CLASSROOM LAW PROJECT®

AUTHENTIC STUDENT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

A GUIDE TO PROJECT CITIZEN FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

Classroom Law Project

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AUTHENTIC STUDENT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:
A GUIDE TO PROJECT CITIZEN

Introduction

Project Citizen is an inquiry-based student action program developed by the Center for Civic Education over 30 years ago. Since then, every year thousands of students around the country research and collaborate together to develop new policy around issues that are important to them in their communities. Using proven student engagement methods, Project Citizen can transform civic engagement for all types of learners.

Objectives of the Project:

- Identify the knowledge and skills that are gained through interaction with government and civic life

- Practice teamwork, problem solving, and civic participation

- Analyze problems and determine multiple solution options

- Support decisions with evidence, practice, and follow up

How a Project Works:

- Students work together to conduct research about important problems in their community

- They choose one of the problems that they think most needs a solution

- They identify alternative solutions to the problem and weigh advantages and disadvantages of each

- Students then propose one policy solution that includes interaction with government action

- They propose an action plan for their chosen policy solution

- Their steps and results are recorded and demonstrated in both documented research and a display of some kind

- Students present their results or even take part in a simulated agency hearing where they are asked questions about their project

"Students can only truly learn civics by doing civics"

- Jessica Lander

What is Citizenship?

Civics = Citizenship

Of the three types of citizenship:

(1)   personally responsible citizenship,
(2)   participatory citizenship, and
(3)   justice-oriented citizenship

….the focus in classrooms is usually only on the **first** or **second** types.

So how do we get to the 3rd type and combine all 3?

+   +   +   +   +   +

Project Citizen helps students move from:

"what should be done?"

to

"what should **WE** do?"

It creates space for active and authentic civics (citizenship):

- working with government to tackle community challenges and injustices
- building coalitions
- support and teach others
- making lasting, justice-based change

The Eric Liu equation:

$$P + Ch = Ci$$

Power: a literacy that students deserve to learn

$$+$$

Character (in the collective): living
constructively in a community

$$=$$

Citizenship: Compassion
Justice
Shared responsibility

Authentic civic engagement means building all 3 types of citizenship:
  personal responsibilities, participation, justice

the following combo will naturally build intrinsic motivation and curiosity in students:

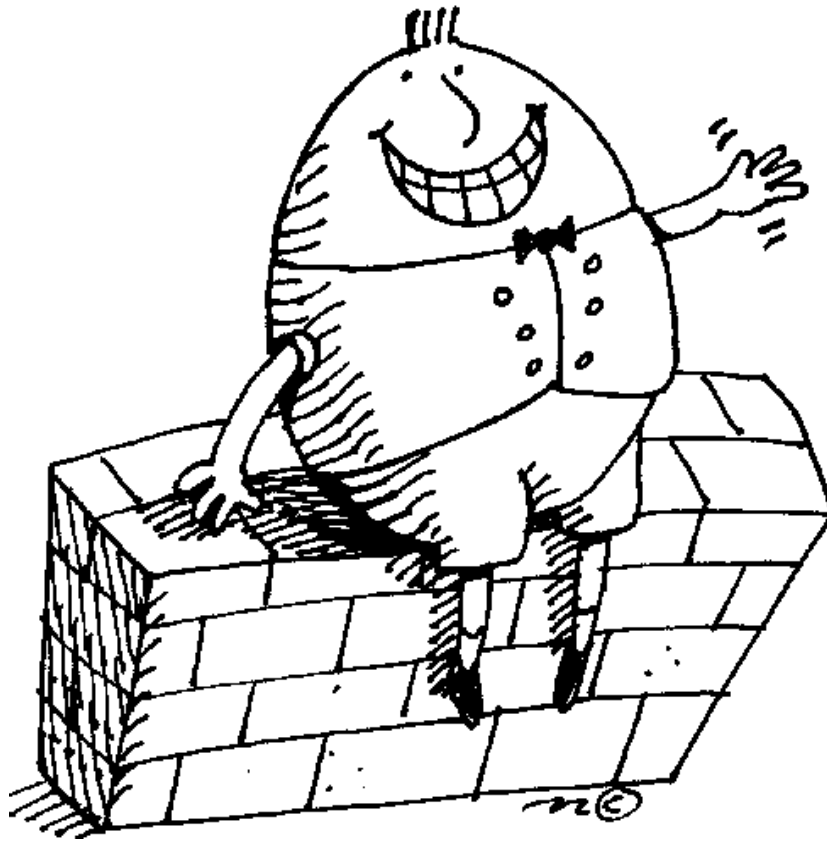| **Autonomy**	**Competence**	**Purpose**
Control		**Relatedness**
Choice	**Achievement**	**Relevance**
Ownership	**"I earned this"**	**Connectedness**
Power	**Accomplishment**	**"Epic Meaning"**
Agency		
Tool: **Inquiry**	*Tool:* **Timely Feedback**	*Tool:* **Participation**

Humpty Dumpty's Great Fall
(Solving Community Problems)

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses
And all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Humpty Dumpty's Great Fall
(Solving Community Problems)

Directions: Use the creative problem-solving process to develop a public policy for Mr. Dumpty's community.

The Problem	Alternative Policy Options	Our Policy	Our Action Plan	
The Problem:	Alternative 1: Advantages: Disadvantages:	Our Proposed Policy:	Steps we will follow:	
Current Policy:	Alternative 2: Advantages:	Does our policy protect people's rights? (Is it Constitutional?)	Who would be Supporters:	Who would be Opponents:
Disagreements in the Community:	Disadvantages:	Which Agency of Government is involved?	Sources of information we used:	

Oregon Elementary Civics Standards that align to Project Citizen

Kindergarten
Civics and Government
K.1   Explain why rules reduce conflict and promote fairness.
K.2   Use and identify respectful dialogue, taking turns, and explain how rules are different in different settings.

Social Science Analysis
K.19   For a given problem find a solution that demonstrates fairness and empathy.
K.20   Given context clues, develop a reasonable idea about who created the primary or secondary source, when they created it, where they created it, or why they created it.

Grade 1
Civics and Government
1.1   Describe the responsibilities of leaders and team members and demonstrate the ability to be both when working to accomplish a common task.
1.2   Apply civic virtues (such as equality, freedom, liberty, respect for individual rights, equity, justice, and deliberation) when participating in school settings (such as the classroom, cafeteria, playground, assemblies, and independent work).

