



Social Science &  
Civic Engagement

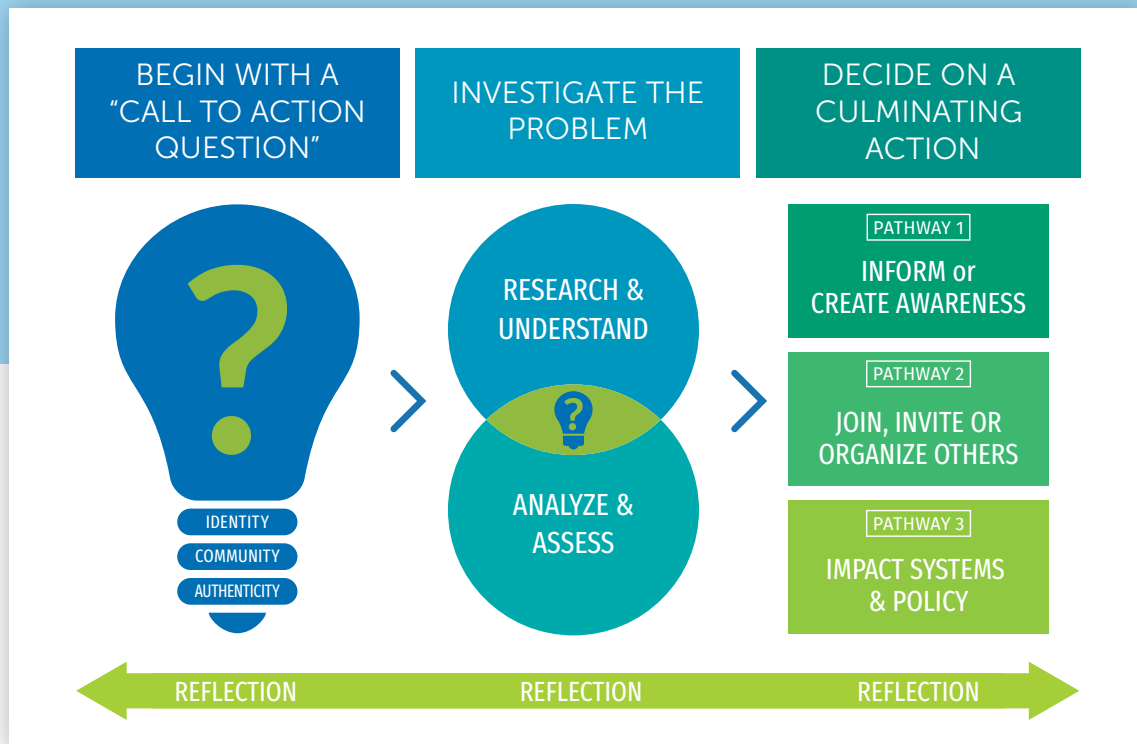


EDUCATING FOR  
DEMOCRACY

## Chicago Public Schools

# INQUIRY TO ACTION FRAMEWORK

A guide for implementing service learning  
projects within course content



# Introduction

Chicago Public Schools and our incredible service learning partner community have championed service learning, and committed to ensuring all students have access to these important civic experiences, for almost 20 years.

In 2016, CPS changed its Service Learning graduation policy from requiring 40 service learning hours to 2 service learning projects - one in their civic course, and another in a different content area. In 2018, we began work with our service learning community to strengthen our vision for what quality service learning looks like in CPS. We learned from our scholar community about evidence-based practices, and we listened to our teachers and partners about the opportunities and challenges they face in leading powerful, student-led service learning projects across all content areas and grade levels. The outcome of this collaborative initiative is a new framework, CPS Inquiry to Action, and a new vision and infrastructure for implementing community-based, student-led civic projects in every content area, grades K-12.

This plan is strategically designed to meet the district's 5-year vision and was deeply informed by the CPS Equity Framework. Preparing all students for Civic Life is core to the CPS mission, and the Inquiry To Action initiative will help every teacher, in every content area K-12, to realize their role in preparing every student to be informed, powerful, and engaged members of society.

It is our intention to ensure that:

- every student engages in at least one Inquiry to Action Project every year throughout their K-12 experience in CPS;
- civic-oriented classroom projects are part of the curriculum, included as a core learning strategy that deepens learning and build mastery, and draws on students' lived experiences.
- teachers, schools, and community partners have the support they need to collaborate on relevant and authentic learning experiences for their students;
- all stakeholders invested in service learning, civic action, and project-based learning find a pathway to partnering with Chicago youth in classrooms to improve our schools, communities, and our world

We are thrilled to be a part of this powerful community and look forward to these next steps in advancing our shared commitment to civic life in CPS. Our deepest thanks to our partners at the McCormick Foundation and the Civic Engagement Research Group (CERG) for their support, advocacy, and northstar championing of civic education.

**Heather Van Benthuisen**, Director

**Alejandra Frausto**, Project Based Learning Manager

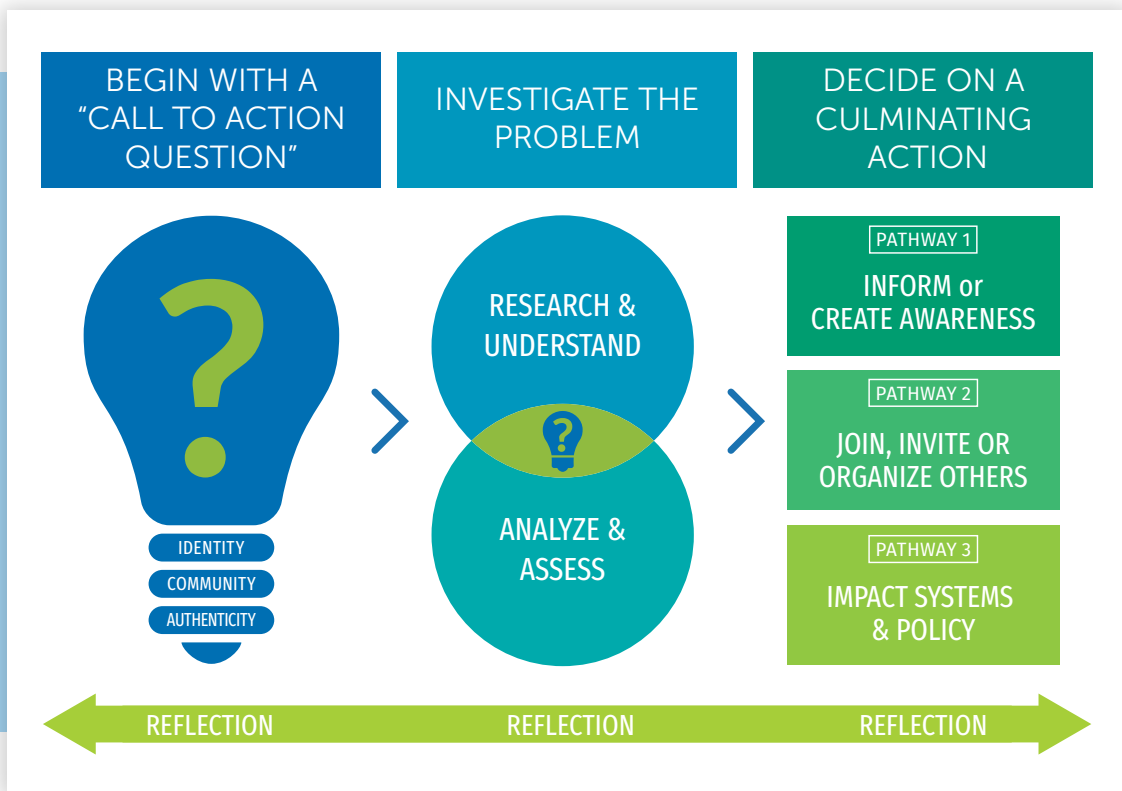
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# What is the CPS Inquiry to Action Framework?

