

Seal of Civic Readiness Handbook

Midlakes High School



Information and
student application



New York State Seal of Civic Readiness

Midlakes High School is pleased to participate in the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness Program. In recognition of the importance of civic participation, a Seal of Civic Readiness is awarded to students who have displayed a high level of proficiency in civic readiness by the time they graduate from high school.

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

- shows the student's understanding of a commitment to participatory government; civic responsibility and civic values;
- demonstrates to universities, colleges, and future employers that the student has completed an action project in civics or social justice; and
- recognizes the value of civic engagement and scholarship.

What is the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness?

The New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) are committed to civic education that empowers all students to make informed decisions for the public good as members of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. Civic education facilitates the development of civic competencies, which are needed for a democratic society to flourish. Through civic education, students learn how to identify and address problems in their community or school community. Students also learn how to demonstrate respect for the rights of others, respectfully disagree with other viewpoints, and provide evidence for a counterargument. Civic education can strengthen the relationships of schools and students with parents, families, civic leaders, and organizations and community partners.

Civic readiness is the ability to make a positive difference in the public life of our communities through the combination of civic knowledge, skills and actions, mindsets, and experiences.

Midlakes School Seal Committee:

- Teachers: Angela Simmons, Jesson Wolfe
- Administrators: Frank Bai-Rossi, Michelle Robinette
- Counselor: Kristin Brunetto

The Seal of Civic Readiness connects to NYS Department of Education's missions of:

- Civic Readiness
 - Empower students to become active, engaged civic participants in our multicultural democracy
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - Civic education is a means to a more equitable, more just democracy responsive to the diverse realities of our students
- Social Emotional Learning
 - Self and Social Awareness – the ability to recognize how thoughts, feelings, and actions are interconnected; and the ability to take the perspective of and have respect for those with different backgrounds or cultures are required of civically minded citizens
- Mental Health Literacy
 - Sense of self-esteem and confidence. Ability to make a contribution to one's community
- Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education
 - Provide opportunities to learn about power and privilege and empower learners to be agents of positive social change

Domains of Civic Readiness



Demonstrate a fundamental and functional knowledge of government, law, history, geography, culture, economics, and current events. These may include inequities within our democratic system at the federal, state and local level. Students should know how to apply this knowledge to different circumstances and settings.



Demonstrate a broad array of critical analytic, verbal, communication, media literacy and other skills and participate in a wide variety of actions. Students should practice such actions both inside and outside of school on a regular basis.



Demonstrate the mindset of a participant in a democratic society. A civic mindset is a commitment to democratic interpersonal and intrapersonal values, virtues, attitudes, and beliefs and informed actions that promote and facilitate meaningful participation in civic life. It is an understanding of self as part of and responsible to larger social groups.



Participate in developmentally appropriate civic experiences. Civic readiness should be developed in a variety of settings and ways—inside and outside of the classroom, across content areas, and for multiple purposes. Civic Readiness should be promoted by engaging students in relevant experiences that include students as active participants.

What does Civic Readiness look like? Students...

- Demonstrate respect for the rights of others in discussions and classroom debates, regardless of whether one agrees with the other viewpoints and provide evidence for a counter-argument
- Participate in activities that focus on a classroom, school, community, state, or national issue or problem
- Participate in persuading, debating, negotiating, and compromising in the resolution of conflicts and differences
- Work to influence those in positions of power to strive for extensions of freedom, social justice and human rights
- Explain differing philosophies of social and political participation and the role of individual leading to group-driven philosophies
- Identify, describe and contrast the roles of individual in opportunities for social and political participation in different societies
- Identify situations in which social actions are required and determine an appropriate course of action
- Fulfill social and political responsibilities associated with citizenship in a democratic society and interdependent global community by developing awareness of and/or engaging

Why earn the Seal of Civic Readiness?

- It enhances applications for college, grants, and scholarships
- Makes your application stronger than someone who does not have the Seal
- Prepares you for life long civic involvement
- Demonstrates willingness to challenge yourself
- Employers and the military are looking for citizens with a civic mindset

Who can apply for the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness?

