Civic life and engagement in the ideals of good citizenship are at the heart of LACOE's latest initiative for public schools.

Ten high schools in L.A. County and two in Orange County are about to embark on a three-year journey to institutionalize civic learning instructional practices to prepare all students at their school sites for citizenship in the 21st century.

The "California Democracy School Civic Learning Initiative: Investigation, Service and Civility for the 21st Century" — funded by the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation in partnership with the L.A. County Education Foundation and directed by LACOE — will engage school teams as professional learning communities to build student knowledge, skills and dispositions to become competent, engaged citizens in our American democracy.

"As the educational community moves forward to implement the Common Core State Standards to prepare students for college and career, it is equally important to prepare students for citizenship," said Michelle Herczog, History-Social Science consultant at LACOE and director of the initiative. "This initiative will achieve that goal in a thoughtful, systematic way that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the soon-to-be-released College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards."

Schools involved in the initiative to be launched July 15-19 include: Loara HS (Anaheim UHSD), Savanna HS (Anaheim UHSD), Bellflower HS (Bellflower USD), Cesar Chavez/Harriet Tubman Alternative HS (Compton USD), Culver City HS (Culver City USD), Glendale HS (Glendale USD), William Workman HS (Hacienda La Puente USD), Road to Success Academy (LACOE Juvenile Court Schools), Cabrillo HS (Long Beach USD), Pomona HS (Pomona USD), Village Academy HS (Pomona USD) and Santa Monica HS (Santa Monica-Malibu USD).

School teams consisting of lead teachers, school site administrators and parent organizations will focus on three critical pedagogical practices:
• **Inquiry and Investigation** — thoughtful problem-solving approaches for addressing public issues that promote critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration through social media and technology.

• **Service** — guided experiential service that builds on youths' capacities to improve society in tangible and visible ways with an intentional focus on research, action and reflection for impacting public policy.

• **Civility** — discussion of controversial issues in meaningful and respectful ways critical to the political process and survival of democracy.

School teams will receive: professional development led by expert civic education scholars and practitioners; opportunities to implement and reflect on civic learning practices with guidance and support from a full-time civic learning coach; and planning time to institutionalize inquiry and investigation into required coursework for all students.

To increase the initiative's capacity to replicate the program across a variety of school sites it will also involve: an annual event for schools to showcase their work to educators and policymakers, leadership training for school administrators and a professional development module and user guide.

"By developing school cultures for learning and building schoolwide and communitywide capacity, we will be institutionalizing civic learning as a meaningful, contextualized approach to fully prepare all students for college, career and civic life in the 21st century," Herczog said.

Initiative partners include the [Mills College Civic Engagement Research Group](http://www.mills.edu/civic-engagement), the [Spencer Foundation](http://www.spencer.org) and UCLA's [Institute for Democracy, Education and Access](http://ideas.ucla.edu).

For more information, contact [Michelle Herczog](mailto:mhcr@ucla.edu), 562/922-6331.

Actions: [E-mail](mailto:mhcr@ucla.edu) | [Permalink](#)