The Inquiry to Action (IA) framework draws on existing frameworks and resources in the fields of project-based learning, action research, youth participatory action research, and civic learning. The framework helps provide teachers and school leaders with key ideas, considerations and resources to successfully facilitate the various elements of the Inquiry to Action project cycle with students. The Inquiry to Action framework pictured here is not a curriculum or a set of lessons. IA projects are shaped by the teacher, the content, and students together.



# INQUIRY TO ACTION FRAMEWORK

When students engage in Inquiry to Action (IA) projects as part of their core curriculum, these experiential learning opportunities position students to apply and localize course knowledge and skills while nurturing student agency to impact their lives, communities, real-world processes, systems, and policy-making.



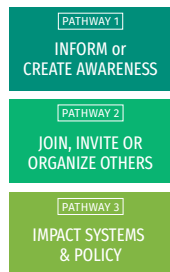
## BEGIN WITH A CALL TO ACTION QUESTION

The Call to Action question (CAQ) serves as a focus for the inquiry, the scope of the project, and the students' investigations. The CAQ helps the teacher focus the scope of research and instruction, guide planning, and reframe standards, content, and skills in ways that are accessible to the students. CAQs also capture and communicate the purpose and relevance of the project.



## INVESTIGATE THE PROBLEM

Throughout the investigation process students are asking questions, investigating the answers to those questions, assessing their learning, conducting action research within their school and community, analyzing and assessing their findings, communicating their conclusions, discussing and deliberating, narrowing their thinking, and ultimately deciding on taking action.



## DECIDING ON A CULMINATING ACTION

Taking action is critical to cultivate students' capacities as civic actors. The three pathways provide options and support for students to apply what they have learned and engage in meaningful ways to solve the problem they are investigating. Taking action also enables students to see how their voices and actions can make a difference on real-world problems.



## CONTINUOUS REFLECTION

Reflection throughout creates opportunities for self-awareness, supports critical thinking, and sustains active student engagement.

## Persistent challenges and perceived barriers to classroom projects

Over the last several years we have learned a great deal from CPS educators about their innovations in service learning, as well as some of the barriers to including student-led

projects as a core practice within their curriculum. The new Inquiry to Action Framework was designed to address these challenges as well as scale and reframe service learning as inquiry-based and justice-focused. The IA framework was also designed to support teachers, students, and at times partners collaborating on classroom projects. Below are the most prevalent challenges we've identified, and how the IA framework aims to address them.

PERSISTENT CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS THROUGH THE IA FRAMEWORK
<b>Personal or Instructional Shifts:</b> Classroom-based inquiry learning and/or civic action is a new pedagogy for many teachers across all content areas. Also, many teachers have not experienced such projects or civic actions as learners themselves.	IA projects are a core part of the new CPS Civic Life initiative that will provide PD, grants, instructional resources, training, events, and access to partners to support this instructional shift across content areas. This will enable teachers to have protected time and space to develop civic knowledge, skills, and habits as individuals and as educators.
<b>Time, Rigor, and Relevance.</b> There are concerns that projects take too much time, they don't fit into course content standards, and that the learning outcomes are only dispositional and not skill or content based. This thinking makes projects a nice-to-have experience rather than a core instructional practice, leading to inequitable access for students.	IA projects are a core component of the curriculum and enable students to apply what they have learned in class to relevant, real world issues in order to deepen their disciplinary understandings. Student learning is deepened as they build mastery of standards by applying learning authentically throughout the year through social political contexts relevant to their lives. IA projects can be as short as one week, extend throughout the year, be interdisciplinary, or intersect across grade levels
<b>Research is at the surface, and inauthentic.</b> Projects can move too quickly through research, and not delve deeply enough into problematizing, perspective-taking, and root cause analysis. Students can learn about issues in a project, but the learning can be disconnected from students' lived experience.	In IA projects, students engage in a process of researching an issue in depth, analyzing and assessing information, and reflecting throughout on their deepening understanding. Students work to understand the context, complexities, multiple perspectives, and systemic implications of an issue. They meet with stakeholders, conduct interviews and focus groups, and collaborate with peers, school staff and community.
<b>Partner Collaboration, Management, and Instructional Alignment.</b> Bringing partners and community stakeholders into the classroom is a lot to manage, and sometimes it can be difficult to align learning to course content. Sometimes partners come to the classroom with a plan or process already developed, leaving little room for flexibility in meeting class standards or learning objectives.	IA projects are designed to position all stakeholders as partners in a collaborative inquiry in which students, teacher, and partners each bring their own expertise and perspective to the project. The Call To Action Question catalyzes everyone around a complex problem that impacts students, their families, and their community - and launches collaborative inquiry and action.
<b>Teacher-Driven.</b> Facilitating projects as student-driven inquiries is challenging, especially in classes of 30 students or more with a fixed amount of time available in a school year. Not only is this a shift for some teachers but also for teams and administrators.	Student-driven learning is at the heart of the IA framework and positions youth and adults as co-learners in a complex problem. In IA projects, students' knowledge, lived experience, and relationships are assets and equally valuable to academic research. Students are positioned as researchers empowered to investigate and act for their own communities.

## What does research tell us about Inquiry to Action projects?

We see from a range of studies that there is a positive relationship between project-based learning and students' cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal outcomes (Condliffe, 2017). For example, research has shown that project-based learning can improve student attendance, feelings of self-reliance, and attitudes toward learning (Thomas, 2000). In addition, studies have found gains on standardized tests when related content has been taught via project-based units of learning (Finkelstein et al, 2011; Geier, et al, 2008; Marx, et al, 2004).

Studies also show that opportunities for students to be involved in a project to improve their school or community have been linked to a number of positive outcomes such as:

1. The development of social trust or "faith in people",
2. Respectful engagement,
3. The development of collaborative action/engagement skills,
4. Opportunities for youth agency,
5. Social relatedness, and
6. Political-moral understanding (Youniss & Yates, 1997).

However, unfortunately, national studies find that youth receive inadequate exposure to desired civic learning opportunities and that this exposure often differs by

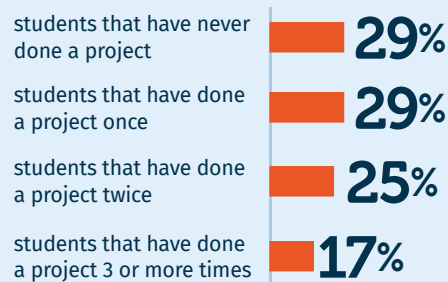
students' race and family income. For example, students in high socioeconomic status classrooms are twice as likely as low-income students to report participating in service learning projects (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). This is why it will be key that all students in CPS have ongoing opportunities to engage in IA projects. And that these projects support students to engage in a rigorous understanding of issues as well possible solutions. Recent research with young adults has found that community service in high school was positively related to civic engagement later in life only when young people's learning included "possible causes of and solutions to social problems" that they were addressing (Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge, 2013).

