Project Citizen

PARENT ENGAGEMENT SUPPLEMENT

Engaging Parents in the Project Citizen Experience

July, 2011

Center for Civic Education

PROJECT CITIZEN CALIFORNIA

Families In Schools

Building Partnerships for Student Success

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TAB I. INTRODUCTION

A. Project Citizen Purpose & Goals

Because the United States is a democratic republic, most of the decision-making and other work of government is accomplished by elected and appointed representatives. It has been recognized since the founding of our nation, however, that the preservation and healthy functioning of our democracy requires that citizens and residents play an active role in what is ultimately a system of self-government. For citizens to play such a role requires, among other things, that they:

- understand their system of government;
- have the knowledge, skills and willingness to participate to an adequate degree; and
- participate in a way that is guided by an enlightened, reasoned commitment to the fundamental values and principles of democracy.

The principal purpose of **Project Citizen** is to help students improve their capacity to participate competently and responsibly in the American political system. In addition to the requirements noted above, such participation requires that citizens/residents have the capacity to keep track of, or monitor, what their government is doing and to influence it on matters of concern to them.

Project Citizen introduces students to and educates them in the methods and procedures used in our governmental processes. The goal of the program is to develop students' commitment to active citizenship and governance by:

- providing the knowledge and teaching the skills required for effective participation;
- providing practical experience designed to foster a sense of competence and efficacy; and
- developing an understanding of the importance of citizen participation.

B. Rationale for the Project Citizen Supplement for Parent Engagement

The **Project Citizen** Parent Supplement is designed to help teachers and students invite parents and families to become a part of the **Project Citizen** team. Throughout the Supplement, the term "parent" is used to refer to parents, guardians, caregivers and significant adults in the participating student's family circle. **Project Citizen** participants often express the pride and excitement they feel as they discover the power they have to influence public policy in the communities where they live and teach. Few American citizens/residents recognize the scope of their own ability to make a difference in their community, their country, their world. While our democracy is far from perfect, we have available to us the basic tools to improve the workings of our government and the circumstances of our lives in ways that are only a dream in most parts of the world - and yet vast numbers of Americans barely use these tools, such as exercising their voting rights. **Project Citizen** has the potential to become a catalyst for the awakening of many more individuals than just the classroom participants. The purpose of this supplement is to increase support for students and teachers as they develop their local **Project Citizen** program and to maximize the effect of the program in the community.

At the inception of the program, teachers can help students to understand that the most important members of their community are the family members with whom they have daily and sustained close contact. If they attend a public school, that school is an instrument of public policy – it is for most citizens their earliest, most concrete and intense involvement with a government agency. The interaction between families and schools is an important place to begin the study of public policy. This understanding can generate a concerted and consistent effort on the part of **Project Citizen** teachers and students to make sure that families are informed and included as they work to enhance citizenship in their community.

When students launch their inquiries to identify and investigate community problems, they will learn to value themselves and their family members as an integral part of the community they are studying. As they proceed to examine and select solutions to problems, they can engage their families in dialogue about what they are learning and how it can affect the community. When the students prepare to present their portfolios, they can practice first with family members, and when they showcase their projects, their families should be present to support them and celebrate their accomplishments.

C. **How to Use the Supplement**

The **Project Citizen** Parent Engagement Supplement is designed to assist teachers in their efforts to implement **Project Citizen** as a powerful catalyst for democratic political action. The emphasis is on the seamless integration of parent input and family participation into the core activities at each stage of the program. **Project Citizen** recognizes the diversity of family structures in American communities and strives to encourage an inclusive approach to working with families. The Supplement is divided into five main tabs and Spanish Tools.

- **Tab I Introduction:** includes an introduction to the Supplement and a list of Activities and Tools

- **Tab II The Introduction of Project Citizen to Families**: is divided into a set of introductory Activities and Tools

- **Tab III Engaging Families in The Development of the Student Project**: is divided into Activities and Tools related to the first three steps of the program that are meant to engage parents in supporting their son/daughter develop their portfolio

- **Tab IV Engaging Families in the Presentation and Review of the Student Project**: is divided into Activities and Tools related to the last three steps of the program that are meant to engage parents in supporting their son/daughter develop their Presentation

- **Tab V Marketing Project Citizen to Families and Communities:** offers information about additional practices that can further enhance efforts to increase parent and family engagement in **Project Citizen**. Tab V includes tips for teachers on how they can outreach and communicate to parents, how to create a welcoming environment, and ideas for informal gatherings with parents.

The Supplement offers a variety of Activities and Tools – resources that can be applied or adapted easily to facilitate teacher/student efforts to engage families. The Tools are included with the related Activity throughout the binder. A list of these Tools with page numbers is provided in this Tab for easy access. While all of the activities described in the supplement are highly recommended, teachers have the latitude to choose those that will work best, given different circumstances and time constraints.

Each Activity recommended will include one to three Tools that are designed to facilitate implementation. The Objective of the Activity is stated, followed by the related Tools.
A section labeled "**How to Implement the Activity**" explains the Tools and the most effective way to use them.

D. **List of the Activities/Tools**

TAB II. INTRODUCING PROJECT CITIZEN TO FAMILIES

Activity 1.   Introductory Letters

List of Tools for Activity 1

Tool 1.1 Sample Project Citizen Welcome Letter from Teacher
- **Objective:** To provide a basic overview of the project purpose and goals and lay a foundation for parent and family engagement.
- **Languages:** English/Spanish

Tool 1.2. Protocol and Sample Invitation Letter from Student
- **Objective:** To inform parents of student's desire for and anticipation of their input and participation.
- **Languages:** English/Spanish

[BEST PRACTICE]

- Communicating school to home invites two-way communication. Busy parents are much more likely to pay attention when they are asked to respond and when they are aware that their response is an important part of the student's responsibility.

How to Implement the Activity

An introductory letter sent to students' homes by mail or sent home with the student is a basic and essential initial outreach to families. It is highly recommended that a letter is sent home by the students' teacher. The letter should not be overly long or wordy, but must contain the appropriate details about the program. Letters sent by mail usually reach the home, but may not be read. However, a personal letter from the teacher is less likely to be overlooked. Letters carried by secondary students may not be read either. An additional invitation letter, written by the student, serves as a personal invite and can lead to increases in parent involvement.

Recommended Directions

- Assign students the task of giving their parent a copy of the **Project Citizen** Welcome Letter from Teacher as a part of their required homework (see Tool 1.1)

- Have students return the **Project Citizen** Welcome Letter Parent Response (see Tool 1.1) with signatures – as a part of their required homework.

- Have students write their own letter in their own words. The letter should be written in the parents' primary language, if possible.

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PROJECT CITIZEN CALIFORNIA

(Insert Teachers Name) Project Citizen Welcome Letter

Dear Parents and Family Members:

I am excited to tell you about an empowering and engaging program your child will be involved in this year during his/her ___(name of class)_____. The name of the program is **Project Citizen.** I am hopeful that you will become involved in **Project Citizen** in a number of meaningful ways.

Project Citizen is a national effort to provide our youth, their families and communities with information and activities that can help citizens/residents become effective participants in the democratic process. The program provides a practical, first-hand approach to learning about our system of government and how to influence it. Students will work together to discover problems in their community that they think their government is not handling at all or not handling well. Then students will select a problem from among those they have identified and work cooperatively to

- **STEP 1** - Conduct research to be able to thoroughly explain the public policy issue they have chosen
- **STEP 2** - Identify several solutions to the issue and weigh the advantages/disadvantages of each
- **STEP 3** - Propose a public policy solution to the problem that requires government action and does not violate provisions of state/federal constitutions
- **STEP 4** - Propose an action plan they can use to influence appropriate government agencies to adopt their public policy

This class project began on __date_____ and will end ___date_____ in a culmination event that we hope you will be able to attend.

Your child will work with a team of students. Students will be responsible for gathering information from you, other family members, neighbors and leaders in the community. This is a cooperative project and your child will need your support to complete it. You will not have any financial responsibilities for **Project Citizen** activities. Your time and support are welcome. **In other words, we want you to become a part of the team!**

Students will learn information and skills through **Project Citizen** that will prepare them for college and careers. By participating and assisting the student teams, families can learn new ways to improve their

lives and their communities. We have found that family participation in this kind of learning can bring parents and children closer together and increase their respect and support for one another.

