NYC speaks
YOUTH

Materials: Facilitation guide and social action kit and survey link
Length of Time: 45 minutes (for survey only) or 2–3 class periods (for lessons, survey, and social action activities)
Vocabulary: Federalism, Three Branches of Government, Adams Administration, Civics, Data, Reparations, Community Conversations, Activism
Suggested Videos: Review of the Three Branches of Government/Separation of Powers and Equity vs. Equality
- Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances - Crash Course Government and Politics
- Branches of the Government: Politics on Point
- Equity vs. Equality

1. Introduce students to NYC Speaks.

From the NYC Speaks Team:
- NYC Speaks is a citywide engagement initiative designed to ensure that all New Yorkers have an opportunity to be heard concerning priorities and policies of the Adams administration.
- Phase 1 of NYC Speaks is a citywide survey followed by in-depth conversations hosted by community organizations across the city.
- Data and ideas will be collected from these conversations which will fuel action planning workshops in the late spring. The details and proposals that come out of the workshops will feed into the upcoming Strategic Plan for the City.
- Our goal is to make sure you are heard!

2. Provide more information about NYC Youth Speaks.

An Excerpt from the Press Release:

NEW YORK (January 31, 2022)--Mayor Eric Adams, Schools Chancellor David C. Banks, and NYC Speaks today announced the launch of NYC Youth Speaks, a new piece of the NYC Speaks civic engagement initiative designed to engage public school students and young people from across the city.

The launch of NYC Youth Speaks features a youth version of a citywide survey that is currently being distributed throughout the five boroughs and online to inform the policies and priorities of the new mayoral administration. This survey has been adapted for students from grades 9 through 12 by students and can be found at nycspeaks.org/youth. In addition, the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) is introducing the NYC Youth Speaks curriculum for public high school students, which will engage young people in the classroom about civic action, city government, and ways to make change.

Both the adult and youth surveys will remain open until February 11th. Extending the NYC Speaks survey for two additional weeks will provide more New Yorkers whose voices are too little heard in government an opportunity to be heard. Survey data will be used to shape Community Conversation events that will add qualitative insights, including events led by students for students. The survey data is anonymous and will be compiled into a report, which will be delivered to Mayor Adams, Chancellor Banks, and the administration and made available to the public.

More About NYC Youth Speaks:

- NYC Youth Speaks will deeply engage students in building the future of NYC, will teach students more about the role of city government, and will ensure young voices are being elevated in these important conversations.
- The first phase of this initiative is the survey that will seek input from our youth on issues such as education, transportation, housing, climate change, public safety and racial equity.
- The NYC Youth Speaks surveying period runs from January 28 to February 11, 2022.
- Prior to taking the survey, teachers and school staff guiding students through this process are encouraged to prepare students by activating their prior knowledge and engaging in one or more of the recommended pre-survey activities below (word web, introductory discussion, government primers from Civics for All).
- School teams are also encouraged to build excitement for the survey by planning for and implementing one or more of the recommended school wide activities in this Facilitation Guide.
- After these initial activities, students should be given the link for the survey and provided with time during the school day to complete the survey.
- Post survey activities are also included in this Facilitation Guide to support with building learning extensions from the survey and to keep students engaged in these and other civic activities.

3. Discuss (some of) the key issues addressed in the survey and why NYC youth should be heard.

ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- Using a **word web**, teachers will solicit responses from students about pressing issues in their communities.
- Draw NYC in a bubble on the board and gradually build the word web based on student responses.
- As student responses are shared, the teacher/adult facilitator will create a word web on the board, highlighting areas of overlap and making connections to content students are learning about in their social studies, civics and government courses.
- This should be a student-led discussion! Students should drive this conversation, bouncing ideas off of each other.
- Students should be encouraged to celebrate areas where their communities are thriving and to think of areas where improvements might be needed.
- Some suggested key issues for this activity are: education and youth development, equity and racial justice, civic engagement, public safety, housing and neighborhoods, economic vitality and workforce development, health and well-being, and climate and infrastructure.

KEY ISSUES RAISED IN THE NYC YOUTH SPEAKS SURVEY

- Have an **introductory discussion** with students **about the issues raised in the** NYC Youth Speaks survey which are areas of concern raised by community members throughout the city.

- As these issues are discussed, reference the word web students created to build on connecting lines of thought that were previously discussed.

Key Social Issue Addressed in Survey	Examples of Issues
Education and Youth Development	- How can the city government support equitable learning opportunities for all students regardless of a student's race, gender identity, income level, immigration status, disability or neighborhood?
Equity and Racial Justice	- Should our city propose reparations for some minority groups in the form of cash, land grants, down payment assistance, etc.? (Provide a definition of reparations for students). - Should the city government offer more resources to support immigrant communities who contribute to the growth and development of New York City (e.g., business grants, translation services, legal assistance for immigration court)?
Civic Engagement	- What can the city government do to support and encourage youth activism?
Public Safety	- How can our youth be leaders in ensuring that their communities are safe? - How can the city government support alternatives to incarceration for at-risk youth? - What resources and policies does the city government have to support youth who were previously incarcerated?
Housing and Neighborhoods	- How will the city government address housing shortages, lack of affordable housing, safety, and quality of life for all New Yorkers? - How will the city government make neighborhood improvements which benefit all New Yorkers? - What are the positive versus negative impacts of large building developments in New York City on New Yorkers?
Economic Vitality and Workforce Development	- How would the city government provide opportunities for high school graduates to be hired by city agencies?