Social Science Analysis
1.19   Identify cause-and-effect relationships.
1.20   Identify and explain a range of issues and problems and some ways that people are addressing them.
1.21   Identify ways that students can take informed action to help address issues and problems.
1.22   Determine if a source is primary or secondary and distinguish whether it is mostly fact or opinion.

Grade 2
Civics and Government
2.1   Compare personal point of view with others' perspectives when participating in rule setting.
2.2   Identify services provided by city government.
2.3   Evaluate how individuals, groups, and communities manage conflict and promote justice and equity.
2.4   Give examples of and identify appropriate and inappropriate use of power and its effect.
2.5   Identify city leaders and their functions.
2.6   Analyze the different ways students can have an effect on their local community.

Social Science Analysis
2.23   Compare and contrast past and present situations, people, and events in neighborhoods and communities.
2.24   Evaluate information relating to an issue or problem.
2.25   Use listening, consensus-building, and voting procedures to decide on and take informed action.

Grade 3

Civics and Government
3.1 Examine how different levels of city and county government provide services to members of a community.
3.2 Describe the responsibilities of people in their community and state.
3.3 Explain how a community relies on active civic participation and identify opportunities for student participation in local and regional issues.

Social Science Analysis
3.17 Use a variety of historical sources including artifacts, pictures and documents to identify factual evidence.
3.18 Identify and compare different ways of looking at an event, issue, or problem with an emphasis on multiple perspectives.
3.19 Analyze different ways that people, other living things, and the environment might be affected by an event, issue, or problem.

Grade 4

Civics and Government
4.1 Investigate the organization and functions of Oregon government.
4.2 Explain how Oregon achieved statehood and identify the stakeholders involved.

Social Science Analysis
4.19 Compare eyewitness and secondhand accounts of an event.
4.20 Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples and details with relevant information and data.
4.21 Analyze historical accounts related to Oregon to understand cause-and-effect.
4.22 Determine the validity of multiple sources, both historical and current, including but not limited to, diverse, primary and secondary sources.
4.23 Explain individual and cooperative approaches people have taken, or could take in the future, to address local, regional, and global problems, as well as predict possible results of those actions.

Grade 5

Civics and Government
5.1 Analyze how cooperation and conflict among people contribute to political, economic, religious, and current social events and situations in the United States.
5.2 Summarize and critique how colonial and new states' governments affected groups within their population (such as citizens, enslaved peoples, foreigners, nobles, religious groups, women, class systems, tribes).
5.3 Compare and contrast tribal forms of government, British monarchy, and early American colonial governments.
5.4 Identify principles of U.S. democracy found in the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.
5.5 Describe how national government affects local, state, and Oregon tribal governments.

Social Science Analysis
5.25 Analyze multiple accounts or perspectives of the same event, issue, problem or topic and describe important similarities and differences.
5.26 Gather, assess, and use information from multiple primary and secondary sources (such as print, electronic, interviews, speeches, images) to examine an event, issue, or problem through inquiry and research.
5.27 Identify characteristics of an event, issue, or problem, suggesting possible causes and results.
5.28 Propose a response or solution to an issue or problem, utilizing research, to support the position.
5.29 Use a range of collaborative procedures to make decisions about and act on civic issues or problems.

Service Learning Standards & Best Practices*

Meaningful Service

Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.

1. Service-learning experiences are appropriate to participant ages and developmental abilities

2. Service-learning addresses issues that are personally relevant to the participants.

3. Service-learning provides participants with interesting and engaging service activities

4. Service-learning encourages participants to understand their service experiences in the context of the underlying societal issues being addressed

5. Service-learning leads to attainable and visible outcomes that are valued by those being served

Link to Curriculum

Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards

1. Service-learning has clearly articulated learning goals

2. Service-learning is aligned with the academic and/or programmatic curriculum

3. Service-learning helps participants learn how to transfer knowledge and skills form one setting to another

4. Service-learning that takes place in schools is formally recognized in school board policies and student records

Reflection

Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society

1. Service-learning reflection includes a variety of verbal, written, artistic, and nonverbal activities to demonstrate understanding and changes in participants' knowledge, sills and/or attitudes

2. Service-learning reflection occurs before, during, and after the service experience

3. Service-learning reflection prompts participants to think deeply about complex community problems and alternative solutions

4. Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine their preconceptions and assumptions in order to explore and understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens

5. Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine a variety of social and civic issues related to their service-learning experience so that participants understand connections to public policy and civic life

Diversity

Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.

1. Service-learning helps participants identify and analyze different points of view to gain understanding of multiple perspectives

2. Service-learning helps participants develop interpersonal skills in conflict resolution and group decision-making

3. Service-learning helps participants actively seek to understand and value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of those offering and receiving service

4. Service-learning encourages participants to recognize and overcome stereotypes

Youth Voice

Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.

1. Service-learning engages youth in generating ideas during the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes

2. Service-learning involves youth in the decision-making process throughout the service-learning experiences

3. Service-learning involves youth and adults in creating an environment that supports trust and open expression of ideas

4. Service-learning promotes acquisition of knowledge and skills to enhance youth leadership and decision-making

5. Service-learning involves youth in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the service-learning experience

Partnerships

Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

1. Service-learning involves a variety of partners, including youth, educators, families, community members, community-based organizations, and/or businesses

2. Service-learning partnerships are characterized by frequent and regular communication to keep all partners well-informed about activities and progress

3. Service-learning partners collaborate to establish a shared vision and set common goals to address community needs

4. Service-learning partners collaboratively develop and implement action plans to meet specified goals

5. Service-learning partners share knowledge and understanding of school and community assets and needs, and view each other as valued resources

Progress Monitoring

Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.

1. Service-learning participants collect evidence of progress toward meeting specific service goals and learning outcomes from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience

2. Service-learning participants collect evidence of the quality of service-learning implementation from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience

3. Service-learning participants use evidence to improve service-learning experiences

4. Service-learning participants communicate evidence of progress toward goals and outcomes with the broader community, including policy-makers and education leaders, to deepen service-learning understanding and ensure that high quality practices are sustained.

Duration and Intensity

Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.

