

LEADING IN PARTNERSHIP



BY FOSTERING COMMUNITY

2022 - 2024

Through the lens of equity, inclusion, diversity, and partnership, the Santa Clara County Office of Education's (SCCOE) *Power of Democracy (POD) Initiative* will:

- (1) Foster an understanding of our democracy's structures and processes by sharing resources and best practices, and encouraging informed civic participation that engages districts and communities.
- (2) Partner with districts and communities to provide access to high-quality civic education through programs, activities, and resources that encourage student civic engagement and civil discourse.
- (3) Support the principles of liberty, civility, equity, inclusion, individual responsibility, diversity, partnership, and justice.
- (4) Support effective and evidenced-based practices to engage authentic youth voice and prepare students to be active in the democratic process.

[civics.sccoe.org](https://civics.sccoe.org)

## About Santa Clara County Voter Participation

The November 3, 2020 Presidential Election was Santa Clara County's highest ever turnout election and had record-high voter registration. Out of 1,019,309 registered voters, a total of 863,964 cast valid ballots, for a voter turnout rate of 84.52%. Youth-eligible voter turnout was 63% in Silicon Valley (Santa Clara & San Mateo Counties), the lowest for all age groups, but a 20% increase since 2016. Voter turnout for 18 - 24 year olds was 77% in 2020 Presidential Election compared to 49% in 2018.

Youth voter registration and pre-registration remain a key focus during youth voter registration weeks in California. Voter registration for 17.5 - 25 year olds is 131,084 as of May 2022. Additionally, Santa Clara County has the 6th largest number of 16 - 17 years olds pre-registered to vote in the state, with a total of 7,635 as of September 2022. That is the highest number of pre-registered youth out of all nine Bay Area counties. In total, 128,944 teens in California pre-registered to vote. Pre-register to vote at: <https://registertovote.ca.gov>.

## About the Power of Democracy's Strategic Plan

In May 2017, the Santa Clara County Office of Education developed a vision and policy framework necessary to increase civic education, youth voice, and engagement opportunities in Santa Clara County. The plan for civic education is centered on research-based practices.

POD Initiative Definitions: Civics is defined as "the study and practice of negotiating values in order to determine how to live productively and compassionately in relation with each other" (Mirra & Godina Garcia, 2023).

## Strategic Area of Emphasis #1

*Expand access to inclusive, equitable, and high-quality opportunities for civic education, engagement, and leadership to ensure students representing the rich diversity of our county have access and are able to participate meaningfully.*

Inclusive, equitable, and high-quality civic education requires knowledge of history, principles, and foundations of American democracy. It requires the ability to

participate in civic and democratic processes. Therefore, content, inquiry, and literacy must be a part of a standardized education, with instruction designed to meet the needs of all students to develop youth voice. Students need to engage in discipline-specific literacy skills, learn to effectively answer and formulate questions about the past and the present, and learn to contribute appropriately to public processes and discussions of real issues.

## Strategy

Provide resources and share opportunities with students to support earning the California State Seal of Civic Engagement.

Support districts to develop Ethnic Studies programs to meet the graduation requirement, as such a course increases youth civic engagement and community responsiveness.

Promote/coordinate civic engagement events for students at all grade levels and abilities throughout Santa Clara County such as Mock Trial, Day of Racial Healing, Constitution Day, Law Day, social justice murals, participating in the voting process, and others.

Recognize and celebrate excellence of educational leaders who provide meaningful civic participation opportunities for all students.

## Strategic Area of Emphasis #2

*Partner with educational leaders to promote inclusive, equitable, and high-quality civic education, engagement, and student leadership opportunities to build their capacity to empower meaningful, student selected issues and take action.*

Strong partnerships, communication, and trust are at the center of providing quality support to meet educational leader's civic

education and engagement goals. Actions include meeting with partners to discuss the value and importance of civic education and engagement. POD encourages educational leaders to apply for the California Civic Learning Award and the California State Seal of Civic Engagement. Lastly, POD will continue to provide non-partisan, specific civic learning educational resources, and expand professional learning opportunities.

## Strategy

Provide resources, effective models, board policies, and educator recognition for implementation of the California State Seal of Civic Engagement.

Provide district leadership with support for the integration of civics and civic action into the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

Expand professional development opportunities for educators to implement best practices and curriculum that can be applied at all levels and subject areas of learning.

Maintain ongoing communication with the entire school community to create a network that shares knowledge, strategies, and resources to inspire civic learning.

