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*REPORTS FROM THE REAL WORLD:  
Elementary, Middle and High Schools*

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Written for the National Student/Parent Mock Election

Written by Charles F. Bahmueller

Center for Civic Education

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[www.nationalmockelection.org](http://www.nationalmockelection.org)

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# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	1
<b>Introduction</b> .....	2
<b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS</b>	
BLACKSTONE COMMUNITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.....	6
LEONTINE GRACEY SCHOOL.....	8
LEWIS COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.....	10
LINCOLN WAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.....	13
MOUND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.....	16
POTLATCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.....	19
SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.....	22
STEWART ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.....	25
SURRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.....	27
<b>MIDDLE SCHOOLS</b>	
ABRAHAM LINCOLN SCHOOL.....	30
AZALEA GARDENS MIDDLE SCHOOL.....	33
BREWBAKER INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL.....	35
HILSMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL.....	38
INDIAN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL.....	41
KIRBYVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL.....	47
PEARL C. ANDERSON LEARNING CENTER.....	49
PIPER MIDDLE SCHOOL.....	52
PIZITZ MIDDLE SCHOOL.....	54
URBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL.....	57
WEST RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL.....	62
<b>HIGH SCHOOLS</b>	
CROCKETT HIGH SCHOOL.....	65
LAKE TAYLOR HIGH SCHOOL.....	67
MANCHESTER ELEMENTARY, JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL.....	70
McKINNEY HIGH SCHOOL.....	73
ROYALTON- HARTLAND JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL.....	75
SCRIPPS RANCH HIGH SCHOOL.....	77
ST. FRANCIS HIGH SCHOOL.....	80
THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL.....	82
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
APPENDIX I: School Addresses.....	84
APPENDIX II: Innovative Ideas.....	86

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Edited by Kate Hackett and Laura Sterling.

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# Introduction

*Reports from the Real World* is composed of accounts from some 28 elementary, middle and high schools throughout the country describing how they implemented the National Student/Parent Mock Election. This introduction will examine the extent to which Mock Election activities fulfill what ought to be a principal benchmark for judging the value of any civic education program in American schools. That benchmark is the relationship of the program to the educational standards marked out in the virtually universally accepted publication *National Standards for Civics and Government* developed by the Center for Civic Education with the active participation of thousands of educators and parents from every state.

Before examining the relationship between Mock Election programs and the national standards, we might also notice how Mock Election programs simultaneously model ways in which practically every elementary and middle school subject — even the health component of physical education classes — can be made to serve as a forum for civic education. This is a pertinent point, since a central proposition of the *National Standards for Civics and Government* is that civic education should begin in kindergarten and be systematically pursued throughout the curriculum until high school graduation.

The descriptions of Mock Election activities found in *Reports from the Real World* fully illustrate how schools can use the full curriculum for civic education. Thus, Mock Election activities were pursued in English and Language Arts classes, where essays, poems, articles, letters and other forms explored a number of approaches to civic writing and civic speaking, and reading classes used appropriate written material. In one instance, even spelling classes were drawn into the program. At Mound Elementary School Language Arts students prepared speeches on candidates' positions on principal issues; and at Thornton Township High School in Illinois, English Department faculty critiqued student Mock Election essays.

In addition, science classes pursued politically relevant issues such as environmental issues, as at Pizitz Middle School; and math classes used statistics, charts and graphs to analyze the substance of certain political issues. Thus, at Hilsman Middle School a math lesson showed students how donations from special interest groups could affect the outcome of an election, and at Urban Middle School, math classes compiled and analyzed weekly straw polls, posting their findings on school bulletin boards.

Social studies classes served to provide basic information on government, elections, election campaigns; many classes researched and studied political issues, candidates and elections. At Surrey Elementary School, for example, students studied the differences and similarities between current elections and past elections.

Art classes created political posters, explored the possibilities of portfolios for civic purposes, and used creative mediums to illustrate patriotism and patriotic ideas. At Potlatch Elementary School, an art class produced posters, banners, and other forms of election advertisements and materials; at Lewis County Elementary School, students colored patriotic pictures.

Other subjects which found avenues to further Mock Election goals include music, in which patriotic songs and other patriotic music were sung and played. At the Piper Middle School, music students presented appropriate songs at an assembly. History brought the past to bear on the present at Lake Taylor High School, where the history of voting was studied. Voting in ancient Greece and Rome was compared with voting today. At Stewart Elementary School historical study entered the program when a series of presidents were chosen for study. Finally, in one instance, even the health component of physical education classes was brought to bear on the election process, as the demands made on candidates' health by rigorous campaigning were examined.

Beyond illustrating how the entire curriculum can be channeled to fulfill the recommendations of National Standards for Civics and Government, Mock Election projects and learning activities partly or completely fulfilled many of the individual national standards. This will be demonstrated by citing standards from 4th, 8th, and 12th grade levels, with individual schools as examples. To become better informed about the standards, readers are urged to consult the document itself. The standards are available from the publisher, the Center for Civic Education, at 800-350-4223.

Mock Election activities wholly or partly fulfilled several “fundamental values and principles” found in the second section of the National Standards (“II. What values and principles are basic to American Democracy? A. 1.”). These include patriotism, diversity, telling the truth, search for justice, pursuit of the common good, and individual rights. Of these, patriotism was most frequently featured in Mock Election programs. At Abraham Lincoln School, patriotic songs were sung. But others, such as individual rights, the common good, diversity and telling the truth also found their way into various programs.

Item II.B.2. of the 5-8 standards under “What are the distinctive characteristics of American society” is “the role of voluntarism in American life.” This key item is also found in the K-4 standards under II.B. 1. and II.B.2. of the 12th grade standards. Voluntarism in various forms is found throughout Mock Election programs: at McKinney High School, students performed some 460 hours of community service.

H. C. “Why is it important for Americans to share certain values, principles, and beliefs?” might be said to be an underlying theme of the whole election process, since it is a process that substitutes ballots for bullets and assists in promoting the social coherence of an often fractious society.

Relevant in this regard are such national standards as (K-4 formulation) “I.E. How should conflicts about diversity be prevented or managed?”; “evaluate ways conflicts about diversity can be prevented” such as: “working together on school and community problems and projects”; “adhering to the values and principles of American democracy”; “provide opportunities for people to present their points of view”; “listening to different points of view.” All of these were fulfilled to varying degrees by virtually all of the schools participating in the Mock Election. At Leontine Gracey School, homework assignments were used to draw parents into an expression of their views; at Crockett High School students met with public officials to discuss their views.

In “II.F.” of the K-4 Standards “How can people work together to promote the values and principles of American democracy?” an example of “I. Promoting ideals” is “volunteering for school and community service,” which several schools engaged in. Another part of fulfilling this standard is given as “participation in government,” for example, by “voting [and] becoming informed on public issues,” which all participating schools engaged in.

The third of the standards is “How does the government established by the [U.S.] Constitution embody the purposes, values and principles of American democracy?” Under it is -B. “What does the national government do,” to which the K-4 standards adds, “how does it protect individual rights and promote the common good?” Mock Election participants will have grasped a number of issues regarding this standard and heard arguments about how the national government could fulfill its obligations under the U.S. Constitution. This was a subject of mock presidential debates, including those at McKinney High School. A further standard in this section is “F. How does the American political system provide for choice and opportunity for participation?” Here the Mock Election is especially outstanding, providing activities and events relevant to nearly all of the national standards of this section. Thus, students are enveloped in the public agenda and how individuals help to set it (F. 1.); in a wide variety of forms of political communication (F.2.); in learning and participation in political parties, campaigns and elections (F.3.); in observing and in some cases participating in the political activities of associations and groups (F.4.); and in aspects of forming public policy (F.5).

Spring Hill Elementary School students became involved in tax, health care and education issues; 5th grade students at Leontine Gracey School acted out state presidential primaries, party conventions, campaigns, and elections, including debates and press conferences; and a number had visits from representatives of the League of Women Voters or studied the League's literature, as at Urban Middle School.

Especially relevant is the involvement of Mock Election students in forms of political communication. The 12th grade standards (III.E.3.) speak of "Political Communication: television, radio, the press, and political persuasion."

*Reports from the Real World* presents a wealth of evidence that Mock Election students become immersed in such political communication as they watch televised election events such as debates, press conferences, political advertising, and the like. Some made their own political advertisements or performed a live telecast with local television stations, as at Pearl C. Anderson Learning Center; while others, as at Surry Elementary School, played the parts of reporters and other members of the media at mock debates. At Leontine Gracey School, students made a special study of negative political advertisements.

Other standards direct attention to state and *local governments*. Although Mock Election activities were often focused on the national election, this was by no means exclusively so. Considerable attention was paid to local issues and sometimes to state issues. Thus, under D. 1., on the "Organization and major responsibilities of local governments," one standard asks students to "describe how local governments are chosen" and "how people can participate in local government?" Students at Surry Elementary school, for example, visited Town Hall to learn how local government operates; other schools undertook similar activities.

The Mock Election is often especially effective in fulfilling the national standards for local government, since the standards call, for example, for "being informed and — taking part in discussion of local issues" and "voting [and] volunteering services." The standards also ask that students be able to "explain why it is important that people participate in their local government," with which many Mock Election participants will have become intimately acquainted by visiting local government offices and listening to and interviewing local officials. At Piper Middle School, for example, students could hear the mayor of Kansas City speak on the democratic process and community service.

Further, the national standards (5-8) ask under 111. D., "Who represents you in local state, and national governments?" Here, many of the participating schools asked candidates to appear at school or other public forums and studied candidates and their positions on issues. At Blackstone Community Elementary School, for example, public officials were asked to speak to students; at Stewart Elementary School, students researched and studied the positions of local candidates.

Finally and in the view of many civic educators, most important, the Mock Election involves students in myriad forms of political participation, including nearly all the forms called for by the national standards in "V. What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy?" Section E., "How can citizens take part in civic life?" details many examples of civic participation that citizens can use to fulfill a principal role of monitoring and influencing public policy.

These forms of civic participation deserve special notice, since critics of civic education programs that focus on elections and voting often complain that civic participation should be conceived as a constant activity, not just at election time. In this regard, it is significant that Mock Election activities point beyond elections themselves as forms of civic participation to a variety of civic-participation activities.

Forms of civic participation other than voting itself for which Mock Election activities prepare American youth include attending public meetings; joining political parties; working in election campaigns, as at St. Francis High School, where students were required to work 5-10 hours in a “real world” election campaign, or at McKinney High School, where students were encouraged to work for a party that they or their family normally did not support (an approach also adopted at the Azalea Gardens Middle School); participating in public debates and discussions of public issues, including Mock Election debates, as at Surrey Elementary School; attending meetings of governing bodies; engaging in various forms of civic writing, such as composing essays, political speeches, articles, and letters to the editor — not simply letters to school newspaper editors, but to those of community newspapers and other media that stimulate community interest in the issues of the day, for example at the Scripps Ranch High School in California; involving others through personal contact, not just other students of pre-voting age, but adults as well, in public issues.

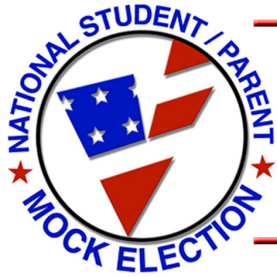
The multitude of varied Mock Election activities illustrate that the experience gained in this program centered on elections is “fungible” — that is, it is transferable to a host of civic activities that occur all the time, not during elections alone. Writing, speaking, researching, debating, interviewing, person-to-person persuasion and other endeavors involved in the Mock Election program can be applied throughout the life of adults in varying forums.

Mock Election programs also fulfill some of the national standards found in V.C. of the 12th grade standards, “What are the Responsibilities of Citizens?” Thus Mock Election activities deal with more of item “2. Civic responsibilities” than the responsibility to vote; they also take into account “being informed and attentive to public issues” and “registering to vote and voting knowledgeably on candidates and issues,” as illustrated by the wealth of research sources and techniques found throughout *Reports from the Real World*. For example, students consulted books, journals and magazines at libraries; interviewed a number of adults, including candidates and public officials; studied media presentations; and made copious use of the Internet for research purposes, as at Indian Hills Middle School, Kirbyville Middle School, and Crockett High School.

In sum, Mock Election programs may be said to have dealt — and dealt fruitfully — with a considerable number of the National Standards for Civics and Government and function as a valuable tool for preparing American youth for effective and responsible democratic citizenship.

Charles F. Bahmueller  
Center for Civic Education





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# National Student/Parent **MOCK ELECTION**

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## **Reports From the Real World: Elementary Schools**



# BLACKSTONE COMMUNITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Project Contact: Frida Rodriguez, principal  
National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Fourth and fifth grades participated.

## Goal

The teachers of Blackstone Community Elementary School recognized the need for students to be aware of the democratic process at an early age. To accomplish this goal, they would have to design and produce a program that would effectively introduce their young students to the excitement and challenges of the 1996 presidential election.

## Highlights of School Activities

A “government bee” was held to encourage the fourth grade students to locate and retain information about the democratic process. A “government bee” is only slightly different from a good old-fashioned spelling Bee.

Political officials were invited to the school to speak to the students and answer questions for which the students had not been able to get answers.

*It was a sight to see the students at the school's political rally carrying student-made signs and marching with marine chants for senator.....*

Frida Rodriguez

A representative of JFK Library in Boston came to the school to discuss what happens during a press conference. He acted out the parts of both Dole and Clinton for two different classes, answering their questions in such a way as to provide them with the experience of a press conference.

Students were exposed to the techniques politicians use to influence voters during a campaign.

## Special Strategies

Media coverage was arranged in small, local, neighborhood papers (*South End News*) and *Boston Globe*. This coverage targeted the immediate community where parents would be sure to see the events and lessons their children were experiencing.

All academic material that was student/parent related was prepared in English and Spanish to accommodate the large Hispanic population in the school district.

*The experiences the students had at public and political events were good, positive experiences, leaving the students with a positive image of what they had learned and how they had learned it. This was true even if they didn't agree with the politician or the issue.*

## **Getting Help**

*Parents \* Business Community \* Public Officials \* Local Media*

The staff and students of Blackstone Elementary School benefited from the support and assistance of parents, the business community, and public and governmental officials. Local newspapers provided information and coverage of school events. Through this help, the students of this school were able to enjoy a positive and productive learning experience.

## **Informational Resources**

Teachers used traditional curriculum materials and resources available to the class through the normal channels and also provided important links between the students and the real world. With guidance and support, the students became active participants, contacting candidates and business people in the effort to expand their own educational resources.

Publications used included the Center for Civic Education publication *We the People*, *USA Today* election teacher/classroom materials and *Weekly Reader*. Other resources included photos, press clippings, student work, and teacher support material. A letter to Diane Wilkerson, state senator, asking her to come to the school, provided personal interaction and a way for the students to ask more questions.

## **Lessons and Outcomes**

This interdisciplinary unit of learning became part of the curriculum for the entire school year within a broad variety of classes. Rather than just a few weeks and one subject. The excitement and energy it produced generated a neighborhood grassroots organization.

# LEONTINE GRACEY SCHOOL

Project Contact: Marc Medefind

National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Fifth grade, one 3 1 -student elementary school classroom. School population: 50% Southeast Asian.

## Goal

Marc Medefind, teacher of this fifth-grade class, wanted to make sure that his students were able to experience every part of the Mock Election in as realistic a manner as possible.

## Highlights of School Activities

*In order to bring the election “home,” our fifth-grade class became a microcosm of U.S. presidential politics. We started with state presidential primaries (conducted part), conventions (where we wrote platforms and nominated candidates); we campaigned (including sign-making, handshaking, press conferences, debates and even baby kissing); and, of course, conducted the election.*

Marc Medefind

Students held platform speeches and debates based on school issues, rather than political issues, which made it easier for the students to identify with the problems addressed. This gave the students a real opportunity to offer solutions to school problems. The students drafted the speeches relating to school issues, basing them on the platforms of the candidate.

The classes nominated candidates who, in turn, chose running mates based on class demographics (i.e., which running mate could reach class demographics that another might not).

