space for student voices, agency and expertise.

Commitment to Equitable Access to Civic Education

In 2017, through the lens of equity and diversity, the Power of Democracy: Civic Education Initiative (POD) was created by the SCCOE to guide our work and focuses on:

- Increasing civic education
- Youth voice
- Engagement opportunities

In response to the State Seal of Civic Engagement (SCCE), the SCCOE developed The California State Seal of Civic Engagement Implementation Toolkit in 2020 that includes the question, "How will we maintain assurance that no student is excluded from an opportunity to earn the SSCE based on academic ability, alternative school settings, or unique or unconventional expressions of civic engagement?"

Creating Local Criteria for SCCOE Special Programs

As a result, in 2022, the SCCOE organized the State Seal of Civic Engagement for the SCCOE Special Programs Advisory Committee to provide equitable and inclusive opportunities for ALL students to earn the SSCE, especially those in the SCCOE Special Programs. SCCOE Special Programs include:

- Alternative Education Department: Court and Community Schools
- Opportunity Youth Academy
- Special Education Department

The SCCOE Special Programs Criteria provide examples for LEAs to effectively implement the SSCE. The work associated with the SSCE may connect to many programs and policies that already exist and support civic learning and engagement.

The goals of the State Seal of Civic Engagement for the SCCOE Special Programs Advisory Committee are to be inclusive; and provide the opportunity for youth to:

- Become civically engaged
- Gain self-advocacy skills
- Build a sense of community
- Become leaders

From creating forms of civic-minded artistic expression to stepping forward to serve their community in different roles, youth across Santa Clara county participate in a wide variety of civic engagement activities.

The State Seal of Civic Engagement is a way for their efforts to be recognized.

The State Seal of Civic Engagement for the SCCOE Special Programs Advisory Committee created the criteria and identified examples to support the varying abilities of students specific to our programs and experiences. These are the result of multiple meetings, listening parties, and brainstorming sessions that took place during Spring 2022.

How did the SCCOE align existing initiatives and efforts with the development of Local Criteria for the State Seal of Civic Engagement?

Below are ways students within the SCCOE Special Programs can meet the five local criteria to earn the State Seal Of Civic Engagement, based on those put forth by the state.

LEAs can use this list as a reference when creating their own criteria. There are many ways to show a commitment to equity and inclusion for all students.

Criteria 1: Be engaged in academic work in a productive way.	Ways to meet the criteria include: • Attend classes and be on track to graduate with a diploma or certificate of completion • Complete school course requirements	Examples: Attain passing grades for all classes (2.0 or better), show improvement in attendance, demonstrate improvement in test scores, show improvement in English Learner testing, or meet Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals.
Criteria 2: Demonstrate a competent understanding of U.S. and California constitutions; functions and governance of local governments; tribal government structures and organizations; the role of the citizen in a constitutional democracy; and democratic principles, concepts, and processes.	Ways to meet the criteria include: • Pass a U.S. History, Government, Economics, or Civics Course • Pass other classes identified as appropriate for the student's program (e.g., IEP, 504 Plan, incarceration, foster youth, those experiencing homelessness, etc.)	Examples: Attend a school board meeting and report about the experience, write a letter to an elected official asking to make a change, participate in Mock Trial or student government, develop a founding student government for the school, or become a student board or committee member in groups such as Peer Advocate Advisory Council or Student Wellness Advisory Group.

Criteria 3:
Participate in one or more informed civic engagement project(s) that address real-world problems and require students to identify and inquire into civic needs or problems, consider varied responses, take action, and reflect on efforts.
	Ways to meet the criteria include:
	• Participate in a civic-action project designed for student ability or skill level (e.g., IEP, 504 Plan, incarceration, foster youth, those experiencing homelessness, etc.)
	  • Identify a real-world problem
	  • Advocate by trying to influence decisions at local, state, or federal level
	  • Educate others about problem
	  • Innovate a unique solution to the problem
		Examples: Civic Action Day, Legislative Action Day, Santa Clara County Law Day, Envision Your Pathway Civic Engagement Organization, Arbor Day, community clean-up, recycling, Santa Clara County Voter Registration Drive, Day of Racial Healing, social justice artwork and/or murals, Speech Beats, or community garden to combat food insecurity.

Criteria 4:
Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions through self-reflection.
	Ways to meet the criteria include:
	• After completion of the civic-action project, complete a self-reflection that includes:
	  • A definition of the problem
	  • An explanation of how the problem was addressed
	  • A reflection about the societal/systemic solutions to the problem
		Examples: SCCOE Special Programs Reflection Form, student portfolio, participation in a SCCOE Civic Learning Student Showcase, IEP advocacy/student voice, Presentation to the Santa Clara County Board of Education, a video, a speech, and podcast.

Criteria 5: Exhibit character traits that reflect civic-mindedness and a commitment to positively impact the classroom, school, community and/or society.	Ways to meet the criteria: • Show concern for the rights and well-being of others, especially historically disenfranchised groups. • Engage with groups or organizations that attend to community or societal priorities, in addition to, forms of engagement that are part of a required classroom experience • Submit evidence of character traits by obtaining at least one recommendation from a peer mentor, local, state, national official, or non-familial community member	Examples: be an Upstander, develop student clubs to ensure equity, inclusion and civic awareness, work with community partners to elicit change, e.g., Day of Racial Healing, planting trees, etc.

What SCCOE Community Partners Might LEAs Collaborate With in Their Programs to Promote Civic Engagement?

Below is a non-exhaustive list of SCCOE local community partners. They are listed under each program and have capacity to work with all students.

Alternative Education Department: Court and Community Schools

Counseling, Advocacy, and Referral Agency (CARA)
Fresh Lifelines for Youth (FLY)
New Hope
Young Women's Freedom Center
Silicon Valley (SV) Creates

San Jose Works

Opportunity Youth Academy

Envision Your Pathway
San Jose Works
Second Harvest Food Bank
Teen Success, Inc.

Year-Up

Special Education Department

Abilities United
Angels on Stage
Buddies in Action
Center for Employment Training
Deaf Counseling, Advocacy and Referral Agency (DCARA)
Department of Rehabilitation
Division of Apprenticeship Standards
Living Classroom
Parents Helping Parents (PHP)
San Andreas Regional Center
Shared Adventures
Silicon Valley Career Technical Education (SVCTE)
Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)

Other Possible Ideas for Community Partners:

Boys and Girls Club
Grassroots Ecology
Kelly Park
Local Libraries
Office of Immigrant Relations
Office of LGBTQ Affairs Division of Equity and Social Justice
Office of Women's Policy
Registrar of Voters
Silicon Valley Urban Debate League (SVUDL)
YMCA

To learn more, go to the SCCOE website at www.sccoe.to/SSCE

For further information or support, contact Saletha Okunnuga, Coordinator of History-Social Science & Civic Engagement, at sokunnuga@sccoe.org.

Santa Clara County youth participate in civic engagement projects (top and bottom); a live drawing takes place as the SCCOE hosts the Power of Democracy annual event to promote civics and youth voice (middle).