A parent and community gathering to kick- off the program is scheduled for <mark>_____date _____</mark>. Please plan to join us. [Refreshments will be served and] You will have an opportunity to_____(List Activities here)_____ .*(Note to teachers: You could show a video about **Project Citizen** (http://new.civiced.org/programs/project-citizen), show last year's portfolios, provide an overview of the various steps, and/or provide additional details about **Project Citizen** plans). You will also have the opportunity to meet the other members of the school community who will participate in the program.

Below is a list of ways that you and your family can be a part of the **Project Citizen** team. If you think you will not be able to support your child in this program, think about someone else in the family circle that can help with **Project Citizen**. You will continue to be welcome to attend any school event and be included in the learning, whenever you can.

Please complete the **Project Citizen** Welcome Letter/Parent Response document attached and return it with your child to my classroom.

Keep an eye out for future information about **Project Citizen**. We need your input and your support.

We only ask for your support.

Sincerely:

Teacher Name
Room Number
Email address
Telephone number
Free period in the day

Enclosures: Ways Family Members Can Help, **Project Citizen** Welcome Letter/Parent Response

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PROJECT CITIZEN CALIFORNIA

Ways Family Members Can Help

- Attend our(**Project Citizen** Kick-Off, Welcome to the **Project Citizen** Event, **Project Citizen** Opening Night)_____ Event

- Participate in surveys/interviews conducted by your child

- Accompany your child to survey/interview neighbors, community members, elected officials

- Accompany your child to the library and/or other locations in the community to gather information

- Ask your child questions about their work on the project

- Listen carefully and learn about your child's experiences, questions, and ideas

- Share your thoughts about his/her comments

- Volunteer to assist the team at school

- Attend presentations and community events about the program

- Praise your child and the team for their efforts – celebrate their learning

- Reflect with your child about what *you* learned

- Reflect with your child about what *he/she* learned

Project Citizen Picture – teams working together

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Project Citizen Welcome Letter/Parent Response

Student Name:
Parent who will support Project Citizen:
Parent Day-Time Telephone:
Parent Email (if available):
I have read the welcome letter and want to support my child as he/she develops their **Project Citizen** program. **Please Sign Here**_____
I plan to attend the **Project Citizen** Kick-Off Event on (date):_____ at (location): _____ **Please Sign Here**_____
I cannot attend the **Project Citizen** Kick-Off Event, but please keep me informed of future events. **Please Sign Here**_____
Please return this form to (Teacher Name) _____ **Return By: (date)**_____

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Tool 1.2. Protocol and Sample Invitation Letter from Student

Directions for **Project Citizen** Parent Invitation Letter

Students please include the following elements in your letters:

1. Begin your letter with an Opening Salutation such as Dear _____ and include the date at the top of the letter.

2. Inform the recipient(s) that you (your class) are (is) participating in **Project Citizen.**

3. Share the purpose of the program and the dates when it will take place.

4. Share why you think **Project Citizen** might be important to you and your family.

5. Explain that there are times when you will need your family's support – give some examples from the "**Way Family Members Can Help"** list**.**

6. Give the recipient(s) information about the opening event for the program and ask them to attend.

7. Ask the recipient to make a commitment to help you with the work you will be doing.

8. End your letter with a closing such as Your Son/Daughter, Sincerely, Lovingly...and your signature.

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Ways Family Members Can Help

- Attend our(**Project Citizen** Kick-Off, Welcome to the **Project Citizen** Event, **Project Citizen** Opening Night)_____ Event

- Participate in surveys/interviews conducted by your child

- Accompany your child to survey/interview neighbors, community members, elected officials

- Accompany your child to the library and/or other locations in the community to gather information

- Ask your child questions about their work on the program frequently

- Listen carefully and learn about your child's experiences, questions, and ideas

- Share your thoughts about his/her comments

- Volunteer to assist the team at school

- Attend presentations and community events about the program

- Praise your child and the team for their efforts – celebrate their learning

- Reflect with your child about what *you* learned

- Reflect with your child about what *he/she* learned

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SAMPLE Student Invitation Letter

(Date)

Dear _____:

I/my class will be participating in a program called **Project Citizen** this year/ between ___(begin date)_____ and_____(end date)___. **Project Citizen** will teach me the methods and procedures used in our governmental processes. The program will help me develop my commitment to active citizenship:

- providing me with the knowledge and skills required to make a difference in my community
- providing me with the practical experience that will help me feel more confident to take action in my community
- helping me understand the importance of citizen/resident participation.

I am excited about this program because it will give me an opportunity to work with a group of students learning about our community and ways that we can help solve the problems that affect our lives. Our teacher ____(name)_____will be helping us with the tasks we have to complete as a part of the program.

We also need you, our parents and other community members, to be a part of the team that helps us with the program. We will have to interview you, neighbors, community leaders and officials, in order to learn about ways to improve our community. We also may need to go to the library and other places to get information or find out how we can get help solving the problems we find.

When we get ready to create a portfolio and make presentations to officials who make public policy, I really want you and our family to be there to help us prepare, to be with us at the presentation(s), and to cheer us on. We're trying to make a difference for everyone in our community and we need to feel like people around us are interested and will support our efforts.

We are going to have a (Kick-off for **Project Citizen)** on _____(date)_____ at __(time)_____.

It will take place at ___(location)_____. My teacher will explain all about the program and how you can support it.

[I will get credit in __(class name)_____for having family members at this event. Can I count on you to be a part of our **Project Citizen** team?]

(Closing),

(Student signature)

(Student name)

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Activity 2. Project Citizen (Kick-off) Event: Orientation for Families/School Community

Activity 2 List of Tools

Tool 2.1 Sample Participant Orientation Agenda for Project Citizen "Kick-off" Event
- **Objective:** To provide parents with a deeper understanding and greater details about the process students will be undertaking, and firmly establish the importance of their support and input.
- **Languages:** English/Spanish

Tool 2.2 Sample Teacher Facilitator Agenda for Project Citizen "Kick-off" Event
- **Objective:** To facilitate effective delivery for a successful informational and welcoming event.

Tool 2.3 Sample Planning Template for Project Citizen "Kick-off" Event
- **Objective:** To facilitate effective planning for a successful informational and welcoming.

Tool 2.4 Project Citizen Benefits Handout
- **Objective:** To provide participants overview of the benefits of participating in **Project Citizen.**
- **Languages:** English/Spanish

[TIPS]

- Announcements of the event should reference the student leadership role in the program.

- Refreshments are a wonderful incentive and if they will be provided, it should be mentioned in letters and announcements about the event.

- The Parent Center Staff and/or parent leaders could be enlisted to publicize the event and call parents of participating students.

- If a telephonic message system is in place, it should be used to remind parents to attend. See Levels of Outreach, page 66 for other outreach ideas.

How to Implement the Activity

Ideally, this event should be planned before sending out the **Project Citizen** Welcome Letters so that the letters can announce the date, time and location. The purpose of the orientation is to give parents an overview of the program and its benefits for the student, family and community. It is important that attendees leave the session with a concrete understanding of the **Project Citizen** process and ideas about how they can contribute to the success of the students. The emphasis should be on visuals that demonstrate what students will be doing and the help that they will need. Student participation is key to increasing parent and community attendance, so it is important to include students in the substance of the meeting.