## Strategic Area of Emphasis #3

*Partner with parents, community members, community-based organizations, government agencies, and the public to raise awareness and expand opportunities for students to have a meaningful voice.*

POD has a strong foundation of partnerships,

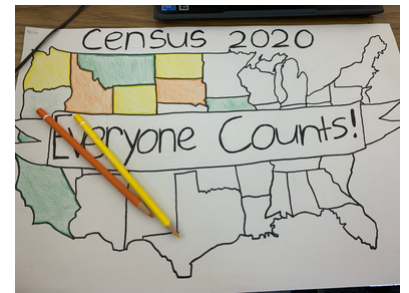
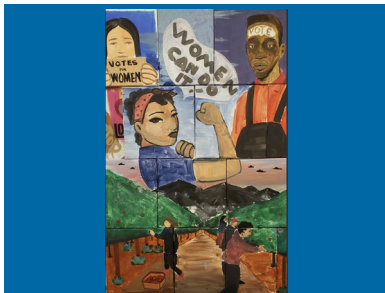
but to reach all youth, expanded participation is needed. Broad-based membership will fill in the gaps and ensure that the partnerships reflect the diversity of the community served. POD will work to reach all corners of the county to build balanced partnerships.

### Strategy

Conduct workshops and outreach to expand partnerships with parents, community members, community-based organizations, and other partners that enhance and elevate POD and support students earning the State Seal of Civic Engagement.

Explore ways to minimize barriers to create and maintain partnerships with educational leaders.

Explore effective and equitable educational systems that model and create a sense of belonging.



*Special recognition and thanks to the Power of Democracy Initiative Steering Committee for their input and contributions in developing this strategic plan.*

Santa Clara County  Office of Education

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San Jose, CA 95131-2304  
[www.sccoe.org](http://www.sccoe.org)



# 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

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.**

**THE POWER OF  
DEMOCRACY**





# 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.

<p><b>Criteria 1:</b> Be engaged in academic work in a productive way.</p>	<p>Ways to meet the criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attend classes and be on track to graduate with a diploma or certificate of completion</li> <li>▪ Complete school course requirements</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Criteria 2:</b> 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.</p>	<p>Ways to meet the criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pass a U.S. History, Government, Economics, or Civics Course</li> <li>▪ Pass other classes identified as appropriate for the student's program (e.g., IEP, 504 Plan, incarceration, foster youth, those experiencing homelessness, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Criteria 3:</b> 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.</p>	<p>Ways to meet the criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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.)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify a real-world problem</li> <li>▪ Advocate by trying to influence decisions at local, state, or federal level</li> <li>▪ Educate others about problem</li> <li>▪ Innovate a unique solution to the problem</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Criteria 4:</b> Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions through self-reflection.</p>	<p>Ways to meet the criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ After completion of the civic-action project, complete a self-reflection that includes:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A definition of the problem</li> <li>▪ An explanation of how the problem was addressed</li> <li>▪ A reflection about the societal/systemic solutions to the problem</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Criteria 5:</b> Exhibit character traits that reflect civic-mindedness and a commitment to positively impact the classroom, school, community and/or society.</p>	<p>Ways to meet the criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Show concern for the rights and well-being of others, especially historically disenfranchised groups.</li> <li>▪ 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</li> <li>▪ Submit evidence of character traits by obtaining at least one recommendation from a peer mentor, local, state, national official, or non-familial community member</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>



# 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

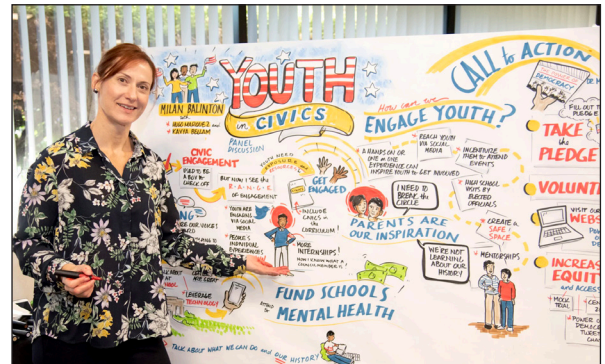
To learn more, go to the SCCOE website at [www.sccoe.to/SSCE](http://www.sccoe.to/SSCE)



For further information or support, contact Saletta Okunnuga, Coordinator of History-Social Science & Civic Engagement, at [sokunnuga@sccoe.org](mailto: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).*







An overview of the **State Seal of Civic Engagement** criteria and the **Community Champion** pathway program.

The State Board of Education awards the State Seal of Civic Engagement (SSCE) to 11th and 12th grade students in California 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.

The Santa Clara County Community Champion pathway program recognizes K-10th grade students for their civic engagement efforts and commitment to positively impacting the community.

