



Franklin  
Public School District

# Student Led Civics Projects

June 13th, 2023





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# Student Led Civics Projects

## Goals For Tonight's Presentation

- ☐ Introduce the “Why” of the project
- ☐ Explain the focus
- ☐ Show student exemplars
- ☐ Introduce next steps

## Chapter 296 of the Acts of 2018

On November 8, 2018, Governor Charlie Baker signed [Chapter 296 of the Acts of 2018](#), *An Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement*, which includes provisions related to student-led civics aligned to the History and Social Science Curriculum Framework.

The law includes the following provisions related to student-led civics projects:

# Chapter 296 of the Acts of 2018

Each public school serving students in the eighth grade and each public high school shall provide not less than 1 student-led, non-partisan civics project for each student; provided, however, that each such project shall be consistent with the history and social science curriculum frameworks adopted by the board pursuant to [section IE of chapter 69](#) and with structured learning time requirements as required under regulations promulgated by the board of elementary and secondary education. **Civics projects may be individual, small group or class wide, and designed to promote a student's ability to: (i) analyze complex issues; (ii) consider differing points of view; (iii) reason, make logical arguments and support claims using valid evidence; (iv) engage in civil discourse with those who hold opposing positions; and (v) demonstrate an understanding of the connections between federal, state and local policies, including issues that may impact the student's school or community.** Any student choosing not to participate in a particular group or class-wide project shall be offered the opportunity to develop an individual civics project, with approval by the principal.

[Civics Project Guidebook](#)



