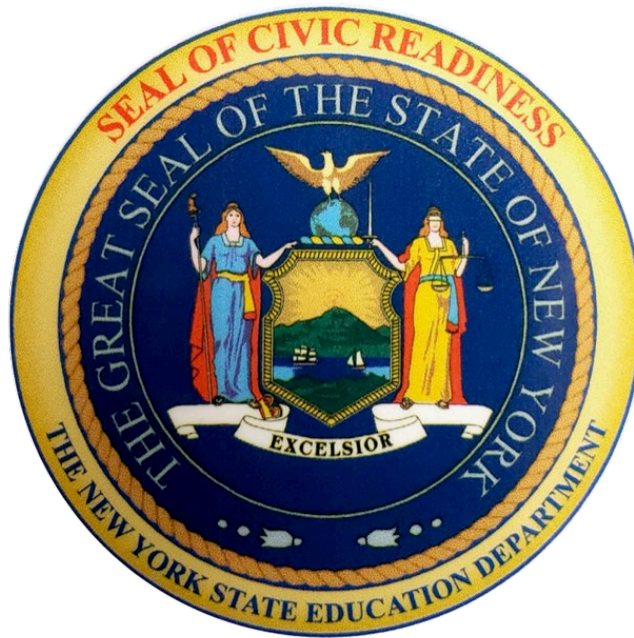


# New York State Education Department

## The New York State Seal of Civic Readiness Handbook



Updated March 2025

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## Summary of Updates to the Seal of Civic Readiness Manual

The Office of Standards and Instruction has updated the formatting of the Seal of Civic Readiness Manual. Please note that content, including program requirements, has not changed.

### Changes:

- **Organization** – Key sections have been reformatted for better navigation. Some sections have been reformatted into charts to clearly outline the important information.
- **Online Version** – The manual is now available in an online format.
- **Resource Toolkit** – A new Resource Toolkit has been added to the website, with templates, rubrics, sample projects, and other helpful materials to support implementation.

**Criteria for Students to earn the NYSED Seal of Civic Readiness**

To earn the Seal of Civic Readiness, a student must accumulate six points according to the chart below: at least two points from Column 1 (Civic Knowledge), two points from Column 2 (Civic Participation), and two additional points from either column. This chart provides flexibility and is not a checklist, as students do not need points in every category to qualify.

<b>Civic Knowledge</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Civic Participation</b>	<b>Points</b>
<i>Options</i>		<i>Options</i>	
<b>1a. 4 Credits of Social Studies</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2a. High School Civics Project (limit two times during grades 9-12)</b>	<b>1.5**</b>
<b>1b. Mastery level on Social Studies Regents Exam</b>	<b>1.5*</b>	<b>2.b Service-Learning Project (minimum 25 hours) and reflective civic learning essay/presentation/product</b>	<b>1*</b>
<b>1c. Proficiency level on Social Studies Regents Exam</b>	<b>1*</b>	<b>2c. Earned credit in an elective course that promotes civic engagement</b>	<b>.5*</b>
<b>1d. Advanced Social Studies Course(s)</b>	<b>.5*</b>	<b>2d. Middle School Capstone Project (Grades 7 and 8 are only eligible for this point)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1e. Research Project</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2e. Extra-curricular participation or work-based learning experience (minimum 40 hours) and an essay/presentation/project</b>	<b>.5*</b>
<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>2f. Civics Capstone Project</b>	<b>4</b>

*\*Students may receive these points more than once.*

*\*\* Students may receive these points no more than two times.*

*Testing accommodations recommended in an individualized education program or section 504 Accommodations Plan must be provided for all State and districtwide assessments administered to students with disabilities, as consistent with State policy. Students in schools with an alternate pathway for graduation approved by the Commissioner will be held to those schools' criteria.*

**Scenarios: See Online Toolkit (Appendix E) for scenarios**

## **Criteria for Demonstrating Proficiency in Civic Knowledge**

Students who receive the NYSED Seal of Civic Readiness must earn a total of six points, with at least two points from column #1 - Criteria for Demonstrating Proficiency in Civic Knowledge.

*The options for this category include:*



**1a. Social Studies courses required for graduation: ..... 1 pt.**

- Obtain course credit in Global History & Geography I
- Obtain course credit in Global History & Geography II
- Obtain course credit in United States History & Government
- Obtain course credit in Participation in Government & Economics
- Or the equivalent of these courses, as approved by the local public-school superintendent or his or her designee or by the chief administrative officer of a registered nonpublic high school.

**1b. Social Studies Regents Exam – Mastery Level ..... 1.5 pts.\***

- Demonstrate mastery level on the Global History & Geography II Regents and/or United States History Regents.

**1c. Social Studies Regents Exams - Proficiency Level ..... 1 pt.\***

- Receive a passing score on the Global History & Geography II Regents and/or United States History Regents (apply safety net if eligible).

**1d. Advanced Social Studies Courses ..... 50 pt.\***

- Demonstrate proficiency in an advanced social studies course (e.g., Honors, Pre-AP, AP, IB or College/University level approved by the school district; including dual enrollment courses or others approved by the SCR Committee).

**1e. Research Project ..... 1 pt.**

Demonstrate civic knowledge through a social studies research project. The District’s Seal of Civic Readiness Committee must approve this project.

*\*Students may receive these points more than once. Testing accommodations recommended in an individualized education program or section 504 Accommodations Plan must be provided. Students in schools with an alternate pathway for graduation approved by the Commissioner will be held to those schools' criteria.*

## Civic Knowledge Research Project

### 1e. The Civic Knowledge Research Project - 1 point\*

Component	Details
<b>Definition</b>	<p>The <b>1e. Civic Knowledge Research Project</b> is a research project in which students examine a question (constitutional, historical, political, economic, an/or social) through the lens of civics, use a variety of sources (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, primary, secondary), support a thesis (argument or perspective on the topic), and present their research using written, audio/visual, oral, and/or multimodal formats.</p> <p><i>*Students may only be awarded points for the 1e. Civic Knowledge Research Project once.</i></p>
<b>Seal of Civic Readiness Committee Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review project performance tasks (overviews and assessment tools) to ensure they meet the requirements.</li> <li>• Track the individual progress of each student earning points towards the 1e. <i>Civic Knowledge Research Project</i>, add the earned points in the locally determined tracking system and store copies of the project for a minimum of three years in the event of audit.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a <b>project overview</b> for students that:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Examines a question (constitutional, historical, political, economic, and/or social) through the lens of civics.</li> <li>○ Use a variety of sources (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, primary, secondary) to investigate the research question and support the research thesis (argument or perspective on the topic).</li> <li>○ Assess student sources for credibility, reliability, and factuality to bolster <i>media literacy</i> skills.</li> <li>○ Create a works cited or bibliography format model for student use.</li> </ul> <p>Facilitate students in creating a work product that presents their research using written, audio/visual, oral, and/or multimodal formats.</p> </li> <li>• Create <b>assessment tools</b> that are consistent with the school’s practices and evaluate each of the essential project elements.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Coordinate with the Seal of Civic Readiness Committee to review the project overview and assessment tools for accreditation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Student Responsibilities</b>	Develop and create a 1e. Civic Knowledge Research Project that fulfills accreditation criterion
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Toolkit Appendix I: Sample Research Project Rubric</li> </ul>



## Criteria for Demonstrating Civic Participation

Students who receive the NYSED Seal of Civic Readiness must earn a total of six points, with at least two points from column #2 - Criteria for Demonstrating Civic Participation. The options for this category include:



- 2a. Civic Skills, Actions, and Mindsets ..... 1.5 pts.\*\***
- Complete a high school civic project that demonstrates civic knowledge, skills, actions, and mindsets, as established by the local Seal of Civic Readiness Committee (SCRC).
- 2b. Civic Experiences Area I ..... 1 pt.\***
- Complete a service-learning project that includes a minimum of 25 hours of demonstrated service to the community and submit a reflective essay/presentation.
- 2c. Civic Experiences Area II ..... 50 pt.\***
- Demonstrate proficiency in an elective course that promotes civic engagement (as defined by SCR committee) and submit an application of knowledge essay/presentation.
- 2d. Civic Experiences Area III ..... 50 pt.\***
- Participate in an extra-curricular program, or work-based learning experience that promotes civic engagement or civic action for a minimum of 40 hours. Write an application of knowledge essay/presentation. This may be accomplished over four years of high school.
- 2e. Middle School Capstone Project ..... 1 pt.**
- Complete the middle school capstone project that includes the essential elements listed below:
    - Identify an issue (local, state, national, or global).
    - Apply civic knowledge, skills, actions, and mindsets to the issue.
    - Present the overall project to the Middle School Capstone Committee.
- 2f. High School Capstone Project ..... 4 pts.**
- Identify an issue (local, state, national, or global).
  - Apply civic knowledge, skills, actions, and mindsets to the issue.
  - Engage in a civic experience based on the issue to influence positive change to the community (local, state, national, or global).
  - Present overall project to the school's Civic Readiness Committee.