## In CPS, Inquiry to Action Projects are Not Accessible to All Students

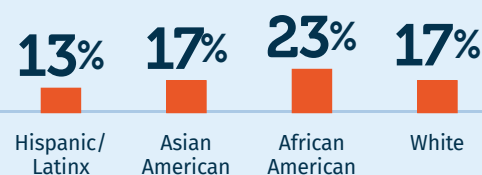
Based on responses from 8th through 12th graders in Chicago Public Schools on the 2017-2018 5Essentials survey, 29% of students reported they had never done a project to improve their school or community. Another 29% reported having done a project once, 25% reported having done a project twice, and only 17% reported having done a project three or more times. We also found that on average, White, Asian, and African-American students reported having more school-based civic learning experiences and digital civic learning opportunities than did Latinx students. For example, 13% of Hispanic/Latinx students strongly agreed that, "I have been involved in a project to improve my school or community," compared to 17% of Asian American students, 23% of African American students, and 17% of White students.

In addition, we found that students in selective enrollment schools report slightly more civic learning experiences than students in other schools. At the same time, students in schools with IB programs tended to report fewer civic and digital civic learning opportunities than did other students. Therefore, it is critical to think about how these opportunities can be offered more frequently and more equitably to all students in CPS regardless of demographic background, school type, and program.

### PROJECTS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY



### INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECTS



# Inquiry to Action Projects across all content areas, in all grade levels, for culturally responsive instruction

It is important that all content is meaningful and authentic for students. Inquiry to Action projects help all courses ensure learning is culturally relevant and meets standards as there are many important topics and concepts that students explore that have social, political, and environmental implications. Here are a few content area standards that illustrate the fundamental connections between Inquiry to Action projects and a variety of subject areas.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- Conducting research and drawing evidence from research for an investigation provides evidence of the Research to Build and Present Knowledge Anchor Standard, (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7)
- Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4)

## SCIENCE

- Gather and make sense of information to describe that synthetic materials come from natural resources and impact society. (MS-PS1-3)
- Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environment. (5-ESS3-1)

## SOCIAL SCIENCE

- Create essential questions to help guide inquiry about a topic. (SS.IS.1.6-8)
- Use interdisciplinary lenses to analyze the causes and effects of and identify solutions to local, regional, or global concerns. (SS.IS.8.9-12)
- Use listening, consensus building, and voting procedures to decide on and take action in their classroom. (SS.IS.6.K-2)

## MATHEMATICS

- Evaluate reports based on data. (CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.IC.B.6)
- Analyze decisions and strategies using probability concepts (e.g., product testing, medical testing, pulling a hockey goalie at the end of a game). (CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.MD.B.7)

**“** *By completing this project, what I learned about myself, civic engagement, and civic power is that everyone, regardless of age, race, gender, location, etc. can have a beneficial political impact on their community... I collected data and researched problems that exist in voting and elections before finally taking action after coming up with a plan of my own. I discovered how and why some people vote or don't vote, and how to convince those who do not vote to vote. I brainstormed ideas for impacting people's understanding of elections. I had conversations with eligible voters about their personal voting experiences. I determined, through research, the most significant voting disparities. ..The most notable aspect of this project to take away is knowing that I made a useful contribution to my community and people around me by taking action.”*

—P. Taylor, 10th grade CPS student

# THE CPS **INQUIRY TO ACTION** FRAMEWORK

— AN IA PROJECT STARTS WITH A SEED —

## BEGIN WITH A “CALL TO ACTION QUESTION”

*The key to a successful inquiry project is a strong, relevant question*

- The “Call to Action” question bridges course content and skills within a unit of study to a relevant social political issue.
- Questions should be open, intriguing, and address an authentic concern relevant to the discipline and to students’ lives or community.
- The question prompts research into a complex problem that requires the analysis and synthesis of multiple sources of information and varied perspectives.



## What is a Call to Action Question, CAQ?

At the heart of every good IA project is an effective question that sparks inquiry. Call to Action questions, CAQs, serve as a launch pad or seed for the student inquiry and establish a bridge between the course content students are learning and the students’ lived experiences, identities, and communities.

In any inquiry project, the CAQ guides both the teacher and the student. Family, community members, and partners can also be engaged through the [designing of a Community CAQ](#). The question might be provided to students in the curriculum by the teacher and refined over time with students. Or, a CAQ might be developed by the students as a learning experience that asks students to make connections with content they learned in the unit and an issue impacting their lives today.

The CAQ serves as a focus for the inquiry, the scope of the project, and the students’ investigations. When engaging students in an inquiry project, the CAQ helps the teacher focus the scope of research and instruction, guide planning, and reframe standards, content, and skills in ways that are accessible to the students. CAQs also capture and communicate the purpose and relevance of the project.

Throughout the scope of the inquiry, students use the question as a guide post to always return to. It also provides the “why” in the question, “why are we learning this?”.

Ultimately, the CAQ is for the student. The question is meant to create interest and present a challenge and invites youth to tackle a pervasive issue that impacts our communities. Youth perspective and expertise are assets and should always be a part of our society’s aspirations for the common good - we are stronger with them at the table.



## The Characteristics of Effective Call To Action Questions:

<b>Open-ended:</b>	The question is complex, allowing students to narrow over time and develop more than one reasonable answer.
<b>Connected to students' identities and community:</b>	The question should point to a problem that can be found amongst their peers or family, in their school, or in their neighborhood or city. In other words, young people can make contact with other individuals or groups that are impacted by or are actively working on this problem.
<b>Rooted in the real world:</b>	The question is authentic to time and place. The CAQ prompts students to engage meaningfully with other people in their school, community, or city.
<b>Extends and Deepens Learning:</b>	The CAQ is clearly connected to the enduring understandings, content, skills, and objectives of the unit/course. The CAQ helps students to apply what they learned in class in a new, meaningful way - enabling deeper learning.
<b>Investigative and Probing:</b>	The question will prompt students to learn NEW information that cannot be learned by simply looking it up in a book or on a website.

## Strategies for Writing a Call To Action Question:

- Problematize the unit's enduring understandings and skills by identifying the relevant social or political topics. Or, contextualize the skills/enduring understandings in a problem relevant to students' lives.
- Focus on Action - Use powerful action verbs (e.g., the difference between "tell" and "convince").
- Consider the role of the learner in the driving question and make sure it is Chicago student-facing (e.g., "How do we...").
- Keep the question simple - don't overload with content and learning goals. The students should be investigating a problem, not answering a question that is seeking a specific answer.
- Know that the question will change over time, and students will/should refine and narrow as they investigate.
- Make sure the question is neither too narrow, which limits the investigation, nor too broad as then it's hard to know where to start.

 **TOO NARROW:**

Can we end single-use plastics in our school?