## **By completing student-led civics projects, students will:**

**DEVELOP CIVIC  
DISPOSITIONS  
AND A SENSE OF  
SELF-EFFICACY**

**DEVELOP AND PRACTICE LITERACY  
SKILLS, INCLUDING DIGITAL MEDIA  
LITERACY**

**CONDUCT INQUIRIES AND  
DETERMINE NEXT STEPS**

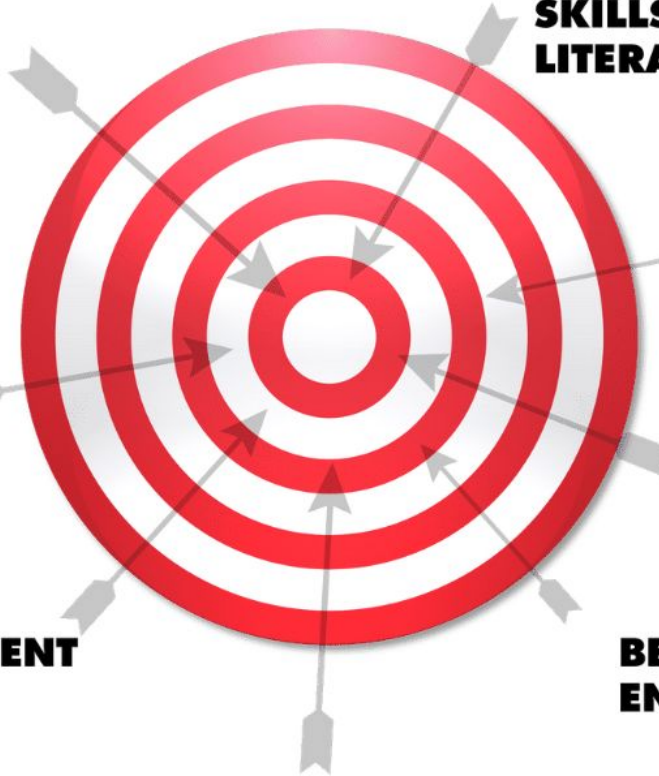
**DEVELOP AND  
PRACTICE CIVIC  
SKILLS**

**DEVELOP AND PRACTICE  
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS**

**BUILD CIVIC CONTENT  
KNOWLEDGE**

**BECOME MORE ACADEMICALLY  
ENGAGED**

**DEVELOP CULTURAL COMPETENCE  
AND SOCIAL POLITICAL AWARENESS**



# The Why

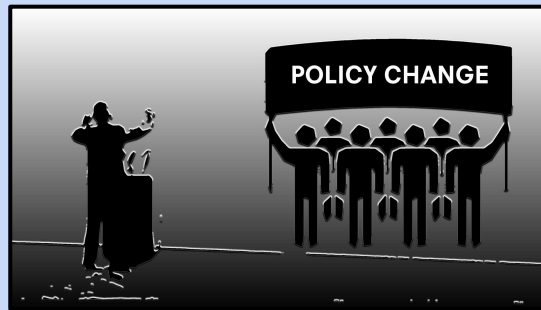
Civics projects are **process-focused**, which can make rubrics a useful formative and summative assessment tool. Both in grade 8 and in high school, assessment of projects should address the extent to which **students engage with the process and show progress toward identified learning goals, not only if their project achieved the desired impact.** The outcome of the action or the extent to which it actually solves the issue is not what defines success in the student-led projects; rather, **what matters is the process.** At its core, the project is an opportunity for students to develop civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions by finding an issue that matters to them, researching to understand the root cause of that issue, and trying to do something about it at a systems level.

[Civics Project Guidebook](#)

## Background to the Project

A high-quality student-led civics project should follow these six stages grounded in action civics. However, there is no prescriptive learning experience. Throughout the six stages, students make, reflect on, and evaluate their own learning decisions. **Engaging with the process of learning and continuous improvement, not perfect mastery,** is the goal, and defines success of student-led civics projects. Depending on the time available, educators may decide to break down each of the six stages into a larger number of steps

# Six Stages of Your Civic Engagement Project:



**Examine self & civic identity** - explore issues that matter to you and your family

**Identifying an issue** - identify a focus issue for your student-led project

**Researching and Investigating** - examine the context, policies, perspectives, and history of the issue to learn about possible root causes.

**Developing an Action Plan** - build a theory of action and an action plan aimed at achieving a change.

**Taking Action** - act on the tactics you planned. It's time for you to move beyond the walls of the classroom and school.

**Reflecting & Showcasing** - You will end the project with a final summative reflection and a work showcase.



# What Does The Project Look Like?

## **Make up:**

Individual

Small groups

Whole class

Select committees

Federal, state, local government focus groups

## **Topics:**

- Mental health awareness
- Changing school start times (later for MS)
- Food insecurity
- Wildlife conservation
- Veterans issues
- Teen drug use
- Decreasing bullying at the Elem school level
- Increasing support for small businesses in town

## **Issues that were started but fizzled out**

- Homelessness
- Decreasing violent crime in MA
- Increasing student awareness for humanitarian aid

# Topics and Stakeholders

## Topics:

Plastic waste in school  
Lowering of the voting age  
Eighth Grade Field Trip  
Quality of school lunches  
School Start Times  
Bus Safety  
Establishment of a Franklin teen center  
Body image in the media.  
Literacy Programs  
Food programs for FPS partnering with local farms  
Senior Center Programs  
Programs/Assistance for Franklin Veterans

## Stakeholders:

Senior Center Director  
Veteran Services Director  
Franklin Public Library Librarian  
Steve Sherlock/Franklin Matters  
Superintendent of FPS  
HMMS Reading Specialist  
Business owners  
Food service providers.  
School administration and counselors.  
Colin Boisvert, Food Services Coordinator.  
Franklin School Committee chair  
Tom Mercer, Town Council  
Jeffrey Roy  
Adam Mosseri, CEO of Instagram

# Student Exemplars

All three middle schools are using the same guidelines to work through the process of civic engagement. Here is an example of what our work looks like.



# Free Library Services

C Period

# How Did You Approach the Task?

In our class we worked to research facts and statistics of library funding.

As a whole class we made a website to make a sustainable outlet for information like facts and stats, and for people to recognize the problem and try to change funding.

## Roles and Responsibilities:

Researcher-online  
Researcher-on site  
Writer  
Editor  
Interviewer  
e-mailer  
Project Organizer  
Community Outreach  
Webmaster  
Data Analysis  
On site organizer  
In class communicator  
Project assistant (helper)  
Task helper (fill-in for absent student)  
Time manager  
Document organizer  
Brainstormer

# Introduction to the Issue (Stage 1 and 2)

How was this issue chosen?

We were assigned the theme of library services and agreed that having access to free services was the most important issue for our class.

Why is this an issue or problem?

Our class had library services as a general theme. After our class research, we focused on the idea of free library services. We felt it was important to highlight the free services to the community. Our hope was to eventually get more funding for our library.