1. Service-learning experiences include the processes of investigating community needs, preparing for service, action, reflection, demonstration of learning and impacts, and celebration

2. Service-learning is conducted during concentrated blocks of time across a period for several weeks or months

3. Service-learning experiences provide enough time to address identified community needs and achieve learning outcomes

* from National Youth Leadership Council

Public Policy & Civic Community

Public Policy is a concept or set of ideas that guides a course of action or a procedure used in dealing with public issues or problems.

Policies are:
- Embodied in laws, rules, or regulations
- Agreed upon procedures used by government to fulfill its responsibilities
- Serve to distribute certain benefits, manage resources, or manage conflicts

Examples of Public Policies:
- A law that forbids selling alcohol to persons under the age of 18
- A law that forbids smoking in public institutions
- A law that forbids carrying guns in schools
- Regulations about work time in places of business
- A school district policy about absenteeism

Public Policy can:
- Include any kind of community problem or issue
- Center on all questions or problems that are sometimes called "general welfare" issues (a Constitutional term)
- Include education, medicine, economics, social care, housing, safety, or any other areas of public concern

Participants in Public Policy making include:
- Executive or Legislative branches of federal, state, or local government
- Government agencies
- Citizens who influence decision makers

Public Policy …
- is purposeful
- is responsive
- is authoritative
- is coercive
- may resolve conflict
- has public input

Public policy can be...

- **Substantive:** major rearrangements of public resources or values (ie, tax reform)
- **Symbolic:** more psychological relief than actual change (ie, legislation against flag burning)

Different Types of Policy:

Private: the section of society where people pursue their own private interests within the scope of the law, free of unreasonable and unfair intrusion by the government.

Civil Society: the section of society where people associate with each other voluntarily to pursue interests they share. They might pursue these interests as individuals or members of groups or organizations. Community groups enacting civil society policy can also keep the government in check.

Public/Government: the section of society that includes formal government institutions at local, state, and national levels. These might be legislative, executive, and judicial branches at all three levels.

Civic Community is the combination of public concerns and values of members of a community.

In a democracy, members of a community, or citizens of a community, have both rights and responsibilities. In a civic community, "citizenship" is not a legal status, but rather a set of individual rights and responsibilities that contribute to the health and well-being of the community.

People are empowered to participate in a democratic society and are all members of a civic community.

The three spheres of influence in a Civic Community are:

The Private Sphere

Most social interactions take place in the private sphere: family, religion, clubs, other social organizations. As long as members of these different social groups don't engage in activities that violate existing laws they may reasonably expect to continue, free of government involvement or interference.

Civil Society

Civil Society is made up of the individual, social, economic relationships and organizations that are not part of formal government institutions. This could include interest groups, unions, businesses, political parties, and other associations that are dedicated to the well-being of their members. Civil Society provides an arena for these institutions to operate freely (within the law) free of government influence. But often these organizations participate in monitoring and influencing public policy and government action in their communities.

Political Communities (Government)

The US Constitution establishes multiple levels of government (federal, state, local) that distribute authority among 3 branches of power: executive, legislative, and judicial. State and Local governments possess substantial powers that affect almost every aspect of a person's life, which makes them most often the focus of public policy issues.

The overall civic community operates best when all three spheres of influence work together towards the general welfare of all members of the community.
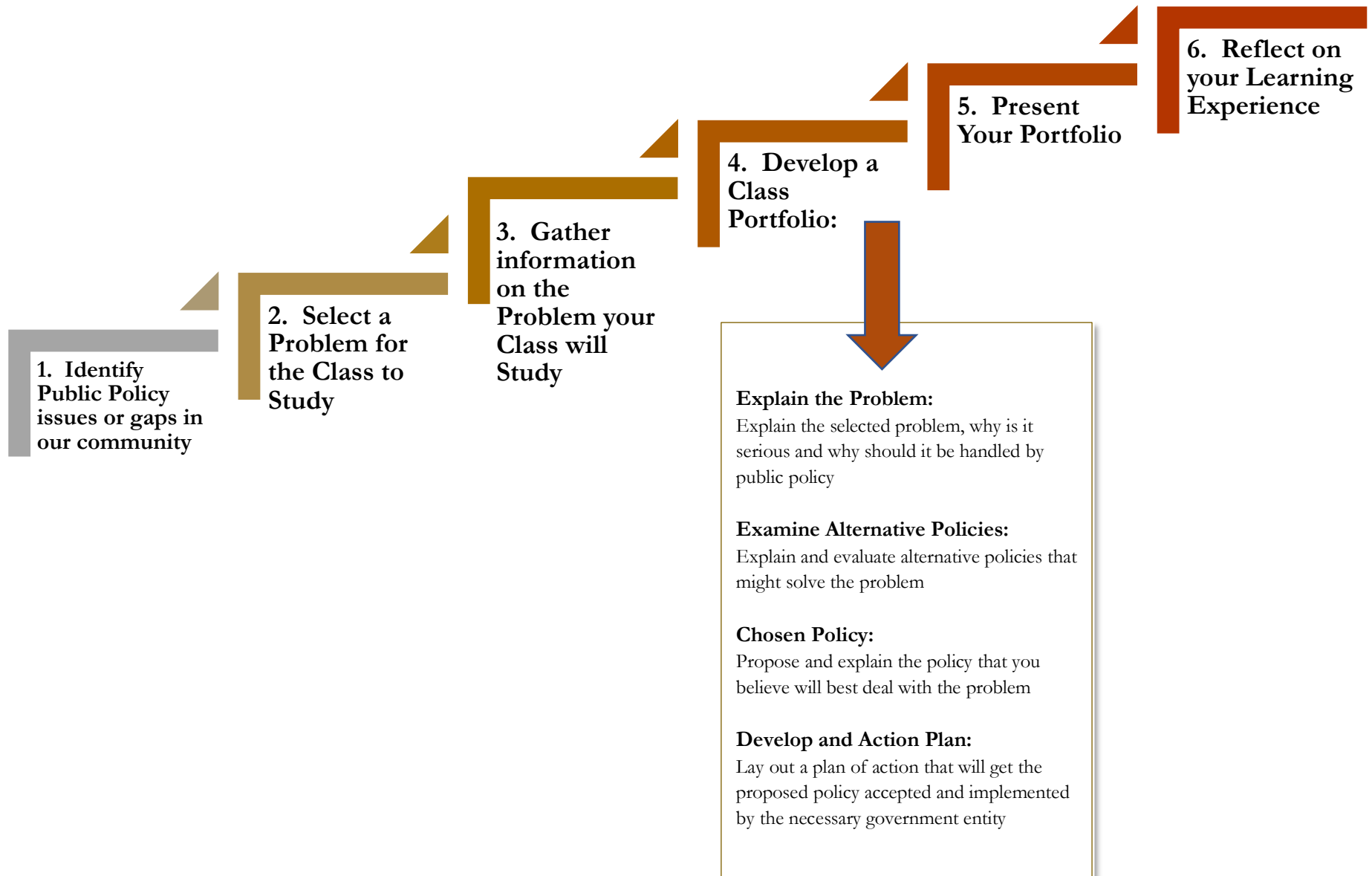
Understanding types of Public Policy Solutions

Read the first example of a community problem shown in the middle column below and the examples of (1) a public policy solution (by a government institution acting with or without civic society and (2) a solution to the problem solely by civil society.