- Any student in the Phelps-Clifton Springs school district
- Projects and some requirements of the Seal are embedded in our middle/high school curriculum
- Social Studies teachers will assist students who exhibit interest in the Seal of Civic Readiness
- PSO will provide students with the application. Students will be introduced to the program requirements beginning in 8th grade. Planning typically starts during the 11th grade year. School counselors will ensure that all necessary courses are in the student courseload to achieve this seal.

How to Earn the Seal of Civic Readiness

In addition to completing all the requirements for graduating with a NYS Regents Diploma, students wishing to receive the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness must also have:

At least two points needed in the Civic Knowledge category

At least two points needed in the Civic Participation category

A GRAND TOTAL of 6 points are required to earn the Seal of Civic Readiness

Students may also earn points by completing a middle school Capstone project or a high school Capstone project.

Civic Knowledge	Pts.	Civic Participation	Pts.
1a. 4 credits of social studies	1	2a. High School Civics Project (limit two times during grades 9-12)	1.5
1b. Mastery level on Social Studies Regents Exam	1.5*	2b. Service-Learning Project (minimum 25 hours) and reflective civic learning essay/presentation/product	1*
1c. Proficiency level on Social Studies Regents Exam	1*	2c. Earned credit in an elective course that promotes civic engagement	.5*
1d. Advanced social studies course(s)	.5*	2d. Extra-curricular participation or work-based learning experience (minimum 40 hours) and an essay/presentation/product	.5*
1e. Research Project	1	2e. Middle School Capstone Project (Grades 7 and 8 are only eligible for this point)	1
		Civics Capstone Project	4

*Students may receive these points more than once.

Testing accommodations recommended in an individualized education program or section 504 Accommodations Plan must be provided for all State and districtwide assessments administered to students with disabilities, as consistent with State policy.

Chart breakdown for Midlakes students on next page.

Civic Knowledge

1a. Social Studies required for graduation - 1 point - Four Credits of Social Studies

- Global History I
- Global History II
- United States History
- American Government .5 and Economics .5

1b. Social Studies Regents Exams-Mastery Level - 1.5 Points*– Mastery level on Social Studies Regents

- 85% or higher on the Global History and Geography Regents Exam and/or United States History Regents (students may earn these points more than once).

1c. Social Studies Regents Exams- Proficiency Level - 1 Point* – Social Studies Regents Exam Proficiency Level.

- 70% or higher on the Global History and Geography Regents Exam and/or United States History Regents Exam (students may earn these points more than once).

1d. Advanced Social Studies Courses - .5 Point* – Advanced Social Studies Courses

- 70% or higher in an advanced social studies course (Honors, AP, Gemini courses approved by the district)
- Currently available: Pre-AP World History, AP World History, AP/Gemini United States History, Gemini Sociology, Gemini Psychology, Gemini American Government and Politics, and Gemini Economics (students may earn these points more than once).

1e. Research Project - 1 point – Research Project

- Demonstrate Civic Knowledge through a social studies research project. This project must be presented to and approved by the District Seal of Civic Readiness Committee.

Civic Participation

2a. Civic Skills, Actions, and Mindsets - 1.5 point – High School Civics Project

A High School Civic Project is a short-term project completed in either the classroom or as part of an extracurricular organization that incorporates some of the essential elements of the Civic Readiness Capstone Project. A Civic Project could also be integrated with a Service-Learning Project. The Civic Project will demonstrate the NYSSCR domains of civic readiness, reflecting students' civic knowledge, skills, actions, and mindsets. Civic projects will be approved and evaluated by a process established by the local Seal of Civic Readiness Committee (SCRC). Students may receive these points twice during their 9-12 school years, maxing out at three points. Students may complete their projects individually or collaboratively in groups.

Options:

1. Advisor (Equity Club, Principals Advisory Committee, Building Improvement Team) creates a committee of students to provide student input to the administration on issues of equity and the school's code of conduct.
 - Students are provided with data about equity in schools, including op-ed columns representing a diverse array of views, quantitative data on disciplinary trends, the NYS School Report Card, articles on Restorative Justice, and other initiatives. Students may also interview school administration, PTSA representatives, and fellow students about equity.
 - Students will determine whether the school can improve the school's code of conduct in terms of equity and make recommendations, if necessary, to that end.
 - Students will create a written report, an audio/visual presentation, or an oral presentation, etc. to communicate their recommendations.
 - Students will produce a reflection on the most challenging aspects of affecting policy as a citizen. This will include advice for effective activism for other citizens that wish to impact public policy.