## Special Strategies

*I found that [my] teaching went across the curriculum. We wrote speeches and slogans; discussed issues and debated (reading, language arts, and social studies). We tallied results and found percentages (math). We designed party symbols and made posters in Art and discussed poll closures across the country and how it would affect election turnout in geography. In physical education, we discussed the need for a candidate to possess stamina and maintain good health.*

*We were careful not to align the students toward any of the major parties. Instead, the classes created their own two-party system made up of the “Floozbongers” and “Disharpoons.” This allowed the students to discover the workings of the political system while exploring their own unique and individual ideas.*

Marc Medefind

Positive and negative tactics such as mud slinging, negative advertising and targeted advertising were integrated into the class Mock Election. These tactics allowed students to experience the strategies used by some candidates and their campaign managers.

## Getting Help

### *League of Women Votes \* Parents \* Business Community*

The League of Women Voters was a source of help for this class and their teacher. Students were not satisfied with the information that was given to them, so went out and found information on their own. Others interviewed their parents and family members to gain a better understanding of how they voted and why. The local business community was also very supportive, providing election material for the students to study and allowing “Get out the Vote” posters to be displayed in their windows.

## Informational Resources

Like many of the other award-winning schools, the fifth-grade class of Leontine Gracey School tapped a variety of resources, getting information in just as many ways as they shared it with others. Newspapers were a common way to bring news to class, but students also showed interest in the impact made by bumper stickers, fliers, signs and posters. Simply talking to community members opened doors, making this a very real learning experience.

## Lessons and Outcomes

The success of this school’s Mock Election can be summed up in the teacher’s story of Rachel:

*Perhaps the single most gratifying incident, however, involved my student Rachel and her mother. Rachel said her mother didn’t know a thing about elections. When Rachel brought her learning home each day and they discussed it together, her mother went from “apathetic” to “involved.” Rachel’s mom, who had never taken the elections seriously before, made sure she went to the polls on Election Day and took Rachel with her. When you teach, you wonder if what you have tried to show your students has really hit the mark. When your students carry your teachings beyond the walls of the classroom and give them to others, you know you have made a bull’s eye.*

Marc Medefind

# LEWIS COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Project Contact: Judy Runion, Teacher

National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Kindergarten through fourth grade. Student population: Approximately 800 students. “At risk” class hosted school-wide Mock Election.

## Goal

Each activity was entered into with the goal for each and every student to become an actively involved, working part of the democratic process.

*It was so exciting to see the students so eager and involved. They could hardly wait to cast their vote. Seeing them so excited made this project all worthwhile. The future of our great country depends on the values we instill in our children.*

Judy Runion

## Highlights of School Activities

Students from Lewis County Elementary School participated in coloring contests, a poster contest and an essay contest in addition to other activities. Students (kindergarten through fourth grade) colored patriotic pictures. One student was chosen from each classroom to receive a prize, along with having his/her picture displayed on the bulletin board. Participants in the poster contest (also for kindergarten through fourth graders) were given creative license to design a half-pasteboard size original poster. Each was based on the theme of “America the Country I Love.” First, second, and third prizes were awarded for each grade with the winners announced on October 28, 1996.

Second through fourth graders participated in the “A Voice for My Country” essay contest. Winners had their works published in the local newspaper and a first, second, and third prize was awarded for each grade. First and second place prize winners received \$10 and \$15 cash awards.

All ages participated in a “Get Out the Vote” parade on November 5th. All the second grade classes (approximately 150 students) marched through town with the banners and flags they had created. Patriotic music accompanied the students’ chants of “Vote.”

Students gladly participated in the “Thank You for Voting” sticker contest. The students who brought in the most stickers, obtained by their parents at the polls on November 5th, won a classroom pizza party and an extra recess.

*We converted an empty classroom into election headquarters. Everything was decorated patriotically, even down to the ballot box. A sign-up sheet was sent to every class in our school. Classes were scheduled to vote every 10 minutes. Students had little trouble deciding whom they would choose because a sample ballot had been sent to every room prior to the election. My students, being the host room, were really put to the test. My class is made up of "at-risk" students. They are academically behind six months to one year. This project was a challenge that brought about a wonderful feeling of self-fulfillment. These students who were rarely asked to do anything extra were hosting a school-wide election. Not only was this an exciting experience for them, but it gave each of them a sense of self-worth and importance.*

*By using a wide variety of activities, all students found at least one area where they felt they fit in. The coloring contests allowed everyone to participate. Students from different age and grade levels shared ideas and worked together, from the planning stages right through to the final event.*

Judy Runion

## Getting Help

*Parents \* Community \* Local Businesses \* Newspaper  
\*Radio Stations*

Activities always involve planning. For Lewis County Elementary School, parent and community assistance assured the students experienced the program to the fullest. Parents and community members helped out with the decorations for the school's election headquarters, the parade and a variety of other events.

*We were given monetary donations from various groups and individuals to purchase prizes for our contest. Our local newspaper and radio station were gracious enough to publish our articles and letters free of cost and give us free air time to promote our activities. Members of the Election Commission helped us by passing out our "Thank You for Voting" tickets on Election Day. This project turned into a great school and community effort.*

## Informational Resources

*At the beginning of our Mock Election campaign we had very limited information on the Reform candidate, Ross Perot. Use of the Internet gave us more information about this candidate's platform and policies. We used the picture we found there to create a sample-voting ballot, which was later duplicated for our Mock Election.*

*Students used resources such as the Internet in conjunction with units of study on "How We Choose a President." As a result, the students obtained enough information on the candidates and their platforms and policies that most seemed to have their minds made up when they went to vote, and were obviously anxious to mark their ballots.*

## **Lessons and Outcomes**

*This Mock Election project started with a simple idea, teach students the step by step process involved in electing a president. It soon escalated into a unique learning experience for all students. It didn't take long for my classroom to take on the appearance of a candidate campaign headquarters. I started with my students. I wanted each student to be actively involved in the democratic process.*

*I wanted them to experience it, so we set up shop in our classroom. Contests were held, winners were chosen, and then the big day finally arrived. It was time for our school to voice its opinion. Who would be president? Whom would we choose at Lewis County Elementary School?*

*Counting the votes was equally thrilling. It was hard to maintain control as each ballot was pulled from the ballot box and the candidate's name was read and then tallied. Children cheered wildly each time their candidate's name was pulled from the box. I could see it on their faces. They weren't bystanders — they were participants. The seeds of democracy had been planted. These children would grow up knowing their responsibilities as citizens. This would be something they would carry with them throughout life, something they could tell their children about, an early childhood memory that would pave the way for this generation to experience a bit of "The American Dream."*

*The most significant achievement of our 1996 Mock Election was getting our community involved in the election. Before our Mock Election project, people in the community seemed apathetic about the election. Many did not want to vote for President Clinton and did not like the Republican nominee, Bob Dole. The general consensus of most was "why vote anyway? my vote won't make a difference." I feel that our Mock Election campaign made students, parents and the community more aware of the election and their responsibility to vote.*

*Just as important, the students carried the lesson home and out into their communities. Where adult citizens had not seen any real reason to vote, students were able to instill their sense of self-worth in other members of their community.*

Judy Runion

# LINCOLN WAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Project Contact: Doris Cantey, Teacher

National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Kindergarten through sixth grade. The Mock Election was a joint effort of both the sixth grade teachers.

## Goal

*Students rarely see or define themselves as “at risk.” It is an adult term used to signify that special attention, intervention and/or guidance may be needed for the student to achieve his/her goal. The challenge, then, is not for the teacher to see the student as “at risk,” but for the student to understand that help is there if needed. It is not something they will have to fight to attain.*

*Our goal was to involve “at risk” students and their parents in the election process. We wanted them to be able to see the importance of taking an active part in the election of our officials. We were able to take the students to a level whereby they were able to encourage their parents to register or vote on Election Day. This was a joint effort by both of the sixth grade teachers. The project was part of the social studies curriculum, where students met government officials, enhanced mapping skills and researched objectives. Students also met objectives in the area of language arts in their writing, research, speaking and reading skills.*

Doris Cantey

## Highlights of School Activities

Students showcased their accomplishments through essay writing, poetry and political cartoons. There were also election projects: the students produced television interviews and presidential debates which were performed for the student body and parents.

Music and art classes provided decorations, posters and entertaining music and songs for the event. The audio and visual impact of the patriotic music and decorations reinforced the lessons the students had learned.

Role-playing the candidates (from security measures to what it takes to be a candidate) involved the students in the democratic process and walked them through the steps necessary to make the process work.

The students’ knowledge of the democratic process was clearly evident as they played the roles of the candidates. They were able to speak about matters important to them and their community and defend their positions during the debate.



*It is truly exciting when you see such a clear example  
of students “getting it.”*

Doris Cantey

## Special Strategies

Lincoln Way Elementary School worked hard to get parents involved.

*Most of the parents have not had good personal experiences with the schools,  
therefore, do not care to take any active roles.*

Some parents participated in a variety of positive and educational ways by taking children to different areas of town in order to obtain research material and gather supplies. At the voter registration stations, parents supervised the students and helped them to read and punch ballots, register to vote, and design registration books.

*The lesson of democracy has brought many in this community  
together and opened the way for students, parents and teachers  
to have a better working relationship.*

Doris Cantey

The use of music and art in the project allowed students, who might otherwise have been overwhelmed at the idea of joining in the unit, to feel that it was going to be fun and worth the effort. With the “friendly” environment, even “at-risk” students were able to participate, interacting with public officials and learning about the use of computer technology in Mock Elections.

*When students can clearly see that what they are learning or  
doing will have a positive effect on their lives, now or in  
the future, and will give them greater control in their  
lives, they have a greater incentive to learn.*

*It was wonderful when the students who felt they  
weren't good at anything suddenly became Secret Service  
agents at the school debates. These students learned  
that every person has value.*

## Getting Help

*Political Science Instructor \* County Board of Elections \* Parents*

Lincoln Way Elementary was able to enlist the assistance of a political science instructor from the College of Wooster to help with the educational aspects of the election. As a result, students saw that democracy is not something they learn about and never use again. He was able to help the students understand the Electoral College and many other election words and strategies, about which they had little previous knowledge. They were given maps, diagrams and the (oh so impressive) “blue book.”

Wayne County Board of Elections was also instrumental in helping Lincoln Way Elementary with ballots, voting booths and “I Voted” stickers. The Board of Elections allowed the school to use its machine to tabulate the votes and provide print outs of the school’s results.

*By making the Mock Election as real as possible  
for the students ... they will undoubtedly carry the lesson  
with them and utilize it in their future lives.*

## **Informational Resources**

Lincoln Way Elementary School utilized a wide variety of resources to supplement its standard curriculum. The television coverage of the election and Mock Election activities were used to provide students with the most up to date information. Newspapers, newscasts, political cartoons and personal interviews all added substance to the daily classroom discussions and the project in general. The involvement of public officials gave the students added support and encouragement.

Computers were used by Lincoln Way Elementary to vote in their Mock Election, and provided access to the Internet, a vital part of the technology research used by the college professor and the students to gain election information.

## **Lessons and Outcomes**

Students learned not only about the democratic process during the Mock Election at Lincoln Way Elementary, they also showed that they were aware of the personal lives and personality traits of the candidates. Many commented on how “rough” or how “neat” it would be to be the child of the President. Internet research also allowed them to learn how other students felt about the various local, state and national candidates.

# MOUND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Project Contact: Bob Katz, Principal  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: Kindergarten through fifth grade.

The Mock Election project of Mound Elementary School was run and directed by a class of developmentally handicapped fourth and fifth grade students in a special-education class.

*They truly deserve to be recognized for their participation  
and achievements as a group and as individuals.*

Bob Katz

## Goal

Mound Elementary School wanted to introduce its students to many campaign strategies during the Mock Election, including grass-roots strategies and door-to-door campaigning.

*We wanted the students to know that telephone communication  
was something more than a way of passing the word  
about school closures due to snow.*

## Highlights of School Activities

Students at Mound Elementary were self-motivated to start with and when they saw how the student body responded to their excitement, their motivation became more intense and spread throughout the school.

Developmentally handicapped students interacted with other students, spreading the word about the Mock Election program. It was found that the self-esteem of the challenged students increased while mainstream students found a new respect for their classmates.

The students' thoughts and concerns about the issues in the election were shared in a group forum. While many questions were answered, the students found that the forum brought to light new questions.

Students showed their command of knowledge in a mock rally where they portrayed the candidates. Students were all required to register as voters. On Mock Election Day each student who was on the Voter Registration List voted at a polling station. If a student's name was not on the list, they were not permitted to vote. The program raised the awareness of the students about the importance of registering to vote. Parents served as assistants at the polls and provided daily updated political information.

Students of Mound Elementary School were involved in passing out applications for voter registration, making sure teachers and parents were eligible and ready to vote in the real world election.

Students mailed in the applications and received extra credit. Students were given specific tasks; if they could not perform those tasks, they were assigned a mentor to help them. The words “I can’t” was not part of their vocabulary and “failure” was not an option. Students were required to make quick and accurate decisions during the campaign preparation, elections and mock rally.

The students and staff assisted in local election activities by working at passing a proposition that would affect their school. Participation included experiencing first-hand campaign strategies such as telephone contacts and door-to-door campaigning.

Students prepared speeches about the candidates’ positions on crime, education, government, drugs, the environment and the economy. The speeches were then presented aloud to individual classes.

Students created posters to hang in windows to encourage attendance and participation in the upcoming rally. Banners, graphs and charts created by the students were displayed throughout the school to show information such as voter turnout in previous years and voter registration percentages.

*It was easy to see the pride in the eyes of those who had created those works.  
In an inner city school it is vital that students are able to understand  
that they are important and what they think counts.*

Bob Katz

## **Special Strategies**

*Our developmentally handicapped students learned about the democratic process within their own classrooms and learning environments and were challenged to pass the knowledge on to other students. They not only integrated with the mainstream students, but showed that they could be leaders in important matters.*

Mound Elementary School is just in the process of obtaining new technology and therefore could not provide all students with computers for their studies. However, a number of students used their own computers at home to do research and discover information relevant to the Mock Election. Those students brought their findings back to share with the rest of the school.

*This Mock Election gave our children the opportunity and education they will need to participate in the government of which they will one day become a part.*

Core information was made available to the host students; from there they decided on the best method to spread the word to the rest of the student body. Students created attainable goals and determined the best way to reach those goals.

## Getting Help

*Parents \* Teachers Community Members \* Local Newspapers*

The participation of parents, teachers, staff and students expanded the Mound Elementary School Mock Election program from a school-wide event to a community-wide event. Local newspapers gave media attention to the program and its events. The support of everyone involved made the program a success.

## Informational Resources

Students who had a computer and Internet access at home were eager to share what they learned with the rest of the students.

The school library, along with news clippings and updates provided by parents, gave students additional (and often more accurate) information on a regular basis.

## Lessons and Outcomes

*Overall, our students received a positive experience that seems to have made a lasting impression on their thoughts and views regarding voting and the democratic process.*

*Students tracked polling results, researched candidate positions on issues and held a mock rally portraying the candidates. Overall, this experience raised voter awareness and community involvement.*

*The students came away with a sense of pride and accomplishment when they saw the turnout for their election and also when polling results were displayed.*

Bob Katz

# POTLATCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Project Contact: Cindy Braun  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: Kindergarten through fifth grade. School population: 326 students.

The Mock Election project of Mound Elementary School was run and directed by a class of developmentally handicapped, fourth and fifth grade students in a special education class.

*The Mock Election program was a unique experience for our school, due to the grade-spans involved and whole school participation. This is an experience usually left to those older than the students at Potlatch Elementary. But this student-led project included a variety of events and projects which enlisted the combined efforts of the entire school and its 326 students.*

Cindy Braun

## Goal

*For everyone to experience the true meaning of democracy, and for the project to be meaningful to our students, we as teachers believed that there must be authenticity to what the students were learning. A simple show or a play would not have made the impact or provided the benefit of traveling authentic avenues for this part of their education.*

## Highlights of School Activities

All the students at Potlatch Elementary registered two weeks prior to the Mock Election so they would be eligible to vote when the time came. Students also encouraged their parents to register in plenty of time to be eligible to vote in the November “real world” election.

