



## **Character Education Resource Center**

**News You Can Use -- December 2018**

### **Civics Education**

#### **Civics lessons: Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Neil Gorsuch on promoting education in citizenship**

Since civics was dropped from school curricula, awareness of our constitutional government, and our participation in it, has declined markedly—read-listen-teach!

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/supreme-court-justices-sonia-sotomayor-and-neil-gorsuch-promote-civics-education/>

#### **California Code: Character and Citizenship**

California Education Code - Section 44790 ---The legislature finds and declare that there is a compelling need to promote the development and implementation of effective educational programs in ethics and civic values in California schools.

California Education Code Section 233.5(a) lays the groundwork and calls upon educators to impress upon students the principles of character and citizenship.

Each teacher shall endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, patriotism, and a true comprehension of the rights, duties, and dignity of American citizenship, and the meaning of equality and human dignity, including the promotion of harmonious relations, kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures, to teach them to avoid idleness, profanity, and falsehood, and to instruct them in manners and morals and the

principles of a free government. Each teacher is also encouraged to create and foster an environment that encourages pupils to realize their full potential and that is free from discriminatory attitudes, practices, events, or activities, in order to prevent acts of hate violence.

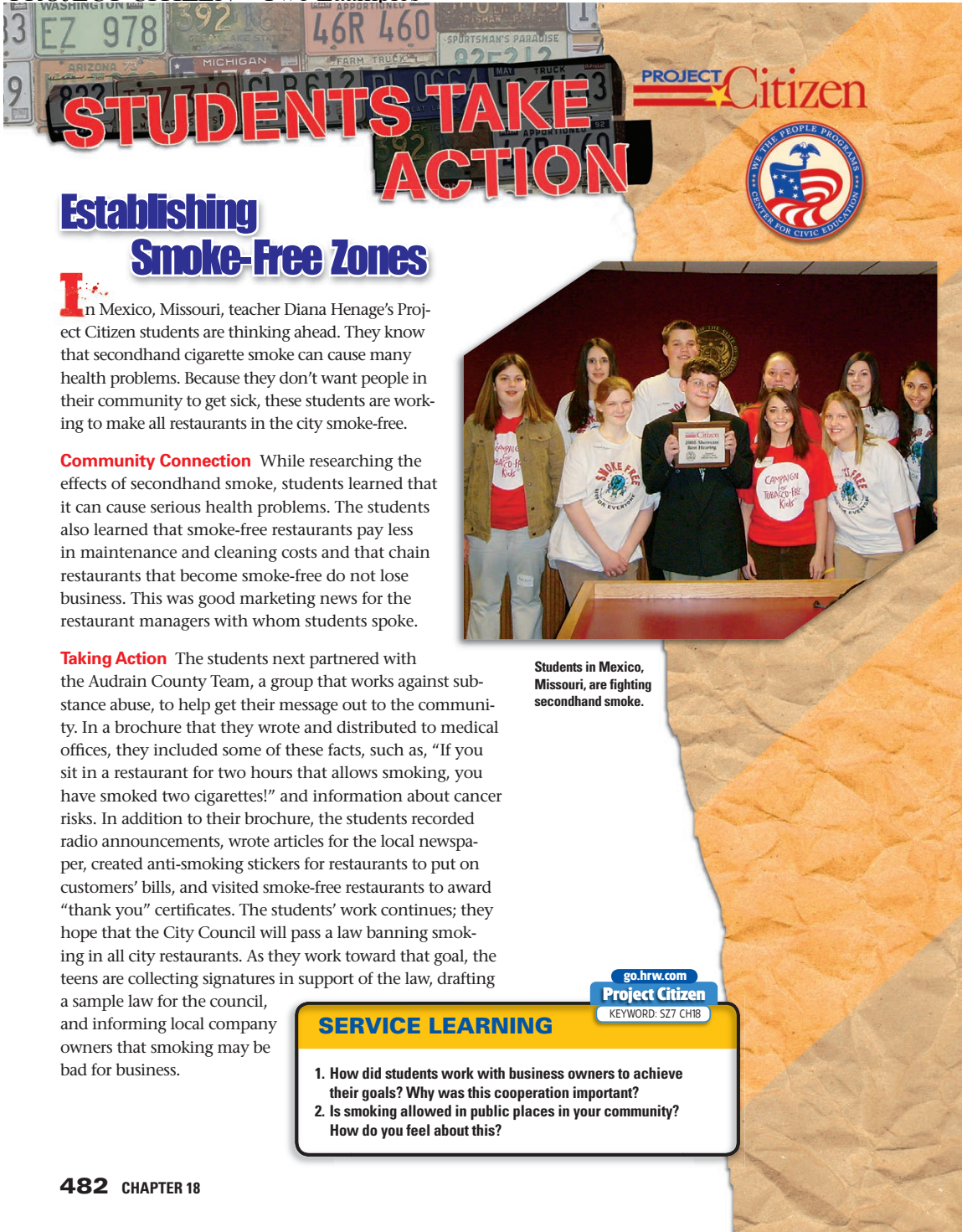
In my pdf file, I have a copy of “Revitalizing K-12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint for Action.” (If you want a copy I will send it to you ([deroche@sandiego.edu](mailto:deroche@sandiego.edu))). This report by the California Task Force On Civic Learning (2014) notes in its “Letter From the Co-Chairs” that California’s The Power of Democracy Steering Committee (website at [www.powerofdemocracy.org](http://www.powerofdemocracy.org).) will assist help spread the recommendations in schools, in communities, and to parents.