Health and Well-Being	- How will the city government guarantee that all New Yorkers have access to healthy food options regardless of their income? - How will the city government prevent incarcerating New Yorkers who are experiencing a mental health crisis? - How can the city government limit the spread of COVID-19?
Climate and Infrastructure	- How can the city government reduce the risk of flooding in low-income areas? - How will the city government ensure that the communities most impacted by environmental burdens benefit from the climate investments made by the city?

4. Use NYC Youth Speaks suggested pre-survey lesson plans and activities.

To further prepare students to actively engage in the NYC Youth Speaks surveying process, additional pre-survey lessons and activities are provided below. School teams should consider which materials are most appropriate for their respective schools and students, and should leverage this opportunity to build on course content.

<u>**LESSON PLANS & ACTIVITIES**</u>

<u>**CIVICS FOR All ACTIVITIES**</u>

The NYCDOE strongly believes civic engagement is an essential part of every students' core academic experience. The Civics for All initiative was launched to "strengthen opportunities for students to develop skills and knowledge related to democracy." The goal is for all our students to become engaged citizens who can think critically and are empowered to chart the course that our city and country take. Civics for All helps schools support students in making connections between history, current events, and democratic structures.

There are many ways that schools can introduce and discuss the purpose of the NYC Youth Speaks survey and its relevance to civic engagement. A range of applicable lessons can be found in the NYCDOE Civics for All curriculum. Below are some suggested civics topics and lessons to consider.

- **Lesson on "The Individual in a Representative Democracy"** — (Students will be able to analyze the responsibilities of representatives at each level of government—which can be found in the Civics for All Curriculum Guide Grades 9-12 Part 1.)
  - Suggested Lesson 3; pages 96–103.

- **Lesson on "Introduction to Budgeting"** and **"New York City's Budget"** — (Students will be able to analyze the purpose and function of creating a personal budget—which can be found in the [Civics For All: Participatory Budgeting in Your School Guide.](#))
  - Suggested Activity #1; pages 16–19: Introduction to Budgeting.
  - Suggested Activity #2; pages 20–33: New York City's Budget.
- **Lesson on "Elected Officials Roles and Duties"** — (Students will be able to analyze roles and functions of local officials to understand which officials can best address their needs and concerns—which can be found in the [Vote: An Instructional Guide to Elections](#).)
  - Suggested Activity #7; pages 27–34.

SCHOOL-WIDE SOCIAL ACTION ACTIVITIES (in collaboration with student government)

These activities can be done during class (advisory, history, government, civics) and/or as part of an after-school club.

Name of Social Action Activity	Description of Activity
Morning Announcement	During the morning announcements, on the day before the survey is administered, have student leaders read a poem, quote, or something they have written about the importance of youth voice in city government. • https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/144562/political-poems • https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/civics/ • https://poets.org/text/politics-poems-kids
Displays	• Have students work together to create an interactive #CivicsMatters bulletin board displaying civics terms created by their peers (e.g., What is civics? What does it mean to be civically engaged? Direct vs. representative democracy, etc.). The board can display several aspects of voting such as key issues affecting the school community and the importance of being civically engaged. • Have the students create a PSA and display it on your digital board/monitor for all to see. It can also be posted on the school's website and social media accounts. • Show a brief video clip regarding youth engagement (e.g., Sarafina). • Create a section in the library (if available) which has books/articles related to youth civic engagement in New York and around the world

	and how youth actions shaped decisions made by their government ([The Little Rock Nine (1957)](#), [Ruby Bridges](#) desegregates her school (1960), [The Greensboro Four (1960)](#), [Sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina (1960)](#)) and in [Birmingham, Alabama (1963)](#), [University uprisings in the US (1968)](#), [Youth uprisings in South Africa and the Death of Hector Peterson (1976)](#), [Tiananmen Square (1989)](#), [The Velvet Revolution (1989)](#), [Apartheid Divestment (the 1970s-80s)](#), [University uprisings in Iran (1999)](#), [The Children's Crusade (1963)](#), and [Black Lives Matter](#) (2013 to present).
Youth Engagement Video Review & Discussion	● Introduce youth engagement examples through videos: 　○ [Sarafina](#): Musical-type video of South African teens at a burial of teens killed in SOWETO during Apartheid singing, "Freedom is Coming Tomorrow." 　○ "[I can't breathe](#)": Youth Protest in Portland, Maine. A call to activate and prioritize teens of color and condemn shootings of black men. 　○ [Student Activism](#): The Power of Using Your Voice: Short interviews from youth activists sharing their experiences about why they are speaking up because youth voice matters. 　○ [This is Equity](#): California students have big dreams. Unfortunately some students face a much tougher road to achieve them. Students share their ideas on ways they can be supported.
Record a Social-Action Video (This might be coordinated with student government after-school with COSA or student advisor)	● Have students record short social-action videos. ● In 1–2 minutes, introduce your cause with "I am speaking because…" and then mention an issue that you care about as a New Yorker and would like Mayor Adams to address. To end your video, say, encourage your peers to Speak up! ● For example, you can say: I'm from [NEIGHBORHOOD], [BOROUGH] and I am in the _____ grade. I am speaking because… ● Students can remix "Sarafina" by re-writing a song, music, and dance routine relevant to the issues students face in New York City.

Contact Your Policymaker	- Have students draft a letter to their local leaders in city, state, or federal government. - The letter should address specific concerns the student has about their education and how the policymaker could assist. - Sample letter attached [HERE](#). Please also find a list of [New York City Council members](#). Here is a list of your [United States Representatives](#), New York State [Senators](#) and [Assembly Members](#). - Activity 7 on page 33 of "An Instructional Guide to Elections" would be a great resource for this activity. - Create a social media post and tag your policymaker regarding an important issue.
Write it Out/Post on Social Media	- Support students with writing video scripts and posting photos of related key issues on social media. - Post on Twitter and/or other social media accounts of your choosing. - You can also add any hashtags listed above (#NYCYouthSpeaks, #YouthVoicesMatter, #NYCYouthInAction, #NYCYouthGetStuffDone, #YouthEmpowerment, #YouthParticipationAllDay, #Don'tMessWithTheYouth, #ASeatAtTheTable, #YouthSitAtTheTable, #YouthActivism, #YouthVoices, #YouthVoiceInBudgetDecisions, #YouthLeadership, #YouthInPolitics, #YouthCivicEducation, #CivicLife, #DoSomething, #MakeADifference, #TakeAStand, #DoYourPart).
TikTok Challenge	- Students can create their own TikTok challenge related to a social issue of their choice. - Students can share their TikToks (with the proper media consents) on their school's pages if any. This must be approved by the principal.
Text Campaign	- Students can also use their phones to spread the word to encourage their peers and family members to get involved and let their voices be heard. Below please find sample texts for students: "Today I decided to speak up about what I think should be a priority for the city government. I took the NYC Youth Speaks Survey. Did you?

	○ "Hi! Have you taken the NYC Youth Speaks Survey about the future of city government? I want to make sure your voice is in the mix. Complete the NYC Youth Speaks Survey! ○ Useful note: high school students should be directed to the NYC Youth Speaks Survey whereas older family members should be encouraged to participate in the NYC Speaks surveying process.

5. Administer the NYC Youth Speaks Survey.

- Although optional, offer all students the opportunity to take the NYC Youth Speaks Survey. It is suggested that the survey be administered in small groups as part of a 45-minute block or a class period (e.g., can be done in advisory and/or a social studies, civics, or government class).
- If students are absent, please provide the link and allow them to complete the survey during their free time.
- Consider survey completion as a participation grade for students (in all classes where grades are given).

6. Obtain feedback from students about the survey.

- Have class discussions on key issues that students personally connected to.
- Think about opportunities for students to be involved and allow them to connect with elected officials or other youth organizations, to take action.
- Consider arranging a town hall meeting with students to discuss the survey and brainstorm ways in which students can get involved.

7. Support your student government by creating more opportunities for youth engagement and to participate in community conversations.

After students take the survey, the work continues! All students are invited to participate in community conversations across the boroughs. Students can organize a group at their school or join existing organizations (more details to follow). Please find a list of youth organizations (this list is not exhaustive):

- **NYCDOE organizations and programs designed to encourage and empower youth voice:**

- ○ My Brother's Keeper NYC, My Sister's Keeper NYC, Emerging Leaders for Social Justice Institute, Students and Educators for Equity (SEE) and Student Advisory Councils - Borough and Chancellor's Student Advisory Councils (BSAC and CSAC).

- **State and Citywide, community-based and youth-led organizations designed to support student organizing and social justice advocacy (including educational policy change at city and state levels) (this list is not exhaustive):**

  - ○ Brotherhood Sister Sol, Sistas and Brothas United, Asian American Student Advocacy Project (ASAP), Dignity in Schools, Girls for Gender Equity, IntegrateNYC, Make the Road New York, NYCLU Teen Activist Project (TAP), Rockaway Youth Task Force, Teens Take Charge, Urban Youth Collaborative, YA-YA Network, Inter-Generational Change Initiative, NYC Youth Leadership Council, Participatory Budgeting Youth Fellowship, NYC Youth for Equity and Solidarity (YES) Council, New York City Youth Council, New York State Youth Leadership Council

- **College/University and non-profit simulated programs designed to promote civic engagement (this list is not exhaustive):**

  - ○ Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia Model Congress
  - ○ Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Columbia Model United Nations,
  - ○ National High School (NHSMUN) and Change the World (UN)
  - ○ New York City Urban Debate League, New York Parliamentary Debate League,

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QUESTIONS? Email Melissa Cisco at mcisco@schools.nyc.gov