

California Democracy School Planning Guide



CALIFORNIA

DEMOCRACY
SCHOOL



Using the California Democracy School Planning Guide

To become a California Democracy School, policies and practices have been institutionalized to ensure that all students are prepared for college, career, and civic life in the 21st Century. By adopting the California Democracy School Mission and Vision, schools prepare students to leave high school able to:

- participate in civil and productive dialogue about current local, national, and international issues;
- understand and respect the electoral process by registering to vote and voting in elections as informed, engaged citizens; and
- investigate and address community public policy issues by utilizing critical thinking and problem solving skills, creativity and innovation, communication, and collaboration skills needed for effective civic life.

California Democracy School

Mission

Provide ALL students with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become informed, actively engaged citizens in the 21st century.

Vision:

Ensure that ALL students participate in a civic inquiry and investigation to acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become informed, actively engaged citizens in the 21st century.

Any effort to achieve the California Democracy School Mission and Vision requires a systems approach that engages school administrators, teachers, families and the school community, working together to strengthen and sustain high quality civic learning practices for all students. Like most schoolwide initiatives, this initiative also calls for long-term strategic planning based on a continuous cycle of inquiry that assesses the current reality, develops an action plan, implements the plan, evaluates the effectiveness of the plan, and revises the plan as needed. Effective implementation requires a common understanding of the civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will define the outcomes for all students. It also requires close attention to the educational support system and school environment that needs to be achieved for success.

Recommended Steps for Using the California Democracy School Planning Guide

Step 1: Form a Team Dedicated to the California Democracy School Mission and Vision

Identify individuals in your school and school community who believe that the fundamental purpose of education is to prepare students for college, career, and civic life in the 21st century. Include school site administrators, teachers, families, school district administrators, board members, and community members.

Step 2: Assess Your Current Reality

Use the California Democracy School Self-Assessment Guide to determine the status of your schools' understanding of student civic competencies, educational support systems, and the school environment. Your analysis will guide the development of your Action Plan.

Step 3: Develop an Action Plan

Focus on one particular area at a time to determine strategies and actions steps, person(s) responsible for each strategy, what the timeline will be, and what evidence you will need to determine effectiveness.

Step 4: Implement Your Plan

Determine what you may need to implement your plan (i.e. professional development, coaching, resources). Get the assistance you need and move forward to implement your plan. Invite others to support, guide, and assess your efforts. Identify indicators of success during implementation and at the conclusion of your project.

Step 5: Analyze Results

Working with your team, evaluate student work and other evidence to determine effectiveness of your plan.

Step 6: Revise your Plan as Needed

Working collaboratively with your team, use your findings to inform your next steps. Adjust and monitor your plan accordingly. Continue to seek guidance, resources, and support to fully institutionalize civic learning competencies in the areas identified in the Self-Assessment Guide.

Step 7: Communicate Progress and Celebrate!

Communicate progress regularly to all participants and stakeholders including community leaders, partners and policymakers. Showcase your work to other schools across your district, region and state to inspire others to adopt the California Democracy School Mission and Vision.

Student Civic Competencies

	Knowledge	Skills	Dispositions
Beginning Stage	The content knowledge of civic learning is identified and guided by the California History-Social Science Standards adopted in 1998. The principles of American democracy are primarily studied in the one-semester government course in grade 12.	Civic skills are identified and guided by the Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills of the California History-Social Science Standards adopted in 1998 and the California History-Social Science Framework adopted in 2001. Civic skills cited in these documents are characterized as cognitive civic skills that call for students to identify, analyze, synthesize, evaluate and think critically about information and issues. Participatory civic skills are largely lacking.	Civic dispositions are described in California History-Social Science Framework adopted in 2001: • "...students need to develop a deep and abiding commitment to democratic values in their individual and social behavior." • "...commitment to accept social responsibilities associated with citizenship; willingness to work to influence those in political power to preserve and extend justice, freedom, equity, and human rights; willingness to assume leadership roles in clarifying goals and mobilizing groups for political action; and willingness to accept the consequences of one's own actions."
Transitional Stage	Schools are beginning to examine, analyze, and consider teaching civic knowledge as defined by current research, reports, and documents that may include: • Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools Report • National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, National Council for the Social Studies • National Standards for Civics and Government, Center for Civic Education • The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards (C3 Framework), Council of Chief State School Officers	Schools are beginning to examine, analyze, and consider teaching cognitive and participatory civic skills as defined by current research, reports, and documents that may include: • Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools Report • National Council for the Social Studies National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies • Center for Civic Education National Standards for Civics and Government • The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards	Schools are beginning to examine, analyze, and consider teaching civic dispositions as defined by current research, reports, and documents that may include: • Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools Report • National Council for the Social Studies National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies • Center for Civic Education National Standards for Civics and Government • The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards
Democracy School	All students by the end of Grade 12, will participate in a civic inquiry investigation to acquire: • civic knowledge identified in the California History-Social Science Standards for Grade 12 Principles of American Democracy • civic knowledge designated by the C3 Framework: ◦ Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of local, state, national and international civic and political institutions. ◦ Analyze the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties and international agreements on the maintenance of national and international order. ◦ Explain how the U.S. Constitution establishes a system of government that has powers, responsibilities and limits that have changed over time and that are still contested. ◦ Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, national and/or international level. ◦ Critique relationships among governments, civil societies and economic markets.	All students by the end of Grade 12, will participate in a civic inquiry investigation to acquire: • cognitive civic skills designated in the California History-Social Science Standards for Grade 12 Principles of American Democracy • cognitive and participatory civic skills designated by the C3 Framework: ◦ Apply civic virtues and democratic principles when working with others. ◦ Evaluate social and political systems in different contexts, times, and places, that enact civic virtues and democratic principles. ◦ Use appropriate deliberative processes in multiple settings. ◦ Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights and human rights.	All students by the end of Grade 12, will participate in a civic inquiry investigation to acquire: • civic dispositions designated by the C3 Framework: ◦ Demonstrate concern for others' rights and welfare. ◦ Promote fairness and civic equality. ◦ Practice reasonable levels of trust. ◦ Appreciate and commit to public duty and civic participation by volunteering, voting in elections, participating in community meetings, communicating with elected and appointed officials, signing petitions and/or participating in peaceful demonstrations.

