

Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project

*A Civic Education Program for Urban and Suburban Youth Implemented through Middle School, High School
and Post-Secondary and Adult Education and Community Organizations*

Youth Urban Agenda Program

AGENDA-BUILDING GUIDE

YOU HAVE A VOICE . . .

LET IT BE HEARD!

Cover Layout:
Tina Samaddar
Photos:
Ella Singer
Edited by:
Ella Singer & Tina Samaddar

Check Out Our Web-Site!!

www.urbanagenda.wayne.edu

WSU-based non-profit
organization promoting
civic education in the schools
and in the community

Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project

What is Civic Literacy?

Civic Literacy is the knowledge of how to actively participate and initiate change in your community and the greater society. It is the foundation by which a democratic society functions: Citizen Power as a check and as a means to create avenues for peaceful change.

Why an Agenda?

- Civic participation not only encompasses voting in elections but also a consciousness about the issues that are most important to an individual and his or her community. Creating an agenda is an avenue to gather support and raise awareness for both community members and elected officials about what's happening in the community.
- Because the **Urban Agenda Project** emphasizes the need to generate a common Youth Urban Agenda, students develop cooperative skills of discussion and consensus as they learn to more effectively articulate their needs.
- **Benefits:**
 - > Increased awareness in civic and community affairs
 - > Learned legitimate mechanisms for articulation, coalition building and peaceful change
 - > Encouraged communication and solidarity among students across racial, economic and religious boundaries
 - > Encouraged curiosity and involvement in multi-cultural exchanges and world affairs
- **Additional Curricular Elements:**
 - > Provides an environment for democratic participation in a multicultural environment.
 - > Develops a discussion of democratic Norms & Values even in a scientific/technological society.
 - > Develops conflict-resolution and peer mediation skills of students.

Elements of Civic Literacy

	Citizen	Structure
Thought	<i>opinions</i>	<i>knowledge</i>
Action	<i>deliberation</i>	<i>participation</i>

Civic Literacy Skills

	Awareness	Analysis	Priorities	Advocacy
Communication	<i>discussion</i>	<i>evaluation</i>	<i>agenda-setting</i>	<i>argumentation</i>
Mobilization	<i>reaching out</i>	<i>debating</i>	<i>tactics</i>	<i>call to action</i>
Coalition- Building	<i>dialogue</i>	<i>strategy</i>	<i>bargaining</i>	<i>selling the idea</i>
Organizing	<i>goal-setting</i>	<i>activity planning</i>	<i>assigning tasks</i>	<i>implementation</i>
Institutionalizing	<i>stakeholder meetings</i>	<i>capacity assessment</i>	<i>long-range plan</i>	<i>getting sponsors</i>

Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project

Support Activities Provided by the Youth Urban Agenda Program

Since 1986, Wayne State University has been implementing the Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project at the university level with the collaboration of students from the departments of Education and Political Science. In 1993, we began to involve middle schools, high schools, adult education and post secondary institutions throughout Southeast Michigan, and nationally through the Michigan Campus Compact (MCC).

The Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project is an effort to promote programs that incorporate the education of students in terms of their civic responsibilities with the praxis of building a real political agenda.

- Teaching Civic Literacy for Urban and Suburban Youth Program**
- Speakers' Bureau**
- Candidate Job Interviews**
- Voter Education/Registration**
- International Linkages**
- Civic Literacy Teacher Training Courses** (*also for CEU's*)
- Long-Distance Learning Courses on Civic Literacy** (*also for CEU's*)
- Political Science Courses on Civic Literacy** *Wayne State University*
- Small Library of Materials on Civic Literacy**
- International Academic Forums on Issues & Civic Literacy**
- Coordination and Implementation of School Conventions and other**
 - Web-Site**

*For more information,
please feel free to browse our WEB PAGE:

www.urbanagenda.wayne.edu

Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project

The Curriculum

Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project

YOUTH URBAN AGENDA PROGRAM

CURRICULUM GUIDE:

The program is a participatory approach to teaching civic literacy. It is designed to be implemented in any educational curriculum. The program facilitates the requirements of the Michigan Content Standards and Draft Benchmarks by developing and enhancing skills required for depth of understanding, inquiry and research, public discourse, and decision making with a focus on the imperative of citizen involvement. These goals are achieved through the four components of the program:

I. In-Class: ACTIVE	II. In-Class: ACADEMIC
III. Convention Process: VENUE	IV. Agenda Engagement: INQUIRY

I. In-Class: ACTIVE

Goal: *to create a forum for youth which provides a "free space" for democratic action . . .*

FACILITATION

What does the Urban Agenda Project Facilitator do?