# Stage 3 Research

## Root Causes

### Franklin Library Budget:

- Franklin Public Library has made the city \$1.5 million in 20 years
- 1.1% of the towns' funds go to the Franklin Public Library
- The Franklin Public Library spent \$10.5M for their expansion and renovation
- The Franklin Public Library is set to get \$24,324 in state aid

## DRIVING QUESTION HERE...

Why are libraries getting such little funding, and how can we stop this?

# Stage 4: Recommended Action

Our recommendation for action is to raise the budget for the library so that there is more money for the library to work with, like being able to buy more books and be able to do more services.

## The STEPS WE TOOK

- We took a total of 5 steps, which were the following:

CAP Stage 1: Examine Self & Civic Identity

CAP Stage 2: Cause and Effect: Think Big!

CAP Stage 3: Research Document

CAP: Stage 4: Developing an Action Plan

CAP Stage 5: Implementing the Action Plan



# Stage 5: Engage with Stakeholders

We communicated with (who were the stakeholders)

The Franklin Public Library and Steve Sherlock (the person who runs franklin matters)

We used **EMAIL** as our main form of communication

The response we received from them was

The library allowed us to post the website to [Franklin Matters](#) with this being posted to the franklin matters website could allow more people to have the chance to see are cause and send support


# Stage 5: Engage with Stakeholders

We measured or tracked our communication by...

Checking if our emails were responded to  
(Mr.Vacca did that)

Our evidence for connecting with stakeholders is..

Our website is posted onto Franklin Matters, this would not have been done without permission from the library.



Free Library Services

# Stage 5: Engage with Stakeholders

We reached out to the community by...

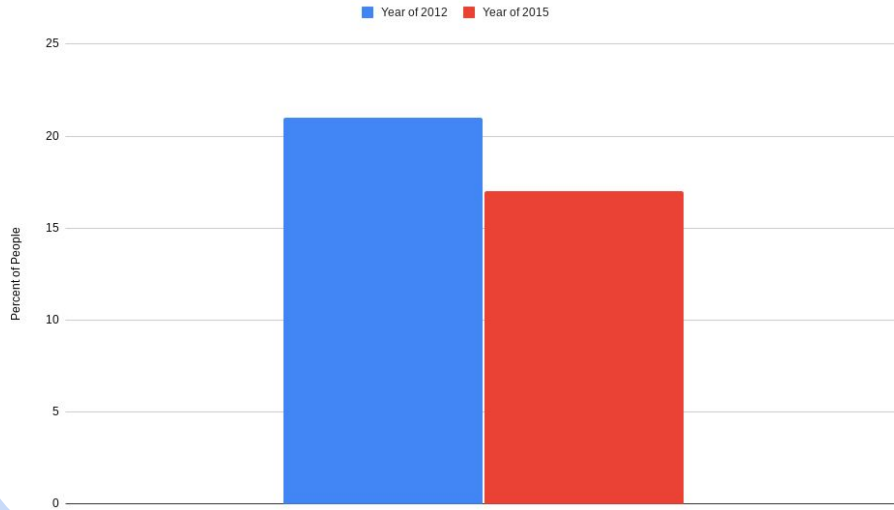
Creating a website and sharing it with the franklin community through

[Franklin Matters](#)

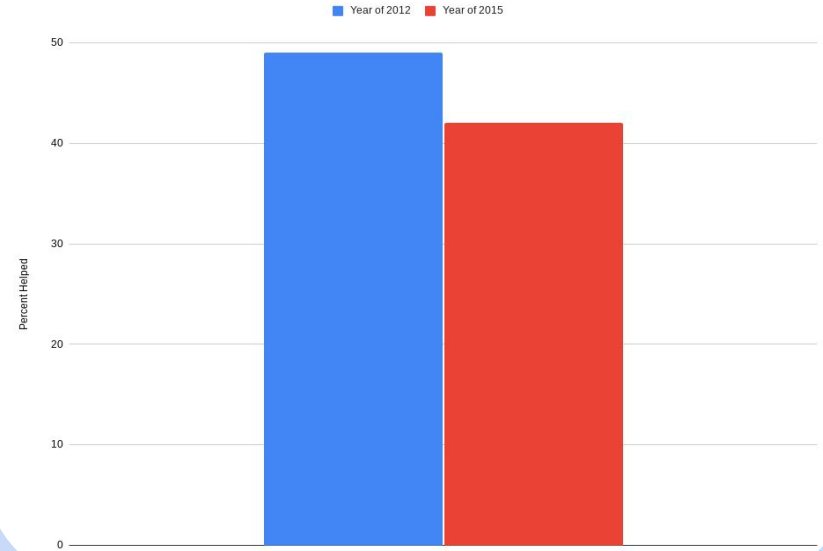
OUR main outreach to the community was sharing our website by putting it onto franklin matters, allowing anyone who goes onto franklin matters to see our website and learn about the problem we are trying to solve.