Fill out the rest of the chart with your own suggestions for public policy and civil society solutions to the problems noted. You can use the last spaces to identify a problem in your own community.

Public Policy Solution	Community Problem	Civil Society Solution
City officials fund a program to give needy individuals vouchers to buy food and clothing from participating merchants	**Poor families in the community need food and adequate clothing**	*Members of a civic organization conduct a drive to collect food and clothing and then distribute it to the needy.*
	School-aged children are out on the streets late at night	
	Parents are not using child protective car seats properly.	
	The lake in the community is polluted and filled with litter	
	Many local students have been cheating on tests	

The Project - Step by Step:

1. Identify Public Policy issues or gaps in our community

2. Select a Problem for the Class to Study

3. Gather information on the Problem your Class will Study

4. Develop a Class Portfolio:

5. Present Your Portfolio

6. Reflect on your Learning Experience

Explain the Problem:
Explain the selected problem, why is it serious and why should it be handled by public policy

Examine Alternative Policies:
Explain and evaluate alternative policies that might solve the problem

Chosen Policy:
Propose and explain the policy that you believe will best deal with the problem

Develop and Action Plan:
Lay out a plan of action that will get the proposed policy accepted and implemented by the necessary government entity

Portfolio & Evidence Collection

1. A Portfolio demonstrates all the work the students do (whether whole class or different groups). It is a way to display and explain the policy solution they worked so hard to develop.

2. The Portfolio needs to have coherence – the sections are sequential and substantively relate to each other. The four main sections that should be displayed for their stakeholder audience are:
   a. **Explain the Problem**
   b. **Examine Alternative Policy Solutions**
   c. **Demonstrate the Chosen Policy Solution**
   d. **Argue for an Action Plan**

3. Any one student should be able to present all four sections to demonstrate their understanding of public policy, but the final presentation can be done in groups. All students need to understand the content of each section to do work as a small group.

4. All students need a clear understanding of the problem before working on different sections of the project.

5. An important role for the teacher is to facilitate the learning by helping students to:
   - Set criteria for what makes a good problem for a community action project
   - Narrow the problem
   - Develop consensus
   - Discuss alternatives
   - Provide intentional time for students to communicate across groups
   - Help them see how research from one group will impact or assist other panels

6. Students should have experience with many sources of evidence as possible. Evidence should be authentic, from your community, and associated with the problem. Surveys, interviews, and local media can be included. The Internet is only one source of information. Teach students to carefully evaluate, summarize, and select sources for their Portfolio.

The Project Portfolio

Portfolio Part 1:   Display Board or Digital/Multimedia Visuals

- Title of the project and school
- Appropriate titles for each section/panel
- Community supporters who helped
- Government involvement clear
- Well organized
- Information is thorough
- Appropriate graphics and pictures
- Attention getting!

Portfolio Part 2:   Documentation

Can be done in a binder for display or a digital folder of documentation

General:
- Cover Page
- Clear Sections
- Table of Contents
- Names of students and teacher

The Problem:
- Problem Summary
- Graphic presentation
- Problem identification form
- Other:
    - Interview form
    - Printed sources
    - Radio/TV/Websites
    - Publications
- Bibliography/Source List

Alternative Solutions:
- Summary of alternative policy solutions (with advantages & disadvantages)
- Graphic presentation
- Bibliography/Source List for each

Chosen Policy Solution:
- Narrative of the Chosen Policy
- Advantages
- Disadvantages

- Level of government responsible and what it needs to do
- Graphic presentation
- Bibliography/Source List

Action Plan:
- How to gain support from:
    - Individuals
    - Groups
- How to gain support of government
- Graphic presentation
- Bibliography/Source List

Evaluation:
- Constitutional opinion form
- Student evaluation form
- Teacher evaluation form

Problem Solving in Brief

Directions: Use the creative problem-solving process to develop a public policy outline for an issue in your community.

The Problem	Alternative Policy Options	Our Policy	Our Action Plan	
The Problem:	Alternative 1: Advantages: Disadvantages:	Our Proposed Policy:	Steps we will follow:	
Current Policy:	Alternative 2: Advantages:	Does our policy protect people's rights? (Is it Constitutional?)	Who would be Supporters:	Who would be Opponents:
Disagreements in the Community:	Disadvantages:	Which Agency of Government is involved?	Sources of information we used:	

Project Tips for Teachers

1. **Make it inquiry based: The students should choose the problem they want to address.** If the students choose they will be much more invested in the issue and the whole process will be much more exciting for everyone.

2. **Make contact early.** Start contacting community members, local civic leaders, experts, etc., as early as possible in the process. Correspondence with public officials can take some time. Be sure to brainstorm your contact list with your kids sooner rather than later so students will have time to include the responses in their portfolio.

3. **Practice, practice, practice.** Have students practice their presentation for the whole class, for the administration, for a faculty meeting, for the class pet turtle, in front of the mirror at home… Each time their audience (except, maybe, the turtle) will give them new questions to consider and they will become more comfortable and knowledgeable about their presentation.

