Title: Civic Action Project

Level: High School

Overview: This final project will be the culmination of their work. Students will select one issue that they believe to be the most important or interesting, and they will try to solve the problem or at least move it in the right direction. First, they will turn their issue into a question: “Should the school board prohibit cell phones?” or “Should the city recreation center receive more funding?” or “Should the school board make it mandatory for high school seniors to do two weeks of community service to graduate?” The students will research their topic, and then try to change local policy. They can do this in any form they wish. They can write a letter to a senator, go to a school board meeting and make a proposal, launch a campaign at their school, etc. They need to document all of their work and the final project will be a portfolio of their work.

Length: 3-5 days

Standard: 4.1 Research, formulate positions, and engage in appropriate civic participation to address local, state, and national issues or policies

Evidence outcome: 4.1a Engage ethically in civic activities including discussing current issues, advocating for their rights and the rights of others, practicing their responsibilities, influencing governmental actions, and other community service learning activities. d. Identify which level of government is appropriate for various policies and demonstrate an ability to appropriate engage with that level of government

Activities:

1. Final brain storm as a class
2. In pairs or as individuals, select the one issue they find the most interesting or important and put it into a question form.
3. Create a notebook, folder, or portfolio organizer to keep all of their work.
4. Research their issue (1-2 pages, see attached format).
5. Create an action plan.
6. Implement their plan.
7. Reflection
8. Share their work as a portfolio to the class

KEY WORDS: final assessment on local government, civic actions.
Part 1: Research

Name:

Assignment: In a two to three page research paper, collect as much information as possible about your topic. Please list your sources at the end of your paper in proper MLA format.

Part I: Answer the 5 W’s:
Who?
What?
When?
Where?
Why?
How?

Part II: Collect data about your issue in other areas including at the federal, state, local and community level.

Part III: As you look over your research and you start to think about your action project, do you see yourself...
- Eliminating existing policy?
- Modifying existing policy?
- Creating a new policy?
- Relating to issues of enforcing your policy?
- Or using policy to leverage change?

Part IV: Include a bibliography in MLA formation (dianahacker.com/resdoc).

Part 2: Civic Action Proposal

Name:
1. What problem, issue, or policy do you propose to work on?

2. Describe the problem and its effects on people:

3. How is the problem or issue related to policy?

4. Why do you want to work on this? Why do you think it is important?

5. What are the first few things you would do?
Problem: Safety in Schools
Project: Write a letter to the school board and attend a school board meeting to propose that Silver Creek High School be a closed campus. Bring in restaurants to the cafeteria. The goal is to help build a community, to prevent dangerous accidents on the road by teens, and increase attendance.

Problem: Spay and Neuter dogs/cats
Project: I wrote a letter to our senators and representatives to encourage them to create a law that enforces spaying and neutering in shelters.

Problem: Bullying
Project: To stop bullying and inform people on the consequences of bullying, we interviewed students and staff about bullying at Silver Creek High School. We created an anti-bullying campaign through posters and a Power point presentation.

Problem: Homeless Children in Longmont
Project: We went to the OUR Center and conducted a series of interviews. We then took classes on how to volunteer. We also created posters around the school to inform students about the OUR Center. We are committed to volunteering two hours a week for the 2010-2011 school year.

Problem: Animal Welfare
Project: We created a school wide fundraiser to gather money for the non-profit organization, Longmont Humane Society.

Problem: Childhood Obesity
Project: We created a presentation for middle school students and build a school garden at Westview Middle School.

Problem: Lack of Awareness about Undocumented Immigrants
Project: We raised awareness about the DREAM Act through presentations and flyers. We asked students to sign a petition. We hope to volunteer for the campaign.
Civic Actions

These are all actions people do as civically engaged residents. They will help you to have a more successful project.

- **Finding out more about the problem:**
  - Examples of civic actions: reading articles, studying resources on the Internet, talking to people who might know something about it. Learning about people/agencies/organizations that share your concern. Learning what, if anything, is already being done. Finding out whom or what agencies make decisions related to the problem, issue, policy. Your first step should be doing research to learn as much as you can about the problem, issue, or policy you want to address.

- **Developing your strategy for addressing the problem.**
  - Examples of civic actions: determining what your goal is—what do you think should happen? Deciding what you need to ask for and who you need to ask.

