

**Preparing Students for College, Career and *CITIZENSHIP*:
A California Guide to Align Civic Education and the Common Core State
Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies,
Science and Technical Subjects**

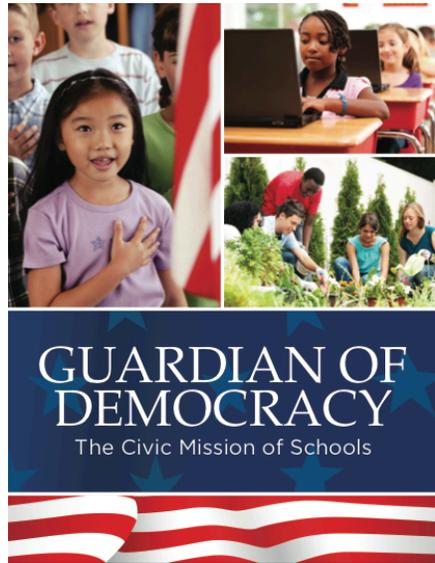
by Michelle M. Herczog, Ed.D.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative led by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association reviewed the fundamental mission of K-12 education across our nation to inform the development of a set of standards that identify the critical knowledge, skills, and dispositions vital for success in college and career in the 21st century. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects and the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics were designed to be robust, provide a clear and consistent understanding of what students are expected to learn, and be relevant to the real world. However, not knowing the path our students will take regarding college or career, one thing is certain – wherever they live or work in our nation, they also need to be prepared to become informed, responsible and engaged members of our democratic society. In other words, in addition to being prepared for college and career, they also need to be prepared for *citizenship*.

A recently released report, *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* produced by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools in partnership with the Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, the National Conference on Citizenship, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University, and the American Bar Association Division for Public Education addresses the urgent need to revitalize our democratic system to meet complex challenges home and abroad. Guiding democratic principles of consensus building, civil discourse, representative government, serving the common good, and protecting the civil rights of all people need to overcome the manifestation of a divided citizenry, legislative gridlock, and special interests overstepping the Constitutional rights of others.

The report calls upon schools to become the *guardians of democracy* by investing in civic learning as a means to strengthen American democracy. “A large body of research demonstrates the tangible benefits of civic learning. First and foremost, civic learning promotes civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions – research makes clear that students who received high quality civic learning are more likely than their counterparts to understand public issues, view political engagement as a means of addressing communal challenges, and participate in civic activities. Civic learning has similarly been shown to promote civic equality. Poor, minority, urban, or rural students who do receive high quality civic learning perform considerably higher than their counterparts without, demonstrating the possibility of civic learning to fulfill the ideal of civic equality.”¹

Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools identifies six proven practices that constitute a well-rounded high-quality civic learning experience.



- 1. Classroom Instruction:** Schools should provide instruction in government, history, economics, law, and democracy.
- 2. Discussion of Current Events and Controversial Issues:** Schools should incorporate discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events into the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives.
- 3. Service-Learning:** Schools should design and implement programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction.
- 4. Extracurricular Activities:** Schools should offer opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities outside of the classroom.
- 5. School Governance:** Schools should encourage student participation in school governance.
- 6. Simulations of Democratic Processes:** Schools should encourage students to participate in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.

Integrating Civic Learning with English-Language Arts

The convergence of our American historical heritage and the goal of civic literacy calls upon students to think critically about connecting and applying the ideals set forth in the founding of our nation and the social and political realities of today. English-Language Arts skills are critical to achieving this goal. Reading and comprehending complex expository text allows students to acquire extensive content knowledge about historical events, democratic ideals, processes and institutions. Listening for understanding about key ideas, diverse perspectives, points of view and various philosophical constructs allows students to identify logical conclusions, analyze any logical fallacies, draw logical conclusions, and take positions based on rational arguments. Allowing students' opportunities to engage in discussions about controversial issues empowers them to paraphrase information, articulate complex ideas representing various points of view and practice the art of civil discourse. Writing informative, explanatory and persuasive writing further develops students' ability to analyze information, deconstruct complex ideas, and articulate arguments in an organized, coherent manner. English-Language Arts skills, developed

in this manner within the construct of civic education not only furthers subject matter knowledge but strengthens students' cognitive abilities to think critically about important issues and provides them with the skills to respond in meaningful, relevant ways.

