

## STRATEGIES FOR USE

This toolkit is designed for teachers, curriculum supervisors, and school district administrators with responsibilities for planning a standards-based instructional program that infuses civics education across content areas.

To begin planning for the curricular integration of civics education, consider the strategies below. Most strategies have examples of activities that include connections to at least one New York State Learning Standard. More connections are possible. The examples below are listed as sample ideas.

---

---

### **Develop a civics theme in your local school district which incorporates all New York State Learning Standards.**

- Create a school- or district-wide calendar to record when days of commemoration like Law Day occur. (Law Day, for example, is held on May 1st of each year.)  
*SS Standard 1, Key Idea 2: PI 3 - Elementary; PI 1 - Intermediate, PI 2 - Commencement*
- Connect specific days of commemoration, such as Law Day, to the civics theme or other civic education activities which support interdisciplinary standards-based instruction.  
*SS Standard 5, Key Idea 4: PI 6 - Elementary; PI 3 - Intermediate; PI 4 & 5 - Commencement*  
*CDOS Standard 2, Key Idea 1: Intermediate*
- Include instructional strategies and related activities on the school or district website that promote civics instruction in all classrooms.  
*SS Standard 3, Key Idea 2: PI 2 - Elementary; PI 3 - Intermediate; PI 4 - Commencement*
- Foster collaboration between school administrators, teachers, students, and the general community to develop a school-wide character education theme.  
*ELA Standard 3, Grade 5 Reading: Identify different perspectives, such as social, cultural, ethnic, and historical, on an issue presented in more than one text*  
*SS Standard 5, Key Idea 4: PI 2 - Elementary*
- Participate in the “Adopt-A-Highway” program.  
*MST Standard 4, Living Environment, Key Idea 7: PI 7.3 - Commencement*  
*SS Standard 5, Key Idea 4: PI 5 - Commencement*
- Visit different web sites to get ideas for civics themes. For example, the web site [If the World Were a Village of 100 People](#) provides a global perspective of

ethnicity, education, religion, literacy, health, and wealth while providing experience with estimation, ratio, percent and proportions.

**MST Standard 3 (Revised 2005):** 6.N.7, 6.N.9, 6.N.10, 6.N.11, 6.N.12, 6.N.21, 6.N.26, 6.N.27

---

**Provide opportunities for students to learn the context of the rule of law, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens and citizenship, through the content, concepts, and skills of all New York State Learning Standards.**

- Research population studies of different varieties of wildlife, and/or correlate changes in populations with conservation laws.  
**MST Standard 4 Living Environment, Key Idea 6:** PI 6.1, 6.2, & 6.3 - Commencement  
**SS Standard 3, Key Idea 2:** PI 2 - Elementary; PI 2 & 3 - Intermediate; PI 1 & 2 - Commencement
- Research how new scientific discoveries have affected changes in existing laws or demanded new laws to be developed.  
**MST Standard 7, Key Idea 1:** All PI's, Elementary through Commencement  
**SS Standard 5, Key Idea 3:** PI 5 - Elementary; PI 3 - Intermediate, PI 4 - Commencement
- Investigate how regional weather patterns influence laws and/or building codes throughout the United States and the world.  
**MST Standard 4 Physical Setting, Key Idea 2:** PI 2.1 - Commencement  
**SS Standard 5, Key Idea 1:** PI 1 & 3 Elementary; PI 3 - Intermediate; PI 3 – 5 - Commencement
- Analyze graphs, and charts describing federal, state, and local government expenditures in different categories (e.g., education, police and fire, health care, welfare, transportation) and design a graphic representation or computer model that compares/contrasts these expenditures.  
**MST Standard 5, Key Idea 3:** PI 2 - Intermediate  
**SS Standard 4, Key Idea 2:** PI 4 - Elementary; PI 5 - Intermediate; PI 4 - Commencement
- Research laws and regulations regarding energy efficiency mandates for new products and/or building codes.  
**CDOS Standard 2, Key Idea 1:** Intermediate  
**MST Standard 5, Key Idea 1:** PI 2 - Commencement
- Investigate the cultural, social, psychological, biological, environmental, economic, political, and/or global roles that impact food choices across the lifespan. Identify governmental, economic, and technological influences on food

choices and nutrition practices.

**CDOS Standard 3a (Systems): Commencement**

**FACS Standard 1, Key Idea 1: Commencement; Standard 3, Key Idea 1: Commencement**

**MST Standard 4 Living Environment, Key Idea 7: PI 7.1 - Intermediate**

- Analyze current influences on housing and predict how they will necessitate innovations in design to meet future human needs. Summarize the demographic trends which influence housing styles and living environments. Identify the areas or situations in which human needs are currently unmet by housing options.

