

Understanding the New Civic Education Legislation

Opportunities for League Partnership with
Schools to Enhance Civic Engagement

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GOOD NEWS: CIVIC EDUCATION IS BACK!

- * 2018 History and Social Science Curriculum Framework
- * Chapter 296 of the Acts of 2018 An Act To Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement
- * Common underlying perspective: Action Civics
- * Teach students content knowledge of civics but also teach them the skills of civic engagement.

FEATURES OF CH. 296

- * Grade 8 – 12 Student-led, non-partisan civics projects (2019-2020). DESE has Civics Project Guidebook.
- * Commonwealth Civics Challenge. Showcase for Grade 8 student projects. (2022-2023)
- * Civics Project Trust Fund (2019-2020)
- * Promotion of youth membership on municipal boards, committees and commissions
- * Non-partisan high school voter challenge (Student Voter Outreach Coordinators)

POSSIBLE PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES- EASY TO MORE INVOLVED

1. Offer to train the student voter outreach coordinators.
 - * Provide them with additional helpful information related to voting. Example: How college students can vote when away from home.
 - * Information about local elections and town meeting.
 - * Dates and locations of local debates
 - * Secretary of Commonwealth will be developing regulations for this high school voter challenge program.

Partnership Activities cont'd

2. Support student participation on municipal boards and committees
 - * Provide materials for local boards on how to create a meaningful role for student participants. (Sec. of the Commonwealth supposed to notify them.)
3. Create a resource directory of community/ government organizations that can be used to help students identify helpful research contacts for their student-led non-partisan civics projects.
 - * Organize by community issue.

Partnership Activities cont'd

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Partnership Activities cont'd – A little more involved

4. Support local showcases for student-led civics projects.
 - ★ It could be as simple as lining up an interested audience of civic-minded adults, parents and other students for a student civics fair.
 - ★ It could be more involved by following a model like that created by Generation Citizen and having judges for the showcase.

PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES – VERY INVOLVED

5. If schools desire – get trained to be an intergenerational coach to assist students with their student-led civics projects. (Generation Citizen curriculum)
6. Offer schools the opportunity to have students co-plan a forum on an issue of importance to the students. (May work best in conjunction with an after school club, like Debate Club or a civics issue club. Curriculum intrusion and scheduling are practical issues for this option.)

PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES – VERY INVOLVED

7. Offer a grant program to support action civics curriculum projects.
 - * The LWVCCA model has been to do this in partnership with the Cape Cod Foundation.
 - * We worked our way up to this, starting with networking and relationship building.
 - * Planning to discontinue at this time with beginning of state Civics Trust Fund.

IN SUMMARY

- * Start with relationship building – listen
- * Build a menu of options with school input
- * Offer what they want and need
- * Remember teachers are very capable on their own
- * There are very professional curriculum materials available to schools
- * Do what is reasonable for your League to do
- * Focus on supporting their action civics projects.
- * Invite them to participate in League civic engagement but do so on their turf and schedule. (Ex. Needham high school LWW Club, co-plan event with one of their clubs.)