*\*Students may receive these points more than once. Testing accommodations recommended in an individualized education program or section 504 Accommodations Plan must be provided. Students in schools with an alternate pathway for graduation approved by the Commissioner will be held to those schools' criteria.*

*\*\* Students may complete the high school civics project twice during their 9-12 school years, for a maximum of three points.*

**Civic Skills, Actions, and Mindsets**

**2a. High School Civic Project - 1.5 Points\***

<b>Component</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<p>A <b>2a. High School Civic Project*</b> is a short-term project completed in either the classroom or as part of an extracurricular organization that incorporates some of the essential elements of the Civic Readiness Capstone Project. A Civic Project could also be integrated with a Service-Learning Project. The Civic Project will demonstrate the NYSSCR domains of civic readiness, reflecting students’ civic knowledge, skills, actions, and mindsets. Projects will relate to local, state or national issues in civics, where students demonstrate historical thinking skills through a product that displays their findings or position in a persuasive manner.</p> <p><i>*Students may receive these points twice during their 9-12 school years, maxing out at three points. Students may complete their projects individually or collaboratively in groups.</i></p>
<b>Seal of Civic Readiness Committee Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic projects will be approved and evaluated by a process established by the local Seal of Civic Readiness Committee (SCRC) to ensure that projects meet the requirements.</li> <li>• Support teachers in the development of a 2a. Civics Project and assessment tools.</li> <li>• The committee shall be responsible for tracking student point totals.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a project overview for students that satisfies the requirements below.</li> <li>• Collaborate with the Seal of Civic Readiness Committee for project approval and assessment tool creation</li> <li>• Support students throughout their work on the 2a. Civics Project.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Responsibilities</b>	<p>Focus on a civic issue or problem within a policy area that may be predetermined by the teacher or advisor. The civic project is focused on a civic issue or problem that can be interpreted in a variety of ways by a broad array of citizens holding various viewpoints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze data, use primary and/or secondary sources of evidence related to the civic issue under investigation, and determine its impact on communities. Sources should be evaluated for bias and credibility. The teacher, advisor, or student can provide sources.</li> <li>• Evaluate at least two current public policies related to the issue or problem under investigation.</li> <li>• Recommend and/or evaluate potential strategies to address the issue or problem that is under investigation.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate their project using written, audio/visual, and/or oral presentations.</li> <li>• Explain how the project influenced their civic knowledge, skills, and mindsets.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Toolkit Appendix J: Sample High School Civics Project Rubric</li> </ul>

**Service Learning**

**2b. Civic Experiences Area I - Complete a Service-Learning Project - 1 point\***

<b>Component</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<p>Service-learning is an inquiry-based, experiential learning approach that teaches curriculum-based objectives through meaningful service to the community. Service learning is more complex than community service – students engage in meaningful opportunities to apply what they learn to issues that matter to them. In addition, service learning involves investigation, preparation, action, and reflection. High-quality service learning goes beyond a requirement of minimum hours of service in a course. Students are required to use academic skills and knowledge to understand community needs to complete a service-learning project that serves the greater good of the community and to reflect upon their role as members of their community.</p> <p><b>Service-learning</b> projects are typically organized into five stages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigation - conduct research on a community-based problem or needs</li> <li>2. Preparation - create a plan to address these needs</li> <li>3. Conduct Action <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Direct service - Service involves hands-on, face-to-face interactions</li> <li>b. Indirect service - Action is not seen by the people who may directly benefit from the service; however, the action meets a real need.</li> <li>c. Advocacy - Students educate others about a particular issue with the goal of inspiring action to address the issue</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Reflection - required to earn the point for the NYSED Civics Diploma Seal</li> <li>5. Demonstration/celebration - can be combined with the presentation of the project and reflection</li> </ol> <p><i>*Students may earn these points more than once.</i></p>
<b>Seal of Civic Readiness Committee Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support teachers in the development of an inquire-based 2b. Service-Learning Project that reflect the criterion for students to earn accreditation.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collaborate with teachers to develop standard assessment tools to evaluate students work products. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Evaluation criteria for the reflective essay/presentation will be locally developed, as they will reflect how the service-learning project was organized.</i></li> <li>○ <i>The evaluation of a student’s reflective essay/presentation should include an evaluation of selected student’s Civic Knowledge, Civic Skills and Actions, Civic Mindset and Experiences listed in the Civic Readiness Domains.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Track student hours completed with external organizations.</li> <li>● Track student point progress towards overall Seal of Civic Readiness accreditation.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create an inquiry-based unit plan where students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Research a specific community and identify an area of need or challenge.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Identify who is working to impact change.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Collaborate with relevant organizations to develop a plan to positively impact the chosen community.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Develop a project template and assessment tool to facilitate students as they work towards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Participating in 25 hours of service-learning.</i></li> <li>○ <i>An actionable plan, or advocacy that impacts the issue in a positive manner.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Student Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Complete a minimum of 25 hours of demonstrated service to the community.</li> <li>● Write and submit a reflective essay/presentation.</li> </ul> <p><i>Reflection opportunities must be incorporated before, during, and after the service-learning experience. Reflection activities completed prior to the service-learning experience can focus on helping students anticipate what their service-learning experience will be like and what assumptions they are bringing into the situation. Reflection that occurs during and after the service-learning experience helps students understand the actual outcome of their experience in relation to their academic experiences. Reflection questions can help students understand themselves, the population they are serving, the social issue driving their service activity, and the relationship between the service and their civics knowledge, skills, and mindset.</i></p>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● See Toolkit Appendix K: Sample Service-Learning Evaluation</li> <li>● See Toolkit Appendix L: Sample Service-Learning Rubric</li> <li>● See Toolkit Appendix M: Service-Learning Resources</li> </ul>

**Elective Coursework**

**2c. Civic Experiences II - Demonstrate proficiency in an elective course that promotes civic engagement - .5 points\***

<b>Component</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<p>These elective courses that promote civic engagement will be locally determined and may exist within disciplines other than social studies. The district’s Seal of Civic Readiness Committee will determine acceptable courses. Examples include but are not limited to public speaking, literature of the civil rights movement, leadership skills, news literacy, and separate courses designed to support students as they pursue the Seal of Civic Readiness (Civics in Action, Contemporary Issues in America, Capstone Civics, etc.). To receive credit towards the Seal of Civics Readiness, students must complete and submit a Civic Participation Application of Knowledge Reflection. For elective courses, Civic Participation Application of Knowledge Reflections will be evaluated by a process established by the local Seal of Civic Readiness Committee (SCRC) in accordance with the following guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced Social Studies classes and electives rooted in civics must demonstrate evidence of a strong foundation to Civic Readiness to be approved as part of the Seal of Civic Readiness. A course may only be approved if there is evidence that the curriculum will include the four domains of civic readiness.</li> <li>• For a course to qualify it needs to have <i>at least three components of each domain</i>: Civic Knowledge, Civic Skills and Actions, Civic Experience and Civic Mindsets.</li> <li>• Student reflections may be in a variety of forms. Written tasks, podcasts, video, visual or oral presentations, or creative pieces accompanied with a rationale are all examples of acceptable application of knowledge products. The content of the reflection will be evaluated based upon the criteria below.</li> <li>• See the Seal of Civic Readiness Toolkit for the <b>Elective Course Criterion Checklist (Appendix Q)</b></li> </ul> <p><i>*Students may earn these points more than once.</i></p>
<b>Seal of Civic Readiness Committee Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist teachers in developing a civics elective course syllabus that aligns with and demonstrates the domain criteria.</li> <li>• Review syllabi and the corresponding Application of Knowledge task to ensure the course meets the specifications to award credit.</li> </ul>

