Instruction
CIVIC EDUCATION

The County Superintendent and County Board recognize that involvement in civic and political institutions is essential to a democratic government and desires to provide a comprehensive civic education program to help students acquire the knowledge, skills, and principles essential for informed, engaged, and responsible citizenship.

The County Board shall approve, upon the recommendation of the County Superintendent or designee, academic standards and curriculum in civics and government that are aligned with state academic standards and curriculum frameworks.

The County Superintendent or designee shall determine specific courses within the K-12 curriculum in which civic education and government may be explicitly and systematically taught. He/she shall also encourage the integration of civic education into other subjects as appropriate.

The County Superintendent's civic education program shall provide students with an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in American democracy and the workings of federal, state, and local governments. As appropriate, instruction should include an examination of fundamental American documents, including, but not limited to, the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and other significant writings and speeches. Instruction should also promote a student's understanding of shared democratic principles and values, such as personal responsibility, justice, equality, respect for others, civic-mindedness, and patriotism, and enable students to make their own commitment to these civic values.

Service learning, extracurricular and cocurricular activities, class and school elections, simulations of government, student-led debates, voter education, and observation of local government processes may be used to reinforce classroom instruction by linking civic knowledge to practical experience and encouraging civic involvement.

Whenever civic education includes topics that may be controversial due to political beliefs or other influences, instruction shall be presented in a balanced manner that does not promote any particular viewpoint. Students shall not be discriminated against for expressing their ideas and opinions and shall be encouraged to respect different points of view.

Constitution/Citizenship Day

Each year on or near September 17, in commemoration of Constitution and Citizenship Day, the County Superintendent may hold an educational program for students in grades K-12 pertaining to the United States Constitution which shall include exercises and instruction in the purpose, meaning, and importance of the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights. (Education Code 37221; 36 USC 106 Note)

Student Voter Registration
To encourage students to participate in the elections process when they are of voting age, the County Superintendent or designee may provide high school students with voter registration information, including information regarding the state's online voter registration system.

The County Superintendent or designee may identify an employee at each high school whom the California Secretary of State may contact to facilitate the distribution of voter registration forms to eligible students. The County Superintendent or designee may provide the business address, phone number, and email address of each contact person to the Secretary of State. (Elections Code 2148)

The designated employee may determine the most effective means of distributing voter registration forms provided by the Secretary of State, which may include, but are not limited to, distributing the forms at the start of the school year with orientation materials, placing voter registration forms at central locations, including voter registration forms with graduation materials, and/or providing links and the web site address of the Secretary of State's online voter registration system on the County Superintendent's web site and in email notices sent to students.

The lead site administrator or designee may appoint one or more students enrolled at each high school to serve as voter outreach coordinators at that school. The voter outreach coordinator(s) may coordinate voter registration activities at the school to encourage eligible persons to register to vote. With the approval of the lead site administrator or designee, the voter outreach coordinator(s) may also coordinate election-related activities on campus, including voter registration drives, mock elections, debates, and other election-related student outreach activities. (Education Code 49041)

During the last two full weeks in April and September, in areas on each high school campus that are reasonably accessible to all students as designated by the lead site administrator or designee, the county elections official shall be allowed to register students and school personnel to vote. (Education Code 49040)

Adopted: 10/20/2011
Amended: 11/19/2020

Legal Reference

Education Code
54 Student service on boards and commissions
233.5 Teaching of principles
33540 Standards for government and civics instruction
37221 Commemorative exercises including anniversary of U.S. Constitution
48205 Absence from school for jury duty or precinct board service
49040-49041 Student voter registration
51210 Courses of study, grades 1-6
51220 Courses of study, grades 7-12
51470-51474  State Seal of Civic Engagement

Elections Codes
2146  Student voter registration
2148  Student voter registration, contact person
12302  Precinct boards, appointment of students

United States Codes, Title 20
6711-6716  Education for Democracy Act

United States Code, Title 36
101-144  Patriotic observances

Management Resources
American Bar Association Publications
Essentials of Law-Related Education, rev. 2003

California Department of Education Publications
History-Social Science Content Standards
History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools

Center for Civic Education Publications
Education for Democracy: California Civic Education Scope & Sequence, 2003
National Standards for Civics and Government, 1994

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Publications
Civics Assessment

Websites
CSBA: http://www.csba.org
American Bar Association: http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education.html
American Political Science Association: http://www.apsanet.org
Bill of Rights Institute: http://www.billofrightsinstitute.org
California Association of Student Leaders: http://www.casl1.org
California Council for the Social Studies: http://www.ccss.org
California Secretary of State Online Voter Registration: http://registertovote.ca.gov
Center for California Studies: http://www.csus.edu/calst
Center for Civic Education: http://www.civiced.org
Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement: http://www.civicyouth.org
Constitutional Rights Foundation: http://www.crf-usa.org
National Assessment of Educational Progress, Civics Assessment:
http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/civics
National Council for the Social Studies: http://www.ncss.org