4. **Be flexible.** There are many different ways to fit a Community Action Project into your year. The following are some variations that might work for you:

   7-8 Week "Perfect World" Plan:
   During school 2 or more times a week for an hour a day
   - Steps 1-2: 1-2 days each
   - Steps 3-5: 2 weeks each

   4-8 Week "After School Special" Plan:
   After school club that meets for 30-45 minutes once or twice a week
   - Steps 1-2: 1 meeting each
   - Steps 3-5: 2-4 meetings each
   - For this plan you will need to assign work (research) to the kids they can do at home
   - Allow kids to work on research and writing during some class times
   - Enlisting help for the students (a volunteer parent, possibly) will make their meeting times more effective

   2-4 Week "Maximum Overdrive" Plan:
   Every day 45-60 minute lessons
   - Steps 1-2: 1 day each
   - Steps 3-5: 2 weeks total
   - Warning: You may not be able to contact experts and get responses back with this short time span

5. Set a date for your school showcase, then plan backwards. Allow at least 4-6 weeks to prepare if you have them.

6. Contact community leaders, policy makers, and any other interested experts, professionals, or others who might be interested in helping your students during the project.

7. Let the students know what parts of the project you will grade and what you expect form each student

8. Plan lessons around each stage of the process – you can teach a LOT of content and skills as they work on the project itself.

Inquiry-Based Learning Tips

The 4 Steps of Inquiry-Based Learning

1. Students develop questions that they are hungry to answer. Have them develop a problem statement that requires them to pitch their question using a constructed response, further inquiry, and citation.

2. Research the topic using time in class. It's crucial to have some of this be classwork so students have access to the head researcher in the room—you. You aren't going to do the work for them, but you are going to guide them and model methods of researching reliably.

3. Have students present what they've learned. Students should create and present a culminating artifact. When I have my students present what they've learned, I use a rubric with "Able to Teach" as the acme of what to reach for. After all, many people can understand content, but can they communicate it? Students can develop a website using Weebly, or perhaps a slideshow using Google Slides.

4. Ask students to reflect on what worked about the process and what didn't. Reflection is key. And it isn't just about asking them to think back on their opinion of the topic. It's about reflecting on the process itself. That's where you can work in metacognition—thinking about thinking. Have students focus on how they learned in addition to what they learned.

~from Edutopia

The principles of inquiry-based learning

- **Principle 1:**   Learners are in the center of the entire process, while instructors, resources and technology are adequately organized to support them.
- **Principle 2**: All learning activities revolve around information-processing skills.
- **Principle 3:** Instructors facilitate the learning process, but also seek to learn more about their students and the process of inquiry-based learning.
- **Principle 4:** Emphasis should be placed on evaluating the development of information-processing skills and conceptual understanding, and not on the actual content of the field.

The 4 forms of inquiry

- **Confirmation inquiry:** Learners are given a question, as well as a method, to which the end result is already known. The goal is to confirm the results. This enables learners to reinforce already established ideas, and to practice their investigative skills.

- **Structured inquiry:** Learners are given the question and the method of achieving the result, but the goal is to provide an explanation that is already supported by the evidence gathered during and through the investigative process.

- **Guided inquiry:** Learners are only given a question. The main goal is to design the method of investigation and then test the question itself. This type of inquiry is not typically as structured as the previously mentioned forms.

- **Open inquiry:** Learners must form their own questions, design investigative methods, and then carry out the inquiry itself. They must present their results at the end of the process.

~from eLearning

Project Citizen 101
Part 1 - Identify the Problem

This is where inquiry begins. Students are empowered to explore and choose issues and problems in the community and begin the process of collaboration, persuasion, and building consensus.

Ways you can introduce students to the consideration of problems:

- Discuss some examples of problems or gaps in policy in various communities (young people, the school or district, the city, the state, the country, the environment, etc.)
- Bring in members of the community to discuss their organizations or issues and give students a chance to question them
- Go on a field trip or virtual field trip of the community to simply observe the environment to identify gaps or problems
- Have students interview others in the community about what problems they observe
- Survey the local or school/district news for what issues are being addressed or discussed

Once students begin brainstorming problems, provide them the structure for thinking through how they might fit into the process of problem solving and making policy.

Logistics:

1. Whole Class brainstorming or exploration of issues
2. Small group work on issues of choice and persuading the class or larger group to tackle them
3. Research, investigation and exploration of issues and problems
4. Presentations from small groups
5. Whole class or larger group decision on problem of choice to tackle

Problem Solving Criteria

For each problem you brainstorm, complete the following checklist to see if it would be a good challenge for the class to take on. In order to be a good community problem for us, it should meet all four requirements in the list.

Problem:

Criteria for a good problem:	Yes	No
1. Does government have a responsibility to deal with it?		
2. Is the problem important to community and our class?		
3. Is there enough information to gather about the problem?		
4. Is it a problem that we might be able to solve?		

Problem:

Criteria for a good problem:	Yes	No
1. Does government have a responsibility to deal with it?		
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Criteria for a good problem:	**Yes**	**No**
1. Does government have a responsibility to deal with it?		
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3. Is there enough information to gather about the problem?		
4. Is it a problem that we might be able to solve?		

Project Citizen: Problem Presentation Checklist

Your Task: Your group's task is to convince the class that your problem is the one we should choose for Project Citizen.

You need to show that:
- This problem is actually a problem!
- people care about this issue
- there is evidence this issue is a problem
- this issue falls under the "good problem" criteria:
  - government has a responsibility to deal with it
  - there is enough information
  - it's solvable

Collect evidence to prove your problem is a good problem:
- Interviews with concerned residents, students, parents, school staff, other community members
- Surveys of concerned residents, students, parents, school staff, other community members
- Articles / stories from local newspapers, newsletters or other news media
- Articles that support a similar issue in other places
- Maps that show how your issue is a problem
- Other data collection (e.g., counting cars or bicycles, etc.) to support your argument

Presentation:

- Your team will present your findings and your argument together. Presentation requirements:
- A visual poster or digital presentation that presents the problem and why it is a good problem
- A 5-minute oral presentation that explains why your problem is a good problem, including your evidence, that is persuasive to your audience
- A 5-minute question-answer time: all group members should participate and be prepared to answer questions

Hand In: In addition to your presentation, your group will need to hand in complete documentation of your research:
- Your Research Plan/Checklist
- Your Team's In-depth Evaluation of the Problem
- Interview sheets with all information and dates filled in
- Articles with citation sheets complete
- Data sheets or tables with complete labeling

Scoring:

You will receive individual score for your daily participation on the project. In addition, your team's work will be scored based on the following rubric:

	5	4	3	2-0
Evidence	The team did an outstanding job presenting your argument using several pieces of clear, well-documented evidence	The team clearly proved that your issue is a problem using evidence (interviews, surveys, etc.)	The team made some good points to support your argument. Much of the argument was supported by some evidence.	The team made a few good points to support your argument. There is little or no evidence to support your argument.
Teamwork	Team members communicated regularly to create a comprehensive group approach	Team members communicated well to create a group plan and share work	Some effort was made for group members to communicate and create a plan	Little or no effort was made for decisions to be discussed or made as a group
Presentation	The presentation was outstanding, tremendously persuasive, and all members took part	Team members all presented and made a good argument for your problem	The presentation was adequate and the argument was mostly clear. Most members participated.	The argument was not clear or not persuasive. Only a few members participated.
Documentation	The team handed in several well-constructed, easy to read documents. The documents serve as further evidence to support your argument.	The team handed in all needed documentation for your work. Documents are neat and complete.	The team handed in most of the needed documents. The documents are mostly neat and complete	The team handed in few or no documents. The documents are messy, hard to understand, or incomplete.

Passing: 14 points

Research Plan

(to be turned in with final project)

Group Member Names: _____

_____

_____

_____

Research Topic/Issue: _____

_____

Team Jobs:

Facilitator/Recorder (makes sure everything
gets done and accurately records information): _____

Researcher/Team 1 (finds information for items
1, 2, & 3 on Research Checklist): _____

Researcher/Team 2 (finds information for items
4, 5, & 6 on the Research Checklist): _____

List at least **FOUR** resources you used (include names, titles, dates, URL, etc.)

Book _____

Data base _____

Internet site _____

Magazine _____

Pamphlets _____

Newspapers _____

Journals _____

Interviews _____

Other _____

Research Checklist:

		✓
1	Is there already a public policy or law in place?	
2	Are there any civic or community groups already working to solve this problem?	
3	If so, who are they?	
4	Did you find any local sources?	
5	Do you have any supporting statistics (charts, graphs, tables)?	
6	Did you find evidence that some might NOT think this is a problem? What is that evidence?	

AFTER your research - Re-evaluate the problem:

Criteria for a good problem:	Yes	No
5. Does government have a responsibility to deal with it?		
6. Is the problem important to community and our class?		
7. Is there enough information to gather about the problem?		
8. Is it a problem that we might be able to solve?		

Project Citizen:
Evaluating your Problem in Depth

In order to explain your issue and persuade the class that it is an important problem to solve, you must first answer the following questions about your issue.

Create a document to hand in that responds to each of these questions:

1. What is the issue/problem that you and your team wants to study?

2. **Intensity of the Problem:** Which community does this issue most affect and how serious is it for the community?
    - How concerned are people about the problem (how upset are they)?

3. **Scope of the Problem:** How widespread is the problem in the community?
    - How many people are affected by it and how?

4. **Duration of the Problem:** How long has this been a problem in the community?

5. **Resources:** what might people gain or lose because of this problem or how it is responded to?

6. Is government already working with the issue? If so, how?

7. Why is this a problem that can be solved by government and which level of government (federal, state, local) is best suited to solve it?

8. Is there already an existing law or policy around this issue, and why is it not adequate to solve the problem?

9. What disagreements, if any, are there in the community about this problem and the way it is being handled?

10. Who are the individuals or groups with an interest in this issue/problem? For each individual or group you identify, answer the following questions:
    - Name of individual/Group:
    - What is their position on the issue?
    - Why are they interested?
    - What are the advantages of their position?
    - What are the disadvantages of their position?
    - What are they doing to influence government or the community to adopt their view?

Guidelines for Conducting an Interview

Have the following information prepared for yourself so you can thoroughly introduce and explain the project and get the information you need:

1. Introductions:

"My name is ____"

"I am a (grade level) student at (your school)"

"I am working on a policy project for (name of class)"

"We are studying local problems, how are they dealt with by different policy solutions, and how citizens can participate in their community."

2. Briefly describe the problem

(how would you explain this to someone in 2 minutes or less??)

3. Go through your pre-prepared list of questions.

(see "Interview Report Form")

4. Some follow up questions:

1. Is there someone else you think I should speak with about this topic?

2. Do you have any printed information you can provide me?

3. Do you know any other sources of information I can pursue?

Interview Report Form

Before beginning the interview be sure to identify yourself and briefly explain the problem you are researching (see Guidelines for Conducting an Interview). If a person does not wish to be named, respect their privacy and indicate only their role in the community.

Name and title of person being interviewed:

The person's **role in the community** (example: parent, community volunteer, business person, etc.):

Record the interviewee's responses to the following:

1. Do you think the problem I have described is important? Why?

2. Do you think others in our community believe this is an important problem? Why?

3. What might be the cause or causes of this problem?

4. Do you think this is a problem that should be dealt with by:

- Government acting alone? Why/Why Not:

- Government with the assistance of Civil Society? Why/Why Not:

- Government with the assistance of Private Individuals? Why/Why Not:

5. What policy, if any, is already in place to deal with this problem?

   5a. If a policy does exist ask the following questions:

   o What are the advantages of this policy?

   o What are the disadvantages o the policy?

   o How might the policy be improved?

- o   Does the policy need to be replaced?

- o   What disagreements about this policy, if any, exist in our community?

5b. If there is no policy currently in place to deal with the problem, ask the following questions:

- o   What sort of policy do you think might be needed to address the problem?

- o   What level(s), branch(es), or agency(ies) of government are responsible, or should've responsible, for dealing with the problem?

6. Do you have any suggestions for where I might get more information about this problem and the different positions people take on the problem?