<b>Teacher Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a course and syllabus that clearly articulates how the elective meets the specified criteria.</li> <li>• Create an Application of Knowledge performance task and corresponding assessment tools.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete and pass the civics elective course.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Toolkit Appendix N: Application of Knowledge Component</li> <li>• See Toolkit Appendix Q: Checklist</li> </ul>

**Extra-curricular or Worked-Based Learning Experience**

**2d. Civic Experiences III - Extra-curricular program, or work-based learning experience that promotes civic engagement or civic action - .5 points\***

<b>Component</b>	<b>Details</b>
<p><b>Definition</b> (according to: <a href="#"><u>NYSED CTE WBL Manual</u></a>)</p>	<p>Work-based learning is authentic learning experiences that allow students to explore their career goals, abilities, and interests while applying their academic and technical knowledge and skills in a real-world context. These experiences are planned and supervised by instructional staff in collaboration with business, industry, or community partners. High quality work-based learning will provide effective and equitable experiences to empower all students to become confident workers and culturally competent citizens of New York State.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be a minimum of 40 hours.</li> <li>• Write an application of knowledge essay/presentation.</li> <li>• This may be accomplished over four years of high school.</li> </ul> <p>This component was designed to be flexible to recognize how clubs and responsibilities outside of school can shape a student’s civic engagement. This includes working after school, participating in Mock Trial, Model UN, or taking a leadership position in any extra-curricular organization. These programs will be determined at the local district level and are not limited to social studies related activities.</p> <p><i>Please note: The Work-Based Learning experiences incorporated into BOCES CTE programming may count as the Seal of Civic Readiness Work-Based Learning experiences. This is a local school district decision. It will be the responsibility of the local school to create and assess the Application of Knowledge component of this category.</i></p>

	<i>*Students may receive these points more than once. However, students may not receive these points for the same extracurricular or work-based learning experience more than once.</i>
<b>Seal of Civic Readiness Committee Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist teachers in the development of an Application of Knowledge project overview and assessment tools.</li> <li>• Review or appoint designee(s) to monitor and track student progress (hours and Application of Knowledge work products).</li> <li>• Ensure students do not apply the same work-based learning experience to earn points towards the NYSSCR more than once.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Application of Knowledge project overviews and assessment tools.</li> <li>• Assist students throughout the work-based learning process.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete at least 40 hours of a singular extracurricular or work-based learning experience.</li> <li>• Pass the Application of Knowledge project as well as any other criteria set forth by the Seal of Civic Readiness Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Toolkit Appendix O: Work-Based Learning Definitions and Examples</li> <li>• See Toolkit Appendix P: Sample Extracurricular Activities</li> </ul>

**Middle School Capstone Project**

**2e. Middle School Capstone Project – 1 pt.**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<p>The <b>2e. Middle School Capstone Project</b> provides students with a meaningful civic experience before high school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students complete the project under teacher guidance, focusing on the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Identify an issue (local, state, national, or global).</i></li> <li>○ <i>Apply civic knowledge, skills, actions, and mindsets to address the issue.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Reflect on their learning.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Present the project to a wider audience (advisor/teacher and classmates).</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• A service option may be included but is not required.</li> </ul>
<b>Seal of Civic Readiness Committee Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form a Seal of Civic Readiness Committee composed of three or more educators, including at least one social studies teacher.</li> <li>• Collaborates with teachers to develop project ideas and evaluation criteria.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews projects to determine if students meet the criteria for one point of credit toward the Seal of Civic Readiness.</li> <li>• At the middle school level, students are not required to present to the full committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide students in identifying and researching a civic issue of interest.</li> <li>• Support students in developing either a <b>Service Action Plan</b> or a <b>Detailed Action Plan</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i><b>Service Action Plan</b>: Create a plan to address an issue and complete service hours.</i></li> <li>○ <i><b>Detailed Action Plan</b>: Analyze research, evaluate solutions, and propose a strategy to address the issue.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure all student contacts with outside organizations follow school procedures.</li> <li>• Facilitate project presentations to an advisor/teacher and classmates.</li> </ul>
<b>Student Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a relevant civic issue (examples: hunger, climate change, human rights).</li> <li>• Develop a guiding question and research using multiple primary and secondary sources.</li> <li>• Complete one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i><b>Service Action Plan</b> to engage in community service.</i></li> <li>○ <i><b>Detailed Action Plan</b> analyzing the issue and recommending solutions.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reflect on their civic learning experience and its impact on their role in the community.</li> <li>• Present their project to a teacher/advisor and a group of peers.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Toolkit Appendix R: Middle School Capstone Project Essential Elements</li> </ul>

**High School Capstone Project**

**2f. High School Capstone Project – 4 pts.**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<p>The <b>2f. High School Capstone Project</b> is a culminating assignment typically completed by students at the end of their final year of study in high school or college. Capstone Projects may be based in any academic subject area. Students typically create a portfolio, a final product, presentation, or performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High quality Capstone Projects are designed to encourage students to develop and assess:</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Critical thinking</i></li> <li>○ <i>Problem-solving</i></li> <li>○ <i>Civic action</i></li> <li>○ <i>Skills like communication, research, teamwork, and planning</i></li> <li>● <b>Examples of Civic Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Organizing meetings or petitions to change school rules or local policies.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Lobbying legislators for law changes.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Creating social media campaigns or writing editorials on community issues.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Launching mental health awareness campaigns.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Starting community gardens or other sustainable initiatives.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Implementation Best Practices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Integrate the project into a dedicated civics course or independent study.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Assign faculty advisors to provide feedback and mentoring.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Partner with community organizations for authentic civic engagement.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Evaluation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Use rubrics aligned with Capstone Essential Elements for formative and summative assessments.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Provide benchmarks and timelines for project completion.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Develop guidelines for evaluating student portfolios, if used as a summative assessment.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Seal of Civic Readiness Committee Responsibilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Appoints a team to design and evaluate the Capstone Project.</li> <li>● Develops and oversees project timelines, structures, and evaluation tools.</li> <li>● Collaborates with community partners and ensures compliance with locally developed Capstone guidelines.</li> <li>● Provides formative and summative feedback using rubrics aligned with Essential Elements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Teacher Responsibilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Guide and mentor students through identifying and researching a civic issue.</li> <li>● Support students in applying Civic Knowledge, Skills and Actions, and Mindset.</li> <li>● Facilitate reflective learning, action planning, and community engagement.</li> <li>● Assist students with portfolio creation and provide professional feedback.</li> <li>● Participate in professional development for Capstone implementation and portfolio design.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Student Responsibilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a Civic Readiness Capstone Project to demonstrate readiness for civic engagement.</li> <li>• Identify, research, and analyze a civic issue in their school or community.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a Service Action Plan or Detailed Action Plan to address the issue.</li> <li>• Reflect on their civic identity, lessons learned, and future actions.</li> <li>• Present their project to the School Civic Readiness Committee.</li> <li>• <i>Optional:</i> Compile a portfolio documenting research, action, reflections, and project artifacts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Toolkit Appendix S: High School Capstone Project Essential Elements</li> <li>• See Toolkit Appendix T: Sample of a Student High School Civic Capstone Project</li> </ul>

## **How Schools and Districts Can Offer the Seal of Civic Readiness**

Public schools, charter schools, and registered nonpublic schools that wish to offer the Seal must complete the Seal of Civic Readiness +1 Civics Pathway application through the [NYSED Business Portal](#) and receive approval from NYSED. Applicants will describe the following: goals, communication plan, student tracking system, projected enrollment, connection to [NYSED Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Initiative](#), advisement, and evaluation plans.

At the conclusion of every school year, schools that were accepted to offer the Seal of Civic Readiness will be required to report the number of Seal recipients, the names and titles of their Seal of Civic Readiness Committee members, and any changes to the school's program through the [NYSED Business Portal](#).

## **How BOCES, P-Tech Programs, Regional High Schools, and Other Educational Entities Can Offer a Seal Program**

BOCES and other educational entities that enroll students from one or more districts, and which do not confer high school diplomas for some (out of district) or all enrolled students, that would like to offer coursework and learning experiences that would provide students with the opportunity to attain the Seal, must complete the Seal of Civic Readiness application through the [NYSED Business Portal](#) and receive approval from NYSED.

