



# Examining Community / School Problems

- 🏠 Identify four or five significant problems facing your community today.
- 🏠 Select the one problem that you believe needs the most immediate attention and think about...
  - What are the major issues related to the problem?
  - What are some of the opposing views related to the problem?
  - What impact is the problem having on the community?
  - Who in the community is most affected by the problem? ...least affected?
  - What attempts have been made to address the problem?
  - How would you solve the problem?
  - What are the potential costs/benefits associated with your proposed solution?

## **List of Portfolio Topics from the SC State Showcase Competitions:**

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|--|---|
| ➤ Boys and Girls Club in York  | ➤ Expired Vehicle Registration Tags                                       |
| ➤ Tag a Keg, Not a Corpse  | ➤ Educational Funding   |
| ➤ Dangerous Traffic Intersection   | ➤ Greenville School District Too Large and Needs to Divided               |
| ➤ Littering in Aiken County  | ➤ Policy to Enforce Upkeep of School Uniforms and Equipment District Wide |
| ➤ Don't Choke on Smoke in Restaurants  | ➤ Abandoned Buildings   |
| ➤ Bus Safety: Buses Too Small for Us All, Bus Stops: Are they Safe?, Bus Quality – Need Better Buses | ➤ You Are What You Eat (Addresses School Food/Nutrition)                  |
| ➤ Bus Safety: Consider Where They Stop   | ➤ Homelessness  |
| ➤ Protect Our Green Space, Stop Cutting Trees  | ➤ Domestic Violence   |
| ➤ Vandalism to Bathrooms – District Policy   | ➤ Train Safety  |
| ➤ Turning Lane Near School   | ➤ Cameras in Red Lights   |
| ➤ Improving Parking for Disabled Citizens  | ➤ Safer Communities – Add Sidewalks                                       |
| ➤ Sprinkler Systems for all Public Buildings New or Old  | ➤ Bottle Tax – Reduce Homelessness  |
|  | ➤ Green Space   |
|  | ➤ Need of Community Centers   |

## **List of Portfolio Topics from previous National Showcase Entries:**

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|--|--|
| ➤ Homelessness/Building a Center for Homelessness  | ➤ Educational Funding                            |
| ➤ No Warning of Crossing Gate at Railroad Crossing | ➤ School-Wide Grading Scale                      |
| ➤ Saving an Historic Building                      | ➤ Transporting Toxic Waste Through the Community |
| ➤ Teen Smoking                                     | ➤ Overcrowding of Detention Centers              |
| ➤ Putting a Stop Light at a Busy Corner            | ➤ Community Recycling Program                    |
|  | ➤ School Uniforms                                |

**List of Suggestions Issues to Address from Students that participated in Project Citizen:**

- Recycling
- Transportation / Road System
- Cutting Down of Too Many Trees
- Teen Pregnancy
- Driving Age of Teenagers
- Gangs/Violence
- Animal Protection
- Wearing of Seatbelts in Vehicles
- Adding Seatbelts to Buses
- Overhead Storage on Buses for Music Instruments
- Air Pollution

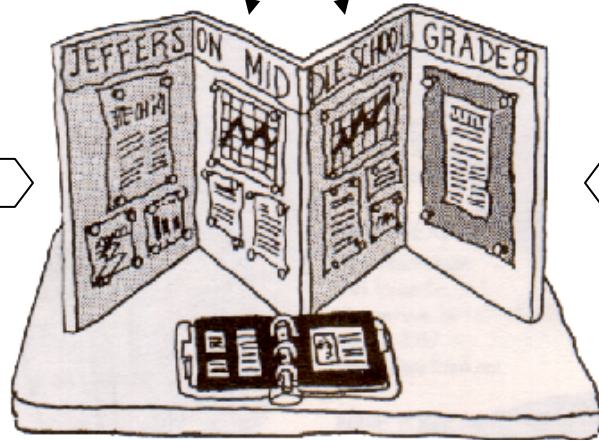
**Project Citizen's Important Design Components:**

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- Students select topic for the portfolio
- Topic should be local, not global
- Students work in teams to complete tasks
  - parents assist students
  - experts from the community visit the class
- Each team is responsible for its part of the portfolio
- All students participate in the hearing
- Awards for students (certificates for all participants and plaques for the state winners)
- Public ceremony to recognize achievements
  - prominent community leaders present awards
  - press releases and media coverage

**Portfolio Criteria Checklist:**

- Criteria for EACH Section of the Portfolio**
- Completeness
  - Clarity
  - Information
  - Support
  - Graphics
  - Documentation
  - Constitutionality



**Criteria for the Overall Portfolio:**

- Persuasiveness
- Practicality
- Coordination
- Reflection

## Tips When Using Project Citizen

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### When choosing a topic...

- Make sure you can find research on the topic.
- Choose a topic that can bring results.
- Preview necessary vocabulary before beginning the portfolio process.

### Keep organized...

- Create folders or binders that don't leave the room.
- Communicate who is doing what so that there isn't duplication of sources and resources.
- Keep track of resources you use.
- Create and adhere to timelines.

### Who does what?

Do a skills inventory of your students before making group assignments.

Optional ways to divide class:

- 1) Divide the class into four groups, have group three shadow group one and group four shadow group two during first part of process. Switch during second part of process.
- 2) Divide class into two groups, allowing one group to work on part one and the other to work on part two. When the first two parts of the portfolio are finished, allow group one to work on part three and group two to work on part four of the portfolio. This keeps the students engaged throughout the process.
- 3) Have entire class work in theory on all of the boards until all of the information is gathered for each board and then divide the class to officially put the boards together.

### Other stuff...

- Practice interviewing before students go out on the real thing.
- Turn students questions back to them and let them explore the answers.
- Hold practice hearings (video, if you can and let students critique themselves).
- Assign some of the research for homework to expedite the process.
- Involve parents, grandparents, and other adults. You will need their help.
- Involve other teachers in your building to help with the project, i.e. math teacher, computer teacher, language arts teacher, art teacher.
- Duplicate the documentation portion of the portfolio so you have it when preparing for the hearing.
- Discuss liability issues with your building administrator.
- Use the media to your advantage.



## Don't Forget...

Your policy doesn't need to be implemented to be a success. The real success is in the experience of creating the product.