Documentation of Information from Publications or Internet Sources

1. Briefly describe the problem being researched:

2. Identify the library, office, agency, organization, website, or other where you obtained this publication:

3. Title of the Publication: _____

4. Author(s): _____

5. Date of Publication: _____

6. According to this publication, what community(ies) is/are affected by this problem?

7. According to this publication, how serious is this problem in the community?

8. How widespread is the problem in other communities and states?

9. Is there a public policy that deals with the problem? (circle one)   **YES** / **NO**

    If yes, answer the following questions:

    a. What form does the policy take (law, regulation, judicial order, etc.):

    b. Briefly describe the public policy. Does it involve action by the government, cviil society, the private sphere, or a mix of all?

    c. Is the public policy dealing with the problem adequate, or is it being poorly enforced or implemented? Explain:

    If there is NO policy, explain why you think there is no policy:

10. What level(s) and branch(es) of government is/are responsible for dealing with the problem?

11. What disagreements about this public policy, or the current way of dealing with it, exist in the community?

12. Who are the major individuals, groups, or organizations expressing opinions regarding the problem?

Project Citizen 101
Part 2 - Alternative Solutions

This is where consensus and problem-solving skills develop. Students work together in teams to research and analyze a variety of options for addressing the chosen problem *through public policy.*

Alternative policy options might include:

- Proposals that have been suggested by different political parties or interest groups
- Suggestions or bills put forward by elected officials
- Policy ideas put forth in speeches by elected officials or citizens
- Current policies in other towns, cities, states, or countries
- Proposals generated by the students themselves brainstorming ideas

A way to introduce this concept may be to walk through a current policy that students are familiar with and what were or might have been alternative ways to handle the issue.

For example: what different alternatives might there have been to address the issue of marijuana legalization in Oregon before we got the current policy?

Logistics:

1. Whole class brainstorming or exploration of alternative solutions to an issue or two
2. Research, investigation and exploration of alternative options
3. Presentations from groups
4. Whole class or larger group decision on solution of choice to tackle

Your Policy Solution Proposal Checklist

For each policy solution you think of, complete the following checklist with thorough responses. This will also be your outline for presenting your policy solution.

Summarize your policy solution in 5 sentences or less:

Title/Name of your Policy:		List of sources where you got the ideas for this policy:
Who in the community will support this policy?	Who in the community might oppose this policy?	
What are at least 3 advantages of this policy?	What are at least 2 disadvantages of this policy?	What questions do you still have with regard to this policy solution?
What level of government is involved?		

Why are you confident this policy is a good solution to our problem?

Analyzing Alternative Policies

As you consider each alternative, analyze each one to help you decide which might be best to choose.

Policy Name/Title:	
Basic description:	
Advantages:	
Disadvantages:	
Supporters / Opponents:	
Things we still need to find out about this policy:	
Policy Name/Title:	
Basic description:	
Advantages:	
Disadvantages:	
Supporters / Opponents:	
Things we still need to find out about this policy:	
Policy Name/Title:	
Basic description:	
Advantages:	
Disadvantages:	
Supporters / Opponents:	
Things we still need to find out about this policy:	

Project Citizen 101
Part 3 - Choosing a Policy Solution

Students must now come to agreement on the final direction of their policy project.

This part of the project is quite brief but can involve the rich experience of learning how to come to consensus on a solution. This section also provides students an opportunity to learn about the limits of government based on the Constitution and how that might affect whether a policy is successful.

In deciding which solution to pursue, students may:

- Support one of the alternative policies proposed in Part 2
- Modify one of those policies
- Combine aspects of several of the alternatives, or
- Develop an entirely new public policy solution

Logistics:

1. Review the alternative solutions

2. Teach about building consensus and how reaching consensus may not mean everyone agrees

3. Use your chosen method of consensus to determine the policy solution for the problem

4. Finalize the chosen policy solution

5. Give students an opportunity to reflect on the Constitutionality of the chosen policy. This is an opportunity to extend some teaching about constitutional basics and/or give students a chance to reflect on how the decision was reached.

The Constitutionality of the Chosen Policy

Evaluate the constitutionality of the chosen policy by responding to the following questions in your own words:

1. **The chosen policy serves the following purposes of government** (based on the Preamble of the Constitution (check all that apply):

   ☐ Creates more unity in the community

   ☐ Establishes justice in the community

   ☐ Ensures peace in the community

   ☐ Provides for the common defense of the community

   ☐ Promotes the general welfare of the members of the community

   ☐ Secures liberty for the future of the community

2. **Which** of these do you think is the primary purpose of the project and **why**?

3. **The chosen policy respects the following individual rights** of members of the community (choose all that apply):

   ☐ The right to freedom of religion

   ☐ The right to freedom of speech & expression

   ☐ The right to due process of law

   ☐ The right to privacy

   ☐ The right to equality of opportunity

4. Explain in your own words how the policy respects the rights you checked above:

Reflection on Choosing a Policy Solution

Respond to the following questions to reflect on your experience of choosing a policy solution and the project so far.

1. Based on your own research and review of the alternative policies, which policy did YOU think would be the best choice for a policy solution and why?

2. Did the group decide on the same policy you preferred?   **YES / NO**

3. Did you feel that the process for deciding the chosen policy was fair - why or why not?

4. What new ideas or skills did you learn from participating in a group decision-making process and how might those ideas or skills help you in the future?

Project Citizen 101
Part 4 - Develop an Action Plan

The final piece of putting together the project portfolio is the creative conclusion to choosing a policy solution.

Now that a policy has been chosen, students must develop an action plan to get the policy adopted and implemented for the community. This means focusing on the government entity that will be responsible for making that successfully happen.

NOTE: An action plan is how to get the policy implemented (NOT how the policy will work - that should have been explained in the policy proposal itself)

An action plan should contain the following:

- Identify influential individuals and groups in the community who might be willing to support the proposed policy and how you might convince them to support

- Identify groups or individuals in the community who might oppose the policy and how you might persuade them to support it

- How you will get the appropriate government entity to support the policy

- What evidence you will use to persuade the appropriate entities to support and implement the policy

Students should document any communications with the above groups in their attempts to get the policy implemented.

Logistics for the students:

1. Respond to the 4 items on the Action Plan Checklist
2. Create a digital or IRL display of the evidence to support the Action Plan
3. Prepare to present the action plan process and any results that have come of it prior to the presentation of the full portfolio

Action Plan Checklist

Respond to each of these items thoroughly (each response should be at least several paragraphs, typed and double spaced for presentation in the portfolio) - the responses should be part of your documentation for the portfolio and serve as an outline for your presentation of the action plan.

1. Identify influential individuals and groups in the community who might be willing to support the proposed policy and how you might convince them to support

2. Identify groups or individuals in the community who might oppose the policy and how you might persuade them to support it

3. How you will get the appropriate government entity to support the policy

4. What evidence you will use to persuade the appropriate entities to support and implement the policy?

Your Acton Plan entry in the Portfolio should include all documentation of the above responses, as well as the actual evidence you have to support it (correspondence with government entities, contact with supporters/opposition, charts, graphs, news articles, pictures, video, etc.)