Applicants must describe the following: goals, communication plan, student tracking system, projected enrollment, connection to [NYSED Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Initiative](#), advisement, and evaluation plans. Please see [Appendix B: Seal of Civic Readiness Application for Educational Entities](#).

In addition, entities wishing to offer a Seal of Civic Readiness Program which would provide the coursework and educational experiences that would allow students to complete the requirements to obtain the Seal of Civic Readiness must do the following:

1. Provide a description and documentation of the proposed Seal Program to all Superintendents of districts that enroll students in the program;
2. Provide a copy of [Appendix C: Application for Districts to Grant the Seal of Civic Readiness to Students who Complete the Seal Program outside of the district](#) to all districts that enroll students in the program; and
3. Collect signed applications from all districts to submit with the application, per the instructions found in [Appendix B](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions

### The Seal of Civic Readiness and How to Apply

#### **Q1: What is the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness (NYSSCR)?**

A: The Seal of Civic Readiness is a formal recognition that a student has attained a prominent level of proficiency in civic knowledge, civic skills, civic mindset, and civic experiences. The Seal of Civic Readiness distinction on a high school transcript and diploma

- Indicates the student’s understanding of and commitment to participatory government, civic responsibility, and civic values;
- Provides universities and colleges with a method to recognize and provide credit for attainment of higher level of understanding and skills in Social Studies;
- Demonstrates to universities, colleges, and future employers that students have earned recognition for their civic knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences; and
- Recognizes the value of civic engagement and scholarship to school communities and society at large.

#### **Q2: What are the benefits for implementing the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness in School Districts?**

A: High quality, school-based civic learning fosters civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, or dispositions, and promotes civic equality and engagement. It connects scholarship to real-world learning experiences that promote active civic participation in communities. In addition, progression through the skills and competencies of the Seal include:

- ***Fostering Civic Knowledge, Skills, Mindsets:*** When students engage in school-based civic learning and civic action projects they broaden and deepen their civic knowledge and understanding, and their civic mindsets are nurtured and refined.
- ***Promotes Civic Equity:*** Universally available, high-quality civic learning opportunities can help by elevating historically marginalized voices and communities.
- ***Builds 21st Century Skills:*** Students develop and hone presentation, media-literacy, collaborative, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.
- ***Improves School Climate and Community Involvement:*** Real world learning experiences further connects students to their schools and neighborhood communities. Through civic action projects, young people learn how to navigate the world outside of the classroom, learn respectful dialogue, collaboration, and teamwork, and develop an appreciation for diversity.

#### **Q3: Is the Seal of Civic Readiness part of the College, Career, and Civic Readiness (CCR) Index for ESSA?**

A: The CCR Index calculates the percentage of students in the accountability cohort who demonstrate readiness as measured by diplomas, credentials, advanced course credits and enrollment, technical education certifications, HSE diplomas and other similar indicators. The index is on a scale of 200 and each student in the cohort can earn a maximum of two points towards the index. For example, if a school has 100 students and all earn two points, the school’s index score would be 200. You can find the weight assigned to the different indicators of readiness on the [State Accountability Resource Tool \(StART\) Educator Guide here](#). Graduating

with a Seal of Civic Readiness has a weight of two. Students who demonstrate readiness through multiple indicators get credit for the one with the highest weight.

**Q4: What are the requirements for students interested in receiving the NYSSCR?**

A: Students who wish to receive the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness shall complete all requirements for a New York State local or Regents diploma.

**Q5: Who awards the NYSSCR to the students?**

A: The NYSSCR is an award given by a school that has been approved by NYSED to grant the Seal. The school formally recognizes students who have demonstrated proficiencies in civic knowledge and participation by high school graduation.

**Q6: Can the Seal of Civic Readiness be granted to students who are earning a local diploma?**

A: Yes, the Seal of Civic Readiness is open to all students who earn a NYS diploma.

**Q7: What are the criteria for attaining the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness?**

A: The criteria require students to meet both academic and participation criteria. There is a level of choice for students that is reflective of the diversity of their experiences and backgrounds as well as the diversity of New York State school systems. Students must demonstrate proficiencies in civic knowledge and civic participation as measured in the Seal of Civic Readiness criteria.

**Q8: Is there a cost to students for the Seal?**

A: No. A fee may not be charged to students who participate in the NYSSCR program.

**Q9: Who provides the physical Seal and any graduation regalia to the students?**

A: It is the school's or district's decision whether to provide physical printed seals. The Department does not provide physical seals, but an electronic image of the seal will be made available by the Department.

**Q10: To get more information on and/or to ask questions about the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness, which office do I contact?**

A: Contact the Office of Standards and Instruction at [p12standardsinstruction@nysed.gov](mailto:p12standardsinstruction@nysed.gov)

**Q11: Where is the application located?**

A: The application to offer the Seal of Civic Readiness is now available for all districts and schools in the SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System located within the [Application Business Portal](#).

**Q12: Is there a role for community members or organizations?**

A: Yes. Civic readiness and engagement involve students interacting in meaningful ways with the local community, government representatives, civic organizations, etc. The role of civic groups and organizations is extremely important to the process. There are several entry points for districts to involve community members or organizations. Districts may choose to include a community member on its NYSSCR committee, as a member of the evaluation committee for the student's civic project, or as student mentors.

**Q13: In districts with multiple high schools, can a single high school create its own program?**

A: Yes. In large school districts with multiple high schools, a single high school may form a SCR committee and create an independent NYSSCR program within the district.

**Q14: What information do schools need to submit to NYSED if they plan to award the Diploma Seal?**

A: Schools need to complete the Seal of Civic Readiness Application on [NYSED's business portal](#). This application will include contact information and detailed narratives describing how the district will provide opportunities for students to earn the Seal of Civic Readiness.

**Q15: Is there a timeline for NYSSCR program activities?**

A: The school-based SCR Committee will be responsible for creating a timeline for all activities pertaining to the NYSSCR program. This will include outreach, a student advisement schedule, and dates for important benchmarks throughout the year.

### **Student and Community Outreach**

**Q16: When should a student be educated about NYSSCR?**

A: Guidance counselors and teachers may begin speaking to students as early as possible so that they may begin planning their course of study and potential projects. While this is designed as a culminating high school project, students may begin developing ideas or becoming engaged in a civics-related course of action much earlier. Possible entry points for planning and involvement may begin in the early high school years, middle school, and even elementary school. Students can earn points toward the NYSSCR by completing a Middle School Capstone Project. However, students are not at a disadvantage if they begin the Capstone project in high school.

**Q17: Can students begin working towards a NYSSCR before high school?**

A: Yes. Students can earn points toward the NYSSCR by completing a Middle School Capstone Project. Schools/Districts are advised to create a Middle School Seal of Civic Readiness subcommittee to collaborate with Social Studies teachers to develop the Middle School Capstone project(s).

**Q18: How should the District's Seal of Civic Readiness Committee promote the Seal?**

A: The district's committee must decide on methods for communicating the NYSSCR program to its students, parents, faculty, and community, which may include informational meetings, parent letters, newsletters, school website, workshops, assemblies, and coverage in the local media. Information presented would contain background information on the NYSSCR, NYSSCR contact information, the student application process, the advisement process, and proficiency criteria.

### **Advisement**

**Q19: Should students be set up with an advisor after they apply?**

A: Once the committee has received the application, it is recommended but not required that students be assigned an advisor who will remain with the student through the completion of the program requirements. Ideally, the advisor will review the requirements with the students and meet with him/her on a regular basis.

**Components of the Seal of Civic Readiness application packet will include:**

- NYS Seal of Civic Readiness Student Application, which may include a self-assessment.
- NYS Seal of Civic Readiness student, mentor, and school counselor checklists.

**Updated Questions**

**Q20: If a student scores Mastery on a Regents Exam, do they get points for proficiency and mastery?**

A: No. Students will earn either 1.0 or 1.5 depending on their score on exams. A student will earn 1 point for scores between 65-84 and 1.5 point for each score between 85-100. Students who are eligible for 55-64 safety nets and 45 variances will also earn 1 credit per exam.

**Q21: Can students who are participating in remote learning earn the Seal?**

A: Yes. The participation requirements may be completed in remote learning environments.

