Civic Engagement Beyond Voting: Preparing Community Engaged Citizens in American Secondary Schools

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**PROBLEM STATEMENT**
An increasingly unsteady political climate and growing social identity based civil unrest has magnified the need for a shift in civic education and community engagement on the local, state, federal, and global level. Undoubtedly, this tension goes beyond our voting booths, spilling into our streets, and smattering the screens of our electronic devices. Traditional civics courses lack the progressive emphasis on global citizenship.

**OLD CIVICS**
Knowledge & School based

**NEW CIVICS**
Skills & Community based

“*If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow.*”
John Dewey

**POLICY RESPONSE**
In October 2018, MA Governor Baker Signs S2631, An Act to promote and enhance civic engagement for students.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- **Implement “New Civics” Course**: Frame the teaching of civic engagement by teaching the rights and responsibilities of American citizens, as global citizens, to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to be engaged citizens.
- **Create Community Partnerships** to promote applied learning and real world connections.
- **Monitor and support Civic & Community Engagement** model in every classroom as a school wide initiative.

**WHAT IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?**
- **Political Involvement**: Vote, campaign or write letters to your representatives.
- **Social Responsibility**: Consider the welfare of others and the environment when making decisions.
- **Community Research**: Explore how your community is impacted by current social problems.
- **Association Involvement**: Participate in organizations that focus on community improvement.
- **Direct Service**: Give personal time and energy to address immediate community needs.
- **Philanthropic Giving**: Donate funds and volunteer time or expertise fundraising efforts.
- **Advocacy & Education**: Use your voice to persuade decision makers to make choices that benefit the community.

*MAP SOURCE: EqualEd*