- **Contacting people/agencies that could address the situation.**
  - Examples of civic actions: Calling, writing, e-mailing, visiting the people who might be able to solve the problem.

- **Making other people aware of your concerns.**
  - Examples of civic actions: Talking to people to get them to support your position, creating a poster/flyer campaign to raise awareness, using the Internet (blog, web page, posting your own writing/video/photos) to raise awareness and build a constituency.

- **Becoming involved in the efforts of others to address the problem.**
  - Join another group already in existence to help them address your concerns. This is often the most successful way to make a difference.

- **Trying to get the problem on the agendas of different groups.**
  - Examples of civic actions--Bring the problem to the attention of a neighborhood council, city council, school board. Or to an appropriate agency like the Better Business Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Department of Housing. Or to an advocacy group that might be interested in your issue (such as groups that are concerned about the environment, health, safety, education, children’s issues, etc). Remember: Doing the research to find out what agencies and groups might help you is a civic action.

- **Taking political action.**
  - Examples of civic actions: Lobbying, petitioning, testifying at hearings and other public meetings, working to get something on a ballot, voting, etc.
Directions: Complete the following Action Record.

1. What is the problem, issue, or policy you are working on?

2. Describe your Civic Action. Be as specific as possible.

3. What knowledge, skills, or attitudes or effective citizenship did you use or did you gain through doing this civic action?


5. What worked for you? What did you accomplish?

7. What is the purpose of this action? What do you hope to achieve through this? Why?

8. Attach evidence of your action! Include copies of emails, correspondence, and phone log, pictures of you at a meeting or event, etc.
Part 4 Action Project Final Thoughts

Name:

Effective citizens work toward solving problems and addressing issues. As individuals, they may or may not achieve their long term goals. However, their efforts often pay off by making others aware of the situation, by building constituencies who will move the cause further, or by inspiring others to be more engaged.

You have worked to address a problem or issue and have examined the role that policy places in this. Now, take your time and respond to the following questions thoughtfully. This "reflection" will play an important part of your assessment grade. You can use your portfolio as you answer these questions if you need further evidence or ideas.

1. What did you learn about your particular issue? Include relevant, recent facts, communication, laws, policies, etc.

2. How did you try to impact this problem/issue/policy? Summarize your civic actions and include implications.

3. What impact did you make? Remember, this could be large or small.

4. What knowledge or skills did you gain through this experience? Do you feel like you developed a different attitude about being an effective, engaged citizen?

5. Do you feel like you have "succeeded" in your mission? Why or why not? Do you see yourself working on this issue after the project continues? What recommendation would you make to the next person who chose to work on this issue?

Any other comments you would like to share.
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<th>Assessment Rubric</th>
<th>Advanced (10)</th>
<th>Proficient (8)</th>
<th>Partially Proficient (7)</th>
<th>In Progress (6)</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
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<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>Portfolio demonstrates an advanced level of content understanding. All bodies of evidence are complete, accurate, reflective, and are of high quality. They go beyond fact listing to synthesis and analysis. The research is fully thought out, complete and includes and in-depth analysis of the issue. Actions were well thought out and professional. Included accurate, detailed and relevant evidence. Required engagement in community.</td>
<td>Portfolio demonstrates a proficient level of content understanding. All bodies of evidence are complete, and accurate. They go beyond fact listing to synthesis and analysis. The research is fully thought out, and complete. Analysis provides an accurate description of the issue. Actions were well thought out and professional. Included some relevant and specific evidence. Required engagement in community.</td>
<td>Portfolio demonstrates a partially proficient level of content understanding. Some evidence may be incomplete, inaccurate. Bodies of evidence do not go beyond a restatement of facts. The research is complete but analysis provides a vague description of the issue. Actions were vague and lacked specific evidence. Required engagement in community.</td>
<td>Portfolio demonstrates a low level of content understanding. Some evidence may be incomplete, inaccurate. Bodies of evidence do not go beyond a restatement of facts. The research is complete but analysis provides a vague description of the issue. Actions were in the beginning stages. Lacked engagement in community.</td>
<td>Portfolio demonstrates a lack of understanding of content material. Some standards are missing bodies of evidence. Many pieces of evidence are incomplete, and/or inaccurate. Evidence that is available does not go beyond a restatement of facts. The research is missing and/or incomplete. Actions did not meet the requirements.</td>
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