

The Seal of Civic Readiness in Six Points

The full point menu with values, the three caps a hand-tallied record sheet will not catch, the current-year implementation checks a committee must verify, and how a student starts.

What it is

The Seal of Civic Readiness is a New York State recognition that appears on a student's high school transcript and diploma. A student must complete all requirements for a New York State local or Regents diploma and earn a total of six points, with at least two points in Civic Knowledge and at least two points in Civic Participation. Points come from coursework, Regents scores, research, civic projects, service learning, approved electives, extracurricular or work-based learning, and capstone projects. Participation is voluntary for districts, and only a school approved by NYSED may award the Seal.

Source: NYSED Criteria to Earn the Seal of Civic Readiness; NYS Seal of Civic Readiness Manual, updated March 2025; NYSED Seal of Civic Readiness Information page; 8 NYCRR 100.5(i). Cited below as the criteria sheet, the Manual and the Information page. Here: Manual p. 6 and Q5.

THE THRESHOLD Six points in total. At least two from Civic Knowledge. At least two from Civic Participation. The last two from either column. This is not a checklist: a student does not need a point in every category, and there is more than one route to six.

The full point menu

Civic Knowledge (column 1)		Pts	How often
1a	Four social studies credits required for graduation: Global History and Geography I, Global History and Geography II, United States History and Government, and Participation in Government and Economics, or the approved equivalent	1	Once. All four or nothing
1b	Social Studies Regents exam, mastery level, 85 to 100, on the Global History and Geography II Regents and/or the United States History Regents	1.5	More than once
1c	Social Studies Regents exam, proficiency level, 65 to 84, on the same two exams. Safety net scores of 55 to 64 and 45 variances also earn this point	1	More than once
1d	Advanced social studies course: Honors, Pre-AP, AP, IB, or a district-approved college level or dual enrollment course	0.5	More than once
1e	Civic Knowledge Research Project, approved by the committee	1	Once only

Civic Participation (column 2)		Pts	How often
2a	High School Civic Project: a short-term civic project in class or through an extracurricular organization	1.5	Twice at most in grades 9 to 12, 3 points maximum
2b	Service-Learning Project, minimum 25 hours of demonstrated service, plus a reflective essay or presentation	1	More than once
2c	Elective course that promotes civic engagement as defined by the committee, plus an Application of Knowledge essay or presentation	0.5	More than once
2d	Extracurricular program or work-based learning experience, minimum 40 hours, plus an Application of Knowledge essay or presentation. May be accumulated across four years	0.5	More than once
2e	Middle School Capstone Project	1	Grades 7 and 8 only
2f	High School Capstone Project, also called the Civics Capstone	4	Carries no repeat marker

Source: Manual pp. 7 and 9, Q20, Q24, Q28, Q29, Q30 and Q31; criteria sheet.

The three caps that trip districts up

1. The High School Civic Project can be claimed twice, and the state's own record sheet does not say so

Criterion 2a is worth 1.5 points and may be completed twice during grades 9 to 12, for a maximum of three points. The trap is where that limit is printed. Manual p. 6 gives 2a a double asterisk defined as no more than two times. On the Sample Student Record Sheet in Appendix H, the page districts copy and hand-tally, 2a carries a single asterisk, and the only note under that sheet defines it as points that may be received more than once. The two-time limit is absent from the sheet, so a third claim adds 1.5 points and nothing on the page says no.

2. The Middle School Capstone is grades 7 and 8 only, and cannot be picked up later

Criterion 2e is worth 1 point, and the criteria sheet states that grades 7 and 8 are the only grades eligible for it. A student who did not complete it in middle school cannot claim it in grade 9. Advise incoming eighth graders before they lose the option, not after.

3. The Civics Capstone is four of the six points and carries no repeat marker

Criterion 2f is worth 4 points, two thirds of the Seal from one component. NYSED marks every repeatable criterion with an asterisk and 2f has none, so it is a one-time award. It is also the widest gap in state support: under Evaluation the Manual tells the committee to use rubrics aligned with Capstone Essential Elements, and NYSED publishes those eight Elements in Appendix S while publishing no Capstone rubric at any grade level.

Source: Manual p. 6, p. 9, pp. 16 to 17 and Q31; criteria sheet; Toolkit Appendices H and S.

Current-year implementation checks

The question	What current guidance requires	Where that leaves you
When must a school apply to offer the Seal?	Check the live NYSED Seal of Civic Readiness Information page for the current application cycle. Record the school year and date checked; confirm uncertainty in writing with the Office of Standards and Instruction.	Verify the current school-year date and retain the NYSED source or written confirmation with committee records.
How are the Civic Participation criteria lettered?	Current component lettering: 2d Extracurricular or Work-Based Learning, 2e Middle School Capstone, and 2f High School Civics Capstone.	Use the current component lettering consistently in the tracker, evidence records, committee minutes, and student communications.
What may an eighth grader earn besides the Middle School Capstone?	Q22: the Capstone may begin in grade 7 or 8, and all other points may be earned in grades 8 to 12. Q31: no, students may only earn 1 point in grade 7 or 8, by completing a middle school capstone project.	Unresolved for grade 8. If you have accelerated eighth graders, get your committee's position in writing before you advise them.

Source: Current NYSED Information page; Manual p. 6, p. 9, Q22 and Q31; Appendices H and N.

What a student does to start

- 1. Confirm the school is approved.** Only a school approved by NYSED may award it. If your school is not approved, no amount of student work produces the Seal.
- 2. Ask for the student application.** The regulation requires an application process completed by interested students and reviewed by an advisor. NYSED names a student application, which may include a self-assessment, and student, mentor and school counselor checklists as parts of that packet.
- 3. Get an advisor assigned.** Recommended once the committee has the application, though not required. The advisor stays with the student through completion and meets regularly.
- 4. Count what already counts.** Work from grades 7 to 12 may be counted retroactively, but whether it is allowed and how the evidence is produced is a local decision. Ask early.
- 5. Plan to both columns, not to a total.** A senior holding 4 points from the Capstone still needs two in Civic Knowledge, and a senior with four years of social studies and two Regents scores still needs two in Civic Participation. Check both columns at every advisement meeting.
- 6. Keep the evidence.** The only retention period anywhere in NYSED's Seal material applies to the 1e Research Project, where the committee stores copies for a minimum of three years in case of audit. Nothing covers anything else, so your committee sets that.

Source: Manual Q5, Q19, Q23, p. 8 and p. 23; 8 NYCRR 100.5(i)(iii)(b)(3).

WHY IT REACHES THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK Graduating with the Seal carries a weight of two in the College, Career and Civic Readiness Index used for ESSA accountability, the maximum a single student can contribute. Where a student passes one social studies Regents exam plus one each in English, mathematics and science, the Seal stands in place of the second social studies Regents exam and the student is reported with Career Path Code CIVIC. Recipients are reported with Program Service Code 8313. For each current school year, check NYSED's current SIRS reporting timeline and your district or regional information center (RIC) cutoff; the district or RIC cutoff is the working deadline for your year. (Manual Q3; NYSED Information Reporting Services timeline.)

FROM THE MACS' LEARNING CO. The available High School Civics Project kit includes a teacher guide, student workbook and scoring rubric for the 2a project. Search High School Civics Project in our store.

Not affiliated with or endorsed by the New York State Education Department. Rules here are current as of the March 2025 Manual and the NYSED Information page as published. Point determinations are made by your Seal of Civic Readiness Committee.