

## Appendix G: Seal of Civic Readiness Optional Reflection Guide



### **Civic Readiness Optional Reflection Guide**

#### **Introduction**

Civic Ready students use civic knowledge, skills, and mindsets to make decisions and take actions for themselves, their communities, and the public good as members of a culturally diverse, democratic society. Schools, therefore, should provide students with meaningful opportunities to develop specific civic knowledge, skills, and mindsets—and to participate in authentic actions and experiences—that are necessary for them to function as productive civic participants within their schools, communities, states, our country, and the world.

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is committed to empowering the civic agency of students and ensuring all students achieve civic readiness as a result of their prekindergarten – 12th grade education. The Board of Regents and NYSED have also emphasized this position in their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan. NYSED understands that the results we seek for all our children can only be fully achieved by incorporating an equity and inclusion lens in every facet of our work.

Civic education strengthens the relationships between schools and students, as well as students' relationships with parents, caregivers and families, civic leaders, community partners, and among each other. The responsibility of ensuring all students are civic ready is a chief aim of social studies education.

Additionally, a growing body of research finds that all students benefit when their schools implement strong Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies and practices – including academic, cognitive, civic, social-emotional, and economic benefits. Effective school DEI policies empower students from all backgrounds to visualize successful futures for themselves and provide them with a sense of belonging and self-worth. These benefits can lead to improved student achievement, which in turn can lead to better outcomes in other areas of their lives, including work and civic engagement.

**The Definition of Civic Readiness** is organized around four domains:

1. Civic Knowledge
2. Civic Skills and Actions
3. Civic Mindsets
4. Civic Experiences

This Reflection Document is provided as an optional guide to help schools and districts as they plan to offer the Seal of Civic Readiness.

**Directions for Part 1:**

**Completing the Reflection**

The school’s Civic Readiness coordinator and/or the school’s Seal of Civic Readiness Committee could review the indicators and consider which of the three categories best captures the work the school has completed to date and/or needed areas of focus.

**Emerging:** Demonstrates beginning knowledge and skills with limited use of the defined practice.

**Integrating:** Exhibits an understanding and use of knowledge and skills in the practice, and performance is growing.

**Sustaining:** Sustains an exemplary level of practice.

**Post- Reflection**

School teams could use the reflection to identify priorities to pursue throughout the school year.

**Part 1**

**Civic Knowledge- demonstrate a fundamental and functional knowledge of government, law, history, geography, culture, economics, and current events. These may include inequities within our democratic system at the federal, state, and local level. Students should know how to apply this knowledge to different circumstances and settings.**

PRACTICES	E	I	S	How this looks in our school
Structure and functioning of government, law, and democracy at the federal, state, local and school levels and how to participate				
Civil and educational rights and responsibilities guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, the Constitution of the State of NY, and federal, state, and local statutes and regulations				
History, geography, economics, and current events within our country and in our global society				
Impact of individual and collective histories in shaping contemporary issues				
View and analyze history and current issues from multiple perspectives				
The importance of civic rights and responsibilities, such as voting, volunteering,				
Ensuring a free press				

**Civic Skills and Actions- Demonstrate a broad array of critical analytic, verbal, communication, media literacy and other skills and participate in a wide variety of actions. Students should practice such actions both inside and outside of school on a regular basis.**

PRACTICES	E	I	S	How this looks in our school
Demonstrate respect for the rights of others in discussions and classroom debates and how to respectfully disagree with other viewpoints and provide evidence for a counterargument				
Participate in activities that focus on a classroom, school, community, state, or national issue or problem				
Identify, describe, and contrast the roles of the individual in opportunities for social and political participation in different societies				
Work to influence those in positions of power to achieve extensions of freedom, social justice, and human rights				
Fulfill social and political responsibilities associated with participation in a democratic society and the interdependent global community by developing awareness of and/or engaging in the political process				
Analyze and evaluate news (news literacy) media, social media, and other sources of information for accuracy, bias, reliability, and credibility				
Engagement in working toward the public good				

**Civic Mindsets- Demonstrate the mindset of a participant in a democratic society. A civic mindset is a commitment to democratic interpersonal and intrapersonal values, virtues, attitudes, and beliefs and informed actions that promote and facilitate meaningful participation in civic life. It is an understanding of self as part of and responsible to larger social groups.**

PRACTICES	E	I	S	How this looks in our school
Valuing equity, inclusivity, diversity, and fairness				
Recognizing the need to plan for both current needs and the good of future generations				
Committing to balancing the common good with individual liberties				
Demonstrating a sense of self as an active participant in society, willing to contribute to solving local and/or national problems				
Respecting fundamental democratic principles, such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press and the rule of law				

**Civic Experiences- participate in developmentally appropriate civic experiences. Civic readiness should be developed in a variety of settings and ways—inside and outside the classroom, across content areas and for multiple purposes. Civic Readiness should be promoted by engaging students in relevant experiences that include students as active participants.**

PRACTICES	E	I	S	How this looks in our school
Completing a civic capstone or civic engagement project				
Engaging in service learning				
Engaging in civil discourse around controversial issues				
Engaging with news and digital tools, such as social media, responsibly				
Participating in civic centered co-curricular and extracurricular activities such as Model UN, Student Government, Debate Club, Student Journalism, or Mock Trial				
Participating in school governance				
Voting, volunteering, and participating in community organizations and governmental systems, such as community boards, youth advisory councils etc. to promote continuous improvement				
Engaging with local officials and government institutions through activities such as providing public comment before a government agency, or meeting with public and elected officials.				

**Directions for Part 2:**

Answers to this section could be based on feedback received at the end of the year from teachers and students, in addition to the committee.

**Part 2**

**The Seal of Civic Readiness  
Successes and Challenges**

Categories of Feedback	Successes	Challenges
Point Structure of the Seal		
Accessibility for all students including ELL and Students with Disabilities		
Barriers to offering the Seal to all students		
Building a K-8 Civics program to support the Seal		
Building Partnerships with outside organizations		