Tool 2.1 Sample Participant Orientation Agenda for Project Citizen "Kick-off" Event

SAMPLE
Project Citizen Kick-Off Event

(Date)
(Location)
(Time – no longer than 1 hour; at a time and day when parents can attend)

AGENDA

Welcome	Principal
	Participating Teacher (s)
	Participating Student (s)
Video: Project Citizen Overview	Teacher
Video or Portfolio	Past Participating Student(s)
	(Teachers, parents)
	Past participating Official
	(or Community Leader)
Project Citizen Plan and Timeline (for current project(s))	Teacher(s), Student(s)
Benefits for Students, Families and Community	Principal or Teacher
Request for Specific Kinds of Engagement	Teacher
Closing	Teacher, Students

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Tool 2.2 Sample Teacher Facilitator Agenda for Project Citizen "Kick-off" Event

	Time	Agenda Item	Description/Notes	Materials Needed
I	6:00 pm 5 min	**Welcome**	Principal gives the opening remarks Participating teacher(s) shares the agenda and objectives of the orientation meeting.	Participant Agenda
II	6:05 pm 15 min	**Video: Project Citizen Overview**	Teacher shows audience the **Project Citizen** Overview Video See (webpage) for video	**Project Citizen** Video and equipment with video cued up
III	6:15 pm 15 min	**Video or Portfolio**	Teachers, students, and/or community official shows a video of past student projects, or shares actual past student's display/presentations.	Presentation videos, student displays
IV	6:30 pm 10 min	**Project Citizen Plan (for current projects)**	Teacher and/or Students review their work plan for **Project Citizen.** See (webpage) for video	Teachers work plan/timeline for **Project Citizen**
V	6:40 pm 5 min	**Benefits for Students, Families, and Community**	Teacher and principal discusses benefits of PC: • Student Benefits: Students will work together to discover problems in their community that they think their government is not handling at all or not handling well. • Family and Community Benefits**:** provide families and communities with information and activities that can help residents become effective participants in the democratic process.	See Tool 2.4 **Project Citizen** Benefits handout
VI	6:45 pm 15 min	**Requests for Specific Kinds of Engagement**	See Tool 3.1,3.2 List of Volunteer Opportunities Review with parents the volunteer guidelines and list of volunteer opportunities that they can be involved in. Ask parents to sign-up to volunteer using the Volunteer sign-up sheet.	Sign-up sheet for Volunteers
VII	7:00 pm	**Closing**		N/A

Tool 2.3 Sample Planning Template for Project Citizen "Kick-off" Event

Priority	Activity	Lead Person	✓Done	Notes
**Project Citizen "Kick-off" Event**
**Before the Event**
	Develop a planning team (the entire classroom of students is the likely team)			
	Create event agenda using Tool 2.1 Sample Participant Orientation Agenda for **Project Citizen** "kick-off" Event and Tool 2.2 Sample Teacher Facilitator Agenda for **Project Citizen** "Kick-off" Event			Choose a time and day when parents can attend; may need to do a survey of your student's parents to learn when they are available
	Meet with the school administrators and interested officials/community leaders to share the purpose/goals of **Project Citizen** and Kick-off event and to encourage them to be involved			
	Finalize parent invitation letter from teacher using Tool 1.1 Sample **Project Citizen** Introductory Letter from Teacher			Provide all materials in parent primary language, if possible
	Have students prepare their **Project Citizen** letters using Tool 1.2 Protocol and Sample Invitation Letter from Student			
	Send parent invitation letter from teacher to students homes			
	Final student parent invitation letters sent home with students			
	Place parent Welcome Letter from teacher in appropriate school offices			
	Hang **Project Citizen** posters (where appropriate)			Can be ordered from the Center for Civic Education
	Enlist the Parent Center team to become involved in the event by helping with logistics and outreach			
	Make phone calls to personally invite parents			
	Have students make reminder calls the week before the event			
	Put information on school marquee (if available)			
	Write and deliver "school student announcement" to inform the school of the event			

	Develop Volunteer Request Form by customizing Tool 3.3 Volunteer Information Form			
	Prepare sign-in sheets with pre-registered parents and dignitaries			
	Make a decision about what refreshments, if any, will be served and who will bring them and set them up			
	Plan Welcome Table and 'student staffing' for the event			
	Make copies of materials (Agenda, Tool 3.1 List of Volunteer Opportunities, Sign-in Sheet, Tool 3.2 Volunteer Information Form) prior to event			

Project Citizen "Kick -off" Event				
Day of Event				
Priority	Activity	Lead Person	Done	Notes
	Begin set-up at least 45 minutes prior to event.			
	Set up tables: put tablecloths on tables where needed,			
	Set up food tables: put out juice, water, snacks, cups, paper plates, napkins.			
	Set up welcome table with: sign-in sheets, parent materials, agendas, pens for sign-in, name tags; place at least 3 chairs at welcome table for helpers to staff the tables (depends on size of expected crowd)			
	Hang directional signs			
	Set up past student **Project Citizen** portfolios around the room			
	Set up TV and DVR (if showing **Project Citizen** Video)			
	Staff someone at the door to welcome and direct people to the welcome table			
	Collect parent sign-up cards for **Project Citizen** volunteer opportunities			

Project Citizen "Kick -off" Event				
Day of Event				
Priority	**Activity**	**Lead Person**	**Done**	**Notes**
	Monitor and replenish food/materials as needed			
	Clean up room: put all chairs up on tables, clean up welcome and food tables			
	Take down signs			

Project Citizen "Kick-off" Event				
After the Event				
Priority	**Activity**	**Lead Person**	**Done**	**Notes**
	Debrief with the planning team and all students in the program			Identify what went well and what you would like to change for next year
	Follow-up with parents to coordinate how they will be volunteers and support **Project Citizen**			
	Review the additional parent engagement tools you will be using from the **Project Citizen** Parent Supplement and possibly send some of the Tools home as a follow up to the "Kick Off" Meeting			

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Project Citizen Benefits Handout

Benefits for Parents
• Opportunities to talk to child regarding school
• Opportunities to share past experiences/knowledge
• Opportunities to know teachers and other students
• Learn more about how to impact public policy issues
• Learn who decision-makers are in the community

Benefits for Students
• Become a better researcher
• Write a better essay
• Do a professional oral presentation
• Keep more accurate written and organized records
• Become a better team member
• Learn how to interview adults
• Develop critical thinking skills

Benefits for Teachers
• Increasing parent engagement skills
• Opportunities for teachers to get to know their students' parents better
• Opportunities for teachers to get to know their students better
• Build a parent volunteer team
• Become more effective at student-based project learning

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Activity 3. Recruit Parents as Project Citizen Volunteers

Activity 3 List of Tools

Tool 3.1 List of Volunteer Opportunities
- **Objective:** To incorporate parents into the full program in as many ways as possible in a supportive role.
- **Languages:** English and Spanish

Tool 3.2. Volunteer Information Form
- **Objective:** Potential volunteers will have a Tool to indicate their intent to participate in specific activities in which they are interested and times when they are available.
- **Languages:** English and Spanish

Tool 3.3 Tips for Volunteer Training
- **Objective:** For teachers to get to know volunteers, their interests, and how they can best support **Project Citizen**.

Tool 3.4 Guidelines for Adult Volunteer Assistance
- **Objective:** To incorporate parents into the full program in as many ways as possible in a supportive role.
- **Languages:** English and Spanish

[BEST PRACTICES]

- When schools give parents opportunities to be on the school site assisting the staff, students learn how important a quality education is to their parents.

- When parents have an opportunity to be involved with staff on campus, they realize the staff wants them and needs them to be involved in their child's education and they learn more about how school works and who to talk with when they have concerns.

How to Implement the Activity

Teachers should ask for help, and when people respond, take the time to provide a training opportunity for parents and others who can assist during the implementation of **Project Citizen.** In addition to parents, teachers may find willing volunteers among senior citizens, educational aides, youth and community organization leaders. It would be helpful to plan for the training before the opening meeting so that potential volunteers would be able to sign up and indicate best times for the training. The training can be brief, but should consist of reviewing the guidelines and opportunities above (or others related to the specific project(s) undertaken) and providing answers to questions about the program or the roles/activities of volunteers. It should also include information about the time frame for **Project Citizen** Activities. It is extremely important for the training to emphasize the difference between assisting students and doing the work for them.