2. 12 Grade Government Involvement - Students will identify an issue facing our society (School level – implementing a policy change, Local level: reduce speed limits, add stop signs, State - propose reform on environmental or health issues, propose a federal policy change to your Senator or Representative in Congress). Students will research the issue, strategies and claims to formulate recommendations to leaders. They will gather their information and send a letter to send to local officials.

- Focus on a civic issue or problem within a policy area that may be predetermined by the teacher or advisor. The civic project is focused on a civic issue or problem that can be interpreted in a variety of ways by a broad array of citizens holding various viewpoints.
- Analyze data, use primary and/or secondary sources of evidence related to the civic issue under investigation, and determine its impact on communities. Sources should be evaluated for bias and credibility. Sources can be provided by the teacher, advisor, or student.
- Evaluate at least two current public policies related to the issue or problem under investigation.
- Recommend and/or evaluate potential strategies to address the issue or problem that is under investigation.
- Communicate their project using written, audio/visual, and/or oral presentations.
- Explain how the project influenced their civic knowledge, skills, and mindsets.

2b. Civic Experiences Area I - 1 Point* – Service-Learning Project (minimum 25 hours).

Service learning is an inquiry-based approach that combines service to community with learning objectives. Service learning is generally described in five states; investigation (conduct research on a community-based problem/needs), preparation (create a plan to address these needs), action (direct service or indirect service), reflection, demonstration/celebration. This project must be presented to and approved by the District Seal of Civic Readiness Committee (students may earn these points more than once). Individuals can complete service-learning projects individually, or with a small group, or part of a larger group. This is generally done with leadership of an adult. Ideas may include: Boys Scouts Eagle Project, Girl Scouts Silver and/or Gold Award Project, and project opportunities through the Phelps Historical Society.

2c. Civic Experiences Area II - .5 Point* – Proficiency level in an elective course that promotes Civic Engagement. Proficiency is a 70% or higher in a social studies elective course or another course that promotes civic engagement such as Environmental Science and Outdoor Education. Students may also propose alternative courses not listed for Seal Committee approval (students may earn these points more than once).

2d. Civic Experiences Area III - .5 Point* – Extracurricular participation or work-based learning experience (minimum 40 hours) and an essay/presentation/product. Required components include writing an application of knowledge essay/presentation. This may be accomplished over four years of high school (students may earn these points more than once). It must promote civic engagement or civic action (for example, making a change in policy, advancing health and wellness, community outreach). This includes working after school, participating in Equity Club, Alliance Club, Interact Club, Student Council, National Honor Society, Midlakes Athletic Leadership Organization, or taking a leadership position in any extracurricular organization.

2e. Middle School Capstone Project - 1 Point - Middle School Capstone Project – Middle School Capstone project is designed to give students a meaningful civic experience before they enter high school. The project should be completed under the direction of a teacher. Complete the middle school capstone project (Be an Activist! Project in 8th grade) that includes the essential elements listed below:

- Identify an issue (local, state, national or global)
- Apply civic knowledge, skills, actions and mindsets to the issue
- Reflect on learning
- Present the overall project to the Middle School Capstone Committee: Chris Stell, Laura Van Laeken, Frank Bai-Rossi, Michelle Robinette

4 Points – Civic Capstone Project. This is a culminating experiential summative project assessing a student’s civic knowledge, skills and actions, and civic mindset that will be: social studies standards based, locally developed, authentic, hands on, and include real world investigation and application. Essential components are:

- Identify a civic issue (problem) facing them, their school, or their community
- Analyze a civic issue (problem), evaluate alternative solutions, design and/or execute a solution for this problem
- Take informed action to address the civic issue
- Reflect on what they have learned about their school or community from the capstone project
- Create and deliver a presentation

Sample Pathway:

Examine your community to identify a civic issue (problem) facing you, or your school or your community

