

THE POWER OF DEMOCRACY

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Through the lens of equity and diversity, the *Power of Democracy: Civic Engagement Initiative* established the following vision, mission, and values.

Our Vision

Foster an understanding of our democracy's structures and processes by sharing resources and best practices, and encouraging informed civic participation that strengthens communities.

Our Mission

In partnership with districts and communities, provide access to high-quality civic education by means of programs and resources that encourage student civic engagement and civil discourse.

Our Values

Liberty, Civility, Equity, Inclusion, Individual Responsibility, Diversity, Partnership, and Justice.

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SANTA CLARA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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About Santa Clara County Voter Participation

The November 8, 2016 Presidential Election was Santa Clara County's highest ever turnout election and had record-high voter registration. Out of 875,176 registered voters, a total of 724,596 cast valid ballots, for a voter turnout rate of 82.8%. Youth-eligible voter turnout was only 42.7% in Silicon Valley (Santa Clara & San Mateo Counties), the lowest for all age groups. Due to the much lower eligible voter turnout rates compared to those of older age groups, youth are projected to continue to be underrepresented in the vote

share through 2040. If youth-eligible turnout rates are lower in future elections, then youth will experience even greater underrepresentation.

Eligible 16- and 17-year-olds can now pre-register to vote online or by paper. California youth who pre-register to vote will have their registration become active once they turn 18 years old. There are 82,821 students in public high schools in Santa Clara County, and the 14-17 year old population is 95,709.

About the Power of Democracy's Strategic Plan

In May 2017, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) began reviewing data in order to create the Power of Democracy (POD) Initiative and assemble a leadership steering committee to develop the vision and policy framework needed to increase civic engagement opportunities throughout Santa Clara County.

POD's formal launch event was held on August 9, 2017. Key leaders were invited to begin the process of partnering with SCCOE to develop and support the countywide initiative to increase civic engagement. The event ended with a call to action and participants were encouraged to fill out a pledge card that offered multiple ways to engage civically. The launch was one of multiple actions to gather insight into areas of need and effective strategies to increase civic engagement. Stakeholders began solidifying collaboration and communication to create a cohesive approach for engaging constituents. To promote the launch and initiative, POD executed a media plan that included radio interviews, editorial articles, informational materials, and a livestream of the launch event.

Following the launch event, POD conducted guided discussions with focus groups comprised of representatives from local stakeholder groups (district personnel, community-based organizations, citizens, and public

agencies). The goals were to raise awareness, identify areas of need, and discover current practices and actions in regard to civic engagement and education to determine relevant elements of emphasis for the strategic plan. As a result, POD drafted this strategic plan for civic education.

The plan for civic education is centered on research-based practices outlined in *Revitalizing K-12 Civic Learning In California: A Blueprint for Action* and the *History Social-Science Framework (HSSF)*. The blueprint provides the context, rationale, specific recommendations, and models for high-quality civics education. The HSSF supports the blueprint by including citizenship as one of the shifts in history-social science. It calls for civics education for all K-12 students. Both documents inform professional development methods for administrators and teachers. Supporting and expanding access to high-quality civic educational experiences – such as Constitution Day, Mock Trial, and National History Day – are also foundational pieces of POD's plan.

Partners, districts, and teachers can access information to learn, engage, and take action via the POD website. The POD website supports collaboration and communication among all the stakeholders and is one piece of a larger media and communications plan.

Sources: 2017 Silicon Valley Index. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2016. California Civic Engagement Project at UC Davis. California Secretary of State Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters, November 8, 2016 Presidential General Post-Election Report

FOUR STRATEGIC AREAS OF EMPHASIS FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

The findings and trends that emerged from the actions of the Power of Democracy Steering Committee resulted in the formation of four strategic areas of emphasis for positive impact. Below are summaries of the main strategies, followed by a more detailed explanation, and additional specific actions to carry out the strategies.

Strategic area of emphasis #1:

Expand access to inclusive, equitable, and high-quality opportunities for civic education, engagement, and leadership to ensure students representing the rich diversity of our county have access and are able to participate meaningfully.