**Q22: When can students start earning points for the Seal of Civic Readiness?**

A: The Middle School Capstone Project may begin in Grade 7 or 8. All other points may be earned in Grades 8-12.

**Q23: Once a school or district is approved to grant students the Seal of Civic Readiness, may students count work they did before their school was approved?**

A: Yes. Students may retroactively count any work they did from Grades 7-12 as outlined above. This will be a local district decision.

**Q24: How can students earn the 1 or 1.5 points for taking the Regents Exam if no Regents Exam was offered and they received an exemption?**

Students who received an exemption should use their course average to determine their points for this category. If a student has a passing course average below 85, they should receive 1 point (proficiency) for this category. If a student has a passing course average of 85 or above, they should receive 1.5 points (mastery) for this category.

**Q25: If a student from out of state enters high school in 10th/11th grade, can points be awarded for the Regents Exams?**

No. The only way a student can earn points on the Regents Exam is by taking the Regents Exam or receiving an exemption.

**Q26: Can out-of-state students be awarded points for electives taken out of state?**

Yes, if the local Seal of Civic Readiness (SCR) committee determines out-of-state electives rooted in civics are allowable, *and* if the student successfully completes the application of knowledge component.

**Q27: What can count for ENL students coming from another country who are missing exams, electives or coming to us with credits from another country.**

Out-of-country electives rooted in civics may count if the student successfully completes the application of knowledge component. Social studies courses taken outside of the country may count towards the 1 point for social studies courses.

**Q28: Does an advanced class need to be rooted in all four domains of civic readiness to qualify for points on the Seal of Civic Readiness?**

No. Advanced social studies courses must be rooted in at least one of the four domains of civic readiness. Most advanced social studies courses qualify because they enhance a student's civic knowledge.

**Q29: Does an elective need to be rooted in all four domains of civic readiness to qualify for points on the Seal of Civic Readiness?**

Yes. Electives need to be rooted in all four domains of civic readiness, and they must demonstrate evidence of civic participation/civic experiences because these points count towards the *civic participation* category on the Seal.

**Q30: Students receive 1 point for completing 4 credits of social studies. Can .5 point be awarded if they take two years of social studies courses?**

No. Points cannot be broken up because the four years of social studies courses demonstrate a summation of civic knowledge.

**Q31: Can a middle school student earn points on the Seal outside of the Middle School Capstone?**

No. Students may only earn 1 point in 7th or 8th grade by completing a middle school capstone project.

**Q32: Once a school/district/BOCES is approved to offer the Seal, do they need to re-apply yearly or is it a perpetual license?**

Currently once a school/district/BOCES is approved for the Seal, they do not need to re-apply.



**Appendix A: Seal of Civic Readiness Application Instructions**  
**Seal of Civic Readiness Application**  
**Information and Guidance**

**Overview**

This document is intended to provide guidance for schools and districts on the creation and submission of the Seal of Civic Readiness.

**Regulations**

[8 CRR-NY 100.5\(i\), New York State Seal of Civic Readiness](#)

School District participation in The Seal of Civic Readiness is voluntary. Schools who wish to offer this pathway shall:

- (i) submit an application for approval to the Commissioner, in a form and by a date prescribed by the commissioner, for the school District to participate in the program. Such application shall include a narrative that describes how the district will implement the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness program, including plans for program communications, processes pertaining to student tracking, advisement and evaluation, and timeliness and benchmarks for the program;
- (ii) maintain appropriate records to identify students who have earned a NYS Seal of Civic Readiness. At the end of each school year in which a school District participates in the program, the school District shall submit a report to the commissioner, in a form and by a date prescribed by the commissioner, that includes the number of students receiving the Seal along with relevant data including, but not limited to the criteria chosen under subparagraph (4)(ii) and (iii) of this subdivision; and
- (iii) establish and identify a NYS Seal of Civic Readiness Committee (SCRC).
  - (a) The SCRC shall include, but is not limited to, the following personnel:
    - (1) at least one Social Studies teacher;
    - (2) at least one School Counselor or other staff who will track student progress on earning the Seal; and
    - (3) at least one administrator or other staff member who will serve as the main contact with the Department to collect data on school offerings and submit copies of student work to the Department if requested.
  - (b) The SCRC shall:
    - (1) create a NYS Seal of Civic Readiness plan that includes, but is not limited to, details concerning communications, student advisement, evaluation, and presentation of awards;
    - (2) create a master list of all available courses and extra-curricular activities pertaining to the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness program within their high school including, but not limited to dates for required benchmarks throughout the program year;
    - (3) develop a student tracking process, including an application process to be completed by interested students and reviewed by an advisor;
    - (4) review and approve potential service learning, extracurricular and work-based learning experiences, the Middle School Capstone Project if available, Civic

- Projects and Civics Capstone Projects in accordance with Commissioner’s guidelines; and
- (5) review and evaluate all coursework, assessments, and civic experiential learning completed by each student to ensure criteria for the seal are met.

The method by which NYSED collects information on The Seal of Civic Readiness +1 Civics Pathway is an application through the [SED Monitoring and Vendor Reporting System](#).

### **NYSED Goals**

The intent of the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness is to encourage the study of civics and civility through experiential learning; certify attainment of civic readiness; provide employers with a method of identifying high school graduates with skills in civics and civility; provide universities with an additional method to recognize applicants seeking admission; prepare students with twenty-first century skills; recognize the value of K-12 Social Studies education in schools as a means to build civic knowledge; empower students as agents of positive social change to redress historical and contemporary oppression; and strengthen our diverse democracy. The NYS Seal of Civic Readiness shall be awarded to students who meet the criteria of this subdivision and complete all criteria prescribed by the Commissioner at a New York State high school approved by the Commissioner to offer the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness.

### **Submission Process**

School District superintendents, or their designees, will submit essential information about the Seal of Civic Readiness +1 Civics Pathway through an application issued through the [SED Monitoring and Vendor Reporting System](#).

Districts must complete all sections and enter answers directly into the application. NYSED will review plans and may communicate with the applicants if answers are not complete or thorough. The applicant may be required to communicate with NYSED for clarification or to provide additional information. Once any concerns are addressed and properly corrected, plans will be approved.

### **Access to the Survey**

To access the SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System:

- ✓ Go to the [NYSED Business Portal](#);
- ✓ Click on the “Log In” button;
- ✓ Enter your username and password;
- ✓ Click on “SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System” under My Applications;
- ✓ Select “NYSED Seal of Civic Readiness +1 Civics Pathway Application”
- ✓ Click on ‘view’ to begin/continue to input information.

The superintendent will have automatic access to the plan. The superintendent will need to delegate access to the person or persons completing the plan through SEDDAS, the SED Delegated Account System, which manages access to SED web-based applications through the

Application Business Portal. Granting these permissions will NOT provide access to any other information in the portal. The superintendent is the only individual that has submit/certify rights and will therefore need to submit the plan when it is ready to be reviewed. For questions regarding the entitlement process, please see the [SEDDAS mini guide](#) for entitling users to SED Monitoring.

### **Timeline**

The deadline to submit the application to NYSED to guarantee that the application will be reviewed in time for Spring graduation is August 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year. NYSED will continue to review applications received after August 1<sup>st</sup> on a rolling basis. Applicants will be notified of their application status, also on a rolling basis.

### **Structure of the Guidance**

The following pages outline the specific information that districts will be required to enter in the SED Monitoring system survey. Guidance is provided in italics below each question. The questions below provide a framework for planning and provide relevant information to support the development of a Seal of Civic Readiness +1 pathway program. Responses should be thorough. A more comprehensive plan is a best practice that will serve Districts well for planning and implementation with stakeholders.

### **Section I – Questions 1-7**

**1. Last name/First name**

*NYSED will consider this person to be the point of contact for questions about the application*

**2. High School BEDS Code**

*Write in your school's BEDS Code. Additional information about BEDS codes can be found on the [NYSED website](#)*

**3. School name**

*Write in the full official name of the High School*

**4. Type of school.**

*A drop-down menu will appear. Please select one of the following categories: Public, Private, Charter, Other*

**5. Official job title of applicant completing this form**

*Write in your official title*

**6. School District name**

*Write in the full title of your LEA/Charter School*

**7. Projected number of students who will earn the Seal by June**

*Estimated number of students who will be in a position to earn all 6 points on the Seal by June*

**8. Is this a public school within the New York City Department of Education?**

If yes, please do NOT complete this form and instead contact the NYCDOE Civics for All at [civicsforall@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:civicsforall@schools.nyc.gov).