These graphs show a decline in library usage over time.

Percent of People Attending a Meeting, Program, or Lecture at a Library



Percent Helped by Librarians in the Years 2012 and 2015



## Results and Reflection (Stage 6)

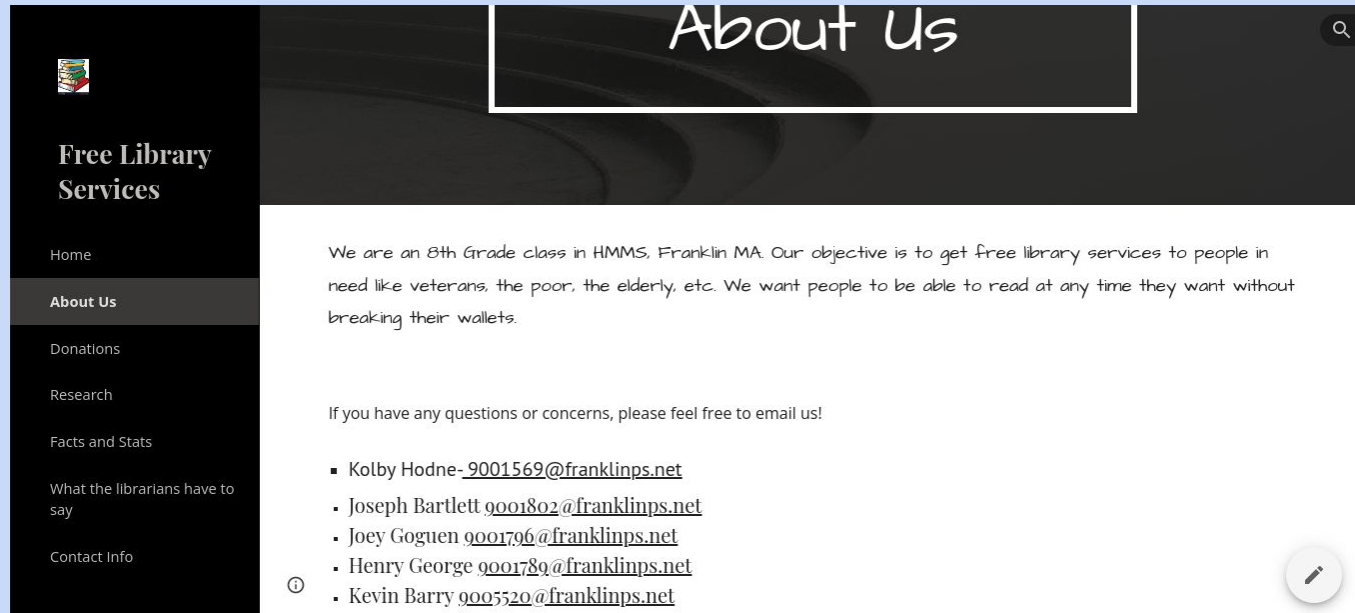
The change that we saw through our action was

We still haven't seen change yet but hopefully we will in the future.

After engaging with stakeholders we are still waiting for

- We are proud to know that the website that we created gives access to the community and is live on [Franklin Matters.](#)

Here is an image of our landing page.



# Stage 6: Results

Our reflection on the SIX STAGES

Stage 3: We found research to be difficult because it took a lot of time,

Stage 4: Action steps were hard to think through in a bigger picture sense.

Working on it for a long period of time was difficult to sustain

We felt like we had the support to do the project

We learned that getting funding for a project is really difficult. Starting with our website is a great first step.

After reflecting on the process we might change...

We had a project leader and that helped to drive the project.

We would like to have started it a bit earlier in the year.

Having access to email outside groups would be helpful for next year's class.

## Next Steps 2023/24

- ❑ We will continue to calibrate and develop the Student Led Civics Projects for all three schools
- ❑ We will continue to work toward a community showcase to share student work
- ❑ We will continue to let students have a voice and choice in the topics that impact them