The Project facilitator introduces the students to the Project. The facilitator establishes the "free space" which encourages students to develop and debate issues that concern them and their communities. As students debate the issues, they develop arguments to defend their viewpoint using both personal experience and factual information in an attempt to create a consensus. Facilitators encourage students in understanding the complexity of issues on a local and global level using the classroom as a forum and the discussion of personal experience as legitimate information in decision-making. During facilitation, vocabulary and political terminology are introduced to help students to articulate their issues.

II. In-Class: ACADEMIC

Goal: *to collectively create a ten-point Agenda reflecting the needs of everyone involved . . .*

AGENDA-BUILDING PROCESS

What do the Students do?

Students are engaged in the agenda building-process. Students may define and investigate issues and problems using a variety of resources. The activities provided were developed to facilitate the agenda-building process incorporating analytical tools such as the **Needs-Demands-Response (NDR) Model** and the **Six Points of Deliberation**.

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Needs- Demands- Response (NDR) Model & The Five Points of Deliberation:

The first two questions address the needs of the students, their environments, and their future goals. The third question addresses the formulation of demands that are derived from needs: what do the students feel is necessary to have their needs met? The fourth and fifth questions are designed to introduce the skills of organizing and coalition building to gain support for issues. The sixth questions opens up discussion in reevaluating whether the Agenda accurately reflects the Needs of those it represents.

N- D- R Model	Five Points of Deliberation
(NEEDS)	1) Where would you like to be in 5-10 years?
(NEEDS -> DEMANDS)	2) Where would you like to see your community in 5-10 years?
(DEMANDS)	3) What are the issues that your class or school sees as most important?
(DEMANDS-> RESPONSE)	4) How can we gain support for our agenda as the youth of Southeast Michigan?
(RESPONSE)	5) What types of community or governmental response would resolve these issues?
(RESPONSE -> NEEDS)	6) What kind of education do you need in order to better understand the Issues?

III. Convention Process

Goal: *to create a Final Youth Agenda through collaboration with other schools . . .*

The process begins in the classroom and culminates in Youth Urban Agenda Conventions. The participating high schools, middle schools, adult education, and post-secondary institutions are organized into clusters groups. The convention serves as the culmination of this agenda-building process and becomes proof that diverse communities can come together in a peaceful manner. The convention process is a forum where the students can exercise skills of communication, developing issues, organization, coalition building, and conflict resolution. This brings their research and efforts to its logical conclusion. In the final convention, students will have the opportunity to exchange and debate about issues that affect them as youth, from around the state, the country and the world

- Opening Plenary: Adoption of Rule of the Convention
- Issue Level, School Level and Cluster Level Caucuses: Small Group Discussions
- Final Plenary: Agenda Adoption

IV. Agenda Engagement

Goal: *to formulate collective activities that contribute to social change . . .*

In this phase the students become more involved in the process through activities designed to explore the relationship between citizen responsibility and citizen rights. The students may wish to present their agenda to a speaker or suggest another topic for deliberation. The activities provided by the Project are:

- Candidate Job Interviews: *students have a chance to interview candidates running for public office*
- Voter Registration/Education
- International Linkages with Other Schools
- Letter Writing Campaigns
-
- Community Outreach
- Speakers' Bureau

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An Example of How the
Michigan Content Standards and Draft Benchmarks
Applies to the
Youth Urban Agenda Program

DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING

Content Standard 9: All students will demonstrate understanding of the complexity of enduring issues and recurring problems by making connections and generating themes within and across texts.

Middle School	High School
1. Explore and reflect on universal themes and substantive issues from oral, visual and written texts. Examples include coming of age, rights and responsibilities, group and individual roles, conflict and cooperation, creativity and resourcefulness.	1. Analyze and reflect on universal themes and substantive issues from oral, visual and written texts. Examples include human interaction with the environment, conflict and change, relationships with others and self-discovery.