**CDOS Standard 3a (Thinking): Commencement; Standard 3a (Managing Information): Commencement**

**FACS Standard 2, Key Idea 1: Commencement; Standard 3, Key Idea 1: Commencement**

- Identify local building codes designed to promote safe and healthy living environments for individuals and families across the lifespan. Examine local building codes to determine the ease of incorporating universal home design and/or environmental home design principles in the local community.

**FACS Standard 2, Key Idea 1: Commencement**

- Identify environmental and social issues that impact the rights of others in the context of consumer decisions. Differentiate between consumer rights and consumer responsibilities. Examine state and federal policies and laws providing consumer protection. Identify consumer protection agencies that assist consumers in ensuring consumer rights.

**CDOS Standard 3a (Systems)**

**FACS Standard 3, Key Idea 1: Intermediate**

- Students participate in a “Safe Routes to School” event that includes a “walkability” evaluation of the route in regards to safety, accessibility for disabled individuals, and appropriate installation of crossing signals. Report the findings to the local government for response.

**PE Standard 2: Elementary: work constructively with others to accomplish a variety of goals; Intermediate: work constructively with others to accomplish a goal in a group activity, demonstrating consideration for others involved**

- Read a newspaper or other print or electronic media critically to learn about bias, propaganda techniques, and persuasion.

**ELA Standard 3, Grade 8 Reading: Evaluate the validity and accuracy of information, ideas, themes, opinions, and experiences in texts: for example, identify cultural and ethnic values and their impact on content**

---

**Collaborate with other teachers to produce interdisciplinary learning experiences for students.**

- Create a service learning project for students in social studies and physical education classes to provide a “chair exercise” program for senior citizens at the local senior center.  
*PE Standard 3: Commencement: recognize the benefits of engaging in appropriate physical activities with others, including both older and younger members of the community*  
*SS Standard 5, Key Idea 4: PI 3 - Elementary; PI 3 - Intermediate; PI 5 - Commencement*
- Study how physical exertion creates changes in metabolic function to maintain homeostasis. Ask students to consider how exercise develops healthier citizens.  
*MST Standard 4 Living Environment, Key Idea 5: PI 5.1 & 5.3 - Commencement*
- Create Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) in foreign languages to research and discuss the findings of how different cultures deal with chemical exposures in both the home and workplace.  
*FACS Standard 2, Key Idea 1: Commencement*  
*MST Standard 4 Physical Setting, Key Idea 3: PI 3.2 - Commencement*
- Coordinate between classes the study of historical events that transformed governments (and citizens’ rights). For example, study concurrently the French Revolution in both French and social studies classes.  
*SS Standard 2, Key Idea 2: PI 4 - Elementary; PI 3 - Intermediate; PI 5 - Commencement*
- Use electronic communication or digital media to participate in a discussion concerning a civics-related theme.  
*ELA Standard 3, Grade 3 Speaking: Analyze and evaluate new ideas by using personal experiences and knowledge*  
*ELA Standard 4, Grade 6 Reading: Recognize the types of language (e.g., jargon, colloquialisms, informal vocabulary, and email conventions) that are appropriate to social communication*
- Discuss and find examples of the misuse or misrepresentation of statistical data concerning election results, using several web sites.  
*MST Standard 3 (Revised 2005): A.S.3, A.W.4, A.S.10, A.S.13, A.S.15*
- Analyze how traditional, command, market, and mixed economies would address the following issues: health care for individuals with special needs, price support for farmers, aid to education, and environmental controls of industries.  
*SS Standard 4, Key Idea 1: PI 3 - Elementary; PI 1 - Intermediate; PI 1 & 7 - Commencement*

- Have students interpret and display data using circle graphs in grade 7 mathematics. This provides an excellent opportunity to discuss the national budget when studying the structure of the federal government. The lesson may be extended to personal budgets, followed by discussion of discretionary money. Our graduated federal income tax system is then an appropriate follow-up lesson, using calculation of taxes using tax formulas and percents. With both the social studies and the mathematics teacher developing these ideas together, a broad understanding of these topics will occur.

**MST Standard 3 (Revised 2005):** 7.M.5, 7.M.8, 7.A.6, 7.S.1, 7.S.2, 7.S.6

- Hold a town meeting where students engage in a discussion about a civics-related topic that affects their community.

**ELA Standard 1, Grade 11 Speaking:** *Ask and respond to probing and challenging questions to acquire information*

**MST Standard 2, Key Idea 1: PI 1 - Commencement**

### **Encourage civic responsibility – how civics applies to students and to their behavior in the world.**

- In a foreign language class, discuss how the driving laws and student work regulations differ among the states and among other countries.

