



SCHOOLS REINVENTING COUNTIES & THE CALIFORNIA STATE SEAL OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

A Guide for Schools, Districts, and County Offices of Education



PURPOSE

Schools Reinventing Counties provides a civic and community-based learning framework in which students investigate authentic community challenges, consider multiple perspectives, and design and communicate proposed solutions using Minecraft Education. Battle of the Counties is the optional competition pathway that gives student work an additional authentic audience, challenge, and celebration.



1. HOW THIS WORK CAN SUPPORT THE STATE SEAL OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

California's State Seal of Civic Engagement (SSCE) recognizes eligible California public school students who demonstrate excellence in civics education and participation and an understanding of constitutional democracy. The California Department of Education (CDE) establishes five statewide criteria, while each local educational agency (LEA) determines how those criteria are implemented, documented, and verified in its local context.



IMPORTANT

Participation in Schools Reinventing Counties or Battle of the Counties does not automatically earn the SSCE. Instead, the experience can provide meaningful evidence that an LEA may choose to incorporate into its locally approved SSCE pathway.



2. THE STRONGEST CONNECTION: CRITERION 3 — INFORMED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Criterion 3 asks students to participate in informed civic engagement projects that address real-world problems. Students identify and inquire into civic needs or problems, consider varied responses, take action, and reflect on their efforts.

Schools Reinventing Counties is intentionally structured around this type of learning. Students may:

- Explore real issues affecting California communities.
- Listen to and consider multiple community perspectives.
- Investigate community strengths, needs, challenges, and possible responses.
- Conduct additional research using credible sources and community resources.
- Design a proposed solution in Minecraft Education.
- Identify who their solution is intended to serve and why.
- Communicate their thinking through the build, in-game boards/signs, student-created NPCs, and other design elements.
- Consider the potential impact of their idea and present it to an authentic audience.



3. CRITERION 4 — REFLECTION & CIVIC VOICE

Criterion 4 asks students to demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions through self-reflection. CDE guidance allows reflection in written, oral, digital, audio, video, multimedia, portfolio, and public-presentation formats.

Schools and districts can strengthen the SSCE connection by pairing the experience with a short reflection such as:

- What community challenge did you investigate?
- Whose perspectives influenced your thinking?
- What did you learn about the community?
- What solution did you propose, and why?
- Who is your proposal intended to serve?
- What impact could your idea have?
- What would you change or do next if the project continued?
- How did this experience change the way you see your role in your community?



4. CRITERION 5 — CIVIC-MINDEDNESS

Criterion 5 focuses on civic-mindedness and a commitment to positively impact the classroom, school, community, and/or society. Schools Reinventing Counties asks students to consider people beyond themselves, seek different perspectives, collaborate, identify who a proposal is intended to serve, and design toward the common good. The experience may also become one piece of a broader, ongoing civic-engagement pathway across a student's schooling.



5. CRITERIA 1 & 2 — SUPPORTING CONNECTIONS

Criterion 1 — Productive Academic Engagement.

LEAs determine locally how students demonstrate productive engagement in academic work. Schools Reinventing Counties can provide interdisciplinary evidence through inquiry, research, communication, collaboration, design, and problem solving.

Criterion 2 — Civic Knowledge.

Criterion 2 includes knowledge of constitutional democracy, government, civic processes, and applicable history-social science coursework. Schools Reinventing Counties can reinforce this learning when educators connect community challenges to local government, public policy, civic institutions, and decision-making. The experience should not be represented as replacing the academic or course requirements associated with Criterion 2.



6. A POSSIBLE LOCAL SSCE PATHWAY

1

LEARN. Complete applicable civic/government coursework and locally established SSCE academic requirements.

2

EXPLORE. Participate in Schools Reinventing Counties and investigate an authentic community challenge.

3

INQUIRE. Research the issue, consider community perspectives, and investigate possible responses.

4

DESIGN & ACT. Create a Minecraft civic proposal that responds to the challenge and identifies how the idea could positively impact the community.

5

SHARE. Present the proposal through a classroom, school, district, county, community showcase, Battle of the Counties, or another authentic civic audience.

6

REFLECT. Complete an LEA-approved reflection documenting civic learning, action, impact, growth, and possible next steps.

DOCUMENT. Include the project, presentation/video, reflection, educator verification, or other locally approved evidence in the student's SSCE documentation or portfolio.



TAKE THE CIVIC WORK BEYOND MINECRAFT

Battle of the Counties may be the competition, but the community is the real audience. Students and educators are encouraged to consider sharing strong proposals with school leaders, city councils, community organizations, local agencies, elected officials, businesses, or other stakeholders connected to the issue. A Minecraft build can become more than a competition submission; it can become a student's civic proposal for a real community.



7. BATTLE OF THE COUNTIES AS AN AUTHENTIC AUDIENCE

Battle of the Counties is the optional competition pathway connected to Schools Reinventing Counties. The Virtual Qualifier uses project information and the team's Virtual Tour, a video walkthrough of 3 minutes or less, rather than submission of the Minecraft world file. Each challenge's Battle Prompt & Rubric scores four criteria: the challenge, learning and evidence, design and creativity, and communication and team voice. These elements can provide useful evidence for local SSCE reflection, presentation, portfolio, or documentation processes when an LEA chooses to recognize them.



8. IMPLEMENTATION NOTE FOR LEAS

Each LEA remains responsible for determining how the statewide SSCE criteria are implemented and verified locally. Schools, districts, and County Offices of Education should review their locally adopted SSCE requirements and determine how work produced through Schools Reinventing Counties and Battle of the Counties may be used as evidence. Local governing boards are encouraged by CDE to approve or adopt policies for SSCE implementation.



9. CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

- State Seal of Civic Engagement: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/pl/hssstatesseal.asp>
- SSCE Implementation Guidance: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/pl/ssceguidance.asp>
- SSCE Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/pl/sscefaq.asp>



10. SUGGESTED LOCAL EVIDENCE

An LEA choosing to incorporate this experience into its SSCE pathway may consider retaining or reviewing locally appropriate evidence such as: the student's civic proposal; research notes or cited sources; screenshots or documentation of the Minecraft build; the Battle of the Counties Virtual Tour or another presentation; a student reflection; educator verification; feedback from judges or community audiences; and evidence of any additional civic action taken beyond the digital proposal.



REMEMBER

Schools Reinventing Counties is the learning experience. Battle of the Counties is the optional competition pathway.

Schools Reinventing Counties and Battle of the Counties are developed and organized by The Level Up Civics Foundation. Minecraft Education is the software platform used for the learning experience.



NOT AN OFFICIAL MINECRAFT OR MINECRAFT EDUCATION PROGRAM OR EVENT

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