

# State Seal of Civic Engagement

State Board of Education Meeting  
July 10, 2019

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction



# State Seal of Civic Engagement Authorization

- California *Education Code (EC)* sections 51470–51474 call for development of a State Seal of Civic Engagement (SSCE):
  - On or before January 1, 2020, the Superintendent (SSPI) shall recommend to the State Board of Education (SBE) criteria for awarding a SSCE to pupils who have demonstrated excellence in civics education and participation and have demonstrated an understanding of the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, and the democratic system of government.



# Build Criteria for the State Seal of Civic Engagement

- In developing criteria for the SSCE, the SSPI shall:
  - Incorporate the Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning, developed by the Education Commission of the States, and any and all other best practices for civic learning and engagement.
  - Consult with a diverse group of credentialed, current, classroom teachers who teach the subject of history-social science, including government, in secondary schools.



# Criteria Considerations

The SSPI must also consider including criteria based on each of the following:

1. Successful completion of history, government, and civics courses, including courses that incorporate character education.
2. Voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities.
3. Any other related requirements deemed appropriate.



# Additional Considerations

The SSPI shall ensure, to the greatest extent feasible, that the criteria:

1. Provide all pupils with an opportunity to earn the SSCE.
2. Recognize pupil excellence or outstanding achievement.
3. Are not based primarily on pupil achievement that is already recognized through grades or other standard measures of pupil achievement.
4. To the extent possible, result in a seal that confers some benefit to pupils beyond secondary school.



# Key State-Level Activities

Date	Event
September 2018	Recruitment of SSCE Advisory Group
November 2018	SSCE Advisory Group convened
March 2019	Public review and comment and additional input
April 2019	Criteria updated based on public comment
July 10, 2019	Criteria presented to SBE for feedback
September 2019	Criteria presented to SBE for potential adoption
January 1, 2020	Statutory deadline for SSPI to recommend criteria
January 31, 2021	Statutory deadline for SBE to take action



# Recommended Criteria

The student must:

1. Be in good academic standing and on track to satisfy requirements to earn a high school diploma;
2. Demonstrate a “competent understanding” of United States (U.S.) and California constitutions; functions and governance of local governments; tribal government structures and organizations; and democratic principles, concepts, and processes;
3. Participate in an informed civic engagement project to address real world problems;
4. Present a written or oral reflection of student civic engagement project activities; and
5. Exhibit character traits that support civic-mindedness, supported by a letter of recommendation from a peer, educator, mentor, local elected official, or non-familial community member.



# Guidance for Criterion 1

Districts may use their own definition of “good standing” for a student to graduate or grade promote, such as:

- Being on track to graduate—using district or state requirements
- Demonstrating academic improvement for all youth (challenges faced by students who are English Learners [EL], homeless, in foster care, and/or incarcerated should be considered)
- Building constructive relationship(s) with the school community, (e.g., prosocial behaviors)
- LEAs may also consider using student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to specify levels needed to attain “good standing.”



## Guidance for Criterion 2

- Students must complete grade level HSS course requirements in U.S. History and American Government with a passing grade. LEAs may determine, through local board of education policy, their local definitions of a passing grade.
- LEAs may choose to measure fulfillment of HSS course requirements with a district-specific content benchmark or civic assessment. LEA encouragement of student participation in local governmental meetings may also be considered.
- LEAs may also consider encouraging grade 11 student fulfillment of the criteria in order for a seal to be affixed to a transcript for use in post-secondary college applications.



# Guidance for Criterion 3

- Participation in informed civic engagement activities may take many forms.
- In order to promote student use of inquiry, educators are encouraged to use the Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning document, which is available on the Education Commission of the States web page at <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/10/48/11048.pdf>.



# Guidance for Criterion 4

- Through self-reflection, the student will demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Student self-reflection could show:
  - How the student engaged with institutions of power to advance a common good (for the student's community and/or society as a whole) or a democratic ideal, such as equity and justice.
  - What the student learned and how the student has personally grown through the civic engagement activity.
- Some examples include a capstone project or portfolio, a public presentation, or a written essay.
- The reflection or presentation should reflect a student's choice of civic engagement activities.



# Guidance for Criterion 5

- Character traits that support “civic-mindedness” may include:
  - Demonstrating concern for both the rights and well-being of others;
  - Tolerating, appreciating, and seeking out a variety of perspectives;
  - Having a sense of civic duty at local, state, national, and global levels;
  - Being aware of the value of their experiences and their power to act, and being predisposed to take action to change things for the better.
- Observed character traits that support civic-mindedness may include:
  - Standing up for another student who is experiencing bullying, harassment, or unwanted attention;
  - Valuing differences, speaking and engaging others with respect and civility, especially those who are different and/or have diverse or opposing views;
  - Leading a group to work toward providing a common good.



# Project Examples

- Table 1: Examples of civic engagement projects for grades nine through twelve
- Table 2: Resources for kindergarten through grade 12
- This guidance will be updated as new resources become available.



# Additional Information

- More information regarding the SSCE is available on the CDE State Seal of Civic Engagement web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/hs/hssstateseal.asp>
  - Six Proven Practices of Civic Education
  - *Revitalizing K–12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint for Action*
  - Detailed timeline of SSCE development activities