**SS Standard 5, Key Idea 1: PI 4 - Elementary; PI 4 - Intermediate; PI 3 - Commencement**

- Students address the needs of a student with disabilities on their team. Teammates modify the group activity to allow the student with disabilities to achieve a level of success in a volleyball unit. Students assist by moving the serving line forward for the disabled student so that s/he is able to successfully serve the volleyball over the net.

**PE Standard 2: Intermediate: work constructively with others to accomplish a goal in a group activity demonstrating consideration for others involved**

- Investigate recycling practices in your school and/or community. Describe the extent to which the recycling laws are followed, and provide solutions to strengthen recycling practices in your area.

**MST Standard 4 Living Environment, Key Idea 7: PI 7.1 - Elementary; Standard 5, Key Idea 6: PI Elementary; Key Idea 7: PI 2 - Elementary**

- Investigate what your local government is doing to conserve energy. Develop a law or policy on energy conservation to share with the school and/or community, along with solutions to ensure compliance.

**MST Standard 4 Physical Setting, Key Idea 4: PI 4.5 - Intermediate**

- Investigate various forms of energy conversion that support recycling, high efficiency, and sustainability. Discuss the financial, social, and ethical responsibilities society has in implementing such endeavors. What laws, sanctions, or taxes are in place to support these “green” energy technologies?  
**MST Standard 4 Physical Setting, Key Idea 5: PI 1 & 3 - Commencement**
- Select a state, regional, national, or international environmental problem or issue. Propose several alternative solutions. Assess the ethical implications as well as the comparative costs and benefits for each alternative approach to resolving the problem or issue. Defend the solution.  
**MST Standard 7, Key Idea 2: All PI's-Commencement**  
**SS Standard 5, Key Idea 4: PI 3 - Elementary; PI 3 - Intermediate; PI 3 - 5 - Commencement**
- Using data from the [Washington State Department of Ecology](#), have students collect data concerning the amount of their weekly family garbage. Graph the data and make predictions of future recycling activities and future solutions.  
**MST Standard 3 (Revised 2005): 4.S.1, 4.S.2, 4.S.3, 4.S.4, 4.S.5, 4.S.6 or 5.S.1, 5.S.2, 5.S.3, 5.S.4**
- After reading a piece of literature, students will use various written forms to demonstrate ways that characters exhibit civic values (for example, self-discipline, due process, equality, and respect for self, others and property).  
**ELA Standard 2, Grade 6 Writing: Respond to literature, connecting the response to personal experience**  
**ELA Standard 2, Grade 11 Writing: Write original literary texts to create social, historical, and/or cultural context**
- Describe worker characteristics that contribute to the success of the individual/group in a variety of work environments. Identify worker behaviors and characteristics which contribute to the success of the individual and/or group in home, school, work, and community settings. Explain how a variety of cooperative behaviors in the work environment may be needed to enable all persons to be productive and to demonstrate their capabilities.  
**CDOS Standard 1, Key Idea 1: Intermediate**  
**FACS Standard 2, Key Idea 1: Intermediate; Standard 3, Key Idea 1: Intermediate**  
**MST Standard 7, Key Idea 2: PI - All levels**
- Discuss the concept of helping others. Students role-play a variety of helping situations.  
**CDOS Standard 1, Key Idea 1: Elementary; Standard 3a (Interpersonal Skills): Elementary**
- Discuss the concept that everyone can contribute to improving their world: home, school, workplace, community. Identify things that students can change and

things they cannot change. Create a workplan, with specific goals, to accomplish an improvement from the “can change” list.

**CDOS Standard 2, Key Idea 1: Elementary; Standard 3a (Personal Qualities): Elementary**

**FACS Standard 2, Key Idea 1: Elementary**

- Students engage in a community service or service learning project, such as making soup for the local soup kitchen, and learn about the policies, people, and jobs involved. A community soup kitchen representative guides and facilitates the connection between community needs and the soup kitchen’s services.

**CDOS Standard 1, Key Idea 1: Intermediate; Standard 2, Key Idea 1:**

**Intermediate; Standard 3a (Interpersonal Skills): Intermediate**

**FACS Standard 3, Key Idea 1: Intermediate**

- Students who are members of one of the Career and Technical Education Student Leadership Organizations (CTSO’s), such as DECA – An Association of Marketing Students, Future Business Leaders of American (FBLA), Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), New York Association of FFA, New York State Technology Student Association (NYSTSA), and Skills USA, may use a program of selected activities (known as the Student Plan) with the assistance and approval of the chapter adviser to meet the objectives for Participation in Government, thereby demonstrating civic responsibility.

**CDOS Standard 1, Key Idea 1: Commencement; Standard 2, Key Idea 1:**

**Commencement**

---

**Create learning experiences that connect the study of cultures with the legal foundations of citizens’ rights and responsibilities as practiced in the United States and in other countries.**

- Research laws related to environmental conservation and/or pollution control in other cultures. Describe the effects of these laws on such cultures. Suggest additional laws or policies that respect that cultural traditions and customs.