## Something to Teach

The Students of History Civics Curriculum: This curriculum provides detailed lesson plans and resources for teaching each of the following ten units:

- . (1) Introduction to government,
- . (2) Foundations of American Government,
- . (3) The Constitution & Federalism,
- . (4) Parties & Ideology,
- . (5) Campaigns & Elections,
- . (6) The Legislative Branch,
- . (7) The Executive branch,
- . (8) The Judicial branch,
- . (9) Civil Liberties,
- (10) Foreign Policy & Comparative Government, (11) Understanding Local Government, and (12) Review and Final Assessment. <https://www.studentsofhistory.com/>

## PROJECT CITIZEN – Two Examples



# STUDENTS TAKE ACTION

PROJECT Citizen



## Establishing Smoke-Free Zones

**I**n Mexico, Missouri, teacher Diana Henage's Project Citizen students are thinking ahead. They know that secondhand cigarette smoke can cause many health problems. Because they don't want people in their community to get sick, these students are working to make all restaurants in the city smoke-free.

**Community Connection** While researching the effects of secondhand smoke, students learned that it can cause serious health problems. The students also learned that smoke-free restaurants pay less in maintenance and cleaning costs and that chain restaurants that become smoke-free do not lose business. This was good marketing news for the restaurant managers with whom students spoke.

**Taking Action** The students next partnered with the Audrain County Team, a group that works against substance abuse, to help get their message out to the community. In a brochure that they wrote and distributed to medical offices, they included some of these facts, such as, "If you sit in a restaurant for two hours that allows smoking, you have smoked two cigarettes!" and information about cancer risks. In addition to their brochure, the students recorded radio announcements, wrote articles for the local newspaper, created anti-smoking stickers for restaurants to put on customers' bills, and visited smoke-free restaurants to award "thank you" certificates. The students' work continues; they hope that the City Council will pass a law banning smoking in all city restaurants. As they work toward that goal, the teens are collecting signatures in support of the law, drafting a sample law for the council, and informing local company owners that smoking may be bad for business.



Students in Mexico, Missouri, are fighting secondhand smoke.

[go.hrw.com](http://go.hrw.com)

Project Citizen

KEYWORD: SZ7 CH18

### SERVICE LEARNING

1. How did students work with business owners to achieve their goals? Why was this cooperation important?
2. Is smoking allowed in public places in your community? How do you feel about this?

**PLANNING GUIDE 3****Students Take Action****Working to Change School Policies**

Some Project Citizen student groups described in your book were concerned about school policies that they considered unwise. In one school, for example, the amount of break time was cut. In response to this unpopular policy, students carefully researched and gathered support to try to convince school leaders to change the policy.



Are there any school or school board policies that teachers, parents, and students would like to see changed in your schools? Follow the steps below to identify an unpopular policy, research it, and formulate a public policy solution.

1. Brainstorm with your classmates and teacher possibly unwise school policies or decisions. Investigate these by researching online and interviewing family members and teachers on their opinions on each issue. Ask yourself the following questions:
  - Which school policies do the most people seem unhappy with?
  - Which problem poses the biggest problem for students? Why?
  - Which issue could we most likely solve given the influence we have?
  - What support could we get (for example, from school board members or parents' associations)?
2. In small groups, compare your preliminary research findings and weigh the issues. Then, as a class, come to a consensus on the school policy you think your class will be best able to improve and address.
3. As a class, decide on a plan of action. Identify the goals you hope to achieve, most importantly improving the quality of education for students and their learning environment. Find out what is currently being done, if anything, to overturn or address the policy.
4. Under your teacher's guidance, work with group members to interview experts in the school district, as well as the people who are directly affected by the policy. Meet with members of the local media and provide them with solid facts about why you are undertaking this project and what you hope to accomplish.
5. Participate in a class discussion on what information needs to be put into the hands of school board members, and how. Then work in small groups to organize all of the information you have gathered in a complete report. Also, create a display that visually explains why the existing policy is a problem and your class's public policy solution.
6. Ask to present at an upcoming school board meeting. Along with your report and display, present statements from parents and teachers, as well as statistics. Explain to the group how this issue affects the present and future education of students.

## Something to Think About Civility

It is about politely disagreeing without disrespect, seeking common

ground as a starting point for dialogue about differences, listening past one's preconceptions, and teaching others to do the same. Civility is the hard work of staying present even with those with whom we have deep-rooted and fierce disagreement.

### Five Key Questions:

1. Who created this message? 2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention? 3. How might different people understand this message differently than me? 4. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message? 5. Why is this message being sent?

### Five Core Concepts:

1. All media messages are 'constructed.' 2. Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules. 3. Different people experience the same media message differently. 4. Media have embedded values and points of view. 5. Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.

<https://nicd.arizona.edu/>

## Something to Ask About

**This guide** is a three-part toolkit for parents, teachers, and students. **Teaching Current Events in the Age of Social Media** 4 tips for including the news in your curriculum: 1) utilize resources; 2) archive positive stories; 3) help students read critically; 4) unplugging.

**What does civics education look like in America? How well are school preparing students to be effective citizens, voters, and members of their community?**

SEE = in-depth analysis of civics education, and what the education community can do to ensure that today's students are prepared to be tomorrow's

citizens, [the 2018 Brown Center Report on American Education](#).

**Is literature the answer to tackling poor civics curriculum?**

<http://www.educationdive.com/news/is-literature-the-answer-to-tackling-poor-civics-curriculum/432294/>

**Something Middle and High School Students Should Do**

Now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, Chapman University’s Rodgers Center for Holocaust Education is offering middle and high school students an opportunity to participate in its Holocaust Art and Writing contest.

For more information see:

(<https://www.chapman.edu/research/institutes-and-centers/holocaust-education/rodgers-center/holocaust-art-and-writing-contest/index.aspx>)

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For Essay Contest, Conference, Certificate, and News You Can Use Information visit our website:

<https://www.sandiego.edu/soles/centers-and-research/character-development-center/>

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