



Complete Proposal

The Proposal (complete text)

- 1. Voting and elections:** All Seattle public schools will hold [mock elections](#) in a manner that befits each school. Because [research proves](#) youth voting increases citizenship aptitudes for life we must [teach kids how to vote](#) from [K-12](#). All K-12 schools will encourage students to register family members and others when feasible and high school social studies teachers district-wide [committed in the fall of 2012 to a shared effort to register all seniors](#) in Seattle public schools. [King County Elections and the Sec. of State's Office in Olympia have committed to assist in this great endeavor.](#)
- 2. Social studies** would make civics perspectives a constant, intentional point of reference in all K-12 social studies classes. The emphasis on alignment with Common [Core Standards in History/Social Studies](#) and English/Language Arts Reading and Writing will predominate. The initiative calls for three [civics CBAs](#) (classroom based assessments) to be completed at each grade level – this is the central improvement of the proposal. For more info on CBAs click [here](#) and [here](#). It is understood that the wide majority of social studies classes would do one of the CBAs each October/November as an “Election/Voting” CBA, leaving two Civics CBAs for the remaining 8 months of the school years. At the grade 6-12 level the [“Political Spectrum” banner](#) would be posted on all SS classroom walls (41 SSD high school social studies teachers have already hung this banner in their room). The Essential Civics Questions banner will hang in all K-12 classrooms but it will get most use in the social studies, where the expectation will be that teachers will identify and infuse at least 2 essential questions into each unit plan, aside from and beyond the CBA’s. Also encouraged: a) more intentional coverage of current events, including elections; b) more regularity in use of [service learning lessons](#) - when outside-classroom community and political engagement activities are unfeasible, in class “policy-based service learning” activities are an excellent alternative. Four programs that district elementary classes use now on an ad hoc basis — [iCivics](#), [Project Citizen](#), [Storypath](#) and [We the People](#) — would be drawn from and used in an intentional manner as befits each school’s preferences.
- 3. Media-literacy instruction:** [Media-literacy](#), especially related to electoral politics, will be a required objective, primarily in social-studies and language-arts classrooms. Current events coverage, from organizations like [CNN Student News](#) (5 min. daily segments available, no cost) and others would occur frequently to merge civic literacy with media-literacy via current events. Civic literacy is unattainable without media literacy. Great

[lessons like these](#) can help immediately. Seattle is a nationally recognized hotbed of [civic media education initiatives](#) – there are boundless opportunities for growth and partnerships in this area. [Puget Sound Off](#), the award winning website, is a superb tool for teachers to use to cultivate civic engagement for youth in areas of personal interest.

- 4. K-12 Civics Across the Curriculum / K-12 Civics Across the Common Core:** All K-12 teachers will be trained to infuse inter-disciplinary civics lessons and “civics awareness” into all grades and all disciplines to help meet the emergent [Common Core Civics expectations](#). While non-social studies teachers would not be “required” to use civics lessons or civics texts in their courses, they would be totally supported in doing so. The Core’s 70:30 emphasis on non-fiction texts and critical thinking aligns perfectly with Civics for All’s [emphasis on inter-disciplinary reading](#) of civics texts. Non-social studies teachers would use civics infused lessons that align with their instructional objectives whenever possible. Teachers will be encouraged to [weave civics frameworks](#) and questions into and around their traditional lessons whenever effective. All classrooms district-wide will be anchored and connected by the “Essential Civics Questions” banner (PDF link below.) The expectation will be that students and teachers will weave these questions into unit plans whenever appropriate. These banners (similar to ones already used by some SSD teachers) help K-12 students/teachers make civics connections between classes, grades, and their schools. Each school will have a staff person serve as a civics coordinator who receives a nominal stipend – (\$300 for small schools, \$500 for large.)
- 5. Civics website page:** A periodically updated portfolio on the District’s website Fusion page will provide teachers with lessons, methods, and ideas to share and infuse civics and current events into each K-12 grade and discipline. This website would be the hub of civics education and action for the entire district. It would play a major role in data aggregation and analysis during K-12 mock elections.
- 6. Professional Development:** The Initiative calls for 2.0 PD days in year one of teaching civics across the K-12 curriculum, 1.0 in year two, and .5 in year three. All SSD teachers and staff (from custodians to the Superintendent), as well as parents and older students, will be encouraged and expected to be conversant with commonly framed main principles of democratic citizenship. [Click here](#) to download the Professional Development Day One proposal. Also, to the extent possible, staff will be reading and discussing four brief, core texts: [The Guardian: The Civic Mission of Schools](#) and [Advancing the Civic Mission of Schools](#), both from Justice O’Connor’s Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools; [The Role of Civic Education](#), from the Center for Civics Education; and [The True Patriot: A Pamphlet](#) (Liu and Hanauer). The Annenberg Foundation’s [“Democracy in America”](#) video course will also serve as a core civics text that helps all school employees participate in civics instruction, the cultivation of civic awareness on campus, and the development of a common instructional language that connects all grades and teachers.