Innovative Resource to Prepare Students for Citizenship

To guide California educators in meeting the goal of preparing students for college, career AND citizenship, the Los Angeles County Office of Education has published an innovative resource, **Preparing Students for College, Career and *CITIZENSHIP*: A California Guide to Align Civic Education and the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects**. Developed in collaboration with the Trinity County Office of Education and the California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, the guide is intended to achieve a dual purpose: to provide English-Language Arts teachers a civic education context for improving literacy skills and, to provide social studies teachers a pedagogical framework for building literacy competencies needed for civic life. *Reading, writing, listening and speaking* skills are critical to success in all subject areas, hence, this guide provides a methodology that can be easily replicated for teachers of science, mathematics, health education, visual and performing arts, and career technical education.

Lesson activities in each of the grade spans follow a natural progression that build students' historical knowledge of the foundations of democracy, an understanding of how America's constitutional principles are reinterpreted over time, and the skills and dispositions needed for effective citizenship. Applied knowledge of history, government and civics are necessary for developing civic competency. Therefore, each series of lessons calls for students to actively participate in activities that strengthen reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in the context of civic dialogue, debate, persuasion and action. For example, the "K-2 Reading Standards for Informational Text" call for students to identify key ideas and details, understand how craft and structure of text contribute to comprehension, integrate knowledge and ideas, and comprehend complex text. The Civic Education Connection example prompts teachers to utilize informational text about different Founding Fathers as a context for developing these literacy skills. Discussions about George Washington and Thomas Jefferson begin with a basic understanding of who they were and what they believed in. It then leads to a discussion about the importance of rules and laws, the responsibility of government to protect rights cherished by the Founding Fathers, and the responsibility of citizens in a democratic society. Even young children can understand principles of equality, fairness and justice and begin to develop a framework for understanding how these values informed the development of our national democracy. Students engage in writing, speaking, and listening activities to build content knowledge, develop civic skills and dispositions, and meet Common Core State Standards needed for civic competency.

The Civic Connections for Grades 3-5 call for students to deepen their understanding of the role and responsibility of government through an analysis of a fictional story, *Yertle the Turtle* by Dr. Seuss. Students transition to informational text and are asked to identify the key ideas and details of the Preamble of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. They compare and contrast the main ideas, identify the authors' point of view and proceed to apply their knowledge of the documents to develop a *preamble* and *bill of rights* for their classroom. Writing, speaking

and listening skills are developed as students write persuasive and explanatory text to explain their work, conduct interviews of peers, school staff and parents about the importance of rules and rule-making, and make formal presentations using a variety of visual and audio aides and speaking techniques.

Students in grades 6-8 begin to uncover the early foundations of democratic ideals and principles by reading informational text about the religions, belief systems and traditions in ancient civilizations that influenced political structures and ideologies in Greece, the Roman Republic, the European Enlightenment and finally the birth of American democracy. Understanding the function, structure and role of various forms of government including our own allows students to think critically about the role of government in addressing complex political, social and economic issues around the world. Students are asked to read about current events, identify an issue of concern in their local community, research and analyze the various causes and effects of the identified problem, and work collaboratively to develop a public policy solution to be presented to the government body authorized to address the problem.

High school students are invited to proceed through a similar model by examining informational text about early political thinkers such as Montesquieu, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau and others to understand the complex ideas surrounding classical republicanism, natural rights, and the role of government to promote the common good while also protecting the civil liberties of individuals. As history reveals, the interpretation of these basic principles come into conflict as Susan B. Anthony, Cady Elizabeth Stanton, Martin Luther King, Jr. and other leaders of civil rights movements press for equal rights and equal protection under the law guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Students are asked to apply their knowledge to think critically about situations where individuals or groups in today's society feel their civil liberties are being violated. Reading, writing, listening and speaking skills are employed to address these complex yet significant issues as competent, responsible citizens of our American society.

Civic Education Connections to Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, Grades K-2

Building a Foundation for Civic Literacy

Children at very young ages understand abstract concepts of equality and justice as well as values such as fairness and honesty. Lessons about the importance of laws and rules in their school and home help them understand the reasons for establishing rules and laws in the birth of a new nation.

Rules and Laws in Our World

Rules and laws are necessary for achieving the goals of a civil society. They establish behavioral norms, protect rights of individuals, and clarify the responsibilities of citizenship. Children at very young ages need to understand that the governance of a family, school and country protects and defends the rights of its members and yet, there are consequences to bending or breaking rules and laws of a society. Working together for the common good is a primary goal of a democratic society.