Students used their language arts skills to write letters to senators, congresspersons and the secretary of state. They were pleased to get responses to their letters.

Art classes produced posters, banners and other forms of election advertisements and materials to spread the word about voting to other students and their families.

Sixth grade students held their student council election at the same time as the Mock Election. While candidates in the Mock Election prepared their strategies, so did the candidates for class president and secretary/treasurer in the sixth grade class.

The school created a poll-site very similar to the ones used to vote locally. The actual voting booths used for the levy election were used by the school and the upper elementary classes. Students were given the opportunity to vote on a state ballot as well as a federal ballot provided for their Mock Election.

Events were video-taped with cassette recorders and video cameras and raw footage was edited and made into a political commercial. The video footage was used by a local television station to promote voting a week before the election.

Students were responsible for collecting and tabulating the votes. They used the information to analyze data and create graphs to provide the rest of the school and their community the opportunity to see how the democratic process works.

*Students used office equipment to make copies of the ballots and the supplies from art class to make packets of information for teachers to use in their classrooms.*

Cindy Braun

## Special Strategies

*The national election was actually happening all around the participants of the Potlatch Elementary School. This made for a perfect time to discuss whether or not the media influences your decision on voting.*

*The media does influence your vote, if you are an undecided or uneducated voter. Students learned that it is important to first know the facts, then form an opinion. Students also learned how difficult it can be at times to find the facts amid all the campaign advertising.*

Cindy Braun

All students who became registered voters received a sticker. Students received another sticker when they actually cast their vote.

Notices were sent out to students to remind them to watch the national CNN election coverage. The notice reminded students that they were part of a larger picture and helped to motivate them to become a part of the event. It also served to remind parents to watch the election coverage with their children and to participate in the lessons the students had been learning.

Biweekly meetings were held for the gifted/talented students to focus on the details of the Mock Election. While these students wrote articles for the school newsletter and the local newspapers, a reporter from a local paper was asked to take pictures and interview the students about the election.

## Getting Help

### *Local Newspapers and Journalists \* Local Business Owners*

The Mock Election program at Potlatch Elementary School extended into the community as local businesses and professional associations included the Mock Election events in their newsletters.

This student-led project focused on the 326 students within the school and initialized the support and assistance of media and local public involvement to enhance the program.

## Informational Resources

Students collected newspaper and magazine articles, as part of their journey to knowledge. When the written and televised reports weren't enough, students used the Internet to get the answers and information they wanted.

Students also went on-on-one with members of the community and the public, asking parents, friends and public officials the questions they could not find the answers for anywhere else.

## Lessons and Outcomes

*We showed leadership by setting a good example of being an informed voter.  
When the votes were collected, tallied and phoned in, students continued  
to experience the election through post-election articles and press releases.*

Cindy Braun

Cindy Braun and the Potlatch Elementary school feel their most significant achievements included:

- A 94% voter turnout;
- student enthusiasm for the process;
- a chance to bring an election to the entire school.



# **SPRING HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Project Contact: Dr. Verneda Edwards, building administrator  
National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## **School Profile**

Grades: Kindergarten through fifth grade.

## **Goal**

Students and staff were to jointly participate in a month-long project titled “Making Wise Choices.” Student activities were based on the 1996 elections. Each grade level selected learning activities appropriate for their age and abilities but were required to reinforce the “Democracy in America” program theme.

## **Highlights of School Activities**

Kindergarten and first grade students learned about the significance of our country’s colors (red, white and blue) and the symbols of political parties (the donkey and the elephant). The students attended a school-created convention hall where Mock Election candidates presented their speeches and debated the issues.

Third grade students performed an extensive study of landmarks in Washington, D.C., and their symbolism. Each class used a broad base of resource materials to prepare a written report and an oral presentation. Part of the project included building a scale model of the topic landmark and giving a “tour” of the site.

An exciting example of the “hands-on” tour activities these students enjoyed was having their fingerprints taken by the FBI.

Fourth and fifth grade students did extensive research on “What it means to be a leader.” Students interviewed parents, staff and peers to find out what qualities they look for in a person to lead our country.

Student teams (manager, writer and candidate) were responsible for producing an essay on the subject matter. Older students selected two of the essays written by younger students to read to the student body during a political convention.

To illustrate the point that citizens must register prior to an election in order to vote, the Student Council held a three-day voter registration. Students were encouraged to register before and after school and during recess. Registered voters participated by going to designated polling stations while Student Council members acted as precinct workers.

Since younger students had more difficulty understanding the issues, they participated in a Mock Election for the animal of their choice. A voting box was brought in and while some students cast their votes, other students acted as voting judges to report the results.

Bill Meek, a school board member, spoke to the students about how to run a campaign and how campaign tactics might change depending on the office they were running for. Senator Mark Parkinson, state senator, talked to the students about how the government is organized and about a government official’s responsibility to those he represents.

Second grade students searched many different forms of media for questions they could share with Kansas State University Education majors.

## Special Strategies

Students participated in several support activities to reinforce lessons about the buildings they had been studying. Several guest speakers visited the school and spoke with the students.

*The Kansas State University college students answered questions and, in some cases, reported back to the second graders.*

The Johnson County Election Commission spoke to the students about the privilege of voting and provided materials for parents to vote early by mail. The material was distributed to members of the community.

Students were rewarded when the election information they compiled was reported on the back of the school newsletter each week. This newsletter went to all the parents and school board members. A local radio show used some of that information as part of its morning show on November 5.

Spring Hill Elementary teachers recognized that issue awareness was limited to taxes, health care and education. This was positive for the students because they could focus and become knowledgeable in specific areas, forming definite opinions.

*It was very important to the building that there was a feeling of connectedness across the curriculum. Content areas, such as social studies, communication and math, were integrated to demonstrate how one topic can meet the objectives of several curricula. Support areas, such as enriched reading, physical education and music, also supported the theme. The music teachers studied historical patriotic music and the qualities a musical patriotic piece would contain. The physical education teacher shared information about the health of candidates on the road. She also discussed what presidents might have done to stay fit and alleviate stress. The counselor supported the activities by providing appropriate information about qualities of leaders and what traits past presidents have possessed.*

Dr. Verneda Edwards

The majority of work was done in cooperative learning groups, enabling the students to accomplish their tasks.

*The students were graded on those identified criteria and their ability to learn at a pre-determined competency level.*

Dr. Verneda Edwards

## Getting Help

### *Kansas State University Education Majors \* Parents \* Local Businesses*

Spring Hill Elementary was able to implement technology in many different ways. Its “on-line” status with Kansas State University made it possible for it to access assistance. Parents provided support and assistance when needed. Local businesses allowed students to have student-made posters in their windows.

## Informational Resources

Once again technology has opened a door to knowledge. This time the link came between Spring Hill Elementary and its college mentors, the educational major students from Kansas State University. In addition to the print and non-print resources available, the link between the two learning centers provided a valuable bridge in education. Direct interviews with parents and local community members also offered information to the students.

*As a result of our participation in the Mock Election, the staff, students and parents were unified in the pursuit of understanding what makes an effective leader. The entire building was focused on the democratic process and the work it takes to be an informed voter. The students had a real sense of accomplishment when they reviewed all they had learned and accomplished.*

Dr. Verneda Edwards

## Lessons and Outcomes

*These students know that their opinions do count and that they have the right and responsibility to let their voices be heard.*

# STEWART ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Project Contact: Bonnie Arloski  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: Fourth and fifth grades. School population: 450 students.

## Goal

Stewart Elementary School wanted to make sure its fourth and fifth grade students enjoyed the lesson of democracy.

## Highlights of School Activities

*Students learn and retain information they feel involved with.  
To achieve this, it was necessary to keep providing new  
information while providing encouragement for students  
to remember what they had learned from days before.*

Bonnie Arloski

Each day one student from Bonnie Arloski's fifth grade class read a question about a past president on the Public Address System. Each class submitted an answer by the end of the day. A prize was awarded to the three classrooms with the most correct answers.

Students tracked the travels of presidential candidates on a map in the school hallway. The students followed CNN and *TIME* Web pages, as well as newspapers, television and radio news to find out where the candidates were going next.

Students researched and studied the local candidates and their positions on the issues through a variety of news sources. They learned how issues and political platforms might affect their lives depending on the outcome of the vote.

A member of the League of Women Voters visited the school during the Mock Election and spoke to Bonnie Arloski's class, later posing with the students for a newspaper picture.

## Special Strategies

The Mock Election was run by one fifth grade class that showed its knowledge and abilities by taking care of its responsibilities. Class members verified the registration of the other students and took them to their precincts. The class registered 100% of the students, and 100% of the students voted. This included six special education students and several "at-risk" learners.

Not one child was left out of the process. All students voted using computers and each proudly received an "I Voted Today" sticker that the students created using their school computers.

## Getting Help

### *League of Women Voters*

Bonnie Arloski and her class solicited the help of the League of Women Voters and a number of other agencies willing to provide information, supplies and support to the Stewart Elementary Mock Election.

## Informational Resources

Political publications such as *All Politics* and news coverage via CNN and *TIME* offered a wealth of information and provided students with information on opposing candidates. Newspapers, magazines and audio/video broadcasts are excellent sources of information that can be easily supplemented by the Internet and local political figures to answer questions about the issues.

## Lessons and Outcomes

*Stewart Elementary is very proud of Ms. Arloski's fifth grade class for hosting such a successful Mock Election project. It is not often that a community, even if it is a school community, can boast of a 100% turn-out in an election. For Stewart Elementary, even the challenged and at-risk learners know that their voice counts.*

Principal

# SURRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Project Contact: Lynn Bonsey

National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Kindergarten through eighth grade. School population: 150 students. Mock Election activities targeted a 17-member, 7th grade class while grades 6-8 voted.

## Goal

*We had to reach the diverse learning needs of all the students in order for them to learn to work together on this unit. As teachers, we were responsible for challenging these students. They had to understand how the election process affected their lives and how their participation affected the election process.*

Lynn Bonsey

## Highlights of School Activities

In this rural Maine town of approximately 1,000 people, all of the students participated in the Mock Election in some capacity.

The project grew to include events such as the Town Meeting and a Mock Election debate. These events brought students and their ideas to a common forum where issues could be discussed.

Role playing as a debate team member, a candidate, moderator, reporter/journalist or videographer offered the students a valuable learning experience, giving them a better understanding of what goes on behind the scenes during a campaign and an election.

Some students wrote articles or simulated newscasts and presented them to their class. Students also wrote speeches and essays on the election process, with their choice for president.

Students tracked the movements of the candidates during the election campaign and studied the differences and similarities between the current elections and past elections.

Students devised their own original party platforms in their communication arts class, working in small groups to research the issues. They used their Math class to poll other students and their Science lessons to synthesize their findings. Commercials, produced and developed by the students, conveyed the information back to parents and the student body.

Students kept election logs to track their findings and record their own understanding of the information. The logs helped students to apply what they had learned.

Parents and other adults were polled on their political views and the information was used to analyze the effect of the Mock Election on the community.

Teachers and students worked together to make the Mock Election a success. Art teachers provided the direction and guidance for students to create political posters and campaign buttons. Social studies classes used art to make political cartoons.

## Special Strategies

Students who were developmentally and/or behaviorally “at-risk” were placed in cooperative learning groups and assigned appropriate tasks and/or tasks that specifically interested them. This meant that while some students were writing newspaper articles, others appeared in simulated newscasts at the “town meeting.” Some students who were unable to watch nightly newscasts gained research exposure at daily in-class newspaper readings or classroom discussions. The research was used to formulate entries in the students’ election logs.

## Getting Help

### *Parents \* Business Community \* Government Agencies*

Government agencies were also a source of help. The Surry Town Administrator gave permission for students to take a field trip to the town hall where students were able to see a polling place and learn about voting procedures.

Parents were a great source of help. Through the combined efforts of parents and teachers, detailed weekly assignment sheets were sent home with students, allowing the parents to be aware of the activities taking place in the classroom.

## Informational Resources

Government agencies often encourage students to come and learn in a hands-on environment, adding a boost to the learning experience.

*The more opportunity for realism, the more the students learn,  
retain and apply the knowledge they collect.*

Lynn Bonsey

Newspapers, newscasts and other media coverage of election and campaign events allowed the students to learn about the candidates’ personalities and their willingness to listen. Students applied what they had learned in the debate or Town Meeting and were better able to listen to the ideas of others and express their own feelings and viewpoints.

## Lessons and Outcomes

Students at Surry Elementary learned that the information in a newscast does affect them. When encouraged to listen to and understand the information, these students became more aware of the world — beyond the small rural area that surrounded them. Being allowed to participate in the system that shapes their daily lives, the students found they had more reason to become involved.

*By working together, the students were able to use what they learned in every lesson or activity of integrated social studies and language arts.*

*The diverse needs of students were met by encouraging collaboration, independent research, role-playing and the free exchange of ideas.*

*These students were able to experience and comprehend the necessity of becoming responsible, informed, participatory citizens.*

*On September 10, 1996, one student wrote in her election log, "I don't watch the news, and when I do, I only pay attention to the weather and that's it.*

*The rest is too confusing for me." Two months later she wrote,*

*"Now I watch the news almost every night, I read and count the signs by the roads, I talk to my parents about what I want, who I want, and why I want these certain candidates."*

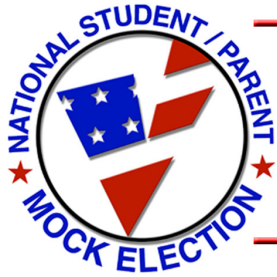
Lynn Bonsey

*Before my mom could only talk with my dad, to her family and dad's family. Now she can talk to me, and I understand what she says to me.*

*Now my sister feels left out because she doesn't understand what the issues we talk about are. What's really fun is when dad joins in on the conversation on and I disagree with him and mom.*

— A student wrote





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# National Student/Parent **MOCK ELECTION**

[nationalmockelection.org](http://nationalmockelection.org)

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## **Reports From the Real World: Middle Schools**

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN SCHOOL

Project Contact: Nora Rylee, 8th Grade Teacher  
National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Sixth through eighth grade. School population: 85% of the school's student population is Hispanic, with approximately the same percentage being from low-income families.

## Goal

*I believe that by creating a true democratic situation — setting up the actual polling place in all its authenticity — the students truly felt the responsibility of being a knowledgeable voter. They realized that decisions could not be made without research and interaction with others. Only the looks on their faces as they exited the polling booth could register their feeling.*

Nora Rylee

## Highlights of School Activities

A political cartoon contest showed how students felt about the issues and the candidates. The cartoons were on display when public officials visited the school.

Students did not go out on field trips but rather invited local political candidates, school and local offices and the media to make a field trip to their school and attend the Mock Election kick-off.

Guests of the Mock Election kick-off enjoyed the chorus' singing patriotic songs. Local candidates gave speeches at the rally and the winners of the cartoon contest were announced.

During the kick-off, students interacted with political officials, camera crews and the news reporters they had been learning about. The students were both pleased and surprised to find that those people cared about them.

*Many students have personal business cards from cameramen and/or anchor news reporters. We hope to take field trips to at least two of these stations; two students will have one-on-one advice from the cameramen when they go to visit the television studio in Fresno, and one cameraman plans to visit our video productions class to give students much-needed assistance. It is impossible to gauge the impact of that personal attention.*

Nora Rylee

Students produced daily video bulletins to update the entire school on the day-to-day happenings of the campaign and the election. The students became news reporters for the school, bringing the events of the real world to the school community.

Students learned the intricacies of developing newspaper ads by creating “want ads” for the Office of the President of the United States.

A “Red, White and Blue Day” contest was held at the school. Teachers tabulated the percentage of students wearing each color and awarded a bonus to the winning team.

The real world met the school community when the county elections manager administered an oath to the students of the leadership class. To understand the importance and seriousness of the position, students who wished to become election judges were able to experience what the job entailed.

It was a meaningful experience for students to have the mayor attend the Mock Election and assist students having difficulty inserting their ballots into the voting machines. The mayor frequently visits Abraham Lincoln Middle School and can be seen eating lunch with the students and reading their daily bulletins.

Tom Sheehan, managing editor of the *Selma Enterprise*, and Randy McFarland, a public relations consultant, served as judges in the political cartoon contest.

## Special Strategies

*The students were allowed the freedom to see and experience for themselves that growing up doesn't occur at a specific age, but is instead a process of learning day to day.*

Nora Rylee

As the project developed, students were introduced to new technologies. Many “surfing the Net” and used the fax machine to contact research sources and local public officials.

## Getting Help

*Parents \* Local Business Owners \* Local Newspapers \*  
Local Television Abraham Lincoln Middle  
School Parent Club*

Resources for activities depended on who and what was available and who answered the call for assistance and support. For the Abraham Lincoln School, the *How To Do It Guide* published by Macmillan McGraw Hill was a beginning. In addition to this publication, the Abraham Lincoln Middle School Parent Club was called on to assist with the project. Added hands and minds found further resources at the Democratic Regional Headquarters, Fresno County Election Department, Fresno County Office of Education, League of Women Voters, Republican Regional Headquarters, California Secretary of State, Selma City Council, Selma Unified School District, *The Fresno Bee* and *The Selma Enterprise*.

## Informational Resources

In addition to the agencies and individuals that so graciously helped with the Mock Election project, the Internet gave computer technology an active role in this project. Using this tool, the Abraham Lincoln Middle School was able to contact and utilize the following resources:

All Things Political (<http://dolphin.gulfnet/political/html>)

National Student/Parent Mock Election (<http://AllPolitics.com>)

Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents 1789-1989 (<gopher://wiretap.spies.com/00/Library/Classic/inaug.text>)

League of Women Voters Voter Education Project (<http://www.oclc.org/VoteSmart/lwv/lwvhome.htm>)

Through the “Newspapers in Education” program, teachers received 30 free copies of the local newspaper per week. Students were encouraged to take the papers home and discuss election issues with their parents, inviting interest in the school and classroom activities.

Norma Logan, the Fresno County Elections officer, provided polling booths and voting machines for the election.

## Lessons and Outcomes

There is no better way to measure the success of the Mock Election than through the eyes and attitudes of the students who have participated in it. The students not only encouraged adults to learn more about elections, but they also developed valuable leadership skills. Students will continue to learn about democracy throughout the school year.

*Significant achievements include the increase in pride in our community, school and in democracy. Students encouraged so many adults to become a knowledgeable electorate.*

*Much student leadership was developed as they led assemblies, registered voters, counted ballots and wrote letters to officials.*

*This study will continue throughout the year. It will end for these teachers and students only on the last day of school. As teachers, we will build upon those stepping stones.*

*Many parents who never studied a ballot and the issues before hopefully will continue to do so. The increased pride that was created in our school and community can only grow with the enthusiasm that was generated by participation in this project. I am certain the principles developed in the celebration of democracy will stay with these students forever.*

Nora Rylee

Nora Rylee also noted that in addition to the excitement and community pride the students gained, they also gained valuable personal knowledge about career choices.

# AZALEA GARDENS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Project Contact: Paula Williams, Social Studies Department chairperson  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: Sixth through eighth grade. School population: Approximately 600 students.

## Goal

The teachers at Azalea Gardens Middle School devised a plan to increase voter registration, inform adults of party platforms and election issues, and increase the community's awareness of issues of concern to students. The plan would ensure that the students took the election process seriously and helped them to realize that, individually and collectively, they could make a difference.

## Highlights of School Activities

Students set up voter registration booths to encourage parental attendance. For maximum exposure, the booths were operated during parent-teacher conferences and special evening school. It was hoped that parents would realize the importance of having their children participate in the election process.

Students whose parents or guardian could not attend school events took forms and information home. Returned cards earned students extra credit.

Students analyzed the television election coverage and prepared to present commercials based on the information they had gathered. Creating commercials provided students with the opportunity to learn about script writing, editing and grammar. Students were encouraged to focus on an issue or platform they did not support, giving them a better understanding of the opposite viewpoint.

The student-made commercials were presented at the school's parent night. The students were asked to adhere to certain criteria when making their commercials: commercials could not exceed three minutes; commercials were to be made by a group not exceeding five people and had to be created and produced by students in the same cluster; content needed to promote the group's chosen candidate, following the party platform and candidates' positions and beliefs. Each commercial was videotaped in the library with the help of Mrs. Farris.

*As teachers, we knew the importance of this being a productive learning experience and did not tolerate any mudslinging. Only positive messages were allowed.*

Paula Williams

Students showed their talents in the essay contest on "What Freedom of Speech Means to Me." Almost 400 students participated and provided some well thought-out ideas on the subject.

The students created and produced campaign materials such as slogans, posters and T-shirts. Some items were displayed at the school to educate students and visiting parents while others were sent to local campaign offices.

*Through the efforts of our students, 120 new adult voters were registered in their community, including eight Azalea Gardens teachers. It is not often that students have the ability to see for themselves the difference their work makes in their communities.*

Paula Williams

## Special Strategies

Teachers made this project a well-run event by their planning and strategic guidance. By allowing the students the freedom to learn from a variety of sources, and in a variety of ways, they absorbed all they were given and craved more.

To encourage students to look at both sides of the issues and to learn about all the candidates, they were assigned to research and write about a candidate they would not normally have chosen.

## Getting Help

*Local Businesses \* Public Officials \* Parents \* Private Individuals*

Azalea Middle School received help from within their own school but also from the business and private sectors. By obtaining the voter registration cards, the students could proudly say that they had a significant effect on the number of registered voters in their community. With an increased number of registered voters, there was an increase in the number of voters. Parents and public officials were very supportive and pleasantly surprised that the students registered so many individuals.

## Informational Resources

Computer resources played a large part in the Azalea Middle School's Mock Election. The use of the Encarta program opened many avenues for learning. Students also tapped into the world of World Book encyclopedia. *Time Almanac* gave an important link to the past, present and future. Infotrac was also used to improve the students' resource pool, providing a broader base of information.

## Lessons and Outcomes

*The students became very aware of the importance of thinking for yourself in a democratic society. The right to freedom of speech and stating opinions was exercised through our right to vote. They discovered if the right to vote was abused, we could lose the right ....*

Paula Williams

The Azalea Middle School's Mock Election taught students the importance of voting, being informed, asking questions, and being able to state their position without fear of reprisal.

# BREWBAKER INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Project Contact: Paulette Moncrief, Principal  
National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Fourth through sixth grade. School population: 580 students.

## Goal

Brewbaker Intermediate School worked hard to provide the best opportunity for their students to enjoy the meaningful experience of the Mock Election. The 1996 Mock Election was the first for this school but the importance and effects of the event were clearly evident.

*This year a foundation was laid upon which to  
build as we approach the 21st century.*

Paulette Moncrief, Principal

## Highlights of School Activities

Students who pledged to vote when they come of age were given certificates for their commitment.

An inter-disciplinary approach to the Mock Election allowed the students of Brewbaker Intermediate School to gather information in each of their classes. Using talents and techniques which brought the knowledge of voting into a “real” setting, the students were able to gain the most from their experience.

The school library gave students red, white and blue “Elect to Read” bookmarks while contests tested the students’ knowledge of U.S. presidents.

Students were motivated by watching the national CNN coverage of political events because it allowed them to see how they fit into the big political picture.

The students created a template form letter to the president so they could contribute their thoughts and ideas on the issues facing the country.

Games such as Political Trivia allowed the students to increase their knowledge in an entertaining and competitive manner. Questions included: Which president appears on a penny? In what year did women win the right to vote? Who was the youngest president ever elected? Who was the first president to get married while in office?

Understanding how voters are swayed by political advertisements inspired the students to make their own campaign buttons.

Some teachers read a book about presidents to their students as part of the Mock Election activities. The students could take an Accelerated Reader test on the computer in the library.

Senator Larry Dixon read excerpts from *Ever-Ready-Eddie* to the top-point student involved in the Accelerated Reader program. The senator talked about reading, elections and character, themes woven into Brewbaker’s Mock Election.

Bert Estes, chief clerk of the Probate Office, spoke to students about being an informed voter and responsible citizen. Following the talk, students voted to determine who would be members of Brewbaker's new student council.

Mrs. Moncrief signed and distributed "Responsible Citizen" award certificates.

The music teacher taught the students an election song; a fourth grade class presented a skit called "Voting," and social studies classes included presidential travels.

## Special Strategies

100% of Brewbaker Intermediate School students participated in the Mock Election program. In addition to the students' hard work, 10% of Brewbaker's parents got involved by assisting with voter registration, helping students vote and giving a verbal pat on the back to the students for all their hard work.

## Getting Help

*Teachers \* Parents \* Public Officials \* Local Businesses \* Newspapers*

The participation of the students in Brewbaker's Mock Election came from every part of the community.

*Parents came to the initial assembly and to hear Senator Dixon speak.  
A special invitation was sent to parents to come to school and  
vote on Tuesday, October 29. A Mock Election table  
was set up for parents at the PTA meeting that night.*

The *Montgomery Independent News* published a picture of Senator Dixon with the children who participated in the Accelerated Reader program. The publicity demonstrated the level of patriotism and leadership shown by the students.

## Informational Resources

Publications such as *Ever-Ready Eddie* and *Electing the President 1996* stimulated many favorable comments from teachers. After hearing their teachers read a book about a president, students were motivated to go to the library media center and challenge their knowledge by taking the Accelerated Reader test.

The Internet provided young minds with a vehicle for answering their questions. While the school's phone lines were occasionally down, the students utilized the Internet whenever possible.

Brewbaker's 1996 Mock Election was especially significant because it was tied in with on-going events. Students were able to watch tapes of real world election events, which were then used as part of their studies. That allowed for an on-going expansion of learning material as the campaign and election process unfolded. Of most significance to the students was the educational assembly about the election process with a working voting booth on display.

Paulette Moncrief, principal of Brewbaker, gave each student an educational booklet called "Electing the President 1996" and an educational activity poster called "Election Time."



## Lessons and Outcomes

*Brewbaker Intermediate School has 580 fourth, fifth and sixth grade students. This was the first year Brewbaker participated in the Mock Election. It was a unique event in our school community ....*

Paulette Moncrief, principal

# HILSMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Project Contact: Victoria Pettis  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: Eighth grade class. School Population: Sixty-six percent of the student population are African-American.

## Goal

*In order for me to pass the torch of democracy to the next generation,  
I believed they needed to know what democracy is. They did not.  
Many adults, even those who vote, are many times uninformed  
(or misinformed). I wanted to change that.*

## Highlights of School Activities

*What made the Mock Election project for my eighth grade Language  
Arts class so unique and special was its tailor-made format.  
I wanted to reach several objectives, and did so,  
using an interdisciplinary approach to the program.*

Victoria Pettis

Students learned about the various kinds of writing involved in an election and what guidelines must be followed in producing speeches, press releases and other presentations.

Students were given first-hand knowledge of the candidates and the issues, allowing them to make informed decisions when they voted in the Mock Election.

Students appreciated the connection between social studies and language arts. Studying brochures/pamphlets, campaign posters and bumper stickers, the students learned about the tactics and political strategies used to sway voters. Students used that knowledge to create their own speeches and essays, which were then posted on school bulletin boards.

Students displayed their work on two bulletin boards created for the Mock Election by the art class.

As a lead-up to the Mock Election, many of the teachers at Hilsman taught mini-lessons on voting, the issues and the candidates.

Students studied editorial cartooning and how one's ideas can be expressed visually. Students were asked to use the information they had gathered to create a cartoon of Ross Perot and the opposing candidate.

Students were challenged to create a brochure or pamphlet for their own candidate, stating the reasons they believed their candidate to be the best person for the job.

Students watched the presidential debates and then critiqued the issues and the candidates, determining the position of their candidate on each topic.

The language arts class held an “If I Were President” speech contest. Students worked in cooperative groups to complete the assignment.

*This cooperative learning left some students surprised at what and how much they had learned.*

Victoria Pettis

During a math lesson students learned about how donations from special-interest groups can affect the outcome of an election.

Students designed and created their own campaign posters and bumper stickers, which were displayed on bulletin boards.

Students worked together to create ads, ABC books and group research papers on the three candidates.

Students went to see the local voter registration office where they were able to see how adults register to vote. The students also visited the election offices of two major political parties.

Students helped to register their parents to vote in the election by taking home the proper forms, encouraging their parents to fill them out and then mailing them in.

## Special Strategies

The planning for this project began several weeks before the actual implementation in October 1996. Students were asked to bring in newspaper and magazine clippings for discussion in class. Television commercials were also used as a learning tool.

Students were exposed to a month of election knowledge. Every lesson, even a simple spelling assignment, had its roots in the election theme. Students benefited from the constant reinforcement.

Students were randomly selected to serve on one of two research teams: one Democratic and the other Republican. The students were also responsible for researching the Reform Party candidate, Ross Perot.

*With information in hand, my role as teacher was to teach them what I wanted them to create cooperatively and individually for their candidate.*

Victoria Pettis

## Getting Help

*Parents \* Major Party Headquarters and Leaders \* Local Newspapers*

This school’s month long program encouraged parents to help bring the Mock Election to life as their children registered them to vote, discussing issues and asking questions.

Students learned how interesting the election process can be when they visited the headquarters of two major parties. Similarly, the students realized that the local community took great interest in their project, allowing them to make field trips to their offices.

## Informational Resources

The headquarters of two major parties allowed students to see a small portion of a real campaign in action and feel the excitement. The students were also provided with Internet information that helped them in their research.

## Lessons and Outcomes

*I think the students became interested and motivated, because they saw this project had relevance and meaning. They overcame their sense of alienation, powerlessness, and low self-esteem because I had them working together to set goals, make decisions and use their critical thinking skills for the common good of the group. Using the confidence fostered by the group experience, students were given assignments to do independently.*

*It is my hope that the next Mock Election will be bigger and better. By interesting more teachers across the disciplines (math, social studies, science, physical education, art) to join in, and by drawing more parent interest, I hope to make the next Mock Election an even more enjoyable learning experience. By working with my principal and perhaps involving our PTO, I would like to be able to set a school goal for registering a certain number of parents and have the local newspaper publicize our events.*

Victoria Pettis

# INDIAN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Project Contacts:

Patty Conneally: Social Studies;

April Jones: Science;

Martha Howard: English;

Carla Grant: Math

National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Sixth through eighth grade. Student population: First generation Vietnamese, Afghanis, East Indians and Americans.

*Our school is made up of a wide ethnic diversity, including first generation immigrants from Vietnam, Afghanistan and India and young American citizens. We were all learning about our political process jointly, so no student or group had an edge. The analyses were accomplished in the most equal manner possible, listening to news reports, reading papers and interviewing people to get the latest information. Discussing the issues with individuals outside their group, students quickly understood that there are no right or wrong answers or views on some issues.*

Patti Conneally

## Goal

Indian Hills Middle School wanted to design a simulation of the political process that would have real-life relevance and sustaining power for the lives of students. It wanted each student to have multiple opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter and to show they could apply it to their daily lives. It was just as much a challenge for the teachers, both veteran and novice, as it was to the students.

## Highlights of School Activities

*"Listening to America" was only a part of the unit for most schools, because the subject matter was happening as it was being studied. No one, not even the teachers, had all the right answers.*

Patti Conneally

Middle school students were already aware of their power, but when they began to learn about the democratic process, they began to understand how to put that power to work for themselves.

The classroom became a place where students could obtain the information they needed to make appropriate choices for themselves. The combination of student, parent and teacher gave students the opportunity to learn in a flexible environment and gave them new tools to use in their lives.

Students discussed breaking news events and showed genuine pleasure that their thoughts and ideas were being heard.

Students worked in teams to act out the political events of the 1996 presidential election. Each day's news served as a template for a flexible curriculum.

Students analyzed and debated the issues in class, expressing their own opinions. Learning became a process of shared thoughts and ideas as opposed to memorized information. Students expanded their knowledge base by gathering information from the Internet.

Students utilized the "good, old-fashioned" postal service to write to public officials. Everyone scanned the newspaper and looked to the media to further their research. With a broad-based ethnic population, the students divided into small groups to offer equal representation to the issues.

*Students wrote to public officials and used the media for their research.*

*Teachers used the democratic process, allowing students the opportunity to see democracy at work in their school communities.*

Martha Howard

Parents served as coaches to the student candidates and contacted local officials to speak at the school. Parents also served as role models when they voted in the real world elections. Many parents took their children with them to the polls.

*One parent graciously agreed to take students to Independence Square on Nov. 4 at 1:30 a.m. to hear Bob Dole in his last stop in the 96-hour marathon.*

Patti Conneally

*They wanted to become a part of history. The experience was video-taped and shared with the students unable to attend. It was this type of dedication on the part of both students and parents that made the Mock Election of Indian Hills Middle School an award-winning success.*

Martha Howard

*A multimedia approach was used by the students during the course of study. Many students took advantage of the Internet to gather information about candidates, while others wrote their own speeches and commercials.*

*Students learned some of the techniques of airing a political advertisement with the help of a local public access television station. The community station was eager to join in and help with the project.*

*Students came to school boasting about getting e-mail replies from Bill Clinton and Bob Dole.*

Martha Howard

*Students played the roles of President Clinton, Bob Dole and Ross Perot during the school's debate. The debate was held before an audience of students, teachers, parents, grandparents, administrators and media representatives. The student/candidates were very well informed on the issues.*

*The student/candidates became the medium through which other students learned about the democratic process, providing an excellent example of students learning from each other.*

The town meeting allowed *the student/candidates* to field questions from members of each *township*. Moderators, special interest groups, news media and voters *had an opportunity to communicate in an informal manner*. Student/candidates did a wonderful job of explaining their platforms to potential voters.

Student/candidates answered sample questions in preparation for the town meeting. The project was designed so that student/ candidates would help students at all grade levels understand the issues and the democratic process.

The Election Club was started to allow students access to resources and their team teacher after school hours. Participating in the Election Club was part of the commitment made to the project by student/candidates. The student/candidates found ways to juggle their schedules in order to attend the club meetings.

Students were encouraged to transform the school's hallways into a display of campaign posters, slogans, student/candidate pictures and other visual presentations.

*Their energy was contagious. You couldn't walk into the entrance of Indian Hills Middle School and not be taken in by the colorful, patriotic display of election memorabilia the students had amassed.*

Parent

The students discovered that some adults in their community did not share their enthusiasm. Students were stunned by the poor voter turnout, not only from their own community, but the whole country. Not easily swayed, the students encouraged parents to vote and some even went with their parents into the voting booth.

Teachers were careful to ensure that part of each day was used to "debrief" with the students on what had occurred the day before.

Students were quick to understand that the two-party system we are now familiar with will be quite different in the future. The majority of the students expressed their willingness to participate in the creation of a third party system as informed and intelligent voters.

*This project worked so well that students not only learned new information, but a new way of learning. And in, doing so, at times it seemed the students were more informed on the issues than their parents. We did our best to include lessons that would complement all learning styles and reach all of our students.*

Martha Howard

*Ultimately, gifted students went beyond the limits of normal classroom work without being singled out as too smart. "At-risk" students challenged their own limits and reached new levels they themselves did not think they were capable of.*

*A student, whose parent initially said that there was too much work for her child to complete, was asking what else she could do for the unit as time went on.*

Patti Conneally

## Special Strategies

Studies focused on four major issues: crime/violence, health care, tax reform and education. Teachers and students brainstormed to conclude that these would be the most manageable issues in the presidential election. Each student chose an issue to research and while they could work with other students, they were ultimately responsible for their own research and final work. Students helped each other by sharing research material and showing that they could work together toward a common goal: learning about democracy.

Teachers knew from the beginning that it would be a challenge to get some students to participate. The inventiveness of the teachers helped to draw students out and have them participate in ways they had not thought possible.

One student who would not verbally participate in class introduced herself and voiced her stand on the issues being discussed.

*Providing students with freedom to direct their own learning and creating a safe environment in which they can learn, makes this especially meaningful. Decisions about the simulation, questions for the candidates, and media events all provided outlets for personal energy and expression of power of our middle school students. Students with different levels of ability were all working toward the culminating activity. Their various jobs fit the diversity of the students.*

Patti Conneally

A unique turn of events could have derailed the Indian Hills Middle School project. Mother Nature dropped seven and one half inches of snow leaving the school without power for 24 hours and many students' homes without power for 5-7 days.

*But a delay in the project was not something the students would tolerate. With everyone pulling together and sharing electricity, the election went off on schedule. Much of the computer work had to be done at the public library, and parents provided transportation to get the students to where they needed to be to complete their work. Kinko's became a popular place. Students were determined to see this project through even though many had to study by candlelight. It is an event the school says it will never forget.*

Patti Conneally



## Getting Help

*Parents \* Local Agencies \* Staff \* Local Businesses \* Journalists*

Indian Hills Middle School received a great deal of assistance from parents, staff and local agencies. These groups provided information and resource material for use in the Mock Election. The project would have been difficult to complete on time if it had not been for the assistance of the library and Kinko's. Real newspaper and television reporters gave students valuable experience and information as they prepared for the debate.

*Being interviewed by real newspaper and television reporters instead of peer student reporters was a very enlightening experience for them.*

*We had tried to prepare them for real media coverage before the simulation, but the concept was difficult to grasp.*

*They quickly learned that there were no right answers when it came to elections issues. Most importantly, they soon discovered that it takes time and research in order to make intelligent decisions about candidates and issues.*

Indian Hills Middle School had 90% parent involvement and attendance at the 9 a.m. Mock Election that Tuesday morning. They also achieved 100% participation of students in attendance on Election Day.

Individuals who supported this project were Linda Braude, mentor for team teachers; Barbara Jones, counselor; Jan Percival, media specialist; Jim Poplau, choral music; Jim Wink, principal; Jennifer Friend, assistant principal; Dr. Hal Jehle, state coordinator Mock Election and social studies resource coordinator; Paulette Manville; Shawnee Mission East, Debate Coach; Henry Bloch, Chairman of H&R Block and involved grandparent; and David Atkins, state representative for the 28th District in Kansas.

## Informational Resources

Many of the resources used by the Indian Hills Middle School came from outside the standard curriculum. Newspapers, television and radio media, magazines, political publications, and personal interviews combined with the "Listening to America" unit made for a wonderfully well-rounded learning experience. Use of computer technology and the Internet provided bridges to external sources not otherwise available to the students. But the personal interaction between students, staff, parents, candidates and government agencies made the program a true winner.

## Lessons and Outcomes

*The way in which the students were discovering and learning the information was very much like the way that well-informed and intelligent voters receive their information. No one needed to ask, "Why are we learning this?" because the students could readily see that they needed the information in order to perform the tasks for the simulation. The students were in charge of their learning; they took control and made decisions about how they were going to learn about democracy. They were eager to accept that challenge because they had enormous freedom during the process, the content was new and exciting for them, and they fed upon the enthusiasm of the teachers. As the process unfolded, a snowball effect occurred and more and more energy developed among the students and teachers. Students took their jobs and roles very seriously and were eager to get the work done. Students acknowledged the challenge of thinking about issues from various points of view, discovered that finding solutions to these issues is quite difficult, and that politicians may also change their positions on the issues while campaigning.*

Dr. Hal Jehle

# KIRBYVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Project Contact: Jennifer Beasley  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: Seventh and eighth grade social studies classes hosted the Mock Election.

## Goal

*From a teachers' point of view, we wanted a way for  
the students to enjoy learning the political process.*

Jennifer Beasley

Students brainstormed and decided they would conduct an "Election Watch Party." Groups of students gathered to decide on committee tasks while coming up with ideas on how to create an event that would be fun and teach others about the election process and the importance of voting.

Students designed games called "Pin the tail on the donkey" and "Pin the nose on the elephant" as part of the entertainment.

Students formed committees responsible for food, entertainment, games, set-up, the tally board, invitation and thank-you letters. Parents and students worked together, organizing and seeking community contributions. Students enjoyed working cooperatively with parents and being able to share what they were learning.

The "Election Watch Party 1996" was the perfect way to encourage participation in the political process. Students heard about the election on the radio and television and read about it in the newspaper. Students learned about the political process while having fun.

## Special Strategies

Students, parents and community members all participated in this event. Members of the community were pleased to see the students so actively involved in the political process. Parents contributed significantly by putting in numerous volunteer hours and helping to provide refreshments. Students, however, were committed to organizing and hosting "Watch Party '96" and let nothing stand in their way.

## Getting Help

### *Local Businesses \* Parents \* Public and Government Officials*

The community contributed much to the success of this Mock Election. Both individuals and businesses donated time, funds and hard work. Those who supported the Mock Election were: Wal-Mart (always ready and willing to help with prizes); the county commissioner, Finis Keys and Assessor James Strahan (taking time to come by and say a few words); Country Mart; Consumers Save-A-Lot, Coca-Cola, Frito-Lay and Highland Dairy. A local radio station reminded parents and community members to stop by the school where a local theater provided music for the evening.

## Informational Resources

Kirbyville Middle School teachers used every resource available to educate their students. Videos, newspaper and magazine clippings added to the research material obtained from encyclopedias and the Internet. Candidate speeches were reviewed and discussed and students met with political officials to ask questions and hear how the candidates felt about the issues.

## Lessons and Outcomes

*At the conclusion of this program, I felt that every student played a major role in the success of Election Watch Party 1996. I feel confident, and the evaluations show, that the students completed the unit with a greater understanding of the political system.*

Jennifer Beasley

The invitation committee kicked off the project by booking local officials to speak at the event. The thank-you committee completed the project by using the computer to create and then mail thank-you cards to all those who supported and/or participated in this project. From start to finish, the students were able to learn about and appreciate the workings of the political system.

# PEARL C. ANDERSON LEARNING CENTER

Project Contact: Michael Cressey  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: Seventh and eighth grades. Student population: Approximately 96% of the student body participated, totaling 1, 00 students.

## Goal

This school is comprised mostly of students whose family income is approximately \$9,000. Most of these students participate in a subsidized school lunch program and if they complete college, will be first generation college graduates. It was a vital part of Pearl C. Anderson Learning Center's goal to show these students that they have a voice in their future and in present day events.

## Highlights of School Activities

The Mock Election was preceded by a "Celebrate Democracy" assembly. The school acted as host to candidates, winners of the cartoon contest were announced, the school's chorus and band provided entertainment and cheerleaders performed patriotic cheers.

Students made posters to encourage other students to vote in the Mock Election and to get involved by contacting a political candidate. "Get out the Vote" messages were displayed around the school.

The Pearl C. Anderson Learning Center began its rally with a local chapter of the ROTC and the posting of the colors (including the American flag).

Students designed and created posters reflecting the thoughts and ideas generated by the Mock Election and national election activities.

*After teaching several lessons on citizenship and voter responsibilities, students started simulating a precinct in the classroom. They got voting machines and ballots. When several of the candidates spoke at the rally, the students had a chance to speak to real people running for office.*

Michael Cressey

The media provided news coverage of the rally and debates. The candidates fielded questions and enjoyed debating with the students.

Two students were given the opportunity to perform a live telecast with Channel 2 News.

To encourage parent participation, the Parent/Teacher Association hosted a "Get-Out-the-Vote" day. Students discussed the issues with their parents and accompanied them to the polls. Parents also helped monitor the school's Mock Election and were asked to bring a friend or neighbor to the school political rally.

## Special Strategies

It is important to note that although a significant number of the students at Pearl C. Anderson Learning Center come from low-income households, they had little, if any, trouble in obtaining assistance from outside sources. The students had no reason to believe that a lack of income would mean a lack of importance in the election process.

Student motivation was kept high with winners of the cartoon contest, red, white, and blue contest and photos of the events being displayed in the school library and boardroom.

Students were entrusted with setting up and running the Mock Election and rally. They had to inform other students through their newspaper (*Morehouse Tiger News*) and call in the results of the election to Channel 2 News.

*Of the 200 schools [in Dallas] who participated in the Mock Election program,  
74 were able to get their results tallied and called in by 5 p.m.*

Michael Cressey

## Getting Help

*Government Officials \* Private Business  
Owners \* Parents Other Schools \* County  
Elections Manager*

Local government officials and the private business sector were called upon to support Pearl C. Anderson students with their Mock Election program. Many were supportive and responded positively to the needs of the students.

Help also came from other Dallas schools participating in Mock Election projects. Working with other schools demonstrated the benefits of working together as a team.

The county elections manager assisted by helping the students to register to vote and by swearing in the student officials.

## Informational Resources

Pearl C. Anderson Learning Center used the Dallas Convention as a source of information. The live, “real world” contact showed the importance of the election and the democratic process and assured students that they would apply what they had learned. Books, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, T.V. and radio spots were additional sources of information for the students.

## Lessons and Outcomes

*Better than 96% of our students voted in the Mock Election. Two of the area schools (Grambling/Jackson State) won awards for the highest percentage of student voters. Another school, Morehouse College, started a newspaper to promote the election. Our students learn through "Performance Based Activities" (they learn by doing). Participation was motivated through daily announcements, the student newspaper and teachers in all disciplines having students discuss and debate political issues. The project was school-wide and community-wide. Students encouraged their parents to vote. Our PTA hosted a parent "get out to vote day." Candidates were invited to speak. We had a 96% turnout at the Mock Election and received numerous letters supporting our work with this program. The program was clearly a success.*

Michael Cressey

# PIPER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Project Contact: April Hawkins

National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz, Award

## School Profile

Grades: Sixth through eighth grade. Student population: Participating class population approximately 700.

## Goal

*The presidential election is always an exciting time in the United States. But there is a growing concern that the apathy of voters will undermine the democratic system. In an effort to teach the students of Piper Middle School about the democratic process, we were faced with the challenge to inspire the eighth grade classes to become educated as to how the system works, and to the importance of being an active participant in their own future. We worked together to design a program that would connect the political process and the election to our students' lives, and show them that their community was involved.*

April Hawkins

## Highlights of School Activities

Eighth grade students hosted an "election tea" and invited senior citizens. Guests shared their memories of past elections and candidates and discussed their views on the current election. Two or three students were grouped with a senior guest and encouraged to discuss similarities and differences between past and present elections.

Refreshments for the tea were prepared by the home economics classes. The recipes for the cookies and other treats were taken from Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole's recipe collection.

While parents were invited to participate in political discussions, they also volunteered their services to set up the tea and clean up afterward.

Students conducted interviews with parents, friends, family and members of the business community to learn about others' experiences.

Students used the results of their interviews to find ways to effectively combat voter apathy. The students brainstormed and developed some good ideas.

Piper Middle School went to an assembly promoting the democratic process and encouraging citizens to get out and vote. The mayor of Kansas City and other prominent officials spoke at the election assembly. Each speaker explained how they became involved in community service and the democratic system and why they remain active.



Eighth grade fine arts students presented appropriate songs during the opening and closing portions of the assembly.

Debates allowed the students to exchange, and sometimes defend, their ideas. Students either adopted their candidate's platform or researched an issue and developed their own opinions.

## Special Strategies

Teachers of Piper Middle School planned the entire unit during their 40-minute planning sessions. This work was in addition to other curriculum objectives and requirements and so students were left with the majority of work and decision-making for the Mock Election.

## Getting Help

### *Business Community \* Parents \* Teachers*

As in many other communities, Piper Middle School teachers and students received a great amount of support and assistance from the business community. The excitement of the students touched the lives of others and the enthusiasm spread. Parents provided students with support and encouragement and helped whenever needed.

## Informational Resources

Piper Middle School used resources from every walk of life, providing the current and up-to-date news or an edited version of the past. They learned from those who had been there to witness past elections. Transcripts of the student interviews were made available and will be used as a reference resource for student essays in the future. The students were also asked to make an informative summary of what they learned from their experience. Newspapers, magazines, books, television newscasts and the Internet offered a broad-based supply of information.

## Lessons and Outcomes

*There was not an area of education that the Mock Election program did not touch or was not a part of. Science, math, language, arts, reading and social studies became studies that actually affected the lives of the students involved. No one could walk away from this experience and think they had no voice in our society.*

*Our achievements were the amount of involvement from the community and the excitement this generated among our students. Because our students were sharing what they learned with adults in the community, they were much more motivated to become "experts" on the issues that were important in the '96 election.*

April Hawkins

# PIZITZ MIDDLE SCHOOL

Project Contact: Donna Watkins  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: Sixth through eighth grade. School population: 94% of the student body participated.

## Goal

*Our school became the site of a bustling campaign in the months of September and October as teachers and students prepared for the 1996 Student Mock Election. Preparations began in the summer when two parent volunteers and three students attended the Mock Convention at Hoover High School. The convention laid the foundation for a slate of election activity. A parent volunteer, a teacher, and students met and put the plan in motion. The primary objectives of our election were to: 1) increase student awareness about candidates and issues, 2) encourage voter participation among students and adults, and 3) experience the energy and excitement generated by an election.*

Donna Watkins

## Highlights of School Activities

Pizitz Middle School was pleased to have Spencer Bachus, congressional representative from its district, visit on October 11<sup>th</sup>. Rep. Bachus, along with many other well-known citizens and elected representatives, led the school's Assembly on Citizenship. Rep. Bachus spoke to the students on the meaning and significance of being a United States citizen and the importance of making informed decisions. It was a proud moment when awards were given to the school and students for demonstrating outstanding leadership.

Two teachers, a parent volunteer and eight students (representing all three grade levels) attended a City Council meeting requesting supplies for the Mock Election. The mayor, City Council members and the City Clerk graciously responded by lending the school polling booths and donating pencils and stickers for each of the students. General Services delivered the equipment to the school the day before the election.

Art teacher Larry Gibson and his students displayed their political cartoons in a left and right-winged eagle.

The enrichment teacher challenged the eighth grade classes and pods of seventh grade classes with three lessons. The lessons covered computer research of the major issues, the history of voting rights and participation in a campaign.

Classrooms became election headquarters and students were charged with developing and mapping out the last minute strategies used by candidates.

Students designed buttons, pamphlets, posters and television and radio jingles to promote the election.

Sixth grade students participated in a “scavenger hunt” using newspapers and the Internet to find relevant campaign materials.

Natalie David, Birmingham Southern professor, former Senate candidate and political analyst, spoke to the students at Pizitz Middle School in a town hall meeting. She answered questions and spoke on “Figuring Out the 1996 Election.” At the conclusion of her presentation, the students posed as candidates and debated the issues.

On Decision Day '96 the school's polls opened at 8 a.m. and 135 volunteers served as poll workers and watchers. Local poll volunteers assisted the student workers with their duties and helped tabulate the votes when the polls closed.

Three teachers and a parent volunteer posed as Bill Clinton, Bob and Elizabeth Dole and Ross Perot. There was much excitement when the candidates roamed the halls, vying for votes. Mayor Reynolds found the time to escort the candidates to some of the classrooms where they answered students' questions. Mayor Reynolds, City Councilman David Skinner and City Clerk Thelma Moon dropped by to cast their vote at the school's polling booths.

Debates allowed the students to exchange, and sometimes defend, their ideas. Students either adopted their candidate's platform or researched an issue and developed their own opinion.

The Pizitz Powerline, the local news program, provided special coverage of the election reports at the end of each class period. Amy Baldwin and Bob Farley of *The Birmingham Post* were on hand to cover the election news.

When the polls closed, Pizitz Middle School tabulated the votes and reported a proud 94% voter turnout. Students cheered as they heard the tally.

*Student participation didn't end there. Students followed the election returns on November 5 and colored states by electoral votes. Students were reminded to encourage their parents to vote and offer their assistance at home so parents could have that extra time. Students were rewarded in numerous ways for their participation.*

Donna Watkins

Science classrooms became the center for discussions on environmental issues and the top three environmental concerns for the 21st century. Medical issues were also open for discussion. Students wanted to know the candidates' views on alcohol and drugs as well as teenage smoking. Space exploration, medical research and health care also found their way into the discussions.

Students looked at which programs depend on large sums of money and what portion of taxes go to fund the various programs. They also studied how the Electoral College works mathematically, how a flat tax compares to the present tax, and how voter turnout at the polls is determined.

English and language arts classes not only researched the candidates and their positions on the issues, but some students made pamphlets and wrote their own political advertisements.

Art students created posters or street signs to hang on the school walls and buttons depicting the campaign of the candidates. Students also produced long banners that graced the election headquarters and polling places. Music students created musical jingles as political advertisements for the radio

Social studies classes discussed the candidates and the issues and held the election celebration (class party) on election eve, emulating the candidates. Social studies students were rewarded with 100% class voter registration and/or voter turnout.

## Special Strategies

Excitement was high when the City Council provided students with tickets to see President Clinton during a surprise campaign stop in Vestavia Hills. While many students could say they had seen the president on television, the students at Pizitz Middle School would be able to, one day, tell their children that they had seen the president in person.

## Getting Help

A surprise campaign stop by President Clinton.

*Government Officials \* Private Businesses \*  
Newspapers TV Journalists \* Parents \*  
Teachers \* Private Individuals*

Help with the Mock Election at the Pizitz Middle School came from a number of sources. Government officials, private businesses, newspapers and journalists, as well as parents, family and friends, provided insight, suggestions and support to the students and staff of Pizitz Middle School. It was with their assistance that this project succeeded in being a strengthening force for the students.

## Informational Resources

The number of informational resources can never be limited when the desire to learn is so strong. For the students of Pizitz Middle School, the resources varied from newspapers and political publications to personal interviews and the world of the Internet.

## Lessons and Outcomes

*Through a team effort — administrative support, community involvement and support, parent volunteers, interdisciplinary teaching and teacher, staff and student participation — future voter participation and public awareness were strengthened. The right to vote was seen not only as a privilege but as an honor, and as an exciting, memorable and powerful event in one's life.*

Donna Watkins

# URBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Project Contact: Kathleen Nelesen, social studies teacher  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: Sixth through eighth grade. Students participating: 130.

## Goal

*Our election activities were both unique and creative because they permitted the students to democratically develop their own goals as a group and then facilitated student success by allowing them to meet those goals using their individual talents, interests and knowledge. It gave students a variety of real-world experiences and raised them to levels far above those gained by the transfer of content in a more traditional manner.*

Kathleen Nelesen

## Highlights of School Activities

A team of teachers identified the core information in the American election process and decided on the best way to deliver this information to students.

Teachers identified a number of key areas on which to focus their lessons. They would focus on: the election; the constitutional background of the election process; the balance of power between the three branches of government, the history of some of the presidents; the current issues and where the candidates stand, and political vocabulary.

Social studies classes became the central arena for the discussion of the election process, teachers in other disciplines used every opportunity to work the Mock Election into their curriculum.

Students developed commercials with the support and guidance of the language arts teachers, using their own language to convey their message. The commercials were shown to other students and presented at Parent/Teacher conferences.

When all the commercials had been viewed by students in the classroom, the best commercials were chosen for re-recording and sent to the local cable station. The commercials were aired one week before the election and provided incentive for adults to vote.

*The teacher responsible for delivering the tape to our cable company reported that, on Election Day, when she took a thank-you note' the students had written to the individual who edited the program, he was wearing an "I Voted" sticker. He told her after working with our commercials he was so inspired by the students' sincerity and belief in the system, he had the other workers at the cable company view the commercials and they had decided as a group to all vote on Election Day. As the teacher looked around the office she realized every worker was wearing an "I Voted" sticker.*

Kathleen Nelesen

Students demonstrated their artistic talents by designing "Promote the Vote" door hangers to remind people to vote. Students canvassed the town, even asking a local pizza company to deliver similar fliers with each pizza purchased five days prior to the election.

Seventh grade students contacted a local sign company owner for help with a sign promoting the vote. The owner was so impressed that seventh grade students would consider taking on this kind of responsibility that he offered to hang their sign for free.

As the word of community generosity and involvement spread, one student challenged teachers and staff with the comment:

*That's great that Mr. Cramer (the sign company owner) wants to give us the billboard for free. But isn't that too easy? If we want people to take us seriously, shouldn't we earn the money and pay for it ourselves, instead of having an adult pay for it for us?*

Urban Middle I School Student

Many discussions and debates followed the students' request for financial autonomy.

*In the end, the students decided to decline the free offer of the billboard and raise the money for the project themselves. Without exception, every student felt and knew that the message would not carry as much weight, if they, as a student community, failed to "put their money where their mouth was."*

The students decided that, even with a financially diverse community and the fact that some students would have difficulty donating money, each of them should donate whatever money they could to the project.

Artistically inclined students picked up mini billboard forms and began designing. All the samples were collected at the end of the week and put on display for the vote to be held the following Monday.

Students spent the weekend collecting aluminum cans for recycling. All the money collected was donated to the sign fund.

Fund-raising for the billboard took the form of babysitting, raking leaves, doing odd jobs for family, friends and neighbors and raiding piggy banks. Some students donated their dessert money, while others handed over pocket change accumulated from their own pockets and their parents'.

*Bake sales during lunch added to the billboard fund. And in only four and a half school days, the students were able to raise \$ 111.07.*

Kathleen Nelesen

One person who heard about the children raising their own funds for the sign, was so moved by the students' sense of responsibility and purpose that she began spreading the story to co-workers.

Many had said they weren't going to vote before, but after hearing how hard the students had worked, and with such determination, the common reaction became, "I'll have to go vote."

Local Businessperson

The owner of the sign company would not accept payment for the sign but donated the funds to the James Madison School, a local elementary school for physically handicapped children. The donation was made in the name of the students from Urban Middle School.

The sign company owner also relocated the billboard two blocks from the school so that students would have more opportunities to see it.

*It was truly a privilege for me as a teacher to be in a position to observe the business community valuing the work of students and wanting to provide the best possible reinforcement for those students.*

Kathleen Nelesen

The school hosted an Election Day rally where students submitted applications to play the roles of candidates in the presidential race. The applications included who the student would play, how they would portray the character and what they would do to make the role most lifelike. Students also played the parts of Secret Service agents, debate team members and the press.

While one student sang the National Anthem at the rally, other students took on the work of stage crew and lighting and sound operators.

Students demonstrated a pride of ownership with the Mock Election. One student took the initiative to place 100 ads on the Internet, reminding Internet users to vote.

Students compiled information from the League of Women Voters literature and distributed the information package to social studies teachers to use in their classes.

During the role-playing that took place at the rally, Urban Middle School's "President Clinton" discovered the importance of correctly wording your thoughts. When questioned by a "reporter" as to what his stand was on the drug problem in this country, the "President" replied earnestly, "I'm against all drugs except for those that make you feel good." It was a very red-faced "President Clinton" who amended amid much laughter, "I mean the ones that make you feel better when you're sick."

## Special Strategies

*The special-needs students, varying from the cognitively disabled to the gifted and talented with all the gray area, “at-risk” and unlabeled learners in between, are encouraged to engage on the level of their choosing and to the best of their ability. All work and workers are valued because, just as in the body, the foot does not outrank the hand, neither do the fits, talents and interests of one student out-value those of another.*

Kathleen Nelesen

*Giving students information and then empowering them to use it as they see fit is the most effective motivational tool we have at our disposal and it’s vital we use it, for it would be impossible to reach this high level of accomplishment and student involvement if the students were not intrinsically motivated to complete the task. But because [students] are encouraged to think, to dream, to envision possibilities, and then decide what’s possible, given the constraints of time, space, money, talent, and technology, students not only became involved, they became unstoppable. The challenge and excitement for the educator is in supplying materials, information, and skilled instruction to the learners as they complete the task they’ve set for themselves.*

## Getting Help

*Local Businesses \* Local Media Outlets \*  
Parents League of Women Voters*

Urban Middle School received a great deal of support from outside sources. The local cable station and a local billboard-advertising firm provided some of the more unique sources of help, but were by no means the only ones to offer support. The League of Women Voters provided information so that students could create and distribute their own information packages. Parents, and even local newspaper carriers, contributed ideas to the school’s Mock Election.

## Informational Resources

Internet access allowed students to obtain information for research and project use. Along with phone, fax, and copy machines, the computer played an important role in gathering and disseminating information. Students were able to take an active role in promoting their own education and informing others about the importance of voting. Students also used newspapers, television newscasts, magazines and personal interviews as research tools.



## Lessons and Outcomes

*The most significant achievement of our 1996 Mock Election activities was the high level of student involvement that provided the impetus for all we accomplished. The activities were multidisciplinary and needed the talents and abilities of all the students to be implemented. All of our 130 students contributed in one way or another to make this a successful endeavor. Just as the democracy needs all its citizens to contribute to the greater good, our election activities did the same. It didn't matter what students' talents were, the important thing was for them to put them to use as they completed the task at hand. The way they worked individually and as a group resulted in what the philosophers would call "utility," or the greatest good for the most people ... a powerful lesson in how our society functions at its best when individuals do what they can where they can to benefit others, and, in the process, help themselves.*

Kathleen Nelesen

*The election activities accommodated the bakers and the sellers, the mathematicians and the organizers, the leaders and the followers, the thinkers and the doers, and all became problem-solvers as they worked past the obstacles standing between them and the goals they had set set for themselves — sometimes working overtime, or using computers, or working in groups, or soliciting help, or sometimes by simply learning from their mistakes.*

# WEST RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Project Contact: Ricky Vickers, Social Studies Teacher  
National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Sixth through eighth grade. Sixth, seventh and eighth grade social studies classes organized and hosted the Mock Election.

## Goal

West Ridge Middle School wanted to motivate all their students to learn about, and participate in, the democratic process.

## Highlights of School Activities

Students prepared themselves for the Mock Election by conducting and participating in a voter registration drive. The students registered parents, staff and the general public for both the Mock Election and the real world election.

West Ridge Middle School's voter registration drive was advertised throughout the school on colorful displays created by the students. Journalists from a local television station provided media coverage.

Students interviewed parents to learn about political ideology from veteran voters. Students were required to interview at least one Republican and one Democrat to gain a understanding of both political parties. Parents, motivated by the students, offered to help with other Mock Election activities.

Students became more informed about the issues by watching and discussing the presidential debates.

*Daily classroom discussions of the issues, and candidate performance were something the students anticipated and enjoyed.*

Ricky Vickers

Coverage by the local media provided incentive for the students. Faxes were sent outlining the events of the Mock Election.

After learning about the Electoral College, students divided into Republican and Democratic parties and elected a candidate to represent their party. Students explored the current political infrastructure, how candidates win votes and why candidates campaign more heavily in some states than others. Students studied how states traditionally vote and then studied the voter opinion polls, translating them into possible electoral votes.

Students used computers (with a program designed by the computer lab teacher) to cast their votes. When the results were in, they were displayed on the school's Internet page. The screen saver displayed the message: "Uncle Sam Wants You."

*Students found themselves determining what each presidential candidate should do to win the additional electoral votes needed to put them over the top.*

Ricky Vickers

## **Special Strategies**

Parent participation was kept to a minimum to assure that the students ran the election precinct by themselves. For the sixth grade class that hosted the West Ridge Middle School Election, parents participated by allowing themselves to be interviewed, an assignment which encouraged students to become aware of the political ideology through discussions with their parents.

Other grades and disciplines were not specifically asked to participate in the West Ridge Middle School project but became involved as the program spread throughout the school.

*Self-contained special education students were included and each was registered and participated in the process, rather than remaining bystanders.*

Ricky Vickers

West Ridge Middle School teachers had not planned to use an interdisciplinary approach to their Mock Election but as the excitement and energy of the program spread throughout the school, social studies, science and art classes began to get involved.

Science students used both their math and science skills to analyze data and determine who might win the election.

## **Getting Help**

*Parents \* Governmental Organizations \* Local Business People*

While parent participation was limited, the Mock Election project could not have been accomplished without the support and assistance of parents.

Additional assistance from government organizations and local business people helped make the Mock Election a success.

## **Informational Resources**

Volunteers, students and staff members found newspapers and television broadcasts useful tools in soliciting energetic classroom discussions. Political cartoons were viewed as more than just entertainment and studied as a reflection of social opinion.

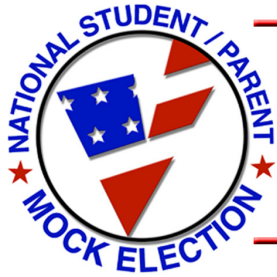
Students found the surveys and interviews with parents to be both informative and educational.

## Lessons and Outcomes

*As an educator, I realize that organizing a school-wide event in addition to the regular classroom curriculum is a great undertaking. Sometimes you wonder if it is worth the effort and sacrifice necessary to make sure a commitment works. However, when it is finally completed and the students and parents thank you for that extra effort — effort that does make a difference in a student's life — it is then that I remember what teaching is all about and I automatically begin to think of ways to make it more effective the next time around.*

*During 18 years of teaching, I have never witnessed so much interest in a presidential election. I believe that so much interest was generated by an intensive study of the election process from start to finish in the social studies class and student involvement in running an 'in-house' election in our building.*

Ricky Vickers



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# National Student/Parent **MOCK ELECTION**

[nationalmockelection.org](http://nationalmockelection.org)

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## **Reports From the Real World: High Schools**

# CROCKETT HIGH SCHOOL

Project Contact: Pat Dobbs  
National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Grade twelve economics classes hosted Mock Election project.

## Goal

Students in the senior economics classes realized that they would soon be of voting age. It was essential that they be aware of their rights and responsibilities as members of the community and citizens of the country.

## Highlights of School Activities

Students were required to use the proper economic terms of the Constitution when making their presentation at the Veterans of Foreign Wars' annual "Loyalty Day" celebration.

Students talked with veterans, former POWs and teachers who had served in the military. For many students this was the first time they had spoken with a war veteran and they found the first-hand accounts more interesting than stories from the newspaper.

Students spoke with public officials and gained a greater understanding of their positions on issues.

TI-IN network produced three enrichment programs with the economics students, asking students to speak out on the issues. The programs were shown to 2,500 students in 47 states.

Students participated in a town meeting with Congressman Lloyd Doggett. The town meeting was taped by TI-IN for their Kid Educational series.

Students wrote letters to senators, Congress members and President Clinton and were very pleased to get some responses.

Students were invited to attend their congressman's birthday party that inspired them to volunteer to work at a real election on election night.

The school held an essay contest to encourage students to express their opinions and beliefs.

## Special Strategies

It was important for students in their senior year of high school to interact with individuals who could share real life experiences.

*Speaking to a veteran who lost his best friend during a war carries much more weight than reading about the event in a book or newspaper article.*

Parent

## Getting Help

*Local Candidates \* Public Officials\*  
Parents, War Veterans \* Local  
Business Owners*

Support from local candidates and public officials opened doors to research materials and opportunities for learning. Students often act as a bridge or link between the candidate and the student's parents. Students often reflect their parents' views.

## Informational Resources

Books, newspaper articles and the Internet provided a wonderful basis for students to begin their studies but the one-on-one discussions and storytelling proved to be the most interesting and educational experiences for the students.

## Lessons and Outcomes

The students and staff of Crockett High School were able to access a wealth of knowledge by taking the time to talk and listen to senior citizens.

*My son saw war through the eyes of one who has experienced it.  
I hope these students know how much they can learn  
about tomorrow from these people.*

# LAKE TAYLOR HIGH SCHOOL

Project Contact: Leslie Freeman

National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Ninth through 12th grade.

## Goal

During September, October and November, students and teachers immersed themselves in the democratic process. Lake Taylor High School was transformed into a living civic laboratory of learning.

## Highlights of School Activities

Students in the advanced placement government class held a seminar on the “Social Barrier to Voting.” They were asked to look at the problem of voter apathy, determine the cause and devise a plan to combat it.

Students were encouraged to learn about the democratic process both academically and personally. Attending a campaign rally for Bob Dole gave the students an opportunity to see politics in action.

The school’s Mock Election activities and events were covered and broadcast by a local television station. The community was given the opportunity to see the educational value of a Mock Election.

Physically and mentally challenged students, assisted by their parents, voted in the Mock Election.

Students in naval science classes discussed the president’s role as commander-in-chief of the military.

Science students researched and discussed the many conditions that affect voter turnout. Regional economies, weather conditions and time zones were all considered factors in determining voter turnout.

History and government classes compared the present democratic process with that of ancient Greece and Rome. The students also compared historical presidential debates with those of the present election campaign.

Students analyzed political cartoons and what they reflected in the presidential election. After learning to interpret political cartoons, the students were asked to create their own.

Students read and discussed poetry and prose with references to political campaigns and elections. The language arts students teamed up with social studies students to create an original collection of poetry.

Students spent time analyzing the text of speeches, identifying sentence patterns, using the correct punctuation and discovering the most effective way to make one’s point.

Teachers at Lake Taylor High felt that it was important for students to know how to give both oral and written presentations. The students were asked to prepare and deliver a persuasive speech in support of one of the presidential candidates.



Using the electoral votes of the state, the math teacher showed students how to use decimals to determine statistical information. Students constructed graphs on voter turnout, electoral voting by region, and demographics based on age and income.

Art students were able to create a powerful visual image of the importance of democracy. A presidential election quilt, paintings with political themes or messages and a pictorial timeline illustrating significant events in presidential history were among the many pieces of artwork that graced the walls of the school. Students also developed an awareness of how music is used to enhance moods and messages in campaign speeches, ads and promotions.

Amid the controversy surrounding whether or not voting materials should be prepared in different languages, the students decided to create pennants and bumper stickers in various languages, complete with translations.

Students used computers and the Internet to research information for their election portfolio projects and to design political campaign buttons, bumper stickers and graphics displays of political surveys. Students also used computers to design and compile a political magazine and to produce political poetry.

## Special Strategies

One of the teachers of Lake Taylor High School was able to bring a significant and unique perspective to her students. Not yet a naturalized citizen, the teacher was able to bring her own personal experiences about voting requirements. The question of who is allowed to vote and why was discussed in class. Students were also given “community service points” for voting and for encouraging their parents to vote.

Voter registration and a mock campaign rally made the project feel real. Parents were encouraged to take their children with them to the polls and to discuss the issues with students. One student was selected to be an officer of elections and given the opportunity to work at the polls on Election Day. Students, including physically and mentally challenged students, shared sample voting machines and so it became necessary to make the ballots understandable for everyone.

## Getting Help

### *Parents*

Lake Taylor High School used many different resources to teach their students about democracy. The opportunity to attend a presidential campaign rally was one of the highlights of the project. Staff and students used the public address system to keep students up-to-date on Mock Election and campaign activities.

Lake Taylor High School made sure that the events and lessons of the election project were available to other classes by making and distributing a video of the mock campaign rally.

## Informational Resources

Computers and the Internet played a major role for students and teachers gathering information on the democratic process. Magazines, videotapes, newspapers and election pamphlets both posed and answered many of the students’ questions.

## **Lessons and Outcomes**

With the assistance and guidance of teachers and parents, the students of Lake Taylor High School realized that their concerns about government and politics reflected the concerns of the general public. Learning about democracy showed the students that school life and life in the real world were very similar. Students began to appreciate those people that fought for the right to vote and those that make it possible for them to participate fully in the political process. The students began to consider their responsibilities as citizens and the power in speaking out.

Lake Taylor High can boast an 80% student participation in its Mock Election, with an approximate 40% parent participation. All grade levels were involved in the Mock Election and all other voter education activities.

# MANCHESTER ELEMENTARY, JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL

Project Contact: Melissa Winn, junior high social studies teacher  
National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Fourth through 12th grade participated.

## Goal

The students of Manchester decided they wanted to learn more about the election process. In order to provide the platform for this knowledge, it was decided to have a Mock Election.

## Highlights of School Activities

A date was selected for registration and notices were sent to local newspapers to let the community know what the students and school were doing. Information was sent to candidates inviting them to participate in the project.

A bonfire, planned for the night of the real election, was a great motivational tool for the students.

*One of the most significant achievements in our 1996 Mock Election was that all the students had the opportunity to participate. As an inclusion school, all students are treated equally. With inclusion, all the students participated in the learning and preparations in the classroom and also in events going on elsewhere; such as helping to gather information on the candidates, making posters, writing and making commercials, actual voting and helping with the bonfire preparations. It was an exciting time of learning and growth.*

Melissa Winn

During the registration process, students and teachers were available to help read or answer questions about how to fill out the form. The school achieved a 100% registration ratio in the junior high level. The high school generated about a 95% registration level. Those students who failed to register soon learned they had lost their chance at having a voice in the election.

Throughout the Mock Election it was stressed that one vote could make a difference. The students understood that their vote could decide the outcome of the election.

The school received letters from Governor Voinovich, Senator John Glenn, Representative Rob Portman and President Clinton. While most letters declined the invitation to the bonfire, students were interested to see who responded.

The high school history students helped write questions for the Business and Professional Women's Club's candidate debate. The debate was broadcast on the local radio station.

Students wrote letters that were submitted for publication in the local newspaper. These letters helped keep the community informed of the school's events.

Posters, art work, letters, debate questions and summaries of information were posted on school walls. Parents and community members were invited to the school to see what the students were doing.

Students in art classes were involved in election poster contests.

The music department helped by playing at the election night bonfire while voc-ag classes helped with preparation.

Language arts classes helped out with instructions for writing letters, proofreading and correcting any mistakes.

The computer department made up the ballot form that was used in the Mock Election.

The math classes came in handy when it came to counting the votes, figuring percentages and making graphs.

Math classes counted the votes and made graphs.

*We involved many departments and almost all the classes in our school.  
Everyone was happy to help, especially the teachers.*

Melissa Winn

## Special Strategies

The bonfire was part of the planned events from the very beginning, making this a highly motivational tool. Within the multi-disciplinary range of the project, the students were bound together by the events. The subjects of study and interest varied from student to student but the entire school had rewards they could look forward to and share.

## Getting Help

### *Parents \* Local Civic Groups*

The community was very supportive in helping the students with projects and information. Parent involvement was lower than they had hoped but higher than at other events. Those parents that did participate were happy to help with the bonfire by offering supplies and chaperoning.

Local civic groups, such as the Women's Club, graciously allowed students to use their forum to ask the candidates questions.

## Informational Resources

Newspapers, magazines, books and in-person interviews provided students with a wide variety of informational resources from which they could gain information and leads on candidates and their positions.

## Lessons and Outcomes

With all the publicity and enthusiasm surrounding the Mock Election, the turn-out was much better than expected. Approximately 90% of the students were involved in the Mock Election in one way or another. Students learned about the candidates, the issues, and in many case, simply to have patience.

*Since it was our first year, there were several things we did not have time to do. The next time we plan on getting the community more involved by helping with voter turn-out.*

Melissa Winn

# McKINNEY HIGH SCHOOL

Project Contact: Ann Presley, government teacher  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: Ninth through 12th grade. 120 students participated.

## Goal

Students and teachers recognized the importance of understanding the role they could play in the election process. Whether a student was eligible to vote in the “real world” election or not, learning how the democratic process functions and discovering how they could make a difference was both inspiring and educational.

## Highlights of School Activities

A spring bond election raised students’ awareness of how issues affected them and their crowded school. Students took the initiative to start a drive to ensure that every teacher at McKinney High School participated in the Mock Election. More importantly, students encouraged every teacher to register and vote in the spring bond election.

Students learned about real world politics by volunteering their time for an actual campaign. They were encouraged to work for a party that neither they, nor their family, would normally support.

Students held a voter registration program to get new voters to register.

Students distributed registration forms and letters to the teachers and kept them informed of all upcoming events.

From making decisions, implementing plans and evaluating outcomes, the students ran the entire Mock Election.

Teachers used an interdisciplinary approach to teaching students about democracy. With a wide ethnic diversity, McKinney High teachers and staff made sure to reach out to every child, not only the at-risk students, but also those students who did not participate.

Mock presidential debates, held in government classes, gave the students the chance to use the information they had compiled on the issues and the candidates.

Students created posters and signs and visited classes to spread the word about the Mock Election and the voter registration drive.

The courthouse lent the school voting booths so that students could experience what “real world” voting would be like.

## Special Strategies

Students were encouraged to participate in “real world” campaigns by volunteering to look after phone banks, put up signs and pass out literature. Student leaders contacted the local Democratic, Republican and Reform Party headquarters and signed up to work at least three hours.

The Mock Election drew as much enthusiasm and sincerity as the presidential election. While the work was enjoyable and entertaining, no one forgot the importance of what they were doing.

## Getting Help

*City Officials \* Parents \* Newspapers \* Local Businesses*

The entire city of McKinney offered help and support to the Mock Election. Students and people in the community worked hand-in-hand to make the election a success. Students helped encourage apathetic adults and adults encouraged students to learn about the issues and the system.

## Informational Resources

The local Democratic, Republican and Reform Party leaders were more than willing to provide the students with literature. Working on election campaigns and talking with campaign workers offered students a valuable and informative look at the inner workings of an election. The students freely shared their experiences and information with others.

## Lessons and Outcomes

The students of McKinney High learned a great deal from the Mock Election program. From the history of past elections, the ability to participate in an election, and learning the importance of voting, students established a foundation from which they can become responsible and informed citizens.

Students found that volunteer work was a great way to learn. In total, they performed 460 hours of community service. These hours earned the students community service credit in class.

# ROYALTON-HARTLAND JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Project Contact: Julie Ulrich, student coordinator  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: All grades participated.

## Goal

Being informed was the focus of Royalton-Hartland's Mock Election. It didn't matter how old you were or what grade you were in, it was important that you be informed. Students of all grades developed and ran the Mock Election — listening, learning and participating.

## Highlights of School Activities

Students designed and created information packages for the teachers to use in their classes.

Students participated in discussions about TV coverage, campaign issues, and political candidates. The Mock Election program was entirely student-run. Guidance and suggestions came from teachers and parents but the students held the reins and made all the decisions.

Students studied real campaign material making the Mock Election and the study of democracy more tangible.

Local newspapers were happy to cover the Mock Election activities, carrying news of the events to the community.

Students designed and created "Get Out the Vote" posters to encourage everyone to vote.

## Special Strategies

Allowing students to direct and run the Mock Election gave them an opportunity to become decision-makers and learn about the election process. Students discovered that gathering and sharing information was a major component in running an election, and a cooperative working environment is an essential ingredient.

## Getting Help

*Teachers \* Local Businesses\* Newspapers \*  
Campaign Headquarters Local  
Government Officials \* Parents*

Teachers, staff, parents and local businesses were a wonderful source of support, supplies and guidance. Newspapers, magazines, and real world political campaign headquarters provided students with valuable information that was used to design and create information packages distributed to teachers and students.



Local government agencies provided the Mock Election with voter booths.

## **Informational Resources**

Newspapers were not only a source of historical information, but allowed students to compare past elections with the current election.

“Real world” campaign literature enabled students to examine the wording, strategies and effects of political advertisements.

## **Lessons and Outcomes**

Royalton-Hartland Junior/Senior High School students were introduced to the political process through their Mock Election.

# SCRIPPS RANCH HIGH SCHOOL

Project Contact: Sandra Lippe, teacher  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: Two public-speaking classes participated.

## Goal

*By opening the door of democracy, the students have embraced other activities of a patriotic nature. I have reminded them that each student can make a difference.*

Sandra Lippe

## Highlights of School Activities

Parents and students took the time to study the ballots and discuss the issues and how they would be affected by them.

Students took the Mock Election seriously, holding debates and discussions in an “adult-like” fashion.

*I could have left the room and the meeting would have continued to be very adult-like.*

Sandra Lippe

Parents were invited to attend classes and talk about their first experience with voting. Many parents had voted during the 1968 election and shared their experience of voting when issues such as the Vietnam War were high on the agenda.

Students set up a guest committee to ensure the comfort of adults and make them feel welcome.

Two students worked as camera operators to film the school’s events. A local cable company edited the film, adding graphics and music to complete the project.

Students with driver’s licenses volunteered to drive adults to the polls. Other students paired up to create visual graphics depicting the positive and negative sides of the various propositions.

One student performed a “rap” song on getting the vote out. The student was pleased to “do his thing” for democracy.

## Special Strategies

By involving this school's public speaking classes, all students were able to participate. While the event wasn't school-wide, the entire school was made aware of the project through hand drawn murals painted by volunteers and hung on the outside of the classroom.

When the *San Diego Union* published a picture of a retired veteran saluting the flag in a classroom of high school students in Oceanside, it received a number of letters criticizing students who had kept their hands in their pockets during the ceremony. The editor soon received letters from the students of Scripps' public-speaking classes. While the students were also critical of the students in the picture, one Scripps Ranch High student talked about the Mock Election and how students were learning to appreciate the democratic system. The editor published many of the letters.

## Getting Help

*Parents \* Public Figures \* Newspapers \* Local Cable Company*

Parents, politicians and public figures offered their support to this school's Mock Election project. Personal friends of students and parents were also invited to be part of the experience.

With the support of the "Newspaper in Education" program, Ms. Lippe received 35 copies of the *San Diego Union/Tribune* every Tuesday for several weeks. The students were able to study the issues and then polled parents on Proposition 209 (affirmative action) and Proposition 215 (medicinal use of marijuana).

## Informational Resources

Newspapers, magazines and news broadcasts were excellent sources for information. However, the interaction between guest speakers and students provided the kind of information not found in print. Parents and other concerned people took the time to come to the classroom to share their feelings and opinions.

## Lessons and Outcomes

*Yesterday will go down in my memory bank as one of the greatest highlights because of your goodness, your talent, your desire to serve America as an informed citizen, your understanding of public speaking as an important tool for getting the message across because YOU ARE ALL THAT IS GOOD ABOUT AMERICAN YOUTH.*

Sandra Lippe to Students

*The torch of democracy was wrenched from my hand rather than passed by me to my students. What I mean is that I participated in an event, the Mock Election on October 30, 1996, that saw students hungry to learn about issues, hungry to experience the right to vote, and hungry to speak their minds about issues relevant to their lives.*

*It was one of the top three events in my teaching career of 10 years.*

Sandra Lippe

# ST. FRANCIS HIGH SCHOOL

Project Contact: Tricia Uhrhammer

National Association of Secondary School Principals/John Herklotz Award

## School Profile

Grades: Ninth through 12th grade.

## Goal

It is absolutely essential that students understand the role they will play in the democratic process when they reach voting age. St. Francis High School teachers and staff worked diligently to make sure that students became informed individuals before their graduation.

## Highlights of School Activities

A campus-wide voter registration drive was held in anticipation of a large turn-out at the Mock Election. Registration was also held for “real world” voters to encourage members of the community to “Get Out and Vote.”

Articles written by students were submitted to the local paper for publication.

In addition to their work on the Mock Election, students were required to volunteer at real campaign centers. Student volunteered 2,500 hours to real campaigns.

*The project was an enjoyable part of the learning experience,  
but the students maintained the air of seriousness  
required in such an important undertaking.*

Tricia Uhrhammer

Local news coverage spotlighted the events of the Mock Election and showed the tremendous efforts being put out by the students.

The Fine Arts program encouraged “at risk” students to participate in the project. The students inspired each other to design posters and other 2D and 3D artwork, pose as Secret Service agents, or role-play election journalists and poll-takers.

## Special Strategies

*We didn't stuff their heads full of information. We gave them the core  
information, and offered guidance as students began learning.*

Tricia Uhrhammer

Teachers used an interdisciplinary approach to their teaching to enable students to learn at their own pace and in the subject they most enjoyed.

## **Getting Help**

*Parents \* Local Officials \* Candidates*

Parent involvement, local media attention, and participation of local public officials and candidates provided an unending supply of ideas and materials. With the encouragement and guidance of teachers and parents, students became comfortable asking for help.

## **Informational Resources**

Real world campaign centers provided students with the opportunity to see how elections are run and strategies are implemented.

## **Lessons and Outcomes**

The experience of volunteering and being a part of the campaign machine was a valuable experience for students. Not only were they given the opportunity to work on a campaign, they discovered that their efforts made a difference.

# THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

Project Contact: Linda Franklin, coordinator  
National Association of Student Councils/Ruth Hollander Award

## School Profile

Grades: Ninth through 12th grade.

## Goal

The teachers and staff of Thornton Township High School, as well as a significant number of community members, committed their time and talents to help educate students about the importance of their right to vote.

## Highlights of School Activities

Students were able to study and write a critique of the political process from convention to election.

Students wrote letters to their congressperson outlining specific needs in their community, using their Language Arts skills to write clear and concise letters.

Local politicians, including Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr., spoke to the students about the issues concerning them and how the outcome of the election could affect their lives.

Certificates of participation were awarded to those involved in the Mock Election project.

An interdisciplinary approach enabled students to learn about the political process in many of their classes. The math department analyzed election results; the English department critiqued essays for students who then typed their papers in the Macintosh Lab; the speech department provided the structure, planning and support for speech writing and oral presentations; the social studies department orchestrated the planning, implementation and execution of all aspects for the Mock and National Election events; and the library collected data and provided the place for students to review news articles, magazines, reports and political documents.

## Special Strategies

Thornton's voter registration drive was a huge success. Students registered 400 people to vote.

Students wrote letters to their parents giving them reasons why they should vote. Parents responded by participating in discussions and voting.

Students encouraged parents to vote.



## Getting Help

*Parents \* Deputy Registrar \* Teachers\* County  
Clerk \* Mayor Congressman \* League of  
Women Voters*

Along with the numerous forms of written and televised research material and news coverage, Thornton Township High School also received help from the Deputy Registrar's Office which held a workshop at the high school, deputizing students to serve as voter registrars at the school's voter registration drive. Parents also assisted by volunteering.

The League of Women Voters, the office of the county clerk and mayor of Phoenix, Illinois, all supported the project, spending a significant amount of time and talent assisting with the process. Their letters of congratulations to the Thornton Township High School are testament to the success of the Mock Election.

## **Informational Resources**

Political offices and public agencies offered a supply of pamphlets and publications about the issues and candidates. Students were also able to access the Internet. Newspapers, magazines, voting road signs and mailings added to the list of resources the students used in their studies. Personal interviews gave students the opportunity to see the local impact of state or federal legislation.

## **Lessons and Outcomes**

Thornton Township High School was successful in registering 400 people to vote and also encouraged other community members to vote.



## **APPENDIX I: School Addresses**

Abraham Lincoln School  
1239 Nelson Blvd.  
Selma, CA 93662  
Attn: Nora Rylee

Azalea Gardens Middle School  
7721 Azalea Garden Road  
Norfolk, VA 23518  
Attn: Paula Williams

Blackstone Elementary School  
380 Shawmut Avenue  
Boston, MA 02118  
Attn: Frida Rodriguez

Brewbaker Intermediate School  
4455 Brewbaker Drive  
Montgomery, AL 36116  
Attn: Paulette Moncrief

Crockett High School  
5601 Manchaca Road  
Austin, TX 78745  
Attn: Pat Dobbs

Hilsman Middle School  
870 Gaines School Road  
Athens, GA 30605  
Attn: Victoria Pettis

Indian Hills Middle School  
6400 Mission Road  
Prairie Village, KS 66208  
Attn: Patty Conneally

Kirbyville Middle School  
PO Box 7705  
Branson, MS 65615  
Attn: Jennifer Beasley

Lake Taylor High School  
1384 Kempsville Road  
Norfolk, VA 23512  
Attn: Lessie Freeman

Leontine Gracey School  
945 West Avenue  
Merced, CA 95340  
Attn: Marc Medefind

Lewis County Elementary School  
305 South Oak Street Hohenwald,  
TN 38462  
Attn: Judy Runions

Lincoln Way Elementary School  
905 Pittsburgh Avenue  
Wooster, OH 44691  
Attn: Doris Cantey

Mark Keppel High School  
501 E. Hellman Avenue  
Alhambra, CA 91801  
Attn: Ginger Stonebraker

McKinney High School  
1400 Wilson Creek Parkway  
McKinney, TX 75069  
Attn: Anne Presley

Mound Elementary School  
5405 Mound Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44105  
Attn: Bob Katz

Pearl C. Anderson Learning Center  
3400 Garden Lane  
Dallas, TX 75215  
Attn: Michael Cressey

Piper Middle School  
4420 N. 107th Street  
Kansas City, KS 66109  
Attn: April Hawkins

Pizitz Middle School  
2020 Pizitz Drive  
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216  
Attn: Donna Watkins

Potlatch Elementary School  
Rt. 2, Box 1A  
Potlatch, ID 83855  
Attn: Cindy Braun

Royalton-Hartland Junior/Senior High School  
54 State Street  
Middleport, NY 14105  
Attn: Sandra Lippe Scripps

Ranch High School  
104 10 Treena Street  
San Diego, CA 92122  
Attn: Julie Ulrich

Spring Hill Elementary School  
300 S. Webster  
Spring Hill, KS 66083  
Attn: Verneda Edwards

Stewart Elementary School  
315 S. College Street  
Oxford, OH 45056  
Attn: Bonnie Arloski

St. Francis High School  
6015 M Street  
Sacramento, CA 95819  
Attn: Tricia Uhrhammer

Surry Elementary School  
RR1, Box 18, North Bend Road  
Surry, ME 04684  
Attn: Lynn Bonsey

Thornton Township High School  
15 1st and Broadway Avenue  
Harvey, IL 60426  
Attn: Linda Franklin

Urban Middle School  
1226 North Avenue  
Sheboygan, WI 53081  
Attn: Kathleen Nelesen

West Ridge Middle School  
9201 Scenic Bluff Drive  
Austin, TX 78733  
Attn: Ricky Vickers

## **APPENDIX II: Innovative Ideas**

### **1996 Time/AASA Award Winners**

#### **Austin Independent School District, Austin, Texas**

*1996 Time/AASA Award Winner*

- + Special ballots, designed for younger children, were helpful during the voting process.
- + Math activities included collecting and analyzing graphed demographic data obtained from the election results.

#### **Dodds-Hessen District, Germany**

*1996 Time/AASA Award Winner*

- + The German legislature was impressed with using the Mock Election as a teaching tool. \*Photos, press clippings, certificates and e-mail were used to brief the participants.

#### **Fort Bend Independent School District, Sugar Land, Texas**

*1996 Time/AASA Award Winner*

- + School partnership with a school in China taught students in each country about their individual forms of democracy.

#### **Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas**

*1996 Time/AASA Award Winner*

- + The students hosted a school-wide national convention where each class represented a candidate.
- + Real voter registration booths, bulletin boards and public officials made this project a real world event.

#### **Pasadena Unified School District and the League of Women Voters**

*1996 Time/AASA Award Winner*

- + A Cablecast election celebration featured a marching band, Folklorico dancers, a chorus, a girls drill team and drum corps, and a high school string quartet, along with a student emcee and a student interviewer. The show aired on four public access channels serving at least seven cities and will be used in the future to recruit schools.

#### **Tongue River Middle School, Sheridan County School, District #1, Ranchester, Wyoming**

*1996 Time/AASA Outstanding Leadership in Voter Education*

- + Started off their district-wide Mock Election program reading *Lord of the Flies* to learn why we have Reports from the Real World

government.

- + Students re-enacted the trial of Anne Hutchinson for their parents.

## **1996 NASC/Ruth Hollander Award Winner**

### **Bald Eagle Area Junior/Senior High School, Wingate, Pennsylvania**

*1996 NASC/Ruth Hollander Award Winner*

- + Students used computer-generated registration cards in the voter registration drive.

## **1996 NASSP/John Herldotz Award Winners**

### **Caribbean Elementary, Miami, Florida**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + Parents from each homeroom contacted other parents from that homeroom. The school used parent networking to enlist the services, and encourage participation, of the entire family. Special education classes and “at-risk” students played a major role in the program. Parents joined students/community officials at Town Meetings.
- + Parents approached supermarkets for promotional help.
- + The school established a new political club.
- + After the Mock Election, the school divided into municipalities.

### **Cascade Brook School, Farmington, Maine**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + Students participated in forums with senators and congresspeople, worked at real world polls and spoke with their town clerk.
- + Studies included the naturalization test given to people before becoming American citizens.

### **Cinnaminson Middle School, Cinnaminson, New Jersey**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + An interdisciplinary approach included writing poems in English, graphing data in math, debating issues in social studies and decorating polling stations in Art.
- + Eighth grade students orchestrated the Mock Election for the school. 731 students, in grades five to eight, participated.

### **Claremont Elementary School, Claremont, North Carolina**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + The sixth grade class conducted the Mock Election and was responsible for tabulating the votes. Grades three through six participated.



### **E.L. Connelly Elementary School, Atlanta, Georgia**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + After the election students participated in a program called “Did Parent Vote?” They continued to survey their parents and discuss how they could get more parents to vote in the next election.

### **Garner Elementary School, Grand Prairie, Texas**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + “Daily Election Fun Facts” were read over the PA system each morning. Students discussed the issues in class and were encouraged to talk to their parents about them.
- + Students wrote “persuasion papers,” using the strategies they had learned on how to sway voters. Students posted information on the Internet.

### **E.A. Gibson Middle School, Danville, Virginia**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + Three television stations and two local radio stations provided coverage of the Mock Election convention.
- + Students impeached a student politician, learning how the system resolves problems.

### **L.P. Goodrich High School, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + The Mock Election entered a float in the school’s homecoming parade.
- + Electronic displays reminded students to participate and vote in the Mock Election.

### **Hope Valley Elementary School, Hope Valley, Rhode Island**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + Students prepared for debates using periodicals, newspaper articles and the Internet.
- + Two of the community’s local papers covered the school’s “Great Debate.”
- + The school boasted a 100% attendance rate the day of the election.

### **Kennedy Middle School, Grand Prairie, Texas**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + Student candidates chose their own campaign manager who bought advertising (on school bulletin boards) with paper money the school had produced.
- + In the absence of Internet access, students created a voter registration roster on the school’s computer system.

## **Dr. Levesque School, Upper Frenchville, Maine**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + The Mock Election included kindergarten students.
- + Students included information about the United Nations in their studies.
- + The media helped bring members of the community together by advertising the school's Mock Election.

## **Mattanawcook Junior High, Lincoln, Maine**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + The candidates visited the classrooms and established a Junior Town Council.
- + Students volunteered time at Democratic and Republican headquarters.
- + Veterans came to the school to speak with the students and share their experiences on Armistice Day.
- + Students enjoyed creating and producing homemade games relating to the campaign, the election and the candidates.

## **Northside Middle School, Norfolk, Virginia**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + Local politicians participated in the school's political assembly.
- + Students auditioned as candidates.
- + Student media groups prepared questions for the student candidates. Both groups of students learned about public speaking and presentation.

## **Piedmont Lakes Middle School, Apopka, Florida**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + The Creative Communications classes debated the Florida sugar tax, an issue affecting their community.
- + Students cast their votes via an Internet page.

## **Saxe Middle School, New Canaan, Connecticut**

*1996 NASSP/John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + Videos of presidential debates were used as a teaching tool.
- + Many of the Mock Election activities were videotaped, including the students taking pledges before they could register to vote.
- + Students were asked to “solemnly swear” they would cast their votes “in a manner which you shall judge contributes to the best interests of Connecticut and the nation, without respect as favor of any person” before they could be registered to vote.
- + Student registrars were elected from each of 10 fifth-grade classes. Twenty registrars, supervised by 20 parents, registered the entire fifth grade.

## **Spruce Street School, Lakewood, New Jersey**

*1996 NASSP /John Herklotz Award Winner*

- + The district publicity officer sent out press