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- ★ Empower youth to become strong collaborators for educational change

## Audience

- District Leaders
- Site Administrators
- Teacher Leaders

**FREE!**

Thursday **February 29, 2024** **VIRTUAL**

4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Registration

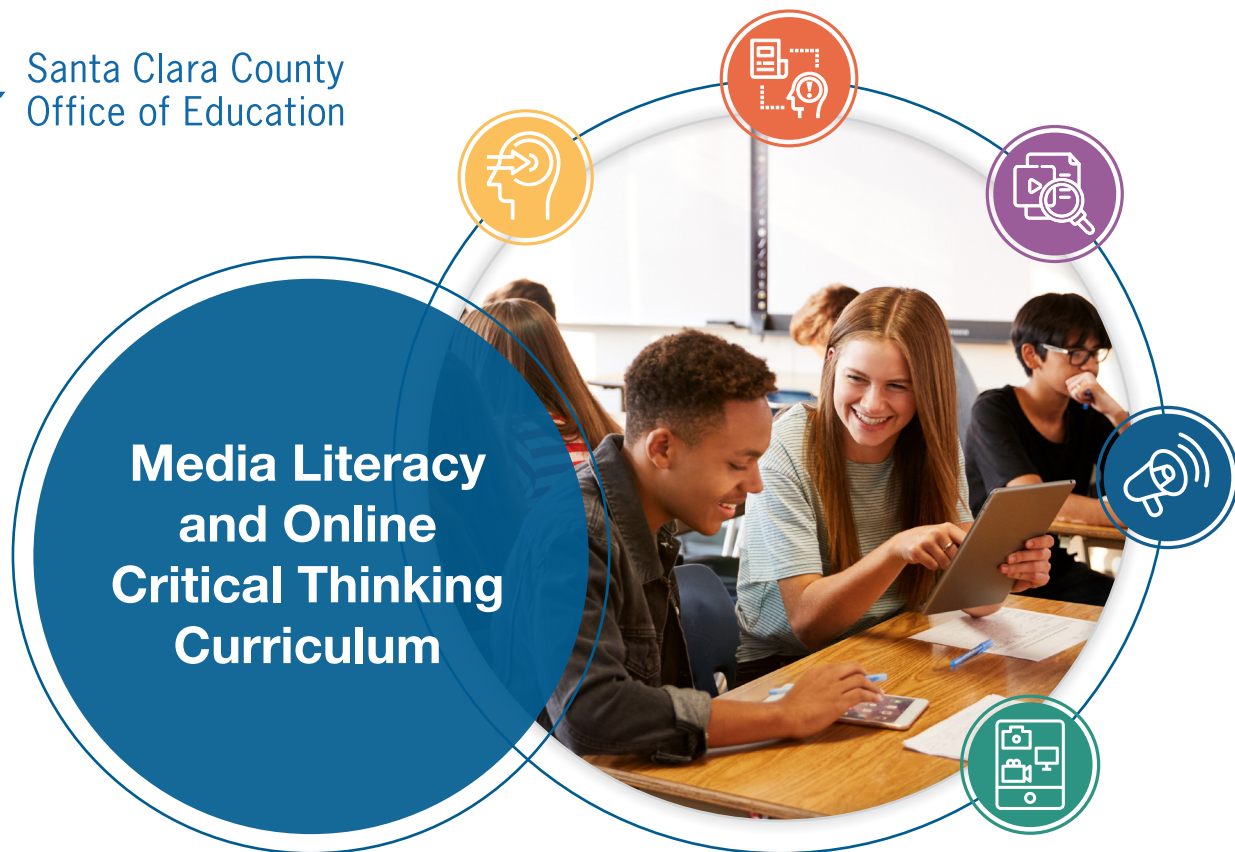
<https://na.eventscloud.com/ereg/index.php?eventid=784164&>

Wednesday **May 1, 2024** **VIRTUAL**

4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Registration

<https://na.eventscloud.com/ereg/index.php?eventid=784733&>



## Media Literacy and Online Critical Thinking Curriculum

How can media literacy help us raise awareness, organize for change, and take restorative action? The Santa Clara County Office of Education's grant-funded project explored this question while designing our social justice-centered media literacy curriculum.

**Explore this free, engaging, and easy-to-implement curriculum!**  
**There are three versions to choose from:**

- **Student-paced high school online course**
- **Teacher-facilitated high school blended learning unit**
- **Online course for adults (English & Spanish)**

Access current resources here: <https://sccoe.to/medialit>

**For more information or questions, contact:**

Christa Norum, Education Technology Coordinator, [cnorum@sccoe.org](mailto:cnorum@sccoe.org)



# High School Voter Education Weeks



## Amplify Youth Vote and Voice!

**High School Voter Education Weeks:  
April 15-26, 2024 and September 16-27, 2024**

**Student Mock Election: October 8, 2024  
Registration opens on April 15, 2024**

This is an opportunity for all middle and high school students to learn about the candidates and discover how government and politics affect their lives. To learn more and sign up, visit the California Secretary of State's [Student Mock Election web page](#).

Once all the votes are counted, participating schools and students can compare their votes with their peers at schools across the state.