*NYCDOE will oversee all NYCDOE public schools. If you are a NYCDOE public school interested in offering the Seal of Civic Readiness please contact [civicsforall@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:civicsforall@schools.nyc.gov) to receive the appropriate application.*

**Section II – Questions 9-16**

**9. Provide a detailed description of the goals for the school’s program.**

*Your narrative may include information about:*

- ✓ *Improving participation in experiential learning*
- ✓ *Expanding access for all students to acquire and use the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and experiences to attain civic readiness*
- ✓ *Promoting a relationship of trust, cultural responsiveness, and respect between schools and families*

**10. Provide a detailed narrative that describes how the school will implement the Seal of Civic Readiness program, including timeliness and benchmarks for program.**

*Your narrative may include information about:*

- ✓ *Building the capacity of educators and administrators*
- ✓ *Building culturally responsive instruction and learning environments to support high expectations and rigorous instruction including student led civic engagement that empower students as positive agents of social change*
- ✓ *Professional development related to the Civic Readiness Initiative*
- ✓ *Resource allocations in place to support the Civic Readiness Initiative*
- ✓ *Approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles and language proficiencies*

**11. Provide a detailed description of the school’s communication plan that has been developed to aid in the implementation the Seal of Civic Readiness.**

*Your narrative may include information about:*

- ✓ *Communication plan that targets students, staff, community, and other stakeholder groups*
- ✓ *Goals and objectives for the Civic Readiness Initiative are clearly defined, actionable and serve as the foundation for communication and engagement efforts*
- ✓ *A well-maintained social media presence utilizing the #NYSCIVICSSEAL*
- ✓ *A plan to build awareness and to strengthen civics education that align with the [Definition of Civic Readiness](#).*
- ✓ *A plan to sustain and grow parent and community stakeholder engagement*

**12. Provide a detailed description of the school’s student tracking process that has been developed to aid in the implementation the Seal of Civic Readiness.**

*Your narrative may include information about:*

- ✓ *Development and maintenance of a school wide data system that will enable all applicable points counted towards the Seal for each student.*
- ✓ *The school level Seal of Civic Readiness Committee should determine if retroactive points will be allowable and how that information will be collected if applicable.*
- ✓ *Determine whether to build or buy a data management system*
- ✓ *Clearly articulate system requirements relative to user needs*
- ✓ *Evaluate the accessibility and consistency of the student tracking process*
- ✓ *Plan and stage the implementation of the data system.*

**13. Provide a detailed description of the school’s advisement and evaluation plans, policies, and procedures that have been developed to aid in the implementation the Seal of Civic Readiness.**

*Your narrative may include information about:*

- ✓ *Collection of formal and informal feedback to measure success to improve communications and engagement activities*
- ✓ *Processes in place to adjust the program based on data analysis*
- ✓ *Plan for awarding points is rigorous and consistent*
- ✓ *Processes to measure and evaluate District Civic Readiness goals and action steps to attain goals.*
- ✓ *A responsive services component on behalf of student with disabilities, English Language Learners, or students experiencing homelessness and/or housing insecurity to ensure their ability to earn a Seal of Civic Readiness*

**14. Provide a detailed narrative that describes how the school’s program connects to [NYSED’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Initiative](#).**

*Your narrative may include information about:*

- ✓ *Preparing all students to become actively engaged citizens*
- ✓ *Respecting diversity to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs for all*
- ✓ *Creating an environment where all feel safe, supported, and valued*

**15. Please read the regulations:**

- a. [8 CRR-NY 100.5\(i\), New York State Seal of Civic Readiness](#)

**16. Please go to the [Office of Standards and Instruction's Civic Readiness Initiative website](#) and review the following materials:**

(<http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/civic-readiness-initiative>):

- The Seal of Civic Readiness
- The Definition of Civic Readiness
- The Civic Capstone Project

## **Appendix B: Seal of Civic Readiness Application for Educational Entities that Enroll Students from Multiple Districts and Do Not Confer Diplomas for All**

### **Information and Guidance**

#### **Overview**

This document is intended to provide guidance for educational entities that enroll students from one or more districts, and which do not confer high school diplomas for some (out of district) or all enrolled students, on the creation and submission of the Seal of Civic Readiness Application. This includes but may not be limited to BOCES programs, regional secondary schools, and alternative, special education, early college, and P-Tech programs/schools that enroll students from multiple districts.

Entities wishing to offer a Seal of Civic Readiness Program which would provide the coursework and educational experiences that would allow students to complete the requirements to obtain the Seal of Civic Readiness must do the following:

1. Complete the application as described in this document;
2. Provide a description and documentation of the program to all Superintendents of districts that enroll students in the program;
3. Provide a copy of Appendix C: Application for Districts to Grant the Seal of Civic Readiness to Students who Complete the Seal Program outside of the district to all districts that enroll students in the program; and
4. Collect signed applications from all districts to submit with this application, per the instructions found in this document.

District participation is voluntary; however, please be aware that if a student completes the Seal of Civic Readiness requirements within your program, and if the district does NOT sign the District Application (Appendix C), the district may not award the student the Seal of Civic Readiness.

The District Application (Appendix C) only applies to students participating in the Seal of Civic Readiness Pathway program offered by your entity. If the district wishes to offer the Seal to district students through the district's high schools, they should see [Appendix A](#) for instructions on how to apply.

#### **Regulations**

##### **[8 CRR-NY 100.5\(i\), New York State Seal of Civic Readiness](#)**

- (i) submit an application for approval to the Commissioner, in a form and by a date prescribed by the commissioner, for the school District to participate in the program. Such application shall include a narrative that describes how the district will implement the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness program, including plans for program communications, processes pertaining to student tracking, advisement and evaluation, and timeliness and benchmarks for the program;

- (ii) maintain appropriate records to identify students who have earned a NYS Seal of Civic Readiness. At the end of each school year in which a school District participates in the program, the school District shall submit a report to the commissioner, in a form and by a date prescribed by the commissioner, that includes the number of students receiving the Seal along with relevant data including, but not limited to the criteria chosen under subparagraph (4)(ii) and (iii) of this subdivision; and
- (iii) establish and identify a NYS Seal of Civic Readiness Committee (SCRC).
  - (a) The SCRC shall include, but is not limited to, the following personnel:
    - (1) at least one Social Studies teacher;
    - (2) at least one School Counselor or other staff who will track student progress on earning the Seal; and
    - (3) at least one administrator or other staff member who will serve as the main contact with the Department to collect data on school offerings and submit copies of student work to the Department if requested.
  - (b) The SCRC shall:
    - (1) create a NYS Seal of Civic Readiness plan that includes, but is not limited to, details concerning communications, student advisement, evaluation, and presentation of awards;
    - (2) create a master list of all available courses and extra-curricular activities pertaining to the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness program within their high school including, but not limited to dates for required benchmarks throughout the program year;
    - (3) develop a student tracking process, including an application process to be completed by interested students and reviewed by an advisor;
    - (4) review and approve potential service learning, extracurricular and work-based learning experiences, the Middle School Capstone Project if available, Civic Projects and Civics Capstone Projects in accordance with Commissioner’s guidelines; and
    - (5) review and evaluate all coursework, assessments, and civic experiential learning completed by each student to ensure criteria for the seal are met.

The method by which NYSED collects information on The Seal of Civic Readiness +1 Civics Pathway is an application through the [SED Monitoring and Vendor Reporting System](#).

### **NYSED Goals**

The intent of the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness is to encourage the study of civics and civility through experiential learning; certify attainment of civic readiness; provide employers with a method of identifying high school graduates with skills in civics and civility; provide universities with an additional method to recognize applicants seeking admission; prepare students with twenty-first century skills; recognize the value of K-12 Social Studies education in schools as a means to build civic knowledge; empower students as agents of positive social change to redress historical and contemporary oppression and strengthen our diverse democracy. The NYS Seal of Civic Readiness shall be awarded to students who meet the criteria of this subdivision and complete all criteria prescribed by the Commissioner at a New York State high school approved by the commissioner to offer the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness.