INQUIRY AND RESEARCH

Content Standard 11: All students will define and investigate important issues and problems using a variety of resources, including technology, to explore and create texts.

Middle School	High School
1. Generate questions about important issues that effect them or topics about which they are curious; narrow the questions to a clear focus; and create a thesis or hypothesis.	1. Generate questions about important issues that affect them or society, or topics about which they are curious; narrow the questions to a clear focus: and create a thesis or hypothesis.
2. Explain and use resources that are most appropriate and readily available for investigating a particular question or topic. Examples include knowledgeable people, field trips, internet, etc.	2. Determine, evaluate and use resources that are most appropriate and readily available for investigating a particular question or topic. Examples include knowledgeable people, field trips, internet, etc.
3. Organize, analyze and synthesize information to draw conclusions and implications based on their investigation of an issue or problem.	3. Synthesize and evaluate information to draw conclusions and implications based on their investigation of an issue or problem.
4. Use different means of developing and presenting conclusions based on the investigation of an issue or problem to an identified audience.	4. Research and select the medium and format to be used to present conclusions based on the investigation of an issue or problem.

V. INQUIRY

Content Standard 2: All students will conduct investigations by formulating a clear statement of a question, gathering and organizing information from a variety of sources, analyzing and interpreting information, formulating and testing hypotheses, reporting results both orally and in writing, and making use of appropriate technology. (Conducting Investigations)

Middle School	High School
1. Pose a social science question about a culture, world region, or international problem.	1. Conduct an investigation prompted by a social science question and compare alternative interpretations of their findings.
2. Gather and analyze information using appropriate information technologies to answer the posed question.	2. Report the results of their investigation including procedures followed and a rationale for their conclusions.

VI. PUBLIC DISCOURSE AND DECISION MAKING

Content Standard 1: All students will state an issue clearly as a question of public policy, trace the origins of the issue, analyze various perspectives people bring to the issue and evaluate possible ways to resolve the issue. (Identifying and Analyzing Issues)

Middle School	High School
1. State public policy issues and their related ethical definitional and factual issues as questions.	1. Generate possible alternative resolutions to public issues and evaluate them using criteria that have been identified.
2. Trace the origins of a public issue.	
3. Explain how culture and experiences shape positions that people take on an issue	

Content Standard 2: All students will engage their peers in constructive conversation about matters of public concern by clarifying issues, considering opposing views, applying democratic values, anticipating consequences, and working toward making decisions. (Group Discussion)

Middle School	High School
1. Engage each other in conversations which attempt to clarify and resolve national and international issues.	1. Engage each other in elaborate conversations that deeply examine public policy issues and help make reasoned and informed decisions.

VII. CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Content Standard 1: All students will consider the effects of an individual's actions on other people, how one acts in accordance with the rule of law, and how one acts in a virtuous and ethically responsible ways as a member of society. (Responsible Personal Conduct)

Middle School	High School
1. Use laws and other ethical rules to evaluate their own conduct and conduct of others.	1. Act out of respect for the rule of law and hold others accountable to the same standard.
Engage in activities intended to contribute to solving national or international problems they have studied.	Plan and conduct activities intended to advance their views on matters of public policy, report the results of their efforts and evaluate their effectiveness.

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An Event:

October 27, 1998:
Youth Urban Agenda Convention
Cobo Hall

Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project

October 27, 1998

Youth Urban Agenda Convention, Cobo Hall

The Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project hosted a Youth Urban Agenda Convention on October 27, 1998, at Cobo Hall in downtown Detroit.

Over 3,000 middle school, high school, post secondary and adult education students of Southeast Michigan participated in the democratic process. At the convention, students formed a political agenda derived from issues that concern themselves and their communities.

Once issues were developed, students debated which of the items were to be added on to the Youth Urban Agenda, representing the students of Southeast Michigan.