Educational Support Systems

	Educational Leadership	Policy	Partnerships
Beginning Stage	Education leaders (including teacher leaders, site and district administrators) promote core academic content mastery as the primary vision for student achievement. Some education leaders in the school and/or district express support for civic learning in the school.	School/district education policies focus primarily on improving student achievement by content mastery of core subject areas. School/district does not identify "preparation for citizenship" as a goal or vision for students. Up to 25% of instructional goals, assessments, and professional development are dedicated to improving civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions.	Parents and families are rarely consulted or invited to work collaboratively with school to understand and support effective civic learning experiences for students. Partnerships with business leaders, community members, higher education, and vendors are minimal. Content, tools, and resources provided by community partners are designed to support student mastery of core subjects.
Transitional Stage	Education leaders promote implementation of the Common Core State Standards and deep content mastery. Education leaders begin to explore and promote interdisciplinary teaching and learning, project-based learning, and innovative approaches to address instructional shifts called for in the Common Core State Standards and Partnership for 21st Century Skills initiatives. Education leaders initiate and support small-scale civic learning opportunities for students.	School/district education policies focus on preparing students for college, career, and citizenship in the 21st century. Policies promote the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics by - providing teachers with professional development to understand and demonstrate the "instructional shifts" revealed in the Common Core State Standards initiative. - supporting project-based learning, interdisciplinary instruction, increased use of technology and digital media. - intentionally integrating creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills into and across all content areas. Up to 50% of instructional goals, assessments, and professional development are dedicated to improving civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions.	Parents and families are familiarized with civic learning experiences and opportunities for students. Parents and families occasionally partner with the school and community organizations to support civic learning experiences. Community partnerships are established specifically to support civic learning by providing content, tools, resources, and civic opportunities for students who can participate.
Democracy School	Educational Leaders are committed to promoting, facilitating, modeling, and supporting: - curriculum and instruction that provides a civic inquiry and investigative approach to developing the civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for effective citizenship in the 21st century. - professional development that equips teachers with the curriculum and pedagogy to engage students in inquiry and investigative approaches. - school and/or district policy that requires all students to engage in a civic inquiry and investigative practice at least once in their high school experience. - engagement with families and community partners to support, advance, and honor civic learning experiences in-school and out-of-school. - innovative uses of technology, digital media, project-based learning, and other interactive structures to strengthen civic competencies. - ongoing collaborative efforts to build capacity within the school, across the school district, and across the state to provide all students opportunities to become competent, engaged citizens in the 21st century.	The high school and school district has established policy to prepare students for citizenship in the 21st century by: - ensuring that every student participates in a civic inquiry and investigation activity specifically designed to build civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions at least once in their high school experience. The policy explicitly states when and where it occurs (i.e. grade level, course). - supporting professional development to equip teachers with the curriculum and instructional strategies to engage students in inquiry and investigative approaches. - including civic learning in the school/district "report card" and measure student progress toward mastery of civic competencies. - integrating <i>the vision of civic learning for all students</i> into the school and or district's mission statement. - promoting and supporting the implementation of the Six Proven Practices of the Guardian of Democracy Civic Mission of Schools Report across the school and/or district.	Parents and families are actively engaged in the civic learning of their students by: - working collaboratively with school teams to understand and promote the goal and vision of civic learning. - providing information, feedback, and support to create effective civic learning experiences for students in-school and out-of-school. - encouraging their children to develop an interest in keeping themselves informed about current events and volunteering in the community. - supporting, encouraging, and modeling civic knowledge, skills, and habits. Partnerships with business leaders, community members, higher education, and vendors have been established to: - engage in meaningful dialogue about the importance of civic learning for young people in their community. - articulate specific needs of the community to inform the development of various civic learning experiences in-school and out-of-school. - work collaboratively to develop, support, promote, and provide civic learning opportunities for all students.