## **Submission Process**

District Superintendents or their designees, or CEOs shall submit essential information about the Seal of Civic Readiness +1 Civics Pathway through an application issued through the [SED Monitoring and Vendor Reporting System](#).

Schools/programs must complete all sections and enter answers directly into the application.

NYSED will review plans and may communicate with the applicants if answers are not complete or thorough. The applicant may be required to communicate with NYSED for clarification or additional information. Once any concerns are addressed and properly corrected plans will be approved.

## **Access to the Survey**

To access the SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System:

- ✓ Go to the [NYSED Business Portal](#);
- ✓ Click on the “Log In” button;
- ✓ Enter your username and password;
- ✓ Click on “SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System”
- ✓ Click on “Office of Curriculum”
- ✓ Select “Seal of Civic Readiness Application for BOCES, P-Tech, Regional Secondary, Early College, Alternative and Special Education High School Programs”
- ✓ Click on ‘view’ to begin/continue to input information.

The point of contact from the school/program will have automatic access to the plan. They will need to delegate access to the person or persons completing the plan through SEDDAS, the SED Delegated Account System, which manages access to SED web-based applications through the Application Business Portal. Granting these permissions will NOT provide access to any other information in the portal. They are the only individual that has submit/certify rights and will therefore need to submit the plan when it is ready to be reviewed. For questions regarding the entitlement process, please see the [SEDDAS mini guide](#) for entitling users to SED Monitoring.

## **Timeline**

This application will enable a School/Program to offer the Seal of Civic Readiness for all students.

Applicants will be notified of their application status on a rolling basis.

## **Structure of the Guidance**

The following pages outline the specific information that schools/program will be required to enter in the SED Monitoring system survey. Guidance is provided in italics below each question. The questions below provide a framework for planning and provide relevant information to support the development of a Seal of Civic Readiness +1 pathway program. Responses should be thorough. A more comprehensive plan is a best practice that will serve schools/program well for planning and implementation with stakeholders.



## **Section I – Questions 1-4**

1. Last name/First name  
*NYSED will consider this person to be the point of contact for questions about the application*
2. Type of school/program.  
*A drop-down menu will appear. Please select one of the following categories: BOCES, P-Tech, Early College, Regional Secondary, Special Education, Other*
3. Official job title of applicant completing this form  
*Write in your official title*
4. Projected number of students who will earn the Seal by June  
*Estimated number of students who will be able to earn all six points on the Seal by June*

## **Section II – Questions 5-13**

5. Provide a detailed description of the goals for the school/program.  
*Your narrative may include information about:*
  - *Improving participation in experiential learning*
  - *Expanding access for all students to acquire and use the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and experiences to attain civic readiness*
  - *Promoting a relationship of trust, cultural responsiveness, and respect between school/program and families*
6. Provide a detailed narrative that describes how the school/program will implement the Seal of Civic Readiness program, including timeliness and benchmarks for program.  
*Your narrative may include information about:*
  - *Building the capacity of educators and administrators*
  - *Building culturally responsive instruction and learning environments to support high expectations and rigorous instruction including student led civic engagement that empower students as positive agents of social change*
  - *Professional development related to the Civic Readiness Initiative*
  - *Resource allocations in place to support the Civic Readiness Initiative*
  - *Approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles and language proficiencies*
7. Provide a detailed description of the school/program communication plan that has been developed to aid in the implementation the Seal of Civic Readiness.  
*Your narrative may include information about:*
  - *Communication plan that targets students, staff, community, and other stakeholder groups*
  - *Goals and objectives for the Civic Readiness Initiative are clearly defined, actionable and serve as the foundation for communication and engagement efforts*
  - *A well-maintained social media presence utilizing the #NYSCIVICSSEAL*
  - *A plan to build awareness and to strengthen civics education that align with the [Definition of Civic Readiness](#).*

- *A plan to sustain and grow parent and community stakeholder engagement*
8. Provide a detailed description of the school/program student tracking process that has been developed to aid in the implementation the Seal of Civic Readiness.  
*Your narrative may include information about:*
- *Development and maintenance of a data system that will enable all applicable points counted towards the Seal for each student.*
  - *The local Seal of Civic Readiness Committee should determine if retroactive points will be allowable and how that information will be collected if applicable*
  - *Determine whether to build or buy a data management system*
  - *Clearly articulate system requirements relative to user needs*
  - *Evaluate the accessibility and consistency of the student tracking process*
  - *Plan and stage the implementation of the data system.*
9. Provide a detailed description of the school/program advisement and evaluation plans, policies, and procedures that have been developed to aid in the implementation the Seal of Civic Readiness.  
*Your narrative may include information about:*
- *Collection of formal and informal feedback to measure success to improve communications and engagement activities*
  - *Processes in place to adjust the program based on data analysis*
  - *Plan for awarding points is rigorous and consistent*
  - *Processes to measure and evaluate District Civic Readiness goals and action steps to attain goals.*
  - *A responsive services component on behalf of student with disabilities, English Language Learners, students experiencing homelessness and/or housing insecurity to ensure their ability to earn a Seal of Civic Readiness*
10. Provide a detailed narrative that describes how the school/program connects to [NYSED's Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Initiative](#).  
*Your narrative may include information about:*
- *Preparing all students to become actively engaged citizens*
  - *Respecting diversity to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs for all*
  - *Creating an environment where all feel safe, supported, and valued*
11. Please read the regulations:
- a. [8 CRR-NY 100.5\(i\), New York State Seal of Civic Readiness](#)
12. Please go to the [Office of Standards and Instruction's Civic Readiness Initiative website](http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/civic-readiness-initiative) (<http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/civic-readiness-initiative>) and review the following materials:
- The Seal of Civic Readiness
  - The Definition of Civic Readiness
  - The Civic Capstone Project

13. Attach a completed District Application Form (Appendix C) for every participating district. It is the responsibility of the entity applying to offer the Seal Program to collect this completed application from all participating districts and upload the completed forms in their NYSED application.

## **Appendix C: Application for Districts to Grant the Seal of Civic Readiness to Students who Complete the Seal Program Outside of the District**

This is an application for districts seeking authorization to grant the Seal of Civic Readiness to their own district students who:

- attend a program outside of the district with an educational entity that does not confer high school diplomas (BOCES programs, regional secondary schools, and alternative, special education, early college, and P-Tech programs/schools that enroll students from multiple districts), and
- complete the requirements for the Seal of Civic Readiness Program while attending the outside program or school, as determined by the outside program.

This application only applies to students participating in a Seal of Civic Readiness Program in the entity listed below (#4). If the district wishes to offer the Seal to district students through the district's high schools, please see [Appendix A](#) for instructions on how to apply.

District participation is voluntary; however, please be aware that if a student completes the Seal of Civic Readiness +1 Pathway requirements outside of the district, and if the district does NOT sign this application, the district may not award the student the Seal of Civic Readiness.

Students may earn the Seal of Civic Readiness as a stand-alone distinction on a NYS High School Diploma.

Once completed and signed, this application should be sent to the entity listed below (#4), which is responsible for collecting and submitting to NYSED as part of its application to offer a Seal of Civic Readiness Program all applications from districts of students participating in the entity's program.