Tool 3.1 List of Volunteer Opportunities

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PROJECT CITIZEN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Participation at Home and in the Community

- Participate in surveys, and/or interviews designed to obtain family input

- Help students prepare for surveys/ interviews/ and/or meetings using role-play

- Ask questions, listen to students and give input about community issues/problems – encourage students to share **Project Citizen** news with their family and friends

- Provide transportation for students to get to locations important for their research

- Accompany students to the library and other locations in the community to gather information

- Attend events where students are reporting their findings and solutions

Participation at School

- Assist with outreach to other parents: phone-banking, passing out flyers, talking about the project

- Help prepare materials for portfolios

- Listen to students practice for presentations – given a teacher created protocol, critique the presentation and assist with improvement (See Tool 10.2 Evaluation for Oral Presentation and **Project Citizen** Criteria Checklist)

- Participate in meetings, workshops, presentations about the program

- Assist with potlucks or providing other refreshments; set-up/clean-up

- Help plan and execute a culminating/celebratory event that will reflect the students' accomplishments

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Project Citizen Timeline Sample of Activities & Opportunities for Volunteers

Week #	Date	PC Activity/Opportunity for Volunteering	Notes
1	9/2/11	Return Welcome Letter/Parent Response	
1	9/5/11	Outreach Assistance: Parent Phone-Bank and/or Pass Out Flyers	Make calls to parents reminding them to attend "Kick-off" Event
1	9/7/11	Attend "Kick-off" Event	
2	9/10/11	Outreach Assistance: Parent Phone-Bank and/or Pass Out Flyers	Make calls to parents reminding them to attend Volunteer Training
2	9/12/11	Attend Volunteer Training	
2	9/13/11	Return Volunteer Information Form	
2	9/16/11	Share Parent Experiences by answering the Survey/Interview Questions with your child	Student is identifying problems in the community
2	9/17/11	Use the Family Conversation Starter sheet to help your child identify a problem for the Project Citizen Study	Student selection of public policy issue
3	9/20/11	Assist with filling out the Student Research Initial Plan	Student begins gathering information
3	9/23/11	Help the student to efficiently and effectively identify and find sources of information that will be useful with their study	Examples: newspapers, articles, computer internet access, directories of gov. officials, agencies, organizations, contact good sources within the community by writing or emailing them, etc.
4	9/25/11	Support your student in the Interview process by referring to the teacher letter regarding "Tips for Helping Students Practice their Interview Skills"	Provide transportation to places in the community to interview resource people
4	9/28/11	Utilize the Family Conversation Starters to reflect on information gathered	Questions will help your student digest the information gathered and to determine what is relevant to the study
4	9/30/11	Assist with Portfolio Development: documents, graphics, tables, charts, etc.	The portfolio allow students to share with the school, and community, the problem that they have studied and the solution they have selected
4	10/1/11	In-class Help – Portfolio Development: proofreading, evaluating charts, photographs	
5	10/3/11	Help students prepare for oral presentation and Q&A. Utilize the Evaluation for Oral Presentation as a guide	
5	10/5/11	Attend Oral Presentations	
5	10/6/11	Student Reflection – Engage your student in a conversation regarding the Project Citizen process	Utilize the Family Conversation Starter for this step
5	10/6/11	Complete the Post-Program Survey	
6	TBD	Culminating/Celebratory Event	

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Tool 3.2. Volunteer Information Form

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PROJECT CITIZEN VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM		
Volunteer Name:	**Parent:** **Community Member:** **Other:**	☐ ☐ ☐
Phone Number:	**Email Address** (if available)	
Student Name:		
How would you like to help (with students – research, prewriting process, proofreading; outreach to parents – phone banking, passing out flyers; assist/attend – meetings, presentations, recognition event etc.)?		
Days Available: Monday_____Tuesday_____Wednesday_____Thursday_____Friday_____Saturday_____		
Time of Day: AM_____ *or* PM_____		
What special skills do you have to offer:		

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Tool 3.3 Tips for Informal Volunteer Training

The information training for volunteers is a good opportunity to get to know your volunteers, their interests, and how they can best support **Project Citizen**. The training can be brief, but should consist of reviewing the guidelines and opportunities, information about the time frame for **Project Citizen** Activities, the role of a **Project Citizen** volunteer and providing answers to questions about the project or the roles/activities of volunteers. Below are tips that you can include in your informal volunteer training:

Ice-Breaker

Do an ice-breaker at the beginning of the training to build rapport with and among volunteers. You can choose an ice-breaker that you know an enjoy doing, or you can choose from the three ideas for ice-breakers below:

- **3 Questions:** Go around the room and ask the volunteers three things: 1. What is your name? 2. What do you know about **Project Citizen**, and 3. What do you hope to learn from today's training?
- **2 Minute-Mixer:** have volunteers talk to another person in the room for 2 minutes (have them introduce themselves and try to learn as much as they can about their conversation partner) and then move on to the next person. Do this for 10 minutes.
- **Two Truths and a Lie:** Each group member shares two things about themselves that are true and one thing that is a lie. The rest of the group tries to guess which of the three is the untrue statement.

Project Citizen Overview and Timeline

- Provide an overview of the program
- Review your work plan for **Project Citizen**

Review Volunteer Guidelines and Activities

- Review the guidelines for adult volunteers, Tool 3.4 Guidelines for Adult Volunteer Assistance
- Review the different types of volunteer activities, Tool 3.1 List of Volunteer Opportunities
- Emphasize that they will be supporting students not doing the work for them

Enlist Volunteers for Different Activities

- Ask volunteers what type(s) of activities they can help with
- Confirm how they can help and when they are available to volunteer
- Have volunteers fill out Tool 3.2. Volunteer Information Form and return it to you

Questions and Answers

- Spend some time during the training or at the end to address any questions from volunteers about the program or their role

INSERT SCHOOL
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Center for Civic Education

PROJECT CITIZEN CALIFORNIA

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Assisting with tasks and procedures

- Help students understand each step of the **Project Citizen** text. When necessary, explain the tasks, associated with developing the class portfolio and preparing for presentations.

Gathering Information

Help students to identify sources of information that could be useful to them. Explain how to gather information efficiently and effectively. For example, you might assist students in finding the information they need by helping them:

- o Use various resources, such as newspapers, articles, journals, radio/television interviews, and topic appropriate websites
- o Locate and use computers to access the Internet to find appropriate information or resources
- o Use telephone books or computer-based directories to locate government officials or agencies and appropriate private organizations
- o Contact people in the community who might be good sources of information
- o Write letters or email requesting information
- o Prepare to interview resource people by role-playing that person
- o Provide transportation to places in the community to gather information or to interview resource people

Preparing presentations

- Coach students in making oral presentations of their portfolio. Help arrange and organize presentations before community groups or government bodies.
- Assist students in using Student Handout 6 – "Criteria for Evaluating Your Portfolio and Preparation for the Simulated Hearing" to perform a self-assessment of their completed work.

Reflecting on the experience

- Help students prepare written statements about what they have learned by participating in **Project Citizen.** Focus attention on what knowledge they gained, what civic skills they have developed, and how their attitudes and dispositions about their role as citizens in a representative democracy changed.

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TAB III. ENGAGING FAMILIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT PROJECTS

Step I   Identify Problems in the Community

Activity 4. Sharing Parent Experiences

Activity 4 List of Tools

Tool 4.1 Survey/Interview questions to use with parents, relatives, neighbors

- **Objective:** For students to acknowledge that their parents, family members, and neighbors are important members of the community by interviewing them about their experiences taking social/political action – students' record and report on findings.
- **Languages:** English/Spanish

How to Implement the Activity

If all participating students are assigned to engage their parents in discussing community problems and community action to solve problems as they begin their project, it will increase the probability that they will engage them as the work progresses. They should be encouraged to introduce the survey/interview by reminding the participant of the letter asking for family input and participation and explaining that they are beginning their study of community problems and solutions with this survey/interview. This Activity will be more effective if implemented as an interview so the student and adult can engage in conversation that may lead to a broader sharing of information and understanding. The questions may be added too expanded upon – they should be treated as a catalyst for greater family awareness and support. This Tool is best used before classroom discussion to identify public policy problems.

The student has an opportunity to increase his/her capacity to discuss the learning in which he/she is engaged and share it with someone who has shown an interest and has some background about **Project Citizen.** Students should be required to record and report responses to their team or class.

[TIPS]

- This interview tool is a perfect opening piece for the students to begin their work of exploring problems right in their own home.

- Remember, parents are in need of opportunities to talk with their children about learning and school and life experience. Help them out by sending this interview home with the students.

- Classroom discussion after interviews will give information about student's family experiences (teachers can know more about student's cultures).

Tool 4.1 Survey/Interview questions to use with parents, relatives, neighbors

SURVEY/INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO USE WITH PARENTS, RELATIVES, NEIGHBORS *(Confirm the questions you, the teacher, want the student to use and make your own student document)*
In the past, what actions have you seen people take to improve the community? What were the results?
Have you or any family members participated in these actions? (If yes) What experiences did you/they have?
What community problems are you aware of right now? Where/How do you get information about these problems?

Here are some of the community issues we have been discussing in class and why we think they are important:
What do you think of these issues? Do you see any of them as problems that we need to solve?
What have you seen others do to help with the problem?
Whose responsibility is it to work on these issues?