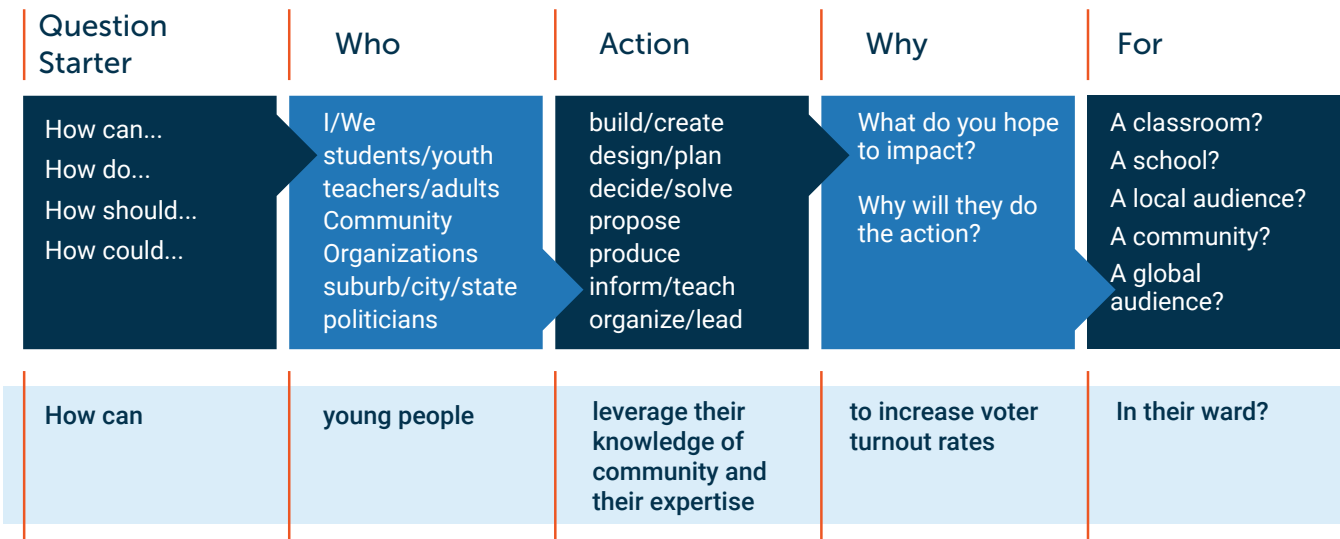
 **TOO BROAD:**

How can we stop climate change?

 **CAQ:**

Is our school green?  
or How can our school be more environmentally proactive?

# Possible Components of a Call to Action Question



This was drawn from the Buck Institute for Education's Driving Question Tubric which can be found [here](#).

## Evaluating a Call to Action Question:

- Is it open-ended, allowing for multiple answers that are reachable by my students? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does it align to the unit's enduring understandings, content, or skills? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does it require students to investigate a problem? Will students act as problem solvers? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does it connect to students' identities, lived experiences, or communities? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is it authentic in time and space? \_\_\_\_\_

### LOOKS LIKE EXAMPLES:

**Social Science Example** = After a 7th grade class completed their unit on the US Constitution, engaged in learning about elections and voting. They learned about the issues that are most pressing in the current election, the candidates running for specific offices, the jobs that those offices are responsible for, the voting process, and the barriers to voting throughout history. The teacher decided to do a IA project w/ the Call to Action prompt:

How can Chicago's Youth increase voter turnout?

**Science Example** = A Chemistry class was engaged in a unit on lead and its impact on water and soil quality. The students learned about lead, its effects on the human body, and the ways in which it can infiltrate our soil and water. The teacher decided to do a IA project using the Call to Action question:

How safe is Chicago's soil and water?

# Engaging Students in the Call to Action Question

Before starting the investigation, it is important that students have had some engagement with the issue or topic while unpacking the CAQ. This will support the beginning of students' inquiry, as well as provide initial background knowledge and vocabulary needed for students to confidently move forward on their own.

Whether students construct the CAQ or are presented with options they can choose from, engaging students in the CAQ is more than simply presenting it to them. Before moving into the investigation, it is critical that students engage in the question and the issue(s) addressed in the question. This can be done by designing learning experiences that facilitate students' unpacking of the CAQ through exploring identity, making connections, exploring community knowledge and identifying intersecting issues and questions. Consider incorporating some of the following into the project depending on what will work best in your context.

## Provide Relevant Background

- Teachers are encouraged to curate information or research on the issue to build student background knowledge so they are more prepared to lead their own inquiry and to increase reading comprehension.

## Explore Identity & Making Connections

- Spend time having students share or write about ways this topic might connect to their own lives or those in their community. Be prepared to give examples if the issue is far removed from their current knowledge.
- Utilize tools like the [Ecological Model](#) to help students consider the varied contexts, individuals, and groups that are connected to the issue.
- Utilize role-playing, such as a [Pair or Group Sculpt](#) activity to allow students to collaborate, present and make connections visually or symbolically.
- Consider how to explore identity progressively. For instance, after [building awareness of self](#), students should expand their social awareness and consider how community and culture impact self and others.
- Spend time having students collaborate, share and process using classroom [graffiti boards](#), a [Big Paper activity](#) or virtual google jam boards.

## Explore Community & Community Knowledge

- Spend time asset mapping and doing a walking or virtual tour of the community or communities impacted by the issue.
- Explore community through local history. Curate historical artifacts or ask students to take pictures.
- Ask students to dialogue with family and/or community members so they can develop a multigenerational perspective of the issue.
- Create storytelling opportunities and invite students to share about relevant familiar stories.

## Generate More Student Questions

- Students will benefit from time committed to unpacking the CAQ. Ask students to consider: What do we need to know in order to answer this question? Consider starting with a QFT ([Question Formulation Technique](#)) to help narrow the problem, develop research questions, understand what the group knows/doesn't know, etc.
- Position the question (and any student-generated supporting questions from the QFT) prominently in the classroom. Check in on them throughout the project, and showcase how the question(s) change over time.
- Enrich your time unpacking the CAQ by having students practice questioning skills with activities such as [Pass-Arounds](#), [Q-Stems Exercise](#), or [Whose Eyes?](#)

## OTHER RELATED RESOURCES:

- [Transformative Student Voice](#) curricular resources on identifying the problem and exploring the problem
- [YPAR Hub](#) (Youth-led Participatory Action Research)
- [Participate Module](#) of the Digital Civics Toolkit
- [Geo-Inquiry Process](#) resources from National Geographic
- [How to Write Effective Driving Questions for Project-Based Learning](#) -- an article by Andrew Miller on Edutopia
- [The Right Question](#) -- an article by Dan Rothstein & Luz Santana in EL magazine about the question formulation technique

## Assessment Considerations

How will you know what students know, what they can do, and if they are ready to move on to the rest of the investigation? As you develop assessment opportunities, consider how students can be positioned and given choices in ways to demonstrate their ability to do the following:

- ✔ The student is able to effectively respond to a comment or idea and communicate collaboratively with a partner or group.
- ✔ The student can pose questions that extend or deepen their thinking and the group's thinking.
- ✔ The student can ask questions that demonstrate their understanding of connections and links among issues or actors.
- ✔ The student can engage with school staff, family, and community members to construct a multigenerational understanding of an issue.
- ✔ The student can reflect on their identity, community, and their relationship and intersections with the issue.

## Strategies for Integrating Digital Tools & Learning:

How might students use digital tools to explore and investigate their interests and wonderings related to the topic of the unit to support the development of the Call to Action Question?

How can students chronicle and share their thinking about their CAQ along the way in a digital format, such as Google documents or a blog, so they can collaborate and gather feedback?

Digital tools can help students (individually or as a group) document their thinking along the way (what we did, what we learned, what's next?) through an online portfolio or student blog. Students can use a range of mediums -- images, video, audio, or text -- to reflect upon and document their process. Consider starting the [Timeline of Learning strategy](#).

“Throughout this tremendously educational project, I collected data and researched problems that exist in voting and elections before finally taking action after coming up with a plan of my own. I discovered how and why some people vote or don't vote, and how to convince those who do not vote to vote. I brainstormed ideas for impacting people's understanding of elections. I had conversations with eligible voters about their personal voting experiences. I determined, through research, the most significant voting disparities.”

