



CALIFORNIA
DEMOCRACY
SCHOOL

AWARD
APPLICATION

For California Elementary, Middle, and High Schools

Application Packet

2024 - 2025

Application Deadline: March 3, 2025

<https://www.lacoe.edu/services/curriculum-instruction/history-social-science/ca-democracy-school>



Los Angeles County
Office of Education

Overview

Background

The California Democracy School Civic Learning Initiative is a *first of its kind* approach to institutionalizing civic learning for all students across entire grade levels in schools. Originally funded by the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation and directed by the Los Angeles County Office of Education with support from the Los Angeles County Education Foundation, the initiative originally engaged 12 high schools in Los Angeles and Orange Counties over a three-year span. All 12 successfully completed the program and were awarded California Democracy School status for institutionalizing high quality civic inquiry and investigations across one or more grade levels to empower all students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for effective life-long civic engagement. Since then, 27 additional schools have been recognized. The complete list can be found at <https://www.lacoe.edu/Curriculum-Instruction/History-Social-Science/California-Democracy-School/Demonstration-Schools>

Purpose

“The success of our nation and state depends on educated, informed and active citizens and residents . . . For *all* students in California to have access to a continuum of civic learning experiences starting in kindergarten—and to effectively respond to equity issues—we must embed robust civic learning throughout the K-12 experiences, both within and beyond school walls” (California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning, *Revitalizing K-12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint for Action* (August 2014), pp. 6, 30.
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/cltffinalreport.pdf>

The goal of the California Democracy School Award program is to recognize elementary, middle, and high schools that are providing high quality civic learning for all students as part of an integrated curricular program or stand-alone curriculum across one or more grade levels.

Award Criteria

In order to qualify for the award, schools must provide evidence for institutionalizing civic learning across an entire grade level in which all students engage in the following five components of high-quality civic learning. These components can be integrated and implemented in any subject area in which all students in the designated grade level are enrolled.

1. Formulate an inquiry about a current public problem or issue
2. Research and analyze multiple perspectives about potential causes and solutions
3. Participate in a civil deliberation to understand different perspectives
4. Reach an informed conclusion
5. Propose a public policy solution to a policymaker

Applicants must also provide thoughtful responses to the questions below.

- **Civic Outcomes for Students** – What civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions do students acquire? How are they assessed?
- **The School Environment** – How is civic learning integrated into the curriculum or delivered as a stand-alone curriculum? How are outcomes assessed? What is the professional development plan for existing and new teachers? How does the learning environment support the program? How has civic learning impacted classroom climate and school culture?
- **School/District Sustainability** – What policies are in place to build capacity and sustain the program for the future in the areas of curriculum, professional development, and accountability?

Award Process

Schools across California are invited to apply for the California Democracy School Award. Once applications are received and reviewed based on the scoring rubric, schools will be contacted to prepare for a virtual site validation visit. Schools that meet the required criteria will be recognized with a plaque and banner.

2024–20245 CALIFORNIA DEMOCRACY SCHOOL AWARD TIMELINE		Submit applications by email by 5:00 p.m., Monday, March 3, 2024 to: Elaina Garza Coordinator III, History-Social Science Los Angeles County Office of Education Garza_Elaina@lacoe.edu
Call for Applications	Fall 2024	
Application Deadline	March 10, 2025	
Completion of Site Validation Visits	April 25, 2025	
Civic Showcase and Award Presentation at Richard Nixon Presidential Library, Yorba Linda CA	May 17, 2025	

For more information, please contact, Elaina Garza, Coordinator III, History-Social Science, Los Angeles County Office of Education, (562) 922-6994 or Garza_Elaina@lacoe.edu



Los Angeles County Office of Education
2024-2025 California Democracy School Award Program

APPLICATION

County-District-School (CDS) Code – 14 digits

County Name

District Name

School Name *(If your school is selected, this school name will be engraved on the award plaque.)*

Mailing Address

City

Zip Code

Area Code and Phone Number

Ext.

Area Code and Fax Number

Principal's Email Address



I certify that I have reviewed the information contained in this application and, to the best of my knowledge, it is complete and accurate. I further certify that:

- The Office for Civil Rights does not have any outstanding findings of civil rights statute violations by the school or district that may affect the school;*
- There are no pending lawsuits by the Department of Justice against the district alleging that the school, or the district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clauses; and*
- The school or district is addressing or has addressed any identified areas of noncompliance under federal or state laws and regulations.*

Principal's Name

Principal's Signature

Date

District Superintendent's Name

Superintendent's Signature

Date

School Information

1. Current school enrollment: _____
2. Percentage of Your Student Population Who are English Learners: _____%
3. Percentage of Your Student Population Who Qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch: _____%
4. Which category best describes where your school is located?
 Urban Suburban Rural
5. What is your school calendar? Traditional Year-round Modified
6. Is your school a charter school? Yes No

(School Name)

Part 1: Civic Outcomes for Students

What knowledge, skills, and dispositions do students acquire? How are they assessed?
Response limited to this page.

