

Frequently Asked Questions

The Seal of Civic Readiness and How to Apply

Q1: What is the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness (NYSSCR)?

A: The Seal of Civic Readiness is a formal recognition that a student has attained a prominent level of proficiency in civic knowledge, civic skills, civic mindset, and civic experiences. The Seal of Civic Readiness distinction on a high school transcript and diploma

- Indicates the student's understanding of and commitment to participatory government, civic responsibility, and civic values;
- Provides universities and colleges with a method to recognize and provide credit for attainment of higher level of understanding and skills in Social Studies;
- Demonstrates to universities, colleges, and future employers that students have earned recognition for their civic knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences; and
- Recognizes the value of civic engagement and scholarship to school communities and society at large.

Q2: What are the benefits for implementing the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness in School Districts?

A: High quality, school-based civic learning fosters civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, or dispositions, and promotes civic equality and engagement. It connects scholarship to real-world learning experiences that promote active civic participation in communities. In addition, progression through the skills and competencies of the Seal include:

- ***Fostering Civic Knowledge, Skills, Mindsets:*** When students engage in school-based civic learning and civic action projects they broaden and deepen their civic knowledge and understanding, and their civic mindsets are nurtured and refined.
- ***Promotes Civic Equity:*** Universally available, high-quality civic learning opportunities can help by elevating historically marginalized voices and communities.
- ***Builds 21st Century Skills:*** Students develop and hone presentation, media-literacy, collaborative, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.
- ***Improves School Climate and Community Involvement:*** Real world learning experiences further connects students to their schools and neighborhood communities. Through civic action projects, young people learn how to navigate the world outside of the classroom, learn respectful dialogue, collaboration, and teamwork, and develop an appreciation for diversity.

Q3: Is the Seal of Civic Readiness part of the College, Career, and Civic Readiness (CCR) Index for ESSA?

A: The CCR Index calculates the percentage of students in the accountability cohort who demonstrate readiness as measured by diplomas, credentials, advanced course credits and enrollment, technical education certifications, HSE diplomas and other similar indicators. The index is on a scale of 200 and each student in the cohort can earn a maximum of two points towards the index. For example, if a school has 100 students and all earn two points, the school's index score would be 200. You can find the weight assigned to the different indicators of readiness on the [State Accountability Resource Tool \(StART\) Educator Guide here](#). Graduating

with a Seal of Civic Readiness has a weight of two. Students who demonstrate readiness through multiple indicators get credit for the one with the highest weight.

Q4: What are the requirements for students interested in receiving the NYSSCR?

A: Students who wish to receive the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness shall complete all requirements for a New York State local or Regent’s diploma.

Q5: Who awards the NYSSCR to the students?

A: The NYSSCR is an award given by a school that has been approved by NYSED to grant the Seal. The school formally recognizes students who have demonstrated proficiencies in civic knowledge and participation by high school graduation.

Q6: Can the Seal of Civic Readiness be granted to students who are earning a local diploma?

A: Yes, the Seal of Civic Readiness is open to all students who earn a NYS diploma.

Q7: What are the criteria for attaining the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness?

A: The criteria require students to meet both academic and participation criteria. There is a level of choice for students that is reflective of the diversity of their experiences and backgrounds as well as the diversity of New York State school systems. Students must demonstrate proficiencies in civic knowledge and civic participation as measured in the Seal of Civic Readiness criteria.

Q8: Is there a cost to students for the Seal?

A: No. A fee may not be charged to students who participate in the NYSSCR program.

Q9: Who provides the physical Seal and any graduation regalia to the students?

A: It is the school’s or district’s decision whether to provide physical printed seals. The Department does not provide physical seals, but an electronic image of the seal will be made available by the Department.

Q10: To get more information on and/or to ask questions about the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness, which office do I contact?

A: Contact the Office of Standards and Instruction at p12standardsinstruction@nysed.gov

Q11: Where is the application located?

A: The application to offer the Seal of Civic Readiness is now available for all districts and schools in the SED Monitoring and Vendor Performance System located within the [Application Business Portal](#).

Q12: Is there a role for community members or organizations?

A: Yes. Civic readiness and engagement involve students interacting in meaningful ways with the local community, government representatives, civic organizations, etc. The role of civic groups and organizations is extremely important to the process. There are several entry points for districts to involve community members or organizations. Districts may choose to include a community member on its NYSSCR committee, as a member of the evaluation committee for the student’s civic project, or as student mentors.

Q13: In districts with multiple high schools, can a single high school create its own program?

A: Yes. In large school districts with multiple high schools, a single high school may form a SCR committee and create an independent NYSSCR program within the district.

Q14: What information do schools need to submit to NYSED if they plan to award the Diploma Seal?

A: Schools need to complete the Seal of Civic Readiness Application on [NYSED's business portal](#). This application will include contact information and detailed narratives describing how the district will provide opportunities for students to earn the Seal of Civic Readiness.

Q15: Is there a timeline for NYSSCR program activities?