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Step II Selecting a Problem for Study

Activity 5.   Parents listen and provide feedback on problem(s) chosen for study

Activity 5 List of Tools

Tool 5.1. Project Citizen Family Conversation Starters for Step II

- **Objective:** To provide parents and interested family members with ideas for questions they might ask and comments that help students to process their information, reflect on it and express their thoughts.

- **Languages:** English/Spanish

[TIP]

- Students could be given extra credit for taking notes and preparing a written report on family conversations about the community problems being studied.

How to Implement the Activity

The Tool can be sent/given to all parents of participating students and to volunteers in the appropriate languages. Sometimes parents wonder how to start a conversation about what students are doing or learning. The Tool offers conversation starters that can be useful as teams are making decisions about the problem(s) they will study, but several of them can be used at any time as the work progresses.

Tool 5.1. Project Citizen Family Conversation Starters for Step II

FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR PROJECT CITIZEN STEP II

1. I'm/We're proud that you are interested in ways to improve our community.

   - How do you feel about what you are studying in class?

   - Do you think you are making a difference? How?

2. What have you learned so far? Anything new since the last time we talked?

   - What is a public policy in your own words?

   - What are some public policies our city, state, or country makes?

3. Why does your team see _____as a problem?

   - Is it because there is no existing law or policy

   - Is it because a law or policy is not being enforced and/or doesn't work well?

4. Do you think others in the community see _____ as a problem or not? Why?

   - Who might want this problem fixed or be against it?

5. How does this issue/problem affect us as a family/ as a community?

   - I think community members have tried to solve this problem before by _____.

6. How did you determine that _____ is a public policy issue?

   - I saw an article about _____ in _____.

   - I heard _____ mentioned (on) (by)_____.

7. I wonder if ordinary citizens can have any effect on _____.

   - What do you think we can do?

8. One improvement I've seen in our community is _____.

   - I think that happened because_____.

9. Tell me what you know about the (the city, the county, the state, the federal government).

   - Which one deals with the problem you're talking about and should they be involved?

   - Who else do you think should be involved with this problem other than government?

   - Are there civil society groups that might be interested in tackling this problem?

10. What will the next steps be for you and the team?

Step III Gathering information

Activity 6. Supporting Students in the Various Aspects of Data Collection

Activity 6 List of Tools

Tool 6.1 Student Research Initial Plan

- **Objective:** Students will provide information about the resources they need and seek the support of a significant adult in obtaining them.

How to Implement the Activity

Students may use program materials under Step 3 (Level 1 p. 18-27 and Level 2 p. 38-48) to engage their parents at this stage of the program. However, the concise Information Sheet for the Initial Planning (Tool 6.1) helps students to summarize their tasks as they request assistance with their research from any adult. The goal of the teacher should be to take advantage of student Activity outside of the classroom – an excellent opportunity to involve more community adults in the program.

Tool 6.1 Student Research Initial Plan

STUDENT RESEARCH INITIAL PLAN
The problem we are studying is:
Dates projected for research:
I need to find out:
People I need to see:
Places I need to go:
Additional resources (books, websites, magazines etc.):
Please give me the names of anybody in the community that you think could help me find out more about:

Notes from student/parent conversation:

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Activity 7. Teacher Letter with Tips for Helping Students Practice their Interview Skills

Activity 7 List of Tools

Tool 7.1 Teacher Letter with Tips for Helping Students Practice their Interview Skills and for Accompanying Students on Interviews

- **Objective:** Parents and family members can help students to practice introducing themselves, explaining **Project Citizen**, and the specific problems they are studying and practicing.
- **Languages:** English/Spanish

How to Implement this Activity

This Tool can be sent/given to all parents of participating students and to volunteers in the appropriate languages. Teachers will work with students on interview skills in class. They should encourage students to share the Tips above and ask a family member to help them practice. Students should also be encouraged to engage parents or a significant adult to accompany them when they go into the community to gather information. This person can serve as another set of eyes and ears and can help the student reflect on his/her learning later. It is important however, to remind the accompanying adult to let the student do the work of actually asking the questions and obtaining the information.

[TIP]

- Students should be encouraged to send thank you notes to community persons who take time to meet with them. If parents accompany them, perhaps parents and students could prepare thank you notes together.

- Students should be encouraged to set up their own interviews appointments.

Tool 7.1 Teacher Letter with Tips for Helping Students Practice their Interview Skills and for Accompanying Students on Interviews

TEACHER LETTER WITH TIPS FOR HELPING STUDENTS PRACTICE THEIR INTERVIEW SKILLS AND ACCOMPANYING STUDENTS ON INTERVIEWS

Dear Parent:

Project Citizen participants have decided on the problem we will study. We are now beginning the exciting phase of our process when we will need your help as we gather information and learn more about the problem and ways to solve it. To do this, we will be going out into the community and talking with people who can provide us with information and ideas.

Parents and family members can play an important role in helping students prepare for an interview. Remember that it is normal to be a little uncomfortable when we meet new people, especially when they are leaders or are well known officials in the community. It can be extremely helpful for the interviewer to have his/her introduction and questions written down and practice reading them out loud two or three times before the interview.

Things to look for when students present information:

1. Students should be well groomed and wear appropriate attire demonstrating respect to the interviewee.
2. Students should speak clearly and should look at the interviewee's eyes when introducing themselves.
3. They should shake the right hand of the person(s) they are meeting.
4. They should have memorized a 2-3 sentence explanation of **Project Citizen** and how they hope to help the community so that they can look directly at the person(s) to whom they are speaking.
5. Each time they read a question, they should look back at the interviewee as he/she begins to answer. Then go ahead and take notes on the answer.
6. Students should be reminded to listen carefully, to ask questions about anything they don't understand and to make sure that they are clear about the information they have received.
7. Students should end the interview by thanking the interviewee for his/her assistance and finding out the best time and contact number/email address in case more information is needed.
8. Remind your child to send a thank you note following the interview.
9. Your child will share more details with you about specific fact-finding visits to places in the community. Please consider accompanying him/her on these visits. It will deepen your understanding of the project and the issues we are addressing. It is important to remember, however, that it is the student who must actually conduct the interviews and perform any other tasks to gather the necessary information.

Thank you for your interest and support. We look forward to your continued participation.

Sincerely:

(Teacher signature)

(Teacher name)

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Activity 8. Provide parents with suggestions that support students' reflections as they are gathering information.

Activity 8 List of Tools

Tool 8.1 Family Conversation Starters for Project Citizen Step III

- **Objective:** For parents to continue to stay in touch with the process and demonstrate their interest.
- **Languages:** English/Spanish

How to Implement this Activity

This Tool can be sent/given to all parents of participating students and to volunteers in the appropriate languages. Sometimes parents wonder how to start a conversation about what students are doing or learning. The Tool offers conversation starters that can be useful as teams proceed with their research.

[TIP]

- Teachers could give a packet of these types of tools to parents when they attend the initial welcome event, or send them home in a packet as a follow up to the welcome event.
- It can be very helpful for parents to receive tips and tools over the course of the project. These documents will help them stay involved.

Tool 8.1 Family Conversation Starters for Project Citizen Step III

Family Conversation Starters for Project Citizen Step III

Parents, here are some questions to help you have your conversation with your child

- You interviewed _____ today. How do you think the interview went? _____ _____

- What did _____ think of your project? Did he/she have any suggestions?_____

- What new information did you get about _____?

- Did _____ think that _____ is a serious problem?_____

- I saw that you were reading _____. Were you able to find any helpful information?_____

- What do you think about that information/those ideas?_____ _____

- Have you thought about _____?

- It seems to me that you are finding valuable information. Have you had a chance to share your research with your teacher and classmates? What did they say/think?

- I like the work that you are doing – I think it will be helpful to our community.

- You seem to be learning a great deal. I'm really proud of you.

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TAB IV. ENGAGING FAMILIES IN THE PRESENTATION AND REVIEW OF THE STUDENT PROJECT

Step IV Portfolio Process

Activity 9. Prepare volunteers to assist with the Portfolio Development

Activity 9 List of Tools

Tools 9.1 Summary of the Requirements for the Project Citizen Portfolio

- **Objective:** To help parents/community volunteers to understand the requirements for the **Project Citizen** portfolio.
- **Languages:** English/Spanish

[TIP]

- Sometimes volunteers are used to help students design the layout and make the appropriate graphics that will be used on the portfolio.

