



Center for Civic Education

5146 Douglas Fir Road • Calabasas, CA 91302 • 818-591-9321 • www.civiced.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 1, 2003

CONTACT: Michelle Dimarob, Michael Fleischer
(202) 667-0901

CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS GET NEW, GROUNDBREAKING GUIDE TO EXPAND CIVIC EDUCATION *Promises to Improve Teaching of Citizenship and Government from K-12*

It's unclear what lessons school children may be learning from the historic recall election that is now just a week away. But a new, groundbreaking tool is arriving this month in every one of California's 9,000 public schools that will help educators improve and expand the teaching of civics in all grade levels and impart the skills and knowledge young people need to be active participants in the political life of their communities.

Education for Democracy: California Civic Education Scope & Sequence is a comprehensive multifaceted curriculum guide designed to aid school administrators, curriculum developers, and classroom teachers in integrating civic education in a systematic way. It shows how teaching civics can meet state and national standards, and provides lesson ideas and suggested resources for use by students and classes.

The project, directed by the Los Angeles-based Center for Civic Education, was created by the California State Legislature and funded through the California Department of Education.

"A democratic form of government can only work if its citizens are involved," said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell. "That path to becoming an involved, civic-minded adult should begin in the classroom. The *Scope & Sequence* should help ensure that California's classrooms contribute to an enlightened citizenry."

The guide says that making civic education a higher priority "is underscored by recent trends. Low voter turnout, especially among 18- to 24-year-olds, and citizen apathy are disturbing indicators of civic disengagement." Likewise, an evaluation by the National Assessment of Educational Progress indicates that 75 percent of America's students are not receiving a thorough and effective education for democracy.

But research shows that education can make citizens more likely "to become active, competent, and responsible participants in the political life of their communities." And the California Constitution specifically recognizes the importance of citizenship education, saying that knowledge is, "essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of people."

"*Education for Democracy* will enable educators – from superintendents to teachers – to include civics in the curriculum at every grade level, thereby ensuring that every California student will be prepared to fill his or her role as an active, informed citizen," said Charles N. Quigley, Executive Director of the Center for Civic Education.

Currently, California does not have specific standards for civics and government that are separate from the state history/social science standards. The 285-page *Education for Democracy* addresses this reality by providing a sequential civics program that shows how civic education can be enriched while meeting the existing history/social science standards. For each grade, the book provides:

- An overview of the content for that grade level.
- Specific civic education units and lessons, correlated with California History-Social Science Standards and the National Standards for Civics and Government.
- Examples of how civics and government can be taught under other standards, such as California's English-Language Arts and Creative and Performing Arts Standards.
- Ideas for lessons related to those standards.
- Recommended print and Internet resources to support the teaching of those lessons.

One of the most unique features of *Education for Democracy* is the way it illustrates how teachers can weave civic education lessons into a variety of lesson plans. The curriculum can be adapted for use in writing classes, reading assignments, and other subject areas included in California's English-Language Arts Standards and Creative and Performing Arts Standards.

"In addition to the '3R's', we need to move towards standards-based instruction in other important subjects too," said Robert Wells, Executive Director of the Association of California School Administrators. "Research proves that civic education, when taught appropriately, will empower our students to engage in the democratic process as adults. The *Scope & Sequence* will enable districts to implement civics in the right way."

"Teachers will be delighted to discover that California content standards really do support instruction in civic education," said fifth-grade teacher, Kim Allender of Burbank who hailed *Education for Democracy*. "Democracy education is embedded in the standards for social studies and language arts. This new K-12 *Scope & Sequence* gives teachers and administrators guidance on what to teach, when to teach it, and where to find the instructional resources."

Education for Democracy also meets the challenge embraced last month at the First Annual Congressional Conference on Civic Education, hosted by the Alliance for Representative Democracy, which includes the Center for Civic Education, Center on Congress at Indiana University, and the National Conference of State Legislatures. That summit launched campaigns to improve civic education in all 50 states.

California delegates attending the conference included: U.S. District Judge Frank Damrell; David Gordon, Superintendent of the Elk Grove Unified School District; Kerry Mazzone, Secretary of Education, Office of the Governor; Michelle Herczog, Social Studies Coordinator for the Los Angeles County Schools; and Mr. Roy Erickson, Director of Justice Education Programs for the Center for Civic Education.