A: The school-based SCR Committee will be responsible for creating a timeline for all activities pertaining to the NYSSCR program. This will include outreach, a student advisement schedule, and dates for important benchmarks throughout the year.

Student and Community Outreach

Q16: When should a student be educated about NYSSCR?

A: Guidance counselors and teachers may begin speaking to students as early as possible so that they may begin planning their course of study and potential projects. While this is designed as a culminating high school project, students may begin developing ideas or becoming engaged in a civics-related course of action much earlier. Possible entry points for planning and involvement may begin in the early high school years, middle school, and even elementary school. Students can earn points toward the NYSSCR by completing a Middle School Capstone Project. However, students are not at a disadvantage if they begin the Capstone project in high school.

Q17: Can students begin working towards a NYSSCR before high school?

A: Yes. Students can earn points toward the NYSSCR by completing a Middle School Capstone Project. Schools/Districts are advised to create a Middle School Seal of Civic Readiness subcommittee to collaborate with Social Studies teachers to develop the Middle School Capstone project(s).

Q18: How should the District's Seal of Civic Readiness Committee promote the Seal?

A: The district's committee must decide on methods for communicating the NYSSCR program to its students, parents, faculty, and community, which may include informational meetings, parent letters, newsletters, school website, workshops, assemblies, and coverage in the local media. Information presented would contain background information on the NYSSCR, NYSSCR contact information, the student application process, the advisement process, and proficiency criteria.

Advisement

Q19: Should students be set up with an advisor after they apply?

A: Once the committee has received the application, it is recommended but not required that students be assigned an advisor who will remain with the student through the completion of the program requirements. Ideally, the advisor will review the requirements with the students and meet with him/her on a regular basis.

Components of the Seal of Civic Readiness application packet will include:

- NYS Seal of Civic Readiness Student Application, which may include a self-assessment.
- NYS Seal of Civic Readiness student, mentor, and school counselor checklists.

Updated Questions

Q20: If a student scores Mastery on a Regents Exam, do they get points for proficiency and mastery?

A: No. Students will earn either 1.0 or 1.5 depending on their score on exams. A student will earn 1 point for scores between 65-84 and 1.5 point for each score between 85-100. Students who are eligible for 55-64 safety nets and 45 variances will also earn 1 credit per exam.

Q21: Can students who are participating in remote learning earn the Seal?

A: Yes. The participation requirements may be completed in remote learning environments.

Q22: When can students start earning points for the Seal of Civic Readiness?

A: The Middle School Capstone Project may begin in Grade 7 or 8. All other points may be earned in Grades 8-12.

Q23: Once a school or district is approved to grant students the Seal of Civic Readiness, may students count work they did before their school was approved?

A: Yes. Students may retroactively count any work they did from Grades 7-12 as outlined above. This will be a local district decision.

Q24: How can students earn the 1 or 1.5 points for taking the Regents Exam if no Regents Exam was offered and they received an exemption?

Students who received an exemption should use their course average to determine their points for this category. If a student has a passing course average below 85, they should receive 1 point (proficiency) for this category. If a student has a passing course average of 85 or above, they should receive 1.5 points (mastery) for this category.

Q25: If a student from out of state enters high school in 10th/11th grade, can points be awarded for the Regents Exams?

No. The only way a student can earn points on the Regents Exam is by taking the Regents Exam or receiving an exemption.

Q26: Can out-of-state students be awarded points for electives taken out of state?

Yes, if the local Seal of Civic Readiness (SCR) committee determines out-of-state electives rooted in civics are allowable, *and* if the student successfully completes the application of knowledge component.

Q27: What can count for ENL students coming from another country who are missing exams, electives or coming to us with credits from another country.

Out-of-country electives rooted in civics may count if the student successfully completes the application of knowledge component. Social studies courses taken outside of the country may count towards the 1 point for social studies courses.

Q28: Does an advanced class need to be rooted in all four domains of civic readiness to qualify for points on the Seal of Civic Readiness?

No. Advanced social studies courses must be rooted in at least one of the four domains of civic readiness. Most advanced social studies courses qualify because they enhance a student's civic knowledge.

Q29: Does an elective need to be rooted in all four domains of civic readiness to qualify for points on the Seal of Civic Readiness?

Yes. Electives need to be rooted in all four domains of civic readiness, and they must demonstrate evidence of civic participation/civic experiences because these points count towards the *civic participation* category on the Seal.

Q30: Students receive 1 point for completing 4 credits of social studies. Can .5 point be awarded if they take two years of social studies courses?

No. Points cannot be broken up because the four years of social studies courses demonstrate a summation of civic knowledge.

Q31: Can a middle school student earn points on the Seal outside of the Middle School Capstone?

No. Students may only earn 1 point in 7th or 8th grade by completing a middle school capstone project.

Q32: Once a school/district/BOCES is approved to offer the Seal, do they need to re-apply yearly or is it a perpetual license?

Once a school, district, or BOCES is approved to offer the Seal, they may continue to do so without the need to reapply each year. Reapplication is only necessary if there are changes to the program offered.