How to Implement this Activity

Parents and volunteers who will support this phase of the process should be given an orientation to the requirements for a well done portfolio. One method would be a workshop with student participation sharing the information in Tool 9.1. By understanding exactly what the expectations are volunteers can assist in organizing materials, making suggestions, reviewing student work and giving students feedback and praise.

Tools 9.1 Summary of the Requirements for the Project Citizen Portfolio

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SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROJECT CITIZEN PORTFOLIO

Purpose: The portfolio allow students to share with the school, and community, the problem that they have studied and the solution they have selected

There are four parts to the portfolio:

1. A detailed explanation of the problem
2. Alternative policies to address the problem
3. An explanation and justification for the students' proposed public policy solution
4. The action plan to try to get the proposed public policy adopted and implemented

The portfolio will consist of four panels, each one containing documents, graphic figures and tables under the four sections identified above, with support and supplementary information in a 3-ring binder.

(In addition, the Portfolio Criteria Checklist, Level 1 p. 49 or Level 2 Teacher's Guide p 105 should be translated and used with this Tool)

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Step V Oral Presentation/Showcase

Activity 10. Help students prepare for oral presentation and Q&A

Activity 10 List of Tools

[TIP]
- Parents should be invited to all formal presentations and showcase events for the project.

How to Implement the Activity

It is important that parents be prepared to support the students as they present themselves and their work to the community at large. The participation of families at this stage will strengthen the students' confidence and courage and increase positive communication between parent and child. Parents tend to respond when their children ask them to come out for a performance. If students are going to present their work to official bodies or participate in other showcase events, this initial presentation will serve as an excellent preparation for those activities. If not, they will have had at least one opportunity to share their work and receive community recognition.

Tool 10.1 is a protocol for students to invite their family, friends, and community members to their initial classroom presentations. During this time, audience members should be encouraged to provide constructive feedback to students on the content of their presentations. Tool 10.2 asks that families offer feedback specifically on student skills for their oral presentation— when used together, Tools 10.1 and 10.2 could be a great way for audience members to provide students with a holistic review of their presentations. The Tools can be used separately; however, audience members should be encouraged to use them together.

The day of the initial presentations, provide the audience members with copies of Tool 10.2 Sample Evaluation for Oral Presentation. The audience can also be given a copy of the checklist mentioned in 9.1 Summary of the Requirements for the **Project Citizen** portfolio or a summary version of it as well. All guests should be encouraged to join in the process of evaluating the students' work by talking with others in the audience.

Tool 10.1 Student Invitation for parents announcing student's initial classroom presentation with opportunity for feedback

---

STUDENT INVITATION TO PARENTS

Directions: Students please write an invitation to your parents, family, and friends. Please make sure to include the following:

- Announce the final stage of the program: they have completed the four phases of the study and are ready to present their findings
- Provide a title for the presentation
- Give the date, time, location of the presentation
- Request the attendance of family members and let them know that they will be giving feedback to help the team prepare for their hearing/showcase
- Request a response naming those who will attend
- Thank parents for their interest and support

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SAMPLE EVALUATION FOR ORAL PRESENTATION

Please circle a number to show how well you agree or don't agree with the statement.

Weak ----------------- Strong

The speaker(s) spoke clearly and loudly enough to be heard easily	1	2	3	4
The speaker(s) made eye contact with the audience	1	2	3	4
The speaker's(s') posture and hand movements were appropriate	1	2	3	4
The speaker(s) was well informed and knew their material	1	2	3	4
The speaker(s) shared the responsibility of the presentation	1	2	3	4
The speaker(s) made a strong argument of their proposed policy and why it was important to the community	1	2	3	4
I understood the solution that was proposed and strengths and weakness for each of the alternative policies	1	2	3	4
I understood the explanation of the action plan	1	2	3	4

What I liked about the presentation was_____

_____

_____

_____

Recommendations for improvement_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Step VI Reflection

Activity 11: Parents and family members promote greater reflection on the student's part.

Activity 11 List of Tools

Tool 11.1 Family Conversation Starters for Project Citizen Step IV
- **Objective:** To encourage parents to support student reflection on the **Project Citizen** process through both positive and critical prompts.
- **Languages:** English/Spanish

Tool 11.2 Post Program Parent Survey
- **Objective:** For parents to reflect on their role in the **Project Citizen** process.
- **Languages:** English/Spanish

How to Implement the Activity 11.1
This Tool can be sent/given to all parents of participating students and to volunteers in the appropriate languages. Sometimes parents wonder how to start a conversation about what students are doing or learning. Students also, sometimes wonder what you mean when you ask them to "reflect". The Tool offers conversation starters that can be useful to promote greater depth in a student's reflection process. They are also reflective of the adult's appreciation for student effort, learning and efficacy in the community. The Tool also offers ideas for helping students to evaluate and consider areas for development.

How to Implement the Activity 11.2
The survey should be sent home with every student who participates in **Project Citizen** regardless of whether a parent or family member has participated in events at school. Students should be assigned to get at least one family member's input and should be given credit/incentives for returning completed surveys.

.

Tool 11.1 Family Conversation Starters for Project Citizen Step IV

FAMILY CONVERSTATION STARTERS FOR PROJECT CITIZEN STEP IV

Parents, here are some questions to help you have your conversation with your child

Effort
- You and your team worked very hard on **Project Citizen**. We're so proud of you!
- You had great ideas for solutions and how to improve the situation. I'm impressed!
- Your teacher must be really happy about the way your team cooperated and finished your work on time.
- What was the most difficult part doing **Project Citizen**?

Learning
- What did you enjoy most about the **Project Citizen**?
- What was the most interesting thing you learned?
- You were so knowledgeable – and it showed when you made your presentation.
- Do you see any way that you can use this new knowledge in the future?
- It must be wonderful to see that work you are doing in school can mean so much to the community!

Results
- I think the solution that your team offered was really well thought out – I hope the _____ will take action on it. What do you think they will do?
- What do you like about the action plan? Do you think it will work?
- I think the _____ seemed very interested. She/he asked a lot of questions!
- Imagine that in a year or two, we may look back and realize that your team/class started a program/policy that has helped our community by_____. That is quite an accomplishment!
- What else do you think people in the community can do to support your team's solution?

Self-Evaluation
- Is there anything you wish your team had done differently during work on **Project Citizen**? Why do you believe that would have been a better way?
- Think about all the ways you helped your team to complete its work. Do you think you did your best – or are there ways you think you could have supported the team more?
- Now that you've had a chance to hear feedback from some other people, is there any way you would change your team's proposed policy?
- Now that you've completed the project, are there any recommendations you would make to a new team just starting **Project Citizen**?
- If you worked on a project like this next year, what would you do differently?

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Tool 11.2 Post Program Parent Survey

Project Citizen Sample Parent Survey

Your child has just completed his/her work with the **Project Citizen** Team. We hope that you have been receiving information and have been participating in his/her work. Please let us know how well we have kept you engaged in this work by filling out our survey and returning it to our class.

1. Please place a check beside those **Project Citizen** activities in which you participated:

   _____Attended Kick-off event   _____Participated in survey/interview

   _____Accompanied student to interview   _____Asked student questions/discuss responses

   _____ Offered student ideas/comments   _____Volunteered to help Team at school

   _____Attended team presentations   _____Helped student to reflect on **Project Citizen**

2. Did your child explain the purpose of **Project Citizen** to you?   _____yes_____no
3. Did your child's teacher communicate with you about the program?   _____yes _____no
4. Did you feel that members of your family learned more about community issues
   as your child participated in **Project Citizen**?   _____yes_____no
5. Did your child ask you for ideas about important community problems?   _____yes _____no
6. Did you have an opportunity to talk about solutions to the problems?   _____yes_____no
7. Please use the space below to answer the questions:
   How did **Project Citizen** benefit your child? _____
   _____
   _____

   Did you or your family benefit from participating in **Project Citizen**? How?_____
   _____
   _____
   _____

   Do you feel that the community is benefiting from **Project Citizen**? How? _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

   Do you see any way that **Project Citizen** teams could improve their outreach to parents and families?_____
   _____
   _____

   What aspect of **Project Citizen** did you enjoy the most?_____
   _____

Activity 12 Parents help design and implement Culminating Activity/Celebratory Event

Activity 12 List of Tools

Tool 12.1. Ideas for a Culminating Activity/Celebratory Event
- **Objective:** Recommendations for an event that brings together the school-community or key segments of the school-community to recognize the **Project Citizen** participants including volunteers and family members who have contributed to the effort.