**For more information on California's high school and youth voter education and registration initiatives:**

[sos.ca.gov/elections/high-school-programs](https://sos.ca.gov/elections/high-school-programs)



# The California State Seal of Civic Engagement Implementation Toolkit



Santa Clara County  
Office of Education

THE POWER OF  
**DEMOCRACY**



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- ★ Empower young people to become strong collaborators for educational change

## Section 1

What is the State Seal of Civic Engagement?

## Section 2

What is Authentic Youth Voice?

## Section 3

How Can I Get Started With Implementation?

## Section 4

What Resources Are Available To Support This Important Work?

## What is the State Seal of Civic Engagement?

*“It is the intent of the Legislature to establish a State Seal of Civic Engagement to encourage, and create pathways for, pupils in elementary and secondary schools to become civically engaged in democratic governmental institutions at the local, state, and national levels.”*

California Education Code Section 51470



## What Is Civic Knowledge?



Financial and Digital Media Literacy

Ethics, History, Geography, Law, and Economics

Constitutional Concepts Such as Separation of Powers and Due Process

How Government Works:  
Government Processes

Local, State, National, and Global Issues of the Day



## State Seal of Civic Engagement Criteria

1. Be engaged in academic work in a productive way.



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.



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.

4. Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions through self-reflection.

**Great example of student self-reflection!**



5. Exhibit character traits that reflect civic-mindedness and a commitment to positively impact the classroom, school, community, and/or society.

## What is Authentic Youth Voice?



## What Are Civic Values? (History-Social Science Framework)



Demonstrate Concern for the Rights and Wellbeing of Others

Tolerate, Appreciate, and Seek out a Variety of Perspectives

Have a Sense of Civic Duty at Local, State, National, and Global Levels

Be Aware of One's Own Power to Act and be Predisposed to Take Action to Change Things for the Better

## How Can I Get Started With Implementation?

Invite students, staff, and family, to learn about the State Seal of Civic Engagement and co-construct local criteria.



Focus on equity and inclusion. How can implementing the State Seal of Civic Engagement foster a sense of belonging for students and the community?

Encourage a Board Resolution to Adopt Local Criteria.



## What Are Civic Skills? (History-Social Science Framework)

The Ability To:

Gather and Process Information, Listen Well, Think Critically, Speak in Public, and Engage in Discussion and Debate

Collaborate, Build Consensus, and Take Collective Action to Address Community Issues

Vote, Perform Jury Duty, and Communicate with Policy Makers

Fluently Use Technology and Digital Civic Engagement Tools

Critically Evaluate Campaign Advertising







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<p><b>Criteria 5:</b> Exhibit character traits that reflect civic-mindedness and a commitment to positively impact the classroom, school, community and/or society.</p>	<p>Ways to meet the criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show concern for the rights and well-being of others, especially historically disenfranchised groups</li> <li>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</li> <li>Submit evidence of character traits by obtaining at least one recommendation from a peer, mentor, local, state, national official, or non-familial community member</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>

## 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.

To learn more, go to the SCCOE website at [www.sccoe.to/SSCE](http://www.sccoe.to/SSCE)



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

### 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

*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).*



### 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  
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:

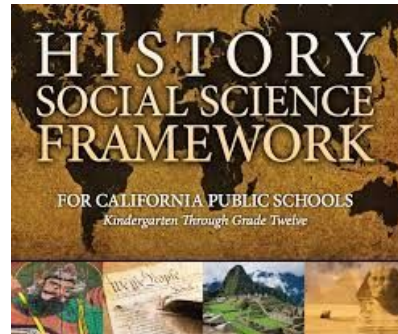
Boys and Girls Club  
Grassroots Ecology  
Kelly Park  
Local Libraries  
Office of Immigrant Relations  
Office of LGBTQ Affairs Division of Equity and Social Justice  
Office of Women's Policy  
Registrar of Voters  
Silicon Valley Urban Debate League (SVUDL)  
YMCA

# What Resources Are Available to Support This Important Work?

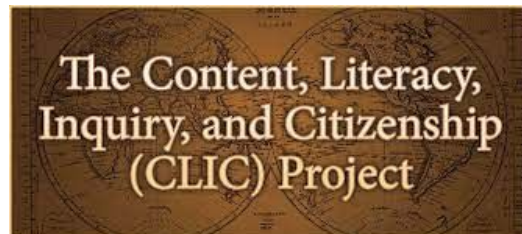
[California Department of Education](#)  
[State Seal of Civic Engagement](#)



[History-Social Science Framework](#)



[Content, Literacy, Inquiry, Citizenship Project](#)



[Educating for American Democracy](#)



[Equity in Civic Education](#)



[LCAP and Civic Engagement](#)



Section 1

Section 2

Section 3

Section 4