



Wyoming Patriot Schools Guide

Program Overview

The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) Wyoming Patriot Schools Program advances the standard of civic education by celebrating schools that are committed to community, country, and character. This voluntary program recognizes individual schools that demonstrate excellence in civics education, patriotic observance, and community engagement.

The program defines civic education as the study of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, including how the government works, how citizens participate in their communities, and the knowledge and skills needed to be informed, engaged members of society.

Recognition Levels

Recognition is awarded to individual schools, not districts. Each school must apply independently. Schools may reapply in subsequent years to maintain recognition or to achieve Distinguished status.

Distinguished Wyoming Patriot School: Schools meeting all 13 criteria.

Wyoming Patriot School: Schools meeting 8 - 13 criteria.

Recognized schools receive:

- Official banner for display.
- Listing on the WDE Patriot Schools website.
- Recognition certificate.

How to Apply

Application Process

Step 1: Review Criteria

See the program criteria and explore the practical steps and examples provided in the following section.

Step 2: Gather Evidence

For each criterion your school meets, collect evidence demonstrating implementation. Acceptable forms of evidence include:

- Photos of classroom activities, assemblies, flag displays, and community partnerships
- Documents that show lesson plans, curriculum maps, assessment results, and student government bylaws.
- Student work, including essays, artwork, projects, or portfolios.
- Event calendars, PD agendas, holiday observance plans.
- Communication with invited military or veteran speakers or community partnership agreements.
- Data that showcases civic assessment results and student government participation rates.

Step 3: Complete Submission Portal

Access the online submission portal from August through September each year. For each criterion:

- Select the criterion from the checklist.
- Upload supporting evidence (multiple files per criterion accepted).
- Describe how your school implements this criterion in a brief narrative that is a maximum of 250 words.

Step 4: Submit Application

- Review all submissions for completeness.
- Provide school contact information.
- Submit application through portal.
- Receive confirmation email with tracking number.

Application Timeline

Initial Application Window: August–September each year.

Recognition Announcements: November 11, Veterans Day each year.

Evaluation Process

Applications are reviewed by a WDE evaluation team using the following process:

- All selected criteria are verified to have supporting evidence.
- Submitted evidence is assessed to determine if it demonstrates meaningful implementation.
- An appropriate award recognition level is decided based on the submitted evidence.
- Schools will be notified of their recognition status by mail and email.

Criteria

Civic Education & Knowledge

Comprehensive Civics Curriculum

Actionable Steps:

- Elementary: Weekly lessons on community helpers, rules vs. laws, basic rights and responsibilities.
- Middle: Semester-long civics course covering the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the three branches of government, and U.S. presidents.
- Middle: Curriculum showing the use of National Museum of Military Vehicles content.
- High School: Required government/civics course with a test on the U.S. Constitution.
- Use free resources like [iCivics](#), [Bill of Rights Institute](#), or the University of Wyoming Malcolm Wallop Civic Engagement Program [Civics 101 curriculum](#).

Examples:

- 4th-grade students create a classroom Constitution and Bill of Rights.
- 8th-graders participate in a mock constitutional convention.
- High schoolers complete the We the People competition materials.

Patriotic Holiday Observance

Actionable Steps:

- Plan school-wide activities for patriotic holidays throughout the school year:
 - Constitution Week (Sept 17-23): Focus on constitutional history and founding documents.
 - Patriots Day (September 11): Honor first responders and discuss civic courage.
 - Veterans Day (November 11): Recognize military service and sacrifice.
 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (December 7): Discuss historical significance and resilience.
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January): Explore civic participation and civil rights.
 - Presidents' Day (February): Study presidential leadership and the executive branch.
 - Memorial Day (May): Honor fallen service members and the meaning of sacrifice.
 - Flag Day (June 14): Learn proper flag etiquette and symbolism.
- Each grade level focuses on different aspects of the holiday's civic significance.
- Invite relevant guest speakers such as veterans, judges, attorneys, government officials, or first responders.
- Display student work related to holiday themes throughout the school.

Examples:

- Elementary: Holiday-themed coloring pages, simple explanations of significance, or thank you cards to veterans/first responders.
- Middle: Historical scavenger hunts, living museums of historical figures, or research presentations on holiday origins.
- High School: Debate tournaments, mock trials/Supreme Court cases, service projects tied to holiday themes, or oral history interviews.

Student Government Program

Actionable Steps:

- Establish a student council with real, authentic agency over school policies.
- Hold campaigns with speeches, debates, and secret ballot voting.
- Train student leaders in parliamentary procedure and meeting management.
- Give the student government budget authority for school improvement projects.

Examples:

- Students vote on school spirit themes, lunch menu additions, or uniform policies.
- The student council organizes school service projects and fundraisers.
- Monthly town halls are held where students can petition the student government.

Civic Assessment Integration

Actionable Steps:

- Administer grade-appropriate civics knowledge pre- and post-assessments each year.
- Include civics questions in existing state tests where possible.
- Create school-based Constitution and citizenship tests.
- Track improvements in civic knowledge over time.