Tool 12.2 Culminating Activity/Celebratory Event Planning Suggestions
- **Objective:** To provide a framework for a parent group, Parent Community Rep, or collaborative group to plan a celebratory event.

Tool 12.3 Sample Planning Template for a Culminating Activity/Celebratory Event
- **Objective:** To provide a framework for a parent group, Parent Community Rep, or collaborative group to plan a celebratory event.

Tool 12.4 Parent/Volunteer Recognition Certificate
- **Objective:** To recognize volunteer participation and work in supporting **Project Citizen**.

[TIP]
- You want all parents at this event--Be sure to reach out in various ways to all of the students' parents.

How to Use Implement the Activity

A celebratory event is a way of acknowledging and appreciating all stakeholders who have helped to implement the program. Often those who have not participated in any other way will make the effort to be present for a culmination and help to recognize those who have participated.

Tool 12.1 offers suggestions for several kinds of events. Notice that the one of the suggestions combines the program presentation/showcase with the celebration. The important ingredient for the presentation/showcase is the opportunity for recognition and closure. The fact that it is a single event that takes place in a short time frame may provide parents who would like to participate in a limited way a vehicle to do so. At the same time, it is an opportunity to review the purposes and outcomes of the effort by presenting a video or short overview of the program. This is also an excellent opportunity for parents to plan and execute the Activity perhaps with the support of the Parent Center or Parent Community Rep. The event planners could use several Tools to help them with their planning. Tool 12.2 Culminating Activity/Celebratory Event Planning Suggestions provides some general ideas of what to include in the event. Tool 12.3 Sample Planning Template for a Culminating Activity/Celebratory Event is designed for a parent group, and/or Parent Community Rep to plan out the specific logistics that need to be completed before, during, and after the Activity.

Tool 12.1. Ideas for a Culminating Activity/Celebratory Event

Ideas for a Culminating Activity/Celebratory Event

- Reception following a presentation of the **Project Citizen** Showcase

- Potluck or banquet dinner to which all participants, their families, volunteers and key staff are invited

- An assembly attended by members of the student body and participants including volunteers and families

- A party at a community location that has been important for the program with all participants, volunteers, significant community members invited

- An open house where the project(s) is/are displayed, light refreshments are provided and school and community members can attend over a given period of time to talk with participants and congratulate them.

- Recognition event dedicated to oral presentations and display of portfolios attended by key stakeholders - PTA/PTSA, local organizations, School Board, etc. that bring value to participants' efforts.

- Acknowledge students by rewarding them with a blurb of their Project Citizen Study in the school newsletter, scholarships, certificates at an important event.

Tool 12.2 Culminating Activity/Celebratory Event Planning Suggestions

Culminating Activity/Celebratory Event Planning Suggestions

It is a time to bring all **Project Citizen** participants together and celebrate the team's hard work. Consider including the following logistics/activities when planning your culminating event:

- Event Invite
    - All invitees should receive a written invitation to the event.
        - The participation of all officials/community leaders who have been included in the study would lend significance to the event.
- Guest Speakers
    - Invite a guest speaker to welcome everyone. This speaker could be the school principal, superintendent, or city official.
- Recognition:
    - Invite each parent up one by one to be recognized.
    - Encourage parents to share reflections of what they learned.
    - Every participant should be awarded a certificate that acknowledges his/her specific role and officials/community leaders who have participated should be acknowledged.
- Culmination Gift:
    - Provide each Team Member with a _____as a culmination gift.
- Refreshments:
    - Celebrate with light refreshments. Often, local business and restaurants will donate food for an educational/youth program.
- Party Decor:
    - Have balloons, banners, or party table covers to make it seem like a party and celebration!
- Documentation:
    - Take pictures during the event to share in your school newsletter and funders.
- Close your program:
    - Ask the teacher to close the program. Express what you've learned and you hope everyone has learned. Thank everyone for participating.
- Evaluation:
    - Have the parents complete the program post-survey.

Tool 12.3 Sample Planning Template for a Culminating Activity/Celebratory Event

Project Citizen "Celebratory" Event			
Before the Event			
Activity	**Lead Person**	✓ **Done**	**Notes**
Plan the event agenda			
Create event invitation			
Send home event invitations			Also give event invitations to appropriate school staff, and send invitations to non-school staff
Hang **Project Citizen** posters (where appropriate)			**Project Citizen** posters can be ordered from the Center for Civic Education Call: 818-591-9321 for more information.
Make list of all invitees			
Make phone calls to all invitees			
Make reminder calls the week before the event			
Set up Marquee (if available)			
Distribute flyers at Parent Center and school offices			
Write and set up student announcement			
Send electronic invites by email			
Sign-up for refreshments (who brings what)			
Purchase small gift for parents (if able)			
Prepare sign-in sheets with pre-registered parents, students, and community members (print)			
Find camera to use for pictures			
Create Parent/Volunteer Recognition Certificates (to recognize their participation and volunteer work)			
Prepare decorations and celebratory music			
Day of Event			
Activity	**Lead Person**	**Done**	**Notes**
Arrive at least 1 hour before event to set up			
Put up balloons, banners, or party table covers			
Set up welcome tables: place at least 5 chairs at welcome table for helpers to staff the tables; include sign-in sheets, pens for sign-in, name tags			
Set up food tables: put out juice, water, snacks, cups, paper plates, napkins.			
Hang directional signs			
Set up student displays around the room			
Staff someone at the door to welcome and direct people to the welcome table			
Collect the post-program parent survey Tool 11.2			

Activity	Lead Person	Done	Notes
Parent Survey from parents			
Take pictures examples: welcome table, speakers, parents receiving their certificates			
Clean up room: put all chairs up on tables (if at school site), clean up welcome and food tables			
Take down signs			
After the Event			
Activity	**Lead Person**	**Done**	**Notes**
Review the post-program survey Tool 11.2 Parent Survey to identify ways to improve the program next year and to identify areas where the team should be praised for doing a good job engaging parents in the **Project Citizen** program.			
Have a debrief meeting with the entire **Project Citizen** team (including students) to make plans for next year. (This will help teachers build a cadre of volunteers)			
Send Thank You letter to everyone that helped with event.			Make a list of everyone that helped with the event. Divide the list among students—have every student write a least 1-3 Thank You letters.

Tina, from Center for Civic Education, will be sending a template teachers can use. KMM 11/11/10

TAB V. MARKETING PROJECT CITIZEN TO FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

Levels of Outreach

Effective outreach to parents requires cultural and practical know-how – it requires thoughtful planning. Too often school staff sends a letter home and believe they have fulfilled their responsibility to inform parents. The list below is a Tool with sample outreach strategies to help you think broadly and deeply about ways to communicate with families.

The outreach strategies are ordered from the <u>least direct</u> to the <u>most direct</u> forms of communication. All methods of outreach are useful, however, <u>the more direct and interactive the form of communication, the more effective</u> it tends to be in getting the message across to families.

Once you identify where your audience can be found, you can use any of the sample strategies to guide your outreach efforts to parents.

Outreach Strategies/Examples

- o Letter/information sent by mail
- o Letter/information carried by student
- o Email sent by child's teacher
- o Information provided on Main Office/Attendance Office counter
- o Letter/ information passed out on campus, in front of school, curbside, parking lot
- o Information passed out/posted in the community: stores, centers, churches, library, community meetings
- o Class/School Newsletter sent home

Posted information

- o Information/newsletter posted on the school/class website
- o Information posted on billboard/marquis in front of school
- o Information posted in the front office/main hallway
- o Information posted by classroom door (**Project Citizen** poster is available from the Center for Civic Education).

Student Involvement in Parent Outreach

- o Student assignment to initiate home-school 2-way communication
    - ▪ Letter/response, announcement/invitation response
    - ▪ Student-created letter/invitation
- o Interview/survey recorded, reported results
- o Incentive/credit for completion of outreach tasks

Telephone Communication

- o Connect Ed/Telephonic message system
- o Direct phone call teacher to parent/group of parents
- o Follow-up phone call made to parent by Parent Center staff or parent leader

Face-to- face Communication

- o Announcement, information table/booth at school-wide event Registration, Back-to-school Night, Open house, Fair, Student performance , Career Day, Cultural celebration, Fundraiser
- o Group meeting
- o Parent Center activities/ Parent Community Rep outreach
- o Individual Parent-Teacher Conference
- o Student-led Parent-Teacher Conference
- o Staff/Parent/student-led workshop/training
- o Parent-Teacher Home Visit

Importance of Language Access

It is essential to be cognizant of and responsive to the linguistic and cultural groups served by the school in order to reach out effectively to all families. Often Second Language Learners can communicate in the language, but need translation in order to fully understand written material.