Inclusive, equitable, and high-quality civic education requires knowledge of history, principles, and foundations of American democracy; also, it requires the ability to participate

in civic and democratic processes. Therefore, content, inquiry, and literacy must be a part of their education with instruction designed to meet the needs of all students. Students need to engage in discipline-specific literacy skills, learn to effectively answer and formulate questions about the past and the present, and learn to contribute appropriately to public processes and discussions of real issues.

| Strategy | Actions (All events occur annually) | Execution |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Promote/Coordinate Civic Engagement Events | Constitution Day | Fall 2018, and annual |
| | Mock Elections | Fall 2018, and annual |
| | Mock Trial | On-going |
| | History Day | Winter 2019, and annual |
| | Civic Engagement Showcase | Spring 2019, and annual |
| | Community outreach events – Santa Clara County Superior Court | On-going |
| Recognize and Celebrate Excellence | Civic Engagement Award | Spring 2019, and annual |

Strategic area of emphasis #2:

Partner with districts and teachers to continue to strengthen communication and provide quality support to promote inclusive, equitable, and high-quality civic education and opportunities for civic engagement and leadership to students.

Strong partnerships and communication are at the center of providing quality support to meet civic education and engagement goals. Actions such as meeting with local superintendents to discuss why civic learning is important,

including civic learning on meeting agendas, and passing civic learning school board resolutions are ways that POD will maintain and expand the partnerships. POD encourages local superintendents and teachers to apply for the California Civic Learning Award and the California Seal for Civic Engagement. Lastly, POD will continue to provide non-partisan, specific civic learning educational resources, and expand professional development opportunities.

| Strategy | Actions | Execution |
|---|---|-------------|
| Provide District Leadership Connections to LCAP | Provide resources with connections to Local Control Accountability Plan | On-going |
| Provide District Leadership with Effective Models | Standing agenda item for district team meetings | On-going |
| | POD website | On-going |
| | SCCOE History Social Science and Civic Engagement Coordinator | On-going |
| Expand Professional Development Opportunities | Expand SCCOE offerings | On-going |
| | Partner with UC Berkeley History Social Science Project | On-going |
| | Partner with Facing History and Ourselves | On-going |
| | Partner with San Jose State University | On-going |
| | Partner with UC Santa Cruz History Social Science Project | On-going |
| | Continue to expand partnerships | On-going |
| | Region 5 History Social Science Community of Practice | On-going |
| Maintain Ongoing Communication | POD website | On-going |
| | SCCOE website | On-going |
| | SCCOE social media outlets | On-going |
| | District meetings | On-going |
| Recognize and Celebrate Excellence | Civic Engagement Award | May 2019 |
| | Civic Engagement Showcase | Spring 2019 |

Strategic area of emphasis #3:

Partner with parents, community members, community-based organizations, and government agencies to raise awareness and expand opportunities.

While POD has a strong foundation of partnerships, we will continue to develop them and expand participation.

Broad-based membership will fill in the gaps and ensure that the partnerships reflect the diversity of the county. POD will work to reach all corners of the county to build balanced partnerships.

| Strategy | Actions | Execution |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| Support and Expand Parent Engagement | Create Civic Engagement Tool Kit | Fall 2018-Summer 2020 |
| | Invite parent representative as Member of POD Leadership Team | Fall 2018 |
| Expand Outreach for Partnerships | Partner with libraries, government agencies, local community based organizations, local universities and community colleges | Fall 2018-Summer 2020 |
| Explore Ways to Minimize Barriers to Partnerships | Equity trainings | On-going |
| | Create equity work stream | On-going |

Strategic area of emphasis #4:

Partner within and across divisions at SCCOE to create internal capacity to support and advance the work.

The POD initiative requires the collective effort of multiple

divisions to efficiently coordinate outreach, events, communication, and materials. SCCOE is dedicated to exploring systems that support collaboration and deepen the understanding and ideas written in its mission and vision statements.

| Strategy | Actions | Execution |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Explore Effective and Equitable Systems | Maintain on-going communication | On-going |
| | Explore ways to minimize internal barriers | Fall 2018-Summer 2020, On-going |
| | Support training for equitable dialogue | Fall 2018-Summer 2020, On-going |
| | Provide training to support coaching for equity | Fall 2018-Summer 2020, On-going |
| | Explore effective and equitable meetings | Fall 2018-Summer 2020, On-going |

Special thanks to the Power of Democracy leadership group:
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