1. Name of District:
2. BEDS CODE:
3. Name of Superintendent:
4. Name of entity providing the Seal of Civic Readiness Program to district student(s):
5. As Superintendent, my signature below affirms the following:
  - I have reviewed and approve of the Seal of Civic Readiness Program being provided to my district student(s) at the educational entity listed above (#4), and this application is based on the responses provided by the above entity;
  - Upon confirmation from the above entity that the student(s) have successfully met the requirements for the Seal of Civic Readiness, the Seal will be granted upon the student's graduation; and
  - I understand that the entity offering the Seal Program must apply separately and be approved by the New York State Education Department to offer the Seal Program, and that until approval is granted, my district may not grant the Seal to any student participating in the program at the above entity.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Superintendent

## **Appendix D: Seal of Civic Readiness Pilot Regional Coordinators**

### **Big 5**

Dawn Bartz, Executive Director, Yonkers City School District  
W. Charles Brandy, Director of Social Studies, Buffalo City School District  
Ryan Keating, Director of Social Studies, Rochester City School District  
Jenna Ryall, Director, Civics for All, New York City Department of Education  
Nick Stamoulacatos, Supervisor of Social Studies, Syracuse City School District

### **BOCES Staff and Curriculum Development Network**

Polly Ash, Social Studies Specialist, Sullivan BOCES  
Jon Cornue, Staff and Curriculum Development Specialist at Madison-Oneida BOCES  
Kathryn Daughton, Literacy and Humanities Coordinator, Onondaga, Cortland, Madison BOCES  
Gregory Fredericks, Regional Coordinator of Social Studies and Blended Learning, Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES  
Rob Griffith, Professional Development and Curriculum Coordinator, Cattaraugus-Allegheny BOCES  
Kathleen Helhoski, Project Coordinator, Orange-Ulster BOCES  
Jessica Karnes, Coordinator of Staff Development, Curriculum & Instruction, Erie 1 BOCES  
Michael Monaghan, Social Studies K-12 Instructional Specialist, Monroe 1 BOCES  
Donna M. Nowak, Data Specialist, Erie 2 BOCES  
Marijo Pearson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development, Monroe 2 BOCES; Chair, SCDN Executive committee  
Betsy Serapilio-Frank, Regional Literacy Coordinator and Staff Development Trainer, Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES  
Patricia Walsh, Supervisor of Professional Learning and Innovation Center, Broome-Tioga BOCES; Chair, SS SCDN Framework

### **Civic Readiness Task Force Members**

Michael Coppotelli, Senior Associate Superintendent of Schools, Archdiocese of New York  
Lisa Kissinger, Academic Administrator, Shenendehowa CSD, Chair 2022 NYS Council for Social Studies Convention  
Aruna Patel, Lead Curriculum Development and Professional Learning Manager, New Visions for Public Schools  
Michael Rebell, Chairman of the Civic Readiness Task Force, Executive Director, Center for Educational Equity  
David Scott, Project Patch Coordinator, Northport East Northport City School District  
April Francis Taylor, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity, Eastern Suffolk BOCES

### **NYSED Staff**

Lisa Pingelski, Associate in Instructional Services, Social Studies  
Christy Radez, Associate in Instructional Services, Social Studies

## **Appendix E: Seal of Civic Readiness Author List**

### **Big 5**

Dawn Bartz, Executive Director, Yonkers City School District  
Jenna Ryall, Director, Civics for All, New York City Department of Education

### **BOCES Staff and Curriculum Development Network**

Kathryn Daughton, Literacy and Humanities Coordinator, Onondaga, Cortland, Madison  
BOCES  
Gregory Fredericks, Regional Coordinator of Social Studies and Blended Learning,  
Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES  
Rob Griffith, Professional Development and Curriculum Coordinator, Cattaraugus-  
Allegheny BOCES  
Jessica Karnes, Coordinator of Staff Development, Curriculum & Instruction, Erie 1  
BOCES  
Donna M. Nowak, Data Specialist, Erie 2 BOCES  
Marijo Pearson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional  
Development, Monroe 2 BOCES; Chair, SCDN Executive committee  
Patricia Walsh, Supervisor of Professional Learning and Innovation Center, Broome-  
Tioga BOCES; Chair, SS SCDN Framework

### **Civic Readiness Task Force Members**

Lisa Kissinger, Seal of Civic Readiness Manual Committee Chair, Academic  
Administrator, Shenendehowa CSD, President of the NYS Council for Social  
Studies  
Aruna Patel, Lead Curriculum Development and Professional Learning Manager, New  
Visions for Public Schools  
April Francis Taylor, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity, Eastern Suffolk  
BOCES

### **NYSED Staff**

Kevin Hetzel, Associate in Instructional Services, Social Studies  
Lisa Pingelski, Associate in Instructional Services, Social Studies  
Christy Radez, Associate in Instructional Services, Social Studies

### **NYSUT Representatives**

Andrew Budris, Social Studies Lead Teacher, South Country School District  
Joseph Karb, Middle School Social Studies Teacher, Springville Central School District  
Donald Little, Social Studies Teacher, Syracuse City School District

### **UFT Representatives**

Nicholas Norman, Field Liaison, UFT Teacher Center

## **Appendix F: Updated Frequently Asked Questions for BOCES**

### **Frequently Asked Questions about the Seal of Civic Readiness Application for BOCES, P-Techs, Regional High Schools, Early Colleges, and other Entities**



#### **Seal of Civic Readiness**

**The Seal of Civic Readiness is a formal recognition that a student has attained a prominent level of proficiency in terms of civic knowledge, civic skills, civic mindset, and civic experiences. The Seal of Civic Readiness is a distinction on both a high school transcript and diploma that:**

- shows the student’s understanding of a commitment to participatory government; civic responsibility and civic values;
- demonstrates to universities, colleges, and future employers that the student has completed an action project in civics or social justice; and
- recognizes the value of civic engagement and scholarship.

#### **Criteria for the Seal of Civic Readiness**

To obtain the Seal of Civic Readiness, a student must complete all the requirements for a New York State local or Regents diploma and **earn a total of six points with at least two points in Civic Knowledge and at least two points in Civic Participation.** Students may also earn points by completing a middle school Capstone project and/or a high school Capstone project.

BOCES and other educational entities that enroll students from one or more districts, and which do not confer high school diplomas for some (out of district) or all enrolled students, that would like to offer coursework and learning experiences that would provide students with the opportunity to attain the Seal, must complete the Seal of Civic Readiness application through the NYSED Business Portal and receive approval from NYSED.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**1. For a BOCES (CTE) or other alternative program to offer the Seal do all their participating component districts need to sign off on the BOCES application?**

No. If one component district signs off, a BOCES (CTE) or other alternative program may offer the Seal to the students from that one district. For example, if a CTE High School has ten components and six sign off they can offer the Seal to students from those six districts.

**2. If a student attends a program from outside those components, must their district also sign off to make them eligible?**

Yes. Students from BOCES, P-Tech, and other entities must have their district sign off to earn the Seal of Civic Readiness.

**3. Can a BOCES, P-Tech, or other entity school combine points between the home high school and their programs?**

Yes. A student may earn the Seal adding together a combination of points earned in their BOCES program, at their local high school, and work completed outside of the school. This approach will require collaboration between the home districts and the BOCES programs. It is strongly recommended that the outside programs work with the local high school's school counseling department.

**4. Who is responsible for ordering the Seals, medallions, cords, etc. and delivering them to the home school?**

Providing seals or any graduation related regalia is not mandatory. However, this could be provided by either the BOCES or other entities or the component districts.

**5. Is the BOCES or alternative program responsible for housing student data and work associated with the Seal and responsible for communicating successful completion of the Seal to the home school?**

Yes. However, it is strongly recommended that the BOCES or alternative program develop a strong relationship with the school counseling department of each component district. Please see below for additional guidance on the role of the school counseling department.

**6. How can the counseling departments in component schools assist BOCES/Alternative Programs in tracking student points?**

Several of the components of the Seal of Civic Readiness (**circled in red below**) can be tracked by school counselors and/or administrators to maintain student privacy. The components would be accessed through student transcripts and records.



Civic Knowledge	Pts.	Civic Participation	Pts.
4 credits of social studies	1	High School Civics Project (limit two times during grades 9-12)	1.5
Mastery level on Social Studies Regents Exam	1.5*	Service-Learning Project (minimum 25 hours) and reflective civic learning essay/presentation/product	1*
Proficiency level on Social Studies Regents Exam	1*	Earned credit in an elective course that promotes civic engagement	.5*
Advanced social studies course(s)	.5*	Middle School Capstone Project (Grades 7 and 8 are only eligible for this point)	1
Research Project	1	Extra-curricular participation or work-based learning experience (minimum 40 hours) and an essay/presentation/product	.5*
		Civics Capstone Project	4

\*Students may receive these points more than once.

Testing accommodations recommended in an individualized education program or section 504 should be adhered to. Accommodations Plan must be provided for all State and districtwide assessments administered to students with disabilities, as consistent with State policy. Students in schools with an alternate pathway for graduation approved by the Commissioner will be held to those schools' criteria.

**7. What are some ways counseling departments could assist their students participating in a BOCES/P-Tech/Alternative program?**

- The use of an electronic tracking process which is secure and complies with all applicable district, state, and federal privacy policies and laws.
- Drafting and updating a “course catalog” which specifies which courses are eligible.
- Highlight that participating in the Seal assists in college and career preparedness.
- Assisting in facilitating ongoing communication between the school, students, and families.