Welcome to LegiSchool!

LegiSchool would like to welcome everyone to the 2020 - 2021 school year. Although 2020 has proven to be a difficult year, we sincerely hope that everyone has been able to enjoy some happy moments while staying safe and healthy. We also want to send our warmest congratulations to the graduating class of 2020! We applaud your perseverance and strength during these hard times. LegiSchool also acknowledges the pillars of strength in the education system: our teachers! Thank you to all of our teachers for adapting to new situations, spending countless hours learning new software, and remaining committed to student learning.

New for the 2020 – 2021 school year, LegiSchool will begin to offer online programming. Teachers and students will be able to access our Virtual Town Hall meetings and participate in discussion sessions online. We hope that students and teachers in California are able to participate in all of our learning opportunities that we have to offer this year. Keep reading to find out how you can get your school involved.

In the 2020-21 school year, we will tackle the issues that students want to talk about, such as public health and racial inequality in California. In addition, we will continue to host our annual contests: the essay contest, the cartoon contest and the photo contest. Students participating in the November’s essay contest will be asked to share their experiences of going virtual in 2020 and to highlight how the changes affected them, their education and the high school experience.

This summer, LegiSchool kicks off the LegiSchool Civics Virtual institute, a paid summer online program. Through LegiSchool’s first virtual internship, participating students will have a chance to learn about the three branches of government, work on their professional skills and engage in thoughtful discussions through online assignments and webinars.

Through our virtual town halls, contests and summer program, LegiSchool illustrates how government is relevant to young people, and encourages the next generation’s commitment to civic life. **Visit our website to learn more!**

Photo credit: Kai Schumann, South Tahoe High School
2020-21
Virtual Town Hall Meetings

Racial Disparities in California
October 14, 2020
At the national level, George Floyd’s death sparked a powerful movement that was felt from coast to coast. In California, communities urged lawmakers to address systemic racism in our state and called for comprehensive police reform. In recent years, these issues have been addressed through legislation, such as AB 392 which restricted law enforcement’s use of deadly force. Currently, AB 3121 aims to establish a Task Force and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans as well as provide an in depth analysis of the impacts of slavery in California. What is institutionalized racism and where can it be found? What can be done to eliminate it?

California’s Response to COVID-19
December 9, 2020
California’s response to COVID-19 highlighted the shortcomings of our current health care system. Testing availability, proper preventative safety measures, and the trade-offs between individual freedom and the common good were headliners throughout our state. At the same time, the coronavirus pandemic has disproportionately affected Californians according to race, with African American and Latino communities being disproportionately affected. What do you think of California’s response to COVID-19? What do you think does and doesn’t work in our current health care systems?

Cyber Security in the Digital Age
February 17, 2021
As the world steered away from in-person gatherings, the internet became the tool for continuing our communication, education and employment. Businesses, schools and other organizations pivoted to virtual events and video conferencing. Increasing our internet usage raises cyber security and privacy concerns: How can we ensure that the privacy of our virtual communications, like Zoom meetings and on-line classes, are protected? How can individuals ensure that their personal and financial data is protected? What companies are collecting private information? How can we hold companies accountable when our privacy isn’t being protected?

California Financial Aid Reform
April 21, 2021
The college experience offers students new learning opportunities but, also comes with financial challenges that affect thousands. To tackle financial hardship, California increased the number of available competitive Cal Grants and increased funding for the California College Promise in 2019. However, many students encounter financial stress with non-tuition costs, such as housing, food and transportation. AB 1314, which aimed to reform the Cal Grant eligibility system, has been one of many bills attempting to overhaul the state’s financial aid system. What changes would you like to see in the financial aid system? What policies can be the most beneficial?

Interested in attending a Virtual Town Hall Meeting?
Send an email to legischool@csus.edu
CONTTEST CORNER

ESSAY CONTEST

The year 2020 brought a lot of uncertainty, change and gave us new perspectives on how we live our daily lives. What are your thoughts on how California responded to the pandemic? Did 2020 change your views in our current state policies? What policies do you think are the most beneficial and why? What was the hardest change you had to face and what was the most feasible?

All current 11th and 12th graders are invited to cook up an idea and submit their essay response to our annual LegiSchool Essay Contest! Selected winners will be chosen to participate in the Legislative Summit at the State Capitol, where they will be able to share their thoughts and ideas with policymakers. Complete details will be available in September.

POSTMARK DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 20, 2020
LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT: JANUARY 27, 2021

EDITORIAL CARTOON CONTEST

Cartoonists use symbols, metaphors, caricatures and more to explore complex subjects in interesting ways. In this contest, we invite students to express their thoughts by creating an original editorial cartoon. Cash prizes awarded to winners and runners up. Complete details available this winter.

POSTMARK DEADLINE: MARCH 19, 2021

PHOTO CONTEST

Join students from around the state and participate in our most popular contest! Step behind the camera lens and capture a quintessential California picture to show us how you envision this state. Let us see California through your eyes and you can win a cash prize! Complete details available this spring.

DEADLINE: MAY 31, 2021

Stay up to date!

Keep informed on all the LegiSchool happenings by following our blog. The blog provides background information and an insider’s glimpse of all of our civic education opportunities. Experience what our contests, Town Halls, and internship are like by catching our latest blog post.

Visit our website for contest details and submission requirements

Photo Credit: Lauren Schwartz, South Tahoe High School
Mission

The LegiSchool Project is a civic education collaboration between Sacramento State and the California State Legislature, administered by the Center for California Studies.

The Project’s mission is to engage California’s high school students in matters of public policy and state government by creating opportunities for students and state leaders to meet and share ideas on issues affecting Californians. In doing so, we hope to motivate young people to take an interest in the public life around them and to encourage their active participation in our political process.

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APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 31, 2021

LEGISCHOOL CIVICS VIRTUAL INSTITUTE

The LegiSchool Civics Virtual Institute gives a select number of California high school students the opportunity to participate in an intensive 4-week online program that explores important policy issues in California and provides students the tools to develop leadership and professional skills. A stipend will be provided to the student at the completion of the summer program. The LegiSchool Civics Virtual Institute is an online summer internship program and is not a Sacramento State college course.

Students will learn about each of the three branches of government with an emphasis on public service and the political process. Activities include: online discussions with experts to learn more about state agencies, the judicial branch, California policy and politics as well as attend online webinars and professional workshops.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 31, 2021