Project Citizen 101:
Wrapping it up: Civic Participation is the Point

A. The Testimony

A Showcase of the projects includes the opportunity for relevant members of the community to observe and review the work of the students (similar to a science fair type of display), as well as a chance for the students to defend their work to a relevant audience.

The most enriching part of this project is when students have put their portfolio and documentation together and present or testify about the policy to the relevant government or community entity.

This presentation could take the form of:

- Testifying before the school board or a legislative committee
- A presentation at a Town Hall with the City Council
- A presentation to members of the school administration
- Testifying to an executive agency

This kind of final presentation has much more impact than traditional class presentations because the result is actually relevant to the effort students have invested from the beginning of the project.

The following pages are evaluation sheets that observers and or evaluators of the portfolios and presentations may use to provide feedback on the project and policy.

Name of Project:_____

Give only one whole numeric rating (1–10) for each of the five sections of the Criteria for Evaluation.

Excellent: 9–10   **Above Average: 7–8**   **Average: 5–6**   **Below Average: 3–4**   **Insufficient: 1–2**

	Score	Comments
Panel 1: Understanding the Problem		
Panel 2: Analysis of Alternatives		
Panel 3: Persuasive Policy Plan		
Panel 4: Action Plan		
TOTAL:		

Criteria for Evaluation

Section 1: Understanding the Problem
- States and explains the problem and its causes and presents evidence that there is a problem
- Demonstrates an understanding of issue(s) involved in the problem
- Demonstrates an understanding of existing or proposed public policies
- Explains disagreements about the problem that may exist in the community
- Explains why government should be involved in the solution

Section 2: Analysis of Alternative Policies
- Presents two or three alternative public policies to address the problem
- Explains advantages and disadvantages of each alternative policy presented
- Identifies controversies and conflicts that may need to be addressed for each alternative

Section 3: Public Policy Development and Persuasiveness
- States a public policy that addresses the problem and identifies the government branch or agency responsible for enacting their proposed public policy
- Supports their proposed public policy with reasoning and evidence
- Identifies and explains advantages and disadvantages of their proposed public policy
- Explains and supports why their proposed public policy is constitutional

Section 4: Implementation of an Action Plan
- Identifies individuals and groups, both supporters and opponents, who will need to be influenced
- Identifies government officials, both supporters and opponents, who will need to be influenced
- Outlines and explains an action process for getting their proposed public policy enacted
- Proposes action that builds and expands on evidence presented in previous panels

Overall Portfolio: Extent to which the complete portfolio does the following:
- Presents material in the display and binder that correlate to and support each other
- Constructs a clear and convincing sequence from one panel/section to the next
- Uses and documents research from multiple sources and provides appropriate notation for the sources and research evidence used
- Follows standards of good writing
- Uses relevant and appropriate graphics and written information
- Is visually appealing
- Includes evidence of student reflection that states what the students have learned.

Name of Project:_____

Give only one whole numeric rating (1–10) for each of the five sections of the Criteria for Evaluation.

Excellent: 9–10　　**Above Average: 7–8**　　**Average: 5–6**　　**Below Average: 3–4**　　**Insufficient: 1–2**

	Score	Comments
Panel 1: Explaining the Problem		
Panel 2: Analysis of Alternatives		
Panel 3: Persuasive Policy Plan		
Panel 4: Action Plan		
TOTAL:		

Criteria for Evaluation

Section 1: Understanding the Problem
- States and explains the problem and its causes and presents evidence that there is a problem
- Demonstrates an understanding of issue(s) involved in the problem
- Demonstrates an understanding of existing or proposed public policies
- Explains disagreements about the problem that may exist in the community
- Explains why government should be involved in the solution

Section 2: Analysis of Alternative Policies
- Presents two or three alternative public policies to address the problem
- Explains advantages and disadvantages of each alternative policy presented
- Identifies controversies and conflicts that may need to be addressed for each alternative

Section 3: Public Policy Development and Persuasiveness
- States a public policy that addresses the problem and identifies the government branch or agency responsible for enacting their proposed public policy
- Supports their proposed public policy with reasoning and evidence
- Identifies and explains advantages and disadvantages of their proposed public policy
- Explains and supports why their proposed public policy is constitutional

Section 4: Implementation of an Action Plan
- Identifies individuals and groups, both supporters and opponents, who will need to be influenced
- Identifies government officials, both supporters and opponents, who will need to be influenced
- Outlines and explains an action process for getting their proposed public policy enacted
- Proposes action that builds and expands on evidence presented in previous panels

Overall Hearing: Extent to which the entire presentation has:
- Constructed a clear and convincing sequence from one group to the next
- Used and documented research from multiple sources and made reference to sources and research used
- Referenced relevant and appropriate graphics and written information
- Used standards of good oral presentation (pace, projection, articulation, poise, eye contact)
- Shared speaking responsibility while making the presentation
- Included evidence of reflection that states what the students learned

B. The Reflection

Reflecting is crucial for students to consider fully the Project and the process the they experienced:

Inquiry

Collaboration

Consensus

Creativity

=

relevant and meaningful civic participation.

The reflection allows students not only to think critically about the process itself, but to consider that while doing the project, they have been exercising many of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in their community that they explored at the very beginning.

Expecting public officials to act democratically, to listen to citizen ideas and proposals, learning about civil society and their role in it, and practicing the act of authentic participation are all aspects of civic engagement in which students now have experience.

Project Reflection

1. What have you learned about how your community and public policies are organized and enacted?

2. What responsibilities of public officials or members of the community did you find most influential as you did this project? Why?

3. What conflicts or challenges did you encounter while doing this project? How did you resolve them?

4. Which parts of the project did you enjoy most and why?

5. Explain how the following attitudes and character traits are important for members of a community in a democracy – and how/if any of these were involved in this project?

   Individual responsibility:

   Self discipline:

   Civility:

   Courage:

   Respect for the rights of others:

   Respect for law:

   Honesty:

Open-mindedness:

Critical thinking:

Negotiation and Compromise:

Persistence:

Civic-mindedness:

Compassion:

6. Now that the project is complete, what do you feel more confident about for
   future projects you work on?

My Project Contributions

Explain in detail what you did for this project in each of the following categories.

Research:

Writing / Documentation:

Interviews, Surveys, Data Collection:

Other: