Introduction to Local Government

Municipal Decisions and Community Responsibility

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Date _____ Class _____

Grades 6 through 12 Research Simulation Task

Essential Question

How can residents use evidence to influence municipal decisions and hold local officials accountable?

NJSLS Social Studies

Grades 6 through 8 connect to 6.3.8.CivicsPI.1 on why government is needed and 6.3.8.CivicsPI.3 on sources, perspectives and civic action. Grades 9 through 12 connect to 6.3.12.CivicsPD.1 through an accountability proposal. Public submission is an optional extension.

NJSLS English Language Arts

Evidence and argument connections include RI.CR.6.1, W.AW.6.1, RI.CR.9–10.1, W.AW.9–10.1, RI.CR.11–12.1 and W.AW.11–12.1. Apply the enrolled grade expectations in grades 7 and 8.

CCLS Literacy Connections

RH.6–8.1, RH.9–10.1 and RH.11–12.1 develop evidence analysis. WHST.6–8.1, WHST.9–10.1 and WHST.11–12.1 support arguments. High school extensions require additional primary source analysis.

Interdisciplinary and Amistad Alignment

Civics examines municipal power and participation. ELA develops claims. Mathematics evaluates a fictional budget. Geography examines service locations. Science tests a surface water model. Amistad connections recognize African American leadership and struggles for representation.

Day 1 Municipal Government in Daily Life

Do Now

Which city service affects your daily life? Explain how.

Source A The Work of a Municipality

A municipality is a local government serving a defined community, such as a city, town or township. Municipal government makes decisions about services and public spaces within the authority it has. Knowing the responsible office helps residents turn a concern into a useful request. Different municipalities can organize their offices differently. This packet studies municipal government through East Orange examples.

East Orange's Public Works Department includes functions involving streets and drains, sanitation, traffic engineering, shade trees and parks maintenance. The department's responsibilities have limits. A city does not automatically own or control every road, building or service within its borders. A resident should identify the location and responsible agency before requesting action. [1, 2]

Imagine a broken sign beside a city maintained park. A helpful report describes the sign, its location and the observed problem. It separates evidence from assumptions about why the damage occurred. Municipal workers need enough information to investigate. A service report can help carry out existing policy; a request to change a city rule may require a different process.

Quick Write

Using Source A, explain why a precise location and identification of the responsible office improve a service request.