**MST Standard 4 Living Environment, Key Idea 7: PI 7.3 - Commencement**

- Compare and graph the growth rate of the US and China, using several available web sites on world population. Compare data to determine if China’s one child per family rule has had an effect. Is this correlation or causation? Predict future trends.

**MST Standard 3 (Revised 2005): A.S.1, A.S.3, A.S.7, A.S.8, A.S.12, A.S.13, A.S.14, A.S.15, A.S.17**

- Gather and interpret data on the number and percentages of eligible voters in various countries around the world.

*SS Standard 4, Key Idea 2: PI 1 & PI 4 - Commencement*  
*SS Standard 5, Key Idea 3: PI 1 - Commencement*

- Explain how an important event or development from world history can be viewed from multiple perspectives, noting how different values, motives, beliefs, frames of reference, and perspectives influence solutions to problems or issues.  
*SS Standard 2, Key Idea 1: PI 2 - Elementary; PI 1 - Intermediate; PI 5 - Commencement*
- Write a short story, poem, or non-fiction account about a citizen's first time voting in an election in the United States or in another country.  
*ELA Standard 4, Grade 4 Writing: Develop a personal voice that enables the reader to get to know the writer*  
*ELA Standard 4, Grade 10 Writing: Respect the age, gender, social position, and cultural traditions of the recipient*
- Demonstrate an appreciation for diverse perspectives, needs, and characteristics of individuals and families. Identify support groups, agencies, and organizations that assist families in carrying out basic functions.  
*CDOS Standard 3a (Systems): Intermediate*  
*FACS Standard 2, Key Idea 1: Intermediate; Standard 3, Key Idea 1: Intermediate*
- Analyze the impact of participation in a local, state, national, or global community activity. Identify community goals, resources, and systems of support available to individuals and families. Analyze the reciprocal nature of individual participation in community activities.  
*CDOS Standard 3a (Systems): Intermediate*  
*FACS Standard 2, Key Idea 1: Intermediate; Standard 3, Key Idea 1: Intermediate*

---

**Collaborate with other teachers and/or library media specialists to develop a cross-content civics education section for your school library.**

- Encourage the participation of teachers from all subject areas, as well as students and parents.
- Purchase books, electronic media, and other resources – with a special emphasis on materials for group projects or class activities.
- Keep the library open for students before and after normal school hours and create a dedicated work space for students to conduct civics activities.

- Take the Gale "Issues and Controversies" database or the Congressional Quarterly "Researcher" database or select authoritative web sites with opposing viewpoints on topical or local issues. Have teams of students read, discuss, and debate these issues from alternate points of view. Have student judges award points based on a teacher developed rubric for quality of argument.
- In a middle school class, contrast the study of past immigration patterns and issues with current immigration issues and how they relate to language.
- Introduce a cross-curricular research project that requires students to learn and report about local historical figures.  
*ELA Standard 1, Grade 12 Reading: Analyze and synthesize information from different sources, making connections and showing relationships to other texts, ideas, and subjects and to the world at large*  
*ELA Standard 1 Grade 7 Writing: Use several sources of information, in addition to an encyclopedia, to develop research reports*
- Examine how communities are systems with interconnected components. Compare a community with your school.  
*MST Standard 6, Key Idea 1: PI 1.1 & 1.2 - Elementary*
- Compare and graph the growth rate of several regions in the United States and in other countries, using several available web sites on world population. Are there geographic trends? Contribute this information to a interdisciplinary world cultures project located in the school library. (Appropriate for grades 4–12 with different levels of complexity)

---

**Connect the NYS Learning Standards to educational standards in other areas, such as in school library services.**

- The American Association of School Librarians published *Standards for the 21st Century Learner*, available at <http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/learningstandards/standards.cfm>.

A Common Belief articulated in these standards is that “Ethical behavior in the use of information must be taught” (In this increasingly global world of information, students must be taught to seek diverse perspectives, gather and use information ethically, and use social tools responsibly and safely.)

*MST Standard 2, Key Idea 2: PI 2.3 - Commencement*

A sample Standard is listed below:

Standard 3

**Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society.**

3.1 Skill 3.1.6 Use information and technology ethically and responsibly.

3.2 Disposition in Action 3.2.2 Show social responsibility by participating actively with others in learning situations and by contributing questions and ideas during group discussions.

3.3 Responsibility 3.3.6 Use information and knowledge in the service of democratic values.

3.4 Self-Assessment Strategy 3.4.3 Assess own ability to work with others in a group setting by evaluating varied roles, leadership, and demonstrations of respect for other viewpoints

[New York State Education Department](#)

Civics Education Toolkit

Strategies for Use

© 2008 NYSED