

Washington's Civic Seal Proposal to Strengthen Youth Civic Readiness

Purpose: To recognize Washington State (K-12) students who demonstrate excellence in civic learning, participation, and leadership, and who embody the values of civic engagement in their communities.

Eligibility Requirements

Students must:

1. Demonstrate Academic Engagement:

- Maintain a record of academic effort and growth, particularly in social studies, civics, and government-related coursework.

2. Exhibit Civic Knowledge

Show a proficient understanding of:

- The U.S. and Washington State Constitutions
- The structure and functions of federal, state, tribal, and local governments
- The rights and responsibilities of community members in a democracy

3. Complete a Civic Community Engagement Project (scaffolded for grade levels K-12)

Participate in at least one informed civic project that:

- Addresses a real-world issue relevant to their local community (school, neighborhood and/or community group)
- Involves research, stakeholder engagement, and community action
- Includes a self learning reflection on the impact of their civic project and learning outcomes

School districts can opt into

- i. Platinum Civic Seal: a project is completed at elementary, middle, and high school
- ii. Gold Civic Seal: a project is completed at middle and high school
- iii. Silver Civic Seal: a project is completed at high school.

4. Demonstrate Civic Dispositions and Skills

Through a portfolio or capstone presentation, students reflect on their:

- Role in a democratic community
- Collaboration, communication, critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Commitment to equitable and inclusive classroom practices that honor diverse identities, ensure fair participation, and support respectful, constructive dialogue among all students.

5. Engage in Community OR School-Based Civic Activities

Participate in at least one sustained civic community activity, such as:

- Volunteering with a civic community organization - *League of Women Voters, Fix Democracy First, Local Chamber of Commerce, Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts, Religious organizations*
- Participating in school student government, school board meetings or local city council meetings

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- Engaging in accessible civic activities such as supporting voter registration activities, participating or serving as an officer in a local precinct, or joining community learning forums to strengthen local democratic participation.

Equity and Accessibility:

School districts and other educational entities are encouraged to:

- Ensure the program is accessible to all students, including those in alternative education settings
- Recognize diverse forms of civic expression, including artistic, cultural, and digital engagement
- Partner with community organizations to support student projects, mentorship and career readiness pathway opportunities

Recognition of Civic Seal:

School districts place a notation on a student's high school diploma and high school transcript indicating that the student has earned the civic seal.

Washington State Civic Seal Standards-Aligned Criteria

Purpose: To honor students who demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions aligned with Washington's Social Studies Learning Standards and OSPI's vision of preparing all students for civic life, college, and career.

Eligibility Criteria (Aligned with OSPI Goals & Standards)

1. Academic Engagement in Social Studies

- Completion of required social studies credits:
 - 1.0 credit U.S. History
 - 0.5 credit Civics
 - 0.5 credit Contemporary World Problems
 - 1.0 credit Social Studies Elective
- Demonstrated growth in civics-related coursework and authentic inquiry skills.

2. Civic Knowledge (EALRs 1 & 2)

- Understanding of constitutional principles, rights, and responsibilities
- Knowledge of federal, tribal, state, and local government structures
- Application of civics concepts to real-world issues.

3. Civic Engagement Project (EALR 5: Social Studies Skills)

- Student-led project addressing a community public issue through research, stakeholder engagement, and action
- Includes reflection on civic impact and personal learning
- Encouraged to use OSPI-developed Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) as a framework.

4. Civic Dispositions and Skills (EALR 5 & OSPI Learning Goal 4)

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- Demonstrated collaboration, communication, and problem-solving
- Respect for diverse perspectives and commitment to equity
- Portfolio or presentation showcasing civic identity and leadership (*define leadership not just a title*)

5. Community or School-Based Civic Participation (OSPI Learning Goal 2)

- Sustained involvement in civic activities such as:
 - Student government
 - Public testimony or local advocacy for identified community issue
 - Volunteer with Voter registration or education access campaigns
 - Service with community organizations such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, FFA, YMCA - Youth in Government

This proposal reflects the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) in civics, history, geography, economics, and social studies skills.

<https://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/resources-subject-area/social-studies/social-studies-learning-standards-graduation-requirements>

1. Anchor Units in the EALRs and GLEs

Use the [Washington K–12 Social Studies Standards](#) to map your units to the five EALRs: civics, economics, geography, history, and social studies skills. For example:

- Civics (EALR 1 & 2): Design lessons around constitutional principles, rights, and responsibilities.
- Skills (EALR 5): Integrate inquiry-based learning, source analysis, and argumentation.

2. Use OSPI's Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)

CBAs are ready-made performance tasks aligned with the standards. They're ideal for:

- Structuring civic action projects
- Assessing student understanding through real-world application You can adapt them to fit your curriculum or use them as capstone experiences.

3. Embed Civic Engagement Projects

- Guiding students through issue identification, research, and action planning
- Encouraging presentations to authentic audiences (e.g., school boards, city councils)
- Using rubrics aligned with EALR 5 to assess collaboration, communication, and impact

4. Integrate Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Practices

Washington's standards emphasize equity. You can:

- Include tribal sovereignty and local Indigenous histories
- Highlight diverse civic voices and social/ community movements
- Allow students to express civic learning through digital media, art, or storytelling

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5. Collaborate and Reflect

- Partner with colleagues to co-plan interdisciplinary units (e.g., civics + ELA)
- Use student reflections to assess civic dispositions and growth
- Celebrate student achievements—through capstone projects or day of celebrations—to reinforce civic community identity and celebration.

Feedback Process:

- For the WSCSS fall conference, we will seek input from classroom teachers about:
 - The feasibility of a civic seal—the benefits to students, teachers, and the state of Washington
 - A streamlined approach to review student projects
 - A statewide portal available to schools
 - Teachers are encouraged to use or adapt projects they are doing already and would qualify for a civic seal
 - The student is responsible for uploading the project; the teacher then affirms the student has completed the projects
 - Submissions are then handled by the Secretary of State's Office—students and teachers are notified directly, and a seal is sent to be placed on the diploma. (Logistics for this need to be worked out.)
 - The civic seal is
- Criteria need to be determined –teacher input is essential in determining the criteria
- The session will provide information about criteria for teacher input/refinement and so forth
- Grade levels for participation will need to be determined—teacher input essential
- An overview of the process as outlined above—insights and perspectives again needed from teachers