Suggested activities:

- *Conduct community walks/drives and asset map the community. Asset Mapping is a tool that relies on a core belief of asset-based community development; namely, that good things exist in communities and that those things can be highlighted and encouraged — these are assets suited to advancing those communities. There are six categories of community assets: physical, economic, stories, local residents, local associations, local institutions. For more information about asset mapping, visit <https://www.vistacampus.gov/what-asset-mapping>*
- *Conducting interviews and administering surveys will help you understand the issue from different perspectives, including diverse cultural groups. Be open to alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas.*
- *Think about what you have learned in other coursework you have completed. How can this information help you identify a civic issue?*
- *Critically evaluate what you hear, see and read in the news and social media about potential civic issues for accuracy, bias, reliability, and credibility.*

Analyze a civic issue (problem) in your school or community

Suggested activities:

- *Describe past attempts to address the issue*
- *Identify, describe, and evaluate the relationships between people, places, regions, and environments by using geographic tools to place them in a spatial context.*
- *Gather data to describe the number of people affected by the issue, the age/gender/socio-economic status of the people affected by the issue, the geographic impact of the issue, the environmental impact of the issue, etc.*
- *Critically evaluate what you hear, see and read in the news and social media about the civic issue for accuracy, bias, reliability, and credibility.*
- *Weigh appropriate evidence from multiple disciplines to support claims, which may include political science, history, natural sciences, economics, geography, and sociology,*

- *Demonstrate respect for the rights of others in discussions and debates; respectfully disagree with other viewpoints*

Identify the cause of the civic issue

Suggested activities:

- *Define and frame questions about events and the world in which we live, form hypotheses as potential answers to these questions, use evidence to answer these questions, and consider and analyze counter-hypotheses.*
- *Weigh appropriate evidence from multiple disciplines to support claims, which may include political science, history, natural sciences, economics, geography, and sociology.*
- *For example, conducting interviews and administering surveys will help students understand the issue from different perspectives, including diverse cultural groups.*
- *Analyze and evaluate news, media, social media and other sources of information for accuracy, bias, reliability, and credibility.*

Generate alternative solutions to address this civic issue

Suggested activities:

- *Identify opportunities for and the role of the individual in social and political participation in the school, local, and/or state community.*
- *Learn about the structure and function of government and democracy at the appropriate level, and how to participate therein.*
- *Reflect on how different cultures have values, norms and beliefs that shape how they understand their communities and the problems they face.*
- *Integrate what can be learned through engagement with diversity into the Capstone Project.*

Evaluate alternative solutions

Suggested activities:

- *Evaluate the feasibility of proposed actions to address the community or civic issue with a cost-benefit analysis*
- *Analyze factors that influenced the perspectives of stakeholders involved in the civic issue central to your Capstone Project.*
- *Organize and participate in a discussion about alternative solutions, setting ground rules to respect the rights of others in discussions so that participants can respectfully disagree with other viewpoints*

Develop strategies and solutions

Your plan should include:

- *A description of your recommended solution to address the issue, including specific references to the level, primary unit, and body of government that you want to address the issue*
- *A cost-benefit analysis for potential solutions*
- *A description of who will be affected by your proposed action. An evaluation of your solution from the perspectives of 3 different stakeholder groups and at least two different cultural groups represented in your community. Identify potential positive and negative outcomes on these different groups from your action. Be sure to comment on ways to mediate negative consequences.*

The plan should address:

- *Where will your solution occur?*
- *When will your solution occur?*
- *How will you communicate about your issue and your action? How will you strategically use different forms of communication* to persuade/advocate, present and express ideas?*

Take informed action

Suggested activities:

- *Implement your proposed action, engaging the school and/or out-of-school community.*
- *Communicate in a civic context, showing the ability to express ideas, discuss, persuade, debate, negotiate, build consensus and compromise to organize and conduct civic action.*
- *Strategically use different forms of communication to persuade/advocate and express ideas.*

Reflection

Suggested activities:

- *Reflect on what you have learned: Include an analysis of your Civic Readiness Capstone Project experience, reflecting on the relevant civic knowledge and skills that you acquired, the process that you implemented, the challenges you faced, the successes of the project, and how what you have learned will affect future civic actions you may take. Include artifacts (i.e., photographs, video recordings, newspaper articles) that document your actions and reflections.*

Presentation: Prepare and make a presentation about your Civic Readiness Capstone Project.