- **Civic Knowledge** – Describe the civic knowledge acquired by students, as identified in the California History-Social Science Standards and Framework including the structure of government and the role and responsibilities of government and citizens to address current public problems and issues.
- **Skills** – Describe the cognitive and civic participatory skills acquired by students, as identified in the California History-Social Science Standards and Framework including analysis of different perspectives, effective use of deliberative processes in speaking and listening, reaching consensus, and working collaboratively with others.
- **Dispositions** – Describe students’ concern for others’ rights and welfare, commitment toward promoting fairness and trust, and appreciation of public duty and civic responsibility (e.g., volunteering, voting in elections, participating in community meetings, communicating with elected and appointed officials).
- **Assessment** – Describe mechanisms for assessing students’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions (i.e., classroom-based formative and summative tasks, portfolios, capstone projects, performance-based assessments).

(School Name)

Part 2: School Environment

Describe the program details as listed below. Limit response to 3 pages.

- **Curriculum** – Describe the curriculum used to engage all students in high quality civic learning and how it is integrated across an entire grade level. The curriculum can be integrated into any subject area. Be sure to address specific ways, or instructional strategies used, that differentiate for students with learning challenges (i.e. English Learners, students with learning challenges, struggling readers).
- **Assessment** – Describe the assessment system used to determine if students have mastered civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions (i.e. classroom-based formative and summative tasks, portfolios, capstone projects, performance-based assessment).
- **Professional Development** – Describe the type, frequency, content, and delivery system of professional development provided.
- **Learning Environment** – Describe the physical environment of the classroom/school space, resources and dedicated time and space for teachers to collaborate for planning, reflection and revising instruction.
- **Home/Community Communication** - Describe how civic learning is communicated with families and community members to further understanding, build capacity, and support.

(School Name)

Part 3: School/District Sustainability

Describe the policies in place to ensure that high quality civic learning is provided to all students across one or more grade levels, addressed in the elements below (i.e. School Level Plan, Local Control Accountability Plan). Limit response to 3 pages.

- **Curriculum** policy that proves that curricula has been adopted for a stand-alone course or integrated within an existing course(s) (e.g., science, history-social science, English Language Arts) across an entire grade level.
- **Professional Development** policy is in place to ensure resources (i.e. time, funding, facility use) to provide civic learning professional development for teachers.
- **Accountability** plan to ensure that civic learning is a required component of the educational program for students (e.g., Senior projects, classroom-based formative and summative tasks, portfolios, capstone projects, graduation requirement).
- **School/Community Support** is ensured through institutionalized structures and systems for building capacity and sustaining programming.

California Democracy School Award Scoring Rubric

Grand Total ____

Reader's Name: _____

County: _____ District: _____

School: _____

1. Civic Outcomes for Students – The reviewer has a clear and complete understanding of the civic outcomes described below.	Excellent (5)	Approaching (3)	Incomplete (1)
<p>a. Civic Knowledge - Description of civic knowledge acquired by students, as identified in the California History-Social Science Standards and Framework including the structure of government and the role and responsibilities of government and citizens to address current public problems and issues.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>b. Skills - Description of cognitive and civic participatory skills acquired by students, as identified in the California History-Social Science Standards and Framework including analysis of different perspectives, effective use of deliberative processes in speaking and listening, reaching consensus, and working collaboratively with others.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>c. Dispositions - Description of students' concern for others' rights and welfare, commitment toward promoting fairness and trust, and appreciation of public duty and civic responsibility (e.g. volunteering, voting in elections, participating in community meetings, communicating with elected and appointed officials).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>d. Assessment – Description of mechanisms for assessing students' knowledge, skills, and dispositions (i.e., Senior project, classroom-based formative and summative tasks, portfolios, capstone projects, performance-based assessments).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. School Environment - Reviewer has a clear/complete understanding of programming in place in the following areas.	Excellent (5)	Approaching (3)	Incomplete (1)
e. Curriculum – A clear description of the curriculum is provided with strategies for students with different learning needs (i.e. English Learners, students with learning challenges, struggling readers) to engage in high quality civic learning across an entire grade level.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Assessment – A clear description of the assessment system to determine if students have mastered civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions (i.e. classroom-based formative and summative tasks, portfolios, capstone projects, performance-based assessment).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Professional Development – A clear description of the type, frequency, content, and delivery system of professional development is provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Learning Environment – A clear description of the physical environment of the classroom/school space and dedicated time and space for teachers to collaborate for planning, reflection and revising instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Home/Community Communication – A clear description of the communications plan to families and community members to further understanding, build capacity, and support.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. School/District Sustainability – Reviewer has a clear/complete understanding of policies that have been adopted to ensure that high quality civic learning is provided to all students across one or more grade levels in the following areas. Policy examples include School Level Plans, Local Control Accountability Plan, and school board policies.	Excellent (5)	Approaching (3)	Incomplete (1)
	j. Curriculum – A curriculum has been adopted for a stand-alone course or integrated within an existing course(s) (e.g., science, history-social science, English Language Arts) across an entire grade level.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Professional Development – Policy and resources are dedicated to provide civic learning professional development for teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Accountability – Policy is adopted to ensure that civic learning is a required component of the educational program for students (e.g., Senior project, classroom-based formative and summative tasks, portfolios, capstone projects, graduation requirement).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. School Community Support – Structures and systems are in place to engage families and community members for building capacity and sustaining programming.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total points awarded:	_____	_____	_____