Participant Schools:

Academy of the Americas; Beaubien Middle School; Burton International; Butzel Middle School; Barbour Magnate School; Birney Middle School; Detroit Open; Friends School of Detroit; Lessenger Middle School; Voyageur Academy; WSU Higher Opp.; Old Redford Academy; Crescent Academy International; McDonald Stout Middle School; Barnes Elementary School; John Page Middle School; River Rouge Middle School; Thompson Middle School; Simpson Middle School; Cass Technical High School; Chadsey High School; Davis Aerospace; Finney High School; Henry Ford High School; Kettering High School; Mumford High School; Northwestern High School; Northern High School; Southwestern High School; Ecorse High School; Northville High School; Kimball High School; Dondero High School; Southfield High School; Roosevelt High School; Breihaupt; Brightmoor Center; Chandler Park; Crossman Alternative Ed.; Franklin Adult Education; Harris Adult Education; Harris COTE; Middle College Academy; Trombley Center; New Work; Central Academy; Highland Park Career Academy; Southgate Adult and Community Education; Wyandotte Adult Education; Wayne State University; Michigan State University; University of Michigan, Flint; University of Michigan, Dearborn; University of Detroit

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ISSUES!

Students debated issues such as:
health care, drunk drivers, drug rehab, job training, gun control, increase wages, mass rapid transit, lower fares, medical research, environmental issues, aging, uniforms, shelters for the homeless, school vouchers, financial aid for education, police harassment, security and honesty from elected officials just to name a few.

The students voted to participate in a **Youth Urban Agenda Convention on October 2000** to present their Agenda to elected officials during election year.

* * * * *

STATS:

Of the students who participated in the convention:
75% want to attend college.
10% want to attend vocational, trade, music or art school.
15% want to work.

In 10 years, the students want their communities to be gang-free, drug-free and to have a cleaner environment.

92% voted to continue the Urban Agenda Project, 5% voted against the Project and 3% were undecided.

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AGENDA ENGAGEMENT:

Because the Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project infuses the learning of civic literacy skills with the praxis of building a real political agenda, the project has developed open-ended activities for students to be able to pursue their issues.

This is an effort to develop avenues by which students can achieve a response to their Agenda. Because these activities openly engage students with political structures, the results are heightened political awareness, practical experience within political structures and the strengthening of democratic understanding.

The Project organizes the following:

- **Speakers' Bureau**
with over 120 elected officials and issues experts willing to visit schools
- **Linkages with Schools Internationally**
including South Africa, Honduras, Siberia, France, Albania, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, Mexico, Canada, European Union, etc.
- **Candidate Job Interviews**
interviews of candidates running for office are conducted by the students and televised on cable channels.
- **Letter Writing Campaigns**
- **Voter Registration & Education**

Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project

2002 FAB

Wayne State University

Detroit, MI 48201

313 577 2235

313 993 3435(Fax)

Dear Participant,

As the world gets smaller, considerable change takes place within communities that compose modern civil society. It is within this context that the **Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project** promotes a civic literacy program designed to provide participants with the skills and knowledge that are necessary to become active members of the diverse and challenging world of today.

Students are approached on a participatory level. **The Youth Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Curriculum** consists of activities that incorporate the Core Democratic Values and has been specifically structured for the utilization of the **Strands and Benchmarks** as prescribed under the **Michigan Curriculum Framework**. In addition, the Curriculum has been designed to enhance skills developed by participating students for increased success on the **Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)** and the **High School Proficiency Test (HSPT)**. Furnished with hands-on experience, students are taught conflict-resolution skills within the context of their own experiences. The **Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project** is not a simulation-based program. Quite the opposite, it infuses the teaching of civic literacy skills with the actual praxis of building a political agenda. As a result, students are taught organizational and practical techniques needed for access and participation in the political arena.

Committed to the education and empowerment of all people, the goals of the Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project have, and continue to be the creation of an educated and active American public life, the essential foundation for American Democracy.

Interest Form

Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project

2002 FAB Wayne State University Detroit, MI 48201
(313) 577 2235 313 993 3435

Name

School or Organization

Address

City, State, Zip

Daytime Phone Number

I am a teacher:

I am an Administrator:

I would like to volunteer:

I am interested in applying this program in my school.

I would like more information.

I would like more information on your project.

I wish to have my students participate in the next convention.

Please put me on your mailing list.

I have looked over the contract, and I would like to get more involved.