*****link to NYS Seal of Civic Readiness Handbook below**

<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/civic-readiness-manual.pdf>

Qualifications Checklist for Seal of Civic Readiness

Original copy completed and retained by Seal of Civic Readiness Committee

Student Name _____ Year of Graduation _____

Criteria for Demonstrating Proficiency in Civic Knowledge	Points	Completed	Total Points- This Area	Date	Approved (initials)
1a. Social Studies required for graduation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain course credit as detailed in the Seal of Civic Readiness Manual 	1	☐			
1b. Social Studies Regents Exams-Mastery Level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate mastery level (85% or higher) on the Global History & Geography Regents and/or United States History Regents (Grades 10,11) 	1.5*	☐			
1c. Social Studies Regents Exams- Proficiency Level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive a score of a 70% or higher on the Global History & Geography Regents and/or United States History Regents (apply safety net if eligible) (Grades 10,11) 	1*	☐			
1d. Advanced Social Studies Courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate proficiency (70% or higher) in an advanced social studies course (Honors, AP, College level approved by the school district; including dual enrollment courses) (Grades 11,12) 	0.50*	☐			
1e. Research Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate civic knowledge through a social studies research project. This project must be approved by the District's Seal of Civic Readiness Committee. (Grades 9-12) 	1	☐			

TOTAL POINTS (2 POINT MINIMUM) _____

Criteria for Demonstrating Proficiency in Civic Participation	Points	Completed	Total Points- This Area	Date	Approved (initials)
2a. Civic Skills, Actions, and Mindsets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a culminating high school civic project. The culminating project is different from the Capstone project. (Grades 9-12) 	1.5**	☐			

2b. Civic Experiences Area I ● Complete a service learning project that includes a minimum of 25 hours of demonstrated service to the community and submit a reflective civic learning essay. (Grades 9-12)	1*	☐			
2c. Civic Experiences Area II ● Demonstrate proficiency in an elective course that promotes civic engagement as detailed on pages 5-6 of the Seal of Civic Readiness Manual	0.50*	☐			
2d. Civic Experiences Area III ● Participate in an extra-curricular program, or work-based learning experience that promotes civic engagement or civic action for a minimum of 40 hours. Write an application of knowledge essay. This may be accomplished over four years of high school.	0.50*	☐			
2e. Middle School Capstone Project ● Complete the middle school capstone project	1*	☐			
2f. Capstone Project ● Complete the Capstone Project	4	☐			

TOTAL POINTS (2 POINT MINIMUM) _____

Student Awarded Seal of Civic Readiness	YES ☐ NO ☐
Verified by Seal of Civic Readiness Committee Name:	Signature

Midlakes Secondary School
1490 St. Rt. 488, Clifton Springs, NY 14432

Seal of Civic Readiness
Student Application

The New York State Seal of Civic Readiness is a formal recognition of high school graduates who demonstrated the knowledge, mindsets and skills that will promote a successful democratic society.

Criteria: In addition to completing all of the requirements for graduating with a NYS Regents diploma, students wishing to receive the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness must also earn a total of six points from a menu of criteria as described in the district Seal of Civic Readiness Handbook. Refer to this handbook for additional information about requirements and criteria.

Submit this application to your school counselor by December 15th of your senior year. Applications submitted after December 15th will require approval from the Principal to be accepted and will only be accepted based on extenuating circumstances.

Student Name (Last, First, Middle Initial)	Student ID #
Student Email	Home Phone
Home Address	Expected Graduation Date

Statement of Intent

I, _____ (name of student), do hereby state that I intend to participate in the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness Program and pursue the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness (NYSSCR). I have carefully read all the materials available and understand that I must submit an application and Letter of Intent form to my school guidance department. I also understand that NYSSCR will only be granted if I fulfill all of the requirements as stated in the task requirements.

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Date Received: _____

Counselor Signature: _____