

# State Seal of Civic Engagement

State Board of Education Meeting  
September 11, 2019

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



# Legislative Intent

“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



# 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 11, 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



# SBE Discussion

- The draft SSCE recommended criteria were presented to the SBE for initial review and feedback on July 10, 2019.
- Changes based on SBE discussion have been incorporated into the revised criteria including:
  - Improving accessibility
  - Supporting continuous civic engagement
  - Promoting diversity and inclusion
  - Engaging young students
  - Supporting an interdisciplinary approach
- Staff prepared an August SBE information memorandum regarding potentially including the SSCE in the College/Career Indicator



# Improving Accessibility

- Change to Criteria 1
  - From “Be in good academic standing and on track to satisfy requirements to earn a high school diploma” to “Be on track to complete required high school coursework.” (p. 3)
- Change to guidance for Criteria 1
  - “LEAs may also consider using student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to specify levels needed to attain ‘good standing,’ or for students to be on track to receive a Certificate of Completion.” (p. 4)



# Supporting Continuous Civic Engagement

- Change to Criteria 3
  - From “Participate in an informed civic engagement project to address real world problems” to “Participate in one or more informed action civics project(s) to address real world problems.” (p. 3)
- Change to guidance for Criteria 3
  - “The term, ‘action civics’ refers to the service learning approach when students choose and define problems in their community, develop and implement plans to address those problems, and reflect on their actions and are encouraged to develop identities as citizens (with rights and responsibilities). Action civics augments service learning by encouraging students to consider influencing institutional policies along with other options for addressing problems.” (p. 4)



# Promoting Diversity and Inclusion

Change to guidance for Criteria 5 (excerpt from p. 6):

1. Civic mindedness may encompass:
  - Concern for the rights and well-being of others and a desire to contribute to the common good
  - Appreciating and seeking out a variety of perspectives and valuing differences
2. Evidence of observed character traits that support civic-mindedness may include:
  - Speaking and engaging others with respect and civility, especially those who are different and/or have diverse or opposing views
  - Demonstrating empathy and understanding through inclusion and helping to elevate the voices of others



# Supporting Young Students

- New language:
  - “Even the youngest students can engage in and demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Civic learning opportunities may begin as early as pre-kindergarten, elementary, and middle school.” (p. 2)
- Title of Table 2, formerly “Select Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve Resources,” modified to include “Pre-Kindergarten.” (p. 11)



# Supporting an Interdisciplinary Approach

- Existing language:
  - “Throughout the process, students are encouraged to consider interdisciplinary projects and issues, using all the knowledge and skills they have gained across the curriculum to engage with their communities.” (p. 2)
- New language:
  - “Action civics projects may integrate skills and knowledge across content areas.” (p. 5)
  - “This may include working with others, the interdisciplinary skills applied, the effectiveness of the action taken for the community the student endeavored to serve, and ideas for further or future work.” (p. 5)



# Considerations for Including the SSCE in the College/Career Indicator

- Criteria would need to be revised and standardized to ensure that the measure is valid and reliable.
- Several of the criteria would require extensive developmental work.
- Standardization would reduce the number of eligible students.
- Staff recommends exploration of an “Advanced” SSCE.
- Additional information is available in the August SBE Information Memorandum.



# Five Recommended Criteria

The student must:

1. Be on track to complete required high school coursework;
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 one or more informed action civics project(s) 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.



# 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