Copies of the guide will be sent to every school superintendent and principal in California who will make them available to educators. Teachers who would like to design lessons that fulfill standards while providing creative educational opportunities in civic education can also obtain copies by contacting the Center for Civic Education at www.civiced.org.

Samples from Education for Democracy: California Civic Education Scope & Sequence A New Toolbox for Teaching

Below are samples from the hundreds of activities and resources provided by Education for Democracy. In a simplified form, they illustrate how the guide will assist California teachers with civic education lessons for every grade level.

Grade Level	CA History-Social Science Standards	Sample Classroom Activity	Sample Resources
2	Students explain governmental institutions and practices in the United States and other countries.	Write a story or a play that shows what might happen if people are not respectful of others. Discuss why it is necessary to show respect to people who might be different than you.	Print: <i>The Butter Battle</i> by Theodore Geisel (Dr. Seuss). The book explains the serious differences between the Zooks and the Yooks and discusses how intolerance and violence can quickly get out of hand.
4	Students explain the economic, social, and political life in California from the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic through the Mexican American War, the Gold Rush and the granting of statehood.	Students trace the history of their community and the people who contributed to its development. Students create displays or posters celebrating local history for your school, community center, or local library.	Print: <i>Statehood: California Chronicles</i> . This book includes articles about the achievement of statehood and the Compromise of 1850, laws and issues of the Mexican Government, Vallejo (a Californian for Statehood), and the State Seal.
8	Students understand the major events preceding the founding of the nation and relate the significance to the development of American constitutional democracy.	Using Lesson 7 in <i>We The People</i> Level 2. Center for Civic Education, Reprint 2003. Students explore the basic ideas of government that were expressed in the Declaration of Independence.	Internet: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Eighteenth Century and Twentieth Century Forms of Resistance. Students use the website to examine the various types of resistance used in colonial times and compare them to the forms of resistance that took place in the twentieth century.
12	Students evaluate, take, and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.	Ask: How well do your elected officials at local, state, and national levels represent your positions on important issues? Have students create "report cards" in graphic format.	Internet: Constitutional Rights Foundation. <i>Election Update: Issues Facing America</i> . This is a two-part lesson online. Lesson one introduces high school students to critical election-year issues and lesson two gives students an opportunity to build their own Youth Platform.

What Californians Are Saying about *Education for Democracy*

It offers age-appropriate classroom activities using specific, readily available resources that not only address the *National Standards for Civics and Government* but also California's own standards in history/social studies, Language Arts, and Visual and Performing Arts. With the ever-increasing expectations in student achievement, it is crucial that teachers deliver lessons that address multiple standards. The recently released *California Civic Education Scope & Sequence* is a wonderful tool that will help teachers meet this expectation.

**Bill Hatcher, Superintendent
Kern High School District, Bakersfield, CA**

This scope and sequence is a critical step in providing California schools with an effective, standards-based model curriculum for civics. Using it significantly increases the likelihood that students will receive a quality civic education. Policymakers, administrators, and teachers now have a practical yet powerful tool for reinvigorating the civic mission of schools!

**Ruben Zepeda, Director
Los Angeles American History Institute, Los Angeles Unified School District**

This is just what we need when we need it most! California kids need to know how government works and what to do when it doesn't. They need to understand it, they need to embrace it, and they need to get out there and be a part of it.

**Michelle Herczog, Ed.D, History/Social Science Consultant
Los Angeles County Department of Education**

The framework helps restore civics as an essential mission in California schools and gives teachers a powerful tool to prepare their students to be knowledgeable, effective, and participatory citizens of our state and nation.

**Marshall Croddy, Director
Programs and Materials Development, Constitutional Rights Foundation**

American democracy is dependent on an educated citizenry. Therefore, our duty as educators is preparation of students to become effective and responsible citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy. *Education for Democracy*, developed by highly respected California educators, delineates specific units and courses in social studies offerings at grades K-12 that emphasize the rule of law, rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens and suggests activities that enhance the individual's capacity to participate in the political process.

**David Vigilante, Project Manager
Education for Democracy
Associate Director
The National Center for History in the Schools, Department of History, UCLA**

Historical Quotes on Civic Education

If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.

Thomas Jefferson

Popular government without education is the prologue to a farce or a tragedy.

James Madison

A general diffusion of knowledge and intelligence being essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people, the Legislature shall encourage by all suitable means the promotion of intellectual, scientific, moral and agricultural improvement.

California Constitution, Article I, Section 9