

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT Board Policy

BP 6143.1

Instruction

Civics Instruction --College, Career and Community Readiness

The goal of the Oakland Unified School District is to prepare ***all*** of our students for college, career and community success. The Board believes that a five-year plan for the expansion of civic learning opportunities in the District should be developed and implemented for the following policy reasons:

- * The success of our Nation, State and City depends on educated, informed and engaged community members;
- * Public support for democracy has been in steady decline and tolerance for autocratic alternatives is rising in the United States and around the world.
- * There has never been a better – or more crucial time – to revitalize civic learning in our schools;
- * Black, Latino and poor students, when compared to White, middle-class students, perform significantly worse on the National Assessment of Educational Progress' (NAEP) test of civic knowledge starting in 4th grade and up through 12th grade;
- * The education system has a major role in ensuring students have equitable access to learning to participate in our democracy. Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) recognizes the necessity of investing in the reduction and ultimate removal of inequitable outcomes. Revitalizing civic learning opportunities in an equitable manner can contribute to meeting these goals;
- * We have much to gain by revitalizing civic learning. In addition to the chief benefits of a vibrant and informed civic life and democracy, high quality civic learning also helps teach children the skills they need for the 21st century workplace, such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, initiative, and innovation. In addition, it can improve school climate and safety, lower schools' dropout rates and promote academic achievement, including in Common Core State Standards;
- * We have data from our 2014 Oakland seniors that shows that students who have done action projects in their schools and communities report that they make important decisions, engage in challenging tasks, and find school work interesting at twice the rate of students who do not have the chance to do action projects.
- * We know how to improve civic outcomes for students. There are many proven practices that directly improve the quality and effectiveness of civic learning in schools,

including civic action projects; digital literacy and engagement; classroom instruction in government, history, law and democracy; discussion of current events; service-learning; extra-curricular or co-curricular activities; student voice in school governance; and simulations of democratic processes;

* Curricular resources are increasingly available to assist schools and teachers with revitalizing civic learning;

The District shall become a Civic Learning Partnership School District. The Superintendent and staff shall conduct extensive data collection on the current state of civic learning in Oakland Unified by including a bank of items on the California Healthy Kids Survey, or similar survey tool, and gathering qualitative data on the lived experiences of students and teachers. Based on the results of this data collection, the Superintendent, staff, students, parents, and guardians shall work together to create a five-year plan for increasing civic learning opportunities for students with special attention given to those demographic groups that are underserved and less resourced. Adequate time and resources will be planned for and prioritized to achieve the goals outlined in this five-year plan. The Superintendent/Staff will update the Board of Education with students' civic learning progress at least twice per school year. Together, the Board, Superintendent, staff, and community members will make Oakland's civic engagement program a national model that equitably prepares all students to graduate college, career, and community ready.

4/26/17