—P. Taylor, 10th grade CPS student

## INVESTIGATE THE PROBLEM

Throughout the inquiry, students will:

- practice & build mastery of the unit content & skills through the investigation of the problem.
- continuously unpack and narrow the question as they work to understand the complexity of the issue and the individuals, groups, institutions, systems, and policies connected to it.
- develop their own questions, analyze root causes, conduct action research, discuss and deliberate, reflect, define, and narrow their thinking on the problem as they begin to see various possible solutions.



Throughout the inquiry, it is important that students are asking questions and investigating the answers to those questions. Students continually unpack and narrow the CAQ, working to understand the complexity of the issue and the individuals, groups, institutions, systems, and policies connected to it.

Investigating the problem so that students can answer the CAQ requires research to understand the problem and its root causes. Students will also need to analyze the research collected to formulate solutions, and then assess and evaluate the possible solutions to the problem.

Mastery of discipline-specific content and skills will depend on how effectively relevant content standards are identified and demonstrated through assessments by students.

### Discipline-specific teachers will want to consider:

How do experts in my content area investigate? What types of investigation do they lead?

What content and skills are needed to effectively investigate as an expert would?

How can students practice to gain mastery of that content and skills as they investigate?

By examining how experts in a discipline produce knowledge, teachers will better equip students to not only apply that way of knowing but also challenge and/or contribute to it.

## LOOKS LIKE EXAMPLES:

**Science Example** = To investigate “How safe is Chicago’s soil and water?”, the students researched current findings, and went out into the community and took soil and water samplings from the north, south, and west sides of Chicago, testing them for lead.

They then collected their data, and made a heat map depicting the levels of lead in soil and water in different neighborhoods in Chicago.

They noticed some trends - higher lead counts were detected in certain neighborhoods in the city.

**Social Science Example** = To investigate “Can Chicago’s Youth Increase Voter Turnout?” the students surveyed at least 30 people each to first determine who in their families, school, and community are registered to vote and who actually votes. They also conducted interviews and focus groups to learn about what motivated folks to vote or not to vote, and to learn about the barriers to voting.

After collecting and analyzing their data, they determined that the vast majority of people in their community do not vote, that the number 1 reason they do not vote is because they cannot get time off of work on election day and/or feel deterred by long lines at their polling place, and that the majority of people who do vote either vote early or vote by mail.

## Engaging Students in the Investigation

Before students start the investigation, check their understanding and ensure they have adequate background knowledge and vocabulary to begin. As noted above, in order for students to lead their own inquiry, it helps to have a strong footing with some knowledge and vocabulary.

During the investigation, students will research their questions and design and conduct discipline-specific action research within their homes, school and/or community to better understand a problem or issue. They will need to engage in reflection, discussions and deliberations that help them draw conclusions and narrow their thinking, to ultimately decide on taking action.

Consider incorporating some of the following suggested tools and strategies throughout the investigation. These strategies are not exhaustive nor are they meant to be done in sequential order.

## Tools and Strategies to use during student investigations:

- Include regular small and whole group discussion, and find ways to make thinking about the CAQ visible.
- Students should conduct their own research by interviewing or surveying community members impacted, allies and advocates, and related experts. These interviews can happen virtually and surveying can happen online. Establish ethical norms for interviewing and time to reflect on bias in questioning and design.
- Regularly use root cause analysis tools like the 5-Whys, Root Cause Tree, or Fishbone analysis to continually narrow thinking, which will ultimately lead to more effective solutions.
- Create a visible, ongoing list of possible allies, advocates, and challengers, and check-in on this list often.
- Identify individuals or groups that have the power to impact this issue, or consider the varied ways power is used and shaping the problem. Use [Liu’s ways of power](#) or [How to Turn Protest into Powerful Change](#).
- Conduct regular check-ins to gauge students’ thinking/feeling about the project and their evolving understanding by utilizing activities such as, KWL charts, four-corners, human barometer, group report out activities.
- Invite discipline experts and researchers to talk to your class about how they conduct investigations.

## RELATED RESOURCES:

- For considerations and resources focused on remote learning from the High School Social Science team [click here](#).
- [The Collective Action Toolkit](#) (in [Spanish](#) too) has many activities you can use with students throughout the inquiry process.
- [YPAR](#) (Youth Participatory Action Research) strategies are useful to support such research strategies as survey design, interviews, and community mapping.
- [YPP Action Frame](#) and the [Ten Questions](#) offer support throughout the inquiry process.
- [Investigate module](#) of the Digital Civics Toolkit
- Mikva Challenge's [Taking Informed Action](#) Curriculum
- Video of CPS Teacher David Jablonsky focused on [Understanding & Identifying Misinformation](#)

## Important questions for students as they engage in their investigation:

Who are our allies? What experts do we have access to?  
(Consider allies and experts generally and those who wield the most political power.)

Have we accounted for our biases and the biases of our sources?

Have we heard from all voices (those impacted and political actors)? Do we have enough varied perspectives on this issue?

Can we trust our sources?  
How do we know?

What else do we need to know about the problem?

If research has been challenging, do we need to refine our question?

## Guidance to support Teachers as project manager:

- Co-construct or revisit community agreements in the context of this project. Help students identify roles, responsibilities, and mechanisms for accountability.
- Balance time in small groups with whole group sharing, questioning, reflecting, and reconnecting on the CAQ. Identify space and time for students to reflect, share their thinking, and question planning.
- Consider dividing parts of the investigation into different committees. Brainstorm with students the different aspects of the problem (topic, location, people, etc) that need to be investigated, and have groups each take one on.
- Create a visual project-tracking system on the wall in your classroom or use a digital format that students can use to keep track of day-to-day planning and share-out with other students for feedback and support.
- Reflect regularly and out loud. The magic and real learning happens during the process together.

## Guidance to support Teachers & Students as they explore online information:

Teachers can play an important role in helping young people navigate the sea of information online particularly when it comes to finding trustworthy sources, identifying “fake news,” and judging credibility. Another important factor for teachers and students to consider is the increase of partisanship that can bias our judgment about the credibility and accuracy of civic and political information online. Having strongly held partisan beliefs can lead you to be less critical of political claims that match up with your own perspective -- whether they are conservative or liberal. Consider integrating some of the following activities with your students to help them judge the accuracy and credibility of online information, be committed to accuracy, and be aware of their biases.

- Guide students in developing nuanced skills and strategies for assessing the accuracy of claims that move beyond hard and fast rules or rote checklists (See the [Stanford History Education Group \(SHEG\)](#) for ideas and resources.)
- Support students to develop an awareness of the role their individual thinking plays in understanding and evaluating online information (See the [Investigation module](#) from the Digital Civics Toolkit)
- Help students acknowledge their own opinions and perspectives and how those may influence/bias their evaluation of a claim
- Give students ongoing and varied practice to integrate these ways of thinking and these skills and strategies into their habits, which can then be applied across settings and contexts (See [KQED Learn](#) for ideas and resources)
- Integrate digital civic media learning opportunities within the core curriculum in ways that enable students to extend and deepen their practice of such skills (See [Center for Media Literacy](#), [Media Education Lab](#), [Center for News Literacy](#), and the [New Literacy Project](#)).