Translation is the transfer of written material to another language and the word is often used for both written and oral communication. Interpretation is the transfer of oral language while it is being produced. In addition to providing materials in parent's primary language, it is especially effective to provide simultaneous interpretation during meetings and workshops. When this is not possible, consecutive interpretation is slower, but better than having attendees miss out on vital information.

If you have difficulty getting assistance with interpretation/translation from your school or district, other resources are: on-line help with native speaker review, student efforts, parent and community leaders, other staff members. Google Translate is a good Tool for translating text, web pages, and documents from English into 57 different languages including Spanish. You can also use Google Translate text from one of the 57 languages into English.

Google Translate URL: **http://translate.google.com/#**

Collaboration with Parent Center Coordinators/ Parent Community Representatives

Many schools have a Parent Center Coordinator or Parent Community Representative (Rep), however, few schools fully utilize the services of these support providers. The implementation of **Project Citizen** affords an ideal opportunity to set up a collaboration that demonstrates the effective instructional integration of a Coordinator or Rep. Because the program is designed to have an effect on the community that surrounds the school, all members of the school community should be aware of its purpose and goals. All parent groups and organizations should be informed – students could be the ambassadors who explain the process. The Parent Center or Parent Community Rep should be an integral partner in designing and executing parent/community outreach strategies. They would be the most likely persons to know about the scheduled meetings of School Advisory committees, PTA/PTSA, booster clubs and community gatherings during which information can be disseminated.

Before **Project Citizen** is launched, teacher leaders should meet with the Coordinator/Rep and an administrator to explain the purpose and goals of the student activities and the importance of family and community engagement. Teachers should share this Supplement and point out the activities that they want to use to support their efforts. They should also share a calendar that highlights the phases of the program and projected timelines.

The Coordinator/Rep should help to plan his/her outreach activities to support the process in which the teams are engaged. For example, the Coordinator/Rep can recruit other parent leaders and be prepared to develop and pass out parent-friendly flyers that inform the school-community of the Kick-off Meeting. She/he might organize a group of Resource Parents to call participants' parents to remind them to attend meetings, or events. He/she might help to plan workshops and trainings for parents and help set them up. Volunteer recruitment and training can be organized by the Coordinator/Rep. (additions to be made)

On-going use of Connect-Ed/telephonic messages for updates

If your school has a telephone messaging system that is used to communicate with the entire school community, it would be an excellent Tool for keeping all stakeholders abreast of major developments in the program: i.e. the kick-off/opening meeting, students, teachers/ classes that are participating, announcement of the community problem(s) that will be addressed, news about student meetings with community leaders/officials, presentations/showcase events, culmination events. See the sample announcement for a helpful format. Messaging systems usually can send specific messages to a limited audience, so parents of participating students could be sent targeted messages more frequently or in greater detail when desirable.

Sample Telephone Message: (45 sec) (preferably student voice)

Students, Parents and Staff: _____(class)_____ (is/are) excited to announce that we are participating in **Project Citizen.** We will begin work on a special project to investigate the main problems that our community here in _____is currently facing. We will be investigating, not only the problems, but also the best solutions that we can find. We intend to present our solutions to public officials and actually get them to take action to solve at least one of these problems. The kick-off/opening meeting for the project will take place on _____date/time_____ at _____. You are all invited to join us and hear more about the

work we will be doing and how you can help. Please stay ALERT – you will be hearing more about **Project Citizen** – Democracy in Action - in the near future.

If a student is to record the message, please make sure that he/she is coached and rehearsed so that the message is delivered with clarity, proper inflection and energy.

Coffee/Tea/Juice with Principal, Project Citizen Teachers and students

Many schools are finding that when parents and interested persons from the community come into the school for informal gatherings with school administrators and teachers, the school community begins to develop greater understanding and mutual respect. School staff or parents may offer a topic/question that represents a current concern. Often administrators or teachers bring information that opens a discussion to share, however, the purpose of the gathering is openness and mutual sharing – so the interaction may "flow" in many directions. This is not a business meeting where the participants are striving to get through an agenda and make decisions. A consensus may result from the discussion, or the group may recommend that some other entity/committee will make decision/plans and use their ideas as a basis for future action. A main attraction of these gatherings is the opportunity for all school-community members with mutual interests to share refreshments and fellowship. The event is scheduled for a regular time and place and everyone is welcome to participate as equal contributors to their school. Such a gathering is an ideal place for **Project Citizen** participants to inform school-community members of their work and their progress. It is also an ideal place to seek support. If the school does not normally provide this type of setting for interaction and collaboration, perhaps the **Project Citizen** team(s) could introduce the strategy as one of the more effective parent engagement methods currently being used at transformative schools.

Potlucks, Partnering with Restaurants

An informational event organized in conjunction with a potluck can be a highly successful strategy to obtain buy-in from potential volunteers as well as parents who rarely attend events at school. Most families eat an evening meal – sometimes not seated around the same table as a family. Yet many parents agree that they enjoy those times when the family can sit down and have a meal together. The **Project Citizen** team could collaborate with the Parent Center Coordinator or Parent Community Rep to organize a Potluck using volunteers. Guidelines and a sign-up system for food and refreshments could be developed by parent leaders. Please see the Tool for Event Planning p. 16.

Partnering with a restaurant during the dinner hour is another version of this strategy that has been used by a **Project Citizen** Team in Los Angeles. It requires less organization of the event, but more outreach in the community to recruit a restaurant(s) that is/are willing to become a partner(s). However, since the idea is to engage community leaders in problem-solving, it could further enhance the impact of the Team's work in the community. Parents would be invited to purchase dinner at the participating restaurant at a discount. Parents would sign up family members to attend and the restaurant would reserve enough space for the group to sit together. The Team would plan to present information about their project toward the end of the meal.

The Importance of Tracking Outreach Strategies

Ask a volunteer, the students, or a Parent Rep to help you track your success in reaching parents. Be sure to always have sign-in sheets at events and to make notes about calls attempted and calls completed. The team can gather together at certain points during the **Project Citizen** process and share their notes, review results (what is working /what is not), and make plans for how to reach those families who do not seem to be responding to the outreach efforts.

The Importance of the School's "Welcome Mat"

Schools that truly value parents as partners are culturally different from schools that do not. *Beyond the Bake Sale: the essential guide to family-school partnerships by* Henderson, Mapp, Johnson and Davies(2007) shares a description of four kinds of schools: partnership schools, open-door schools, come-if we-call schools and fortress schools. The authors offer a detailed description of each approach to parent engagement in an effort to have school communities evaluate their progress toward becoming a community that engages all parents and serves all students.

Some of the signs of a welcoming environment are:

- Friendly signs around the school that express invitation/appreciation
- Standards for welcoming behavior applied to all staff
- A friendly and informative front office
- A family resource room or parent center
- A family liaison, coordinator, representative
- Frequent interaction and strong relationships between teachers and parents
- Frequent two-way communication between teachers and parents, including home visits
- Parent input in planning for family engagement
- School councils and committees that reflect the cultural/language diversity of the community
- Easy accessibility to the administrators, teachers, support staff
- Families learning about the school system and how to advocate for their children
- Teachers and administrators learning about effective ways to communicate and work with families
- Opportunities for families and staff to learn together and collaborate
- The school reaching out to access local community resources and support

Transformative schools – schools that are determined to serve the needs of even their most challenged and challenging students – work diligently to improve their relationships with their students' families and to invite the support of the community in which they reside.

Project Citizen encourages teachers to become aware of the quality of the welcoming environment in your school. Your efforts to engage parents in **Project Citizen** may be easier if your school is already working to create a welcoming environment for families. However, if your school needs to improve in the area of parent engagement, you have in your hands a powerful opportunity to help lead the way. This supplement offers Tools to engage families in each step of a wonderful learning process that can demonstrate in a concrete way the value of educational partnerships.