Examples:

- Hold a citizenship test, similar to a naturalization exam, that has been modified for grade level.
- Conduct a portfolio assessment of civic learning with evidence from each year.
- Establish digital badges for civics knowledge milestones.

Ceremonial & Symbolic Elements

Daily Pledge of Allegiance

Actionable Steps:

- Begin each day with the Pledge of Allegiance over the intercom or in classrooms.
- Teach proper flag etiquette and hand placement during the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Explain the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance using words at age-appropriate levels.

Examples:

- Elementary students learn the Pledge of Allegiance phrase by phrase with explanations.
- Middle schoolers research the history of the Pledge of Allegiance and compose reflections.
- Student leaders rotate responsibility for leading the morning Pledge of Allegiance.

Proper Flag Display & Education

Actionable Steps:

- Ensure the flags in every classroom are properly displayed and maintained.
- Teach flag folding, raising/lowering procedures, and hold flag retirement ceremonies.
- Create a flag timeline showing the evolution of the American flag design.
- Partner with VFW or American Legion for flag education programs.

Examples:

- Students assist with holding proper flag ceremonies.
- Students participate in a flag retirement ceremony at the local VFW.
- Art classes create flag-themed projects while learning flag history.

Patriotic Arts Integration

Actionable Steps:

- Participate in the VFW Patriotic Pen essay contest and art competitions.
- Create patriotic-themed performances for school and community events.
- Integrate American history and civics into art, music, and drama classes.
- Display student patriotic artwork throughout the school building.

Examples:

- Annual Patriotic Arts Festival showcasing student work.
- Students perform historical skits about the Founding Fathers or other key events.
- Poetry contest with themes of freedom, service, and citizenship.

Community Engagement & Service

Community Civics Connections

Actionable Steps:

- Partner with the local city hall for monthly student observer visits to city council meetings.
- Arrange a courthouse field trip, including meetings with a judge.
- Invite the local mayor, city council members, or county commissioners for Q&A sessions.
- Have students attend local government meetings and report back.

Examples:

- 5th-graders visit city planning meetings during a community development unit.
- High schoolers interview local elected officials for civics projects.
- Students present proposals to the local city council on youth-related issues.

Veterans Recognition Program

Actionable Steps:

- Host a Veterans Day assembly with local veteran speakers.
- Invite veterans to share military experiences and service stories.
- Create a Wall of Honor featuring local veterans and active military.
- Organize service projects supporting veteran organizations.
- Visit the National Museum of Military History in Dubois.

Examples:

- Host a lunch with a Veteran program where students interview veterans.
- Veterans speak to classes about military service and sacrifice.
- Students write thank-you letters to troops or create care packages.

Patriotic Community Service

Actionable Steps:

- Require annual service hours with a patriotic/civic component.
- Partner with veterans organizations, historical societies, or civic groups.
- Organize flag placement at cemeteries on Memorial Day.
- Volunteer for flags across America.
- Adopt local veterans or community memorials for maintenance.
- Students perform the National Anthem at local events.

Examples:

- Students help with veteran organization fundraisers or events.
- Adopt-a-grave program at the local military cemetery.
- Community cleanup projects around historic sites or monuments.

Historical Preservation Projects

Actionable Steps:

- Partner with local historical societies for preservation projects.
- Create oral history projects interviewing community veterans and elders.
- Research and document local historical sites and landmarks.
- Develop historical walking tours or digital presentations.

Examples:

- Students create documentaries about local World War II veterans.
- Research project on the community's role in historical events.
- Restoration work on local historical markers or monuments.
- Wyoming History Day research project.

Purple Star School

- Become a designated [Wyoming Purple Star School](#) that is in good standing.

Professional Development & Teacher Support

This criterion may be met through either participation in Civics Professional Development or involvement in a Teacher/Administrator Recognition Program.

Civics Professional Development

Actionable Steps:

- Require two hours of annual civics-focused professional development (PD) for all teachers.
- Utilize WDE-curated civics PD courses on the [Innovator Network](#) or the [WDE PD Portal](#).
- Partner with universities for civics education graduate courses.
- Subscribe to civics education organizations such as the [Center for Civic Education](#) or [iCivics](#).
- Attend state and national civics education conferences.

Examples:

- Hold a summer institute on teaching the Constitution for all social studies teachers.
- Host a cross-curricular workshop on integrating civics into math, science, and ELA.
- Attend mini-civics conferences hosted by WDE for participating schools.
- Initiate book study groups using civics education texts.

Teacher/Administrator Recognition Program

Actionable Steps:

- Nominate teachers or administrators for VFW Smart/Maher Teacher of the Year awards.
- Create an internal Patriotic Educator recognition program.
- Celebrate teachers who integrate civics across all subjects.
- Highlight teacher accomplishments in community newsletters.

Examples:

- Monthly spotlight on a teacher who is incorporating patriotic themes into lessons.
- Annual banquet recognizing civics education excellence.
- Teacher grants for innovative civics/patriotism projects.