## Assessment Considerations

How will you know what students know, what they can do, and if they are ready to move on to deciding on a culminating action? As you develop assessment opportunities, consider how students can be positioned and given choices in ways to demonstrate their ability to do the following:

- ✔ The student understands the complexity, root causes, and multiple perspectives on the issue they are investigating.
- ✔ The student can locate a range of credible sources, as well as acknowledge their own and others' biases.
- ✔ The student can conduct their own discipline-specific research or study in order to more deeply understand the issue.
- ✔ The student is able to assess and evaluate possible solutions to the problem based on what they have learned, as well as identify community partners and organizations working on the issue.
- ✔ The student is able to communicate conclusions, discuss, deliberate, and reflect upon what they have learned and the implications for taking action.

“By learning more about the census, I can use my knowledge to inform others about it. While doing my research, I learned that there are some barriers people face when it comes to the census. They don't trust the government with their information, they don't care about the census, they don't believe that them being counted matters compared, and/or they think that the census will only impact the community and not them. I have decided to put around posters addressing these common barriers, and clarifying them. This way, people can learn the truth. I can well inform them about the census and make a difference this way in my community by convincing people to fill it out.

*Civic power is the action or ability to influence your community...It's important to have such power because it means your voice is truly heard...With civic power comes change and a chance of a better well-being for all.”*

—N. Guduleasa, CPS student



## DECIDING ON A CULMINATING ACTION

- Students share, discuss, reflect, and prioritize the most important and relevant information they've collected.
- Pathways provide options and support for students in deciding if/how they will take culminating action of the project.
- Every culmination action should include an opportunity for students to engage with outside stakeholders connected to the problem.
- Choose one pathway or cover all three. The framework supports projects that span a few days or several weeks.

PATHWAY 1

INFORM or  
CREATE AWARENESS

PATHWAY 2

JOIN, INVITE OR  
ORGANIZE OTHERS

PATHWAY 3

IMPACT SYSTEMS  
& POLICY

### At this point in the project, students will have worked to:

- Narrow the issue
- Understand the complexity of and multiple perspectives on the issue applying discipline-specific research methodologies
- Understand the systems that work within and around the issue.
- Learn from or about community partners and organizations working on the issue
- Perhaps - researched elected officials or policies connected to the issue or analyzed any policy (or lack of)
- Perhaps - proposed possible solutions and may have even begun assessing their effectiveness

Students will now need to be guided through evaluating solutions, if they haven't done so already, in order to decide on a culminating action. By taking action, students will have the opportunity to apply what they have learned and engage in meaningful ways to solve the problem they are investigating. This step in the inquiry is critical for students to cultivate capacities as civic participants. Taking action also enables students to see how their voices and actions can make a difference with real-world problems.

There are three pathways to consider for the culminating action. The pathways provide options and support for students and teachers. Students might focus on one pathway, combine two of the pathways, or go through a sequence of all three. Some teachers have even found that some projects can build upon the work of previous students or classes and thus focus on different pathways at different times. Teachers must also consider how much time they have to devote to this project given other priorities. Depending on the issue, question, or course, projects might span a week or occur as a touchstone throughout the year. Emerging teachers might consider starting small with a short project to build their project-manager muscles.

## RELATED RESOURCES:

- Taking Action Project [video and blog series](#) from Matt Colley, a 9th grade teacher in Oakland
- Watch this video "[Infographics for Change](#)" to see how 12th grade teacher Chela Delgado guides her students to design an infographic that visually displays the key aspects of the issue they researched, the root cause, and a theory of change.
- Tool for identifying actions: [Core Practices of Participatory Politics](#)
- [Core Concept of 3 Kinds of Participants](#)
- [10 Questions for Young Changemakers](#) unit created by Facing History and Ourselves in collaboration with the Democratic Knowledge Project.

## Engaging Students in Deciding on a Pathway

Before choosing a pathway, students should engage in some of the following:

Consider whether it is clear and specific.	Challenge students to articulate their desired outcome and write it out. All decisions and actions should come back to this question: "Will this achieve your objective? Why?"
Consider whether it is actionable.	Discuss time constraints with students. Help students identify steps and actions they can take in the time they have. Also, help them consider how they might join and further the efforts of others.
Consider whether it is responsive.	Brainstorm possible actions and then rank and sort using different lenses (i.e. possible by time frame, most likely to least likely, resources, our own access to power, most impactful to least impactful, etc). Prompt students to revisit the CAQ, reflect on their understanding of root causes, and review groups or organizations working on the same issue.
Consider whether it is measurable.	Once a solution is identified, ask students to consider a question like, "How will you know you're successful?" "What does success look like here?"

Pathway 1 calls upon students to **Inform or Create Awareness** about the issue they have investigated. Students will consider an authentic audience they want to reach, the key message they want to convey, and the most effective ways to raise awareness and shift the narrative. If there is limited time, Pathway 1 may be the most tangible of the three.

Pathway 2 encourages students to **Join, Invite, or Organize Others** in order to have an impact on the problem they have investigated. Students may have learned about key advocates or community organizations with whom they can join in order to support existing and longstanding efforts to attend to the problem. Students can play a role in inviting others to get involved in established efforts and galvanizing more support. Students can also organize others to be part of an effort they are organizing.

Pathway 3 supports students to **Impact Systems & Policy** related to the issue in which they are focusing. In this pathway, students can consider ways to create systemic change at the institutional or policy level. They can work with advocates, allies, or political representatives to propose and/or push for a new policy, procedure or legislation. Pathway 3 may involve more time over the span of a longer period.

**Digital Learning & Dimensions to Consider:** In each of the pathways, it will be important for students to strategically assess the most effective and relevant tactics and strategies, including if and how digital media and online platforms may be useful. Instead of leading with a particular digital tool or platform, encourage students to first think about what they have learned, what they want to accomplish, what they are best positioned to achieve, and then what media they have available to them to help achieve their goals. It is also important for students to consider the advantages of combining face-to-face and digital tactics when taking action.

## Assessment Considerations

How will you know what students know, what they can do, and if they are ready to move on to the planning and action portion of their project? As you develop assessment opportunities, consider how students can be positioned and given choices in ways to demonstrate their ability to do the following:

- ✓ The student is able to decide on the best course of action based on what they have learned from their investigation and what they are best positioned to accomplish.
- ✓ The student can build a plan that includes clearly stated outcomes as well as specific and measurable goals.
- ✓ The student can determine if and how digital media and online platforms can help them achieve their goals.
- ✓ The student can work cooperatively with their peers, adults, and/or community members in order to achieve their agreed upon goals.



## PATHWAY 1

# INFORM or CREATE AWARENESS

## Engaging Students in Pathway 1

This pathway is focused on elevating students' knowledge in order to educate others, create awareness, and inform the public. Students should have opportunities to recognize their value to our institutions and our society. IA projects are an opportunity to share their newly acquired knowledge, perspective as youth, and their ideas and solutions to the problem with an authentic audience.

Students should decide WHAT information their inquiry uncovers, WHO it is valuable to and WHY, HOW that information is best communicated, and what IMPACT they want to have as a result of their PURPOSE.

The following **student-facing questions/tasks** are designed to take them through a "creating awareness" action. They also can be used as framing for your own lesson planning and preparation:

### STEP 1

Reflect upon and summarize what you have learned about this issue and why it's important. Discuss the CAQ again with your classmates, spend time collecting and reflecting upon all of the information you've acquired. WHAT information has the most significance or impact?