The School Environment

	Curriculum and Instruction	Assessment
Beginning Stage	Civic learning is primarily limited to instruction in one-semester government course in grade 12. Most of instruction is focused on acquiring civic knowledge; little attention to practicing and demonstrating cognitive and participatory civic skills and civic dispositions.	Assessment is primarily limited to assessing student understanding of civic knowledge in the one-semester government course in grade 12. Assessment measures are primarily multiple-choice and/or short answer/essay tests. Few opportunities to demonstrate mastery of civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions through performance-based assessments.
Transitional Stage	School begins to consider integrating the teaching of civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions in various grade spans and courses. School offers a variety of civic learning experiences to students. A particular civic education program may be implemented in isolated classroom(s) or across a grade span. Not all students may have the opportunity to participate in civic learning experiences outside the required government course in grade 12.	School offers some opportunities to demonstrate mastery of civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions through classroom-based assessment strategies such as portfolios, capstone projects, and performance-based assessments. Parents and families are typically not informed of student progress. Few if any opportunities for educators to work collaboratively to analyze data to inform and refine instruction.
Democracy School	Over 75% of core academic curriculum and instruction: • builds deep content knowledge to enable students to understand complex problems in the 21st century. • intentionally integrates creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills that will strengthen civic competencies. • demonstrates effective use of technology, digital media, and academic language in reading, writing, speaking and listening as required in the California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. • meets the instructional needs of all students including English Learners and students with special needs. Civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions are acquired by all students through an inquiry-based approach that requires students to • Construct compelling and supporting questions • Apply disciplinary concepts and tools • Gather, evaluate, and use evidence to reach a conclusion • Work collaboratively to communicate conclusions • Take informed action if needed.	The school assesses student mastery of civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions through a comprehensive, balanced approach that: • measures growth over time using formative and summative assessment measures. • utilizes a variety of classroom-based assessment strategies such as portfolios, capstone projects, and performance-based assessments. • engages students and families as active participants in assessing and understanding student performance and use this understanding to guide and refine their work. • allows educators to work collaboratively to analyze data to inform and refine instruction.

The School Environment

	Learning Environment	Professional Development
Beginning Stage	School environment is focused on improving student achievement as measured on mandated assessment and accountability systems.	Professional development primarily focuses on improving teachers' capacity to teach core academic content to improve student achievement as measured on mandated assessment and accountability systems. Some professional development opportunities may address civic knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions. Professional development is not available for supporting civic learning in a systemic way at the school.
Transitional Stage	School is moving forward to implement the Common Core State Standards by exploring a variety of instructional approaches such as project-based learning and interdisciplinary teaching. School has instituted some of the research-based <i>Six Proven Practices</i> that constitute a well-rounded and high quality civic learning experience as identified in the Guardian of Democracy Civic Mission of Schools Report: 1. Classroom instruction in government, history, economics, and democracy. 2. Discussion of current events and controversial issues. 3. Service-learning that is linked to formal curriculum and classroom instruction. 4. Extracurricular activities that are voluntary, structured, organized and led by an adult, and require effort on the part of the student 5. Participation in school governance 6. Simulations of democratic processes	Professional development to support civic learning made available to teachers; usually limited to History-Social Science teachers. Teachers may participate in professional development to implement a particular civic education program.
Democracy School	The school has established a learning environment that guarantees: • all students, by the end of grade 12, will participate in four or more of the research-based Six Proven Practices that constitute a well-rounded and high quality civic learning experience as identified in the Guardian of Democracy Civic Mission of Schools Report. • flexible and regular units of time and physical space for school teams to meet regularly to monitor and adjust instruction for all students to acquire and demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. • structures that support and encourage professional development, collaborative instructional practices, and engagement with the surrounding community.	All teachers will participate in professional development that: • deepens their knowledge of their particular subject area to better equip them to engage students in discussions and inquiry about topics, problems, and issues in contemporary society. • explores interdisciplinary, project-based approaches to build civic competency of students. • actively engages teachers in participatory activities that model inquiry-based approaches to teaching and learning that includes civil dialogue about controversial issues. • includes ongoing, job-embedded opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively to practice new approaches, analyze data, provide feedback, share instructional strategies and refine their work. • explores strategies to engage families and the community in building civic competencies of students.