Civic Education Connections:

- Conduct a discussion about rules at home and at school.
 - Why are they important?
 - What happens when they are not followed?
- Select a book with a storyline about rules and laws to either read aloud to the class or for students to read independently.
- Ask students to recall key details in the text, summarize the story, identify the characters, setting, major events and what occurred to the main characters when rules were not followed.

Reading Standards for Literature K–2		
The following standards offer a focus for instruction each year and help ensure that students gain adequate exposure to a range of texts and tasks. Rigor is also infused through the requirement that students read increasingly complex texts through the grades. <i>Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year’s grade specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.</i>		
Kindergartners:	Grade 1 Students:	Grade 2 Students:
Key Ideas and Details		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text. With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details. With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ask and answer questions about key details in a text. Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson. Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral. Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

Civic Education Connections to Common Core Standards – Grades K-2

Civic Education Connections:

- Identify new vocabulary words and utilize strategies to determine meanings (i.e. looking at pictures, context cues, cognates).
- Discuss various words and phrases that convey feelings (i.e. fair/unfair, just/justice/ unjust, benefit, consequence).
- Recognize different types of texts for different purposes. Identify the type of text the book represents (i.e. storybook, fantasy, realistic text) and its purpose (i.e. tell a story, give information).
- Focus on various characters and their different points of view:
 - Who follows the rules? Why?
 - Who does not follow the rules? Why?
 - How do the characters act in the beginning of the story, the middle and the end?
 - What is the author trying to say?
 - What is the illustrator trying to say?
- Examine the illustrations and text to gain a full understanding of the story. How do the illustrations support the context of the story?
- Read and examine another story about Rules and Laws and compare/contrast the events, characters and lessons learned. Relate the characters and stories to a real life scenario in the classroom. Ask students:
 - What would happen if Character A (rule follower) was a student in our classroom?
 - What would happen if Character B (rule breaker) was a student in our classroom?
 - How would their behavior affect our ability to learn, play and be successful?
 - What could be done to make sure that all of us are safe, secure and protected?
- Work with students to create a set of classroom rules and consequences.

Kindergartners:	Grade 1 Students:	Grade 2 Students:
Craft and Structure		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text. (See grade K Language standards 4-6 on pages 19-20 for additional expectations.) Recognize common types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems, fantasy, realistic text). With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses. (See grade 1 Language standards 4-6 on pages 19-20 for additional expectations.) Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types. Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song. (See grade 2 Language standards 4-6 on pages 19-20 for additional expectations.) Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action. Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts). (Not applicable to literature) With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events. (Not applicable to literature) Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot. (Not applicable to literature) Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Activate prior knowledge related to the information and events in texts. Use illustrations and context to make predictions about text. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> With prompting and support, read prose and poetry of appropriate complexity for grade 1. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Activate prior knowledge related to the information and events in a text. Confirm predictions about what will happen next in a text. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories and poetry, in the grades 2–3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Needless to say there are a plethora of examples and opportunities within both History/Social Studies and English Language Arts classrooms to engage students in reading, writing, listening and speaking activities that are rigorous, meaningful and promote critical thinking and problem solving – important knowledge and skills needed to prepare young people for college, career and citizenship in the 21st century.

By integrating the goals of the Common Core State Standards initiative and the goals of civic education, educators can truly provide all students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for success. Whether students' lives lead them to college or the workforce, they must, as future citizens of our nation learn to become effective, responsible and engaged citizens in the 21st century. It is our mission, our *civic mission* as educators, families, and policymakers to adopt this goal as a moral and civic imperative for the young people we serve and the future of our democracy.

Preparing Students for College, Career and CITIZENSHIP: A California Guide to Align Civic Education and the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects has also been adapted for a national audience by correlating civic education connections to the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects* developed by the CCSSO and NGA without the additional standards adopted by the California State Board of Education.

Both documents can be downloaded at no cost at <http://commoncore.lacoe.edu/resources/general.php> or at www.lacoe.edu/historysocialscience

ⁱ *Guardian of democracy: The civic mission of schools*, Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, Educating for Democracy, Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics, University of Pennsylvania, CIRCLE, National Conference on Citizenship, American Bar Association Division for Public Education (2011).

Author:

Michelle M. Herczog, Ed.D.

Consultant III, History-Social Science, Los Angeles County Office of Education

Member of Board of Directors, National Council for the Social Studies

Commissioner, California Curriculum Development and Supplemental Material Commission

Co-Chair, California Coalition for the Partnership for 21st Century Skills

ACSA Region XIV Vice-President, Legislative Action