### STEP 2

Identify WHO needs to know this information and WHY they need to know it. Do not focus on everyone, rather consider which individuals/groups would benefit most or who would be impacted the most, from your research-based knowledge, perspective, and ideas. Who has power to address the issue? Or, who has been impacted the most that would gain power from this information?

### STEP 3

Identify your PURPOSE. Reflect on how your PURPOSE connects with your intended IMPACT. What do you hope to achieve? What do you want your audience to think, feel, know, or do as a result of being informed and aware? The clearer you are, the more effective your message will be. Make sure to consider how your identity plays a role in your PURPOSE and intended IMPACT.

## STEP 4

Next, choose a medium. What is the best way to communicate this information? A letter or email? A tweet or hashtag campaign? A multimedia campaign? A face-to-face meeting? A public service announcement? A poster/flyer campaign? Or some combination of these mediums? Make sure you can fully explain why this medium is the best choice for your audience and purpose.

## STEP 5

Finally, construct your MESSAGE. Consider what you have already decided, and how to bring that all together. Who is your audience? How can you appeal to them? Make sure you are achieving your purpose. What do you want the audience to think, feel, know, or do? What is the best medium to communicate your message? And, MOST importantly, how will you know you are successful? How will you measure success/impact?

## STEP 6

- Implement your plan.
- Track your progress.
- Meet regularly to check in on your plan and goals.
- Reflect, celebrate, and refine your plan as well as share your results with others

## Digital Learning & Dimensions to Consider:

With the rise of digital media and online platforms, young people now have significantly more opportunities to produce and circulate information and raise awareness. At the same time, youth have to carefully weigh what they want to share, how and why they want to share it, and the goals they have for putting their perspectives out there. They also need to consider potential risks, including surveillance and possible conflict with people who have different ideas and perspectives. Teachers can help students explore the following questions as they consider how they will go about informing others and raising awareness:

- What do I choose to share publicly and what do I keep to myself?
- How can I capture people's attention in a media-rich way without oversimplifying the message?
- Who do I want to reach and what is the best platform to reach them?
- As I express myself, how will my message spread?
- How might I tap into the networks I have on social media to spread information and raise awareness?
- How do I manage the 'digital afterlife' of what I've shared?

## LOOKS LIKE EXAMPLES:

**Science Example** = How safe is Chicago's soil and water?

Students decide that communities in high-risk areas need to know that their water is not safe. They developed informational flyers and canvassed the neighborhood, putting them in mailboxes and hanging them in stores.

**Social Science Example** = Can Chicago's Youth Increase Voter Turnout?

Students' research showed that many people in their community don't vote because they either don't know how, or don't know enough about the candidates. Students decided to create a candidate informational campaign and voter guide. They committed to talking to at least 10 people each that they personally know to educate them in how to vote and the candidates.

## RELATED RESOURCES:

- [Voice module](#) from the Digital Civics Toolkit
- In this video, "[Writing Commentaries: The Power of Youth Voice](#)" Teresa Chin from YR Media supports students to write a commentary about an issue they care about, which they will later publish via radio and/or social media.
- [Civic Literacy: Photojournalism to Highlight Community Issues](#) video by CERG and Free Spirit Media explores how Chicago youth used photo essays and social media to voice their concerns about issues in their communities.
- The video, "[Public v. Private in the Digital Age](#)", by HITRecord and the MAPP team touches on some of the core considerations for young people to consider what to express and to whom when sharing their civic and political perspectives online.

## Summative Assessment Considerations

As you develop assessment opportunities, consider how students can be positioned and given choices in ways to demonstrate their ability to inform or create awareness about the issue they have investigated by engaging an authentic audience. Also consider how the student can reflect on the extent to which they were successful, what they learned, and how they might continue to stay involved over time.

Students may be asked to complete a Reflective Essay at the end of the project to consider the development of SEL skills and what they have learned. Consider the question, guidance, and rubric that follows.

***Prompt: What did you learn about yourself, civic engagement, and civic power by completing this project?***

- Focus your reflection on **what you have learned** throughout the **process**, and what you learned about yourself and your community.
- Cite the work you did during the project as evidence.
- Organize your writing so that it is clear and allows the reader to understand the process you took to complete the project.

You can draw on this [Reflective Essay Rubric](#).

## PATHWAY 2

# JOIN, INVITE OR ORGANIZE OTHERS

## Engaging Students in Pathway 2

In Pathway 2, students Join, Invite, or Organize Others in order to have an impact on the problem they have investigated. Students may have learned about key advocates or community organizations with whom they can join in order to support existing and longstanding efforts to attend to the problem. Students can play a role in inviting others to get involved in established efforts and galvanizing more support. Students can also create their own efforts and organize others to be part of it.

Students should apply and connect what they learned from their inquiry to WHAT efforts they want to join, support or lead; WHO they might invite to get involved or organize and WHY; HOW to participate and/or organize others to get involved, and what IMPACT they want to have as a result of their PURPOSE.

The following student-facing questions/tasks are designed to take them through a “Join, Invite, or Organize Others” action.

### STEP 1

Reflect upon and summarize WHAT you have learned about this issue and why it’s important. Discuss the CAQ again with your classmates, spend time analyzing and reflecting upon all of the information you’ve acquired. WHAT information has the most significance or impact? Why should you organize others? What local and national organizations and leaders are already involved? What existing efforts or campaigns might you join or support?

### STEP 2

Identify WHO your audience might be. Identify WHO needs to get involved and WHY. Do not focus on everyone, rather consider which individuals/groups would benefit most or who would be impacted the most, from joining your efforts. Who has power to address the issue? How are those who have been impacted the most being heard and positioned to lead?

### STEP 3

Identify your PURPOSE. Reflect on how your purpose connects with your intended IMPACT. What do you hope to achieve? What do you want your audience to think, feel, know, or do? The clearer you are, the more effective your action will be. If you intend to join or support an existing campaign, how are the intended impacts and purpose of that campaign aligned to your own? Make sure to consider how your identity plays a role in your purpose and intended impact.

## STEP 4

Next, choose WHAT action steps you will take. Do not focus on everything, rather consider what might have the most IMPACT, what are you best positioned to do, and how you can best contribute to existing efforts. Make sure you can fully explain why your action steps are the best choice for your audience and PURPOSE. If you are joining others, make sure that you are asking them what you can do, what you can lead and how you can support the voices of those most impacted. Develop a detailed action plan that includes:

- What steps will you take?
- What is your timeline for when you will take these steps?
- Who will be involved? What role will you each play?
- Who is your target audience and how will you reach them?
- What is the best medium to communicate your message?
- What materials or resources do you need and how will you get them?
- And, MOST importantly, how will you know you are successful? How will you measure success/ impact? What do you want the audience to think, feel, know, or do?

## STEP 5

- Implement your plan.
- Track your progress.
- Meet regularly to check in on your plan and goals.
- Reflect, celebrate, and refine your plan, as well as share your results with others.

## Digital Learning & Dimensions to Consider:

In the digital era, youth can draw on digital media and online platforms to learn about and join existing efforts, and mobilize others to bring about change in a variety of ways. When mobilizing others, teachers and students can reconsider some of the critiques of online activism being a low form of political participation or, as many call it, "slacktivism." Research actually shows that online action (also referred to as "flash activism") can be impactful. It can result in a rush of involvement that raises awareness about issues, increases public dialogue, motivates people who would otherwise not get involved, and, in some cases, creates the pressure needed to influence key targets like politicians or corporations (Earl, 2016). As students think about joining, inviting or organizing others to take action, it's important for them to consider the following questions:

- How can I effectively circulate and share information from existing groups working on the same issue?
- Who do I want to reach and what is the best platform to reach them?
- How might I tap into the networks I already have on social media to encourage others to get involved?
- How can I capture people's attention in a media-rich way without oversimplifying the issue and my call to action?



## LOOKS LIKE EXAMPLES:

**Science Example** = How safe is Chicago’s soil and water?

Students’ research showed that there are regular community meetings about the lead issue, but they are poorly attended. These meetings are important because they create space for electeds to hear concerns from residents, and they rally support for change.

The students decide to recruit friends and family in the community to attend the meeting and they also ask to speak at the meeting to educate the attendees on how serious the issue is.

**Social Science Example** = Can Chicago’s Youth Increase Voter Turnout?

Students learned that there were two community groups conducting voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives in their community. They reached out to these organizations and volunteered. They spent the remaining weeks before the election joining these groups in the effort.

## Summative Assessment Considerations

As you develop assessment opportunities, consider how students can be positioned and given choices in ways to demonstrate their ability to join, invite or organize others to have an impact on the problem in an effective way. Also consider how the student can reflect on the extent to which they were successful, what they learned, and how they might continue to stay involved over time.

Students may be asked to complete a Reflective Essay at the end of the project to consider the development of SEL skills and what they have learned. Consider the question, guidance, and rubric that follows.

*Prompt: What did you learn about yourself, civic engagement, and civic power by completing this project?*

- Focus your reflection on **what you have learned** throughout the **process**, and what you learned about yourself and your community.
- Cite the work you did during the project as evidence.
- Organize your writing so that it is clear and allows the reader to understand the process you took to complete the project.

You can draw on this [Reflective Essay Rubric](#).

## RELATED RESOURCES:

- [Action module](#) of Digital Civics Toolkit
- [Taking Action Project](#) video and blog series from Matt Colley, a 9th grade teacher in Oakland

## PATHWAY 3

# IMPACT SYSTEMS & POLICY

## Engaging Students in Pathway 3

For Pathway 3, students Impact Systems & Policy related to the issue in which they are focusing. Students can consider the ways to create systemic change at the institutional or policy level. They can work with advocates, allies, or political representatives to propose and/or push for a new policy, procedure or legislation. Pathway 3 may involve more time over the span of a longer period, so it's important to keep that in mind when planning.

Students should apply and connect what they learned from their inquiry to identify WHAT systems and policies are relevant, WHO they might target and WHY, and what IMPACT they want to have as a result of their PURPOSE.

The following student-facing questions/tasks are designed to take them through a "impact systems and policy" action. They also can be used as framing for your own lesson planning and preparation:

### STEP 1

Reflect upon and summarize what you have learned about this issue and why it's important. Discuss the CAQ again with your classmates, spend time synthesizing and reflecting upon all of the information you've acquired, and identify important steps you and others might take to impact systems and policies related to the issue. Investigate what related policies exist, what civic institutions may do work related to this issue, what level of policy you want to affect (classroom, school, city, county, state, or federal policies or systems), and what businesses or corporations you may want to take into account.

### STEP 2

Identify WHO your target might be at the federal, state, local, school or district level. Identify WHO has influence and power to address the issue. Do not focus on everyone, rather consider which individuals/groups/institutions have the most substantial impact. Also, consider what community organizations and civic or political leaders are already involved and how you might join or support their efforts. Finally, if you are approaching an election, what candidates are talking about your issue and does their position align with your views? How might you challenge or stretch their position on the issue or support their efforts?

### STEP 3

Identify your **PURPOSE**. What do you hope to achieve? What system do you want to change or what policy do you want to have an impact on? Changing systems and policies can take sustained efforts over a long period of time so consider what is manageable to accomplish in the time you have and what you are best positioned to achieve alongside others working on the same issue. The clearer and more realistic you are, the more effective your action will be.

### STEP 4

Next, choose **WHAT** action steps you will take. Again, do not focus on everything, rather consider what might have the most impact, what are you best positioned to do, and how you can best contribute to existing efforts. Make sure you can fully explain why your action steps are the best choice for your audience/target and purpose. If you are joining others, make sure that you are asking them what you can do and how you can be helpful. Develop a detailed action plan that includes:

- What steps will you take?
- Who will be involved? What role will you each play?
- Who is your target audience and how will you reach them?
- What system, policy, and/or institution are you aiming to impact and how?
- By when will you take these steps?
- What materials or resources do you need and how will you get them?
- And, **MOST** importantly, how will you know you are successful? How will you measure success/impact? What do you want the audience to think, feel, know, or do?
- How are your efforts part of longer term change?

### STEP 5

- Implement your plan.
- Track your progress.
- Meet regularly to check in on your plan and goals.
- Reflect, celebrate, and refine your plan, as well as share your results with others.

## Digital Learning & Dimensions to Consider:

As students consider what systems and/or policies they want to influence, it's important for them to consider how digital tools and platforms may help them achieve their goals. For example, many agencies, institutions, and politicians now have an active social media presence through which students can glean important information, engage, communicate, and apply pressure. In addition, students can now utilize tried and true tactics, like petitions, in an online format which enables them to mobilize support more easily and quickly. Finally, students can consider how digital tools and platforms may help them share information about related ballot issues, mobilize support for key legislation, and support or pressure candidates during an election.

### LOOKS LIKE EXAMPLES:

**Science Example** = How safe is Chicago's soil and water?

Students learn that if residents in these communities that have high lead counts want their water or soil tested, they need to pay for the kits themselves.

They drafted a petition asking for the Alderman to subsidize the cost through her budget and collected over 300 signatures.

They presented this petition at a community meeting and followed up with the Alderwoman a month later to see what steps she had taken.

**Social Science Example** = Can Chicago's Youth Increase Voter Turnout?

Students uncovered that the polling places in their community had very low turnout from older voters due to transportation challenges. So students worked with a community group to launch an absentee voting registration program to support older voters to register to vote with an absentee ballot so they wouldn't have to arrange transportation and leave their home.

## Summative Assessment Considerations

As you develop assessment opportunities, consider how students can be positioned and given choices in ways to demonstrate their ability to impact systems or policies in some manner by working with advocates, allies, or representatives to create some substantive change. Also consider how the student can reflect on the extent to which they were successful, what they learned, and how they might continue to stay involved over time.

Students may be asked to complete a Reflective Essay at the end of the project to consider the development of SEL skills and what they have learned. Consider the question, guidance, and rubric that follows.

***Prompt: What did you learn about yourself, civic engagement, and civic power by completing this project?***

- Focus your reflection on **what you have learned** throughout the **process**, and what you learned about yourself and your community.
- Cite the work you did during the project as evidence.
- Organize your writing so that it is clear and allows the reader to understand the process you took to complete the project.

You can draw on this [Reflective Essay Rubric](#).



### RELATED RESOURCES:

- [Action module](#) of Digital Civics Toolkit
- [Petitions for Change](#) blog post by Matt Colley
- [Policy Presentation Rubric](#) by Amplifying Youth Voice project

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*As former President Barack Obama said at the opening of the National Museum of African American History: “The best history helps us recognize the mistakes that we’ve made, and the dark corners of the human spirit that we need to guard against. And yes, a clear-eyed view of history can make us uncomfortable. It will shake us out of familiar narratives. But it is precisely because of that discomfort that we learn, and grow, and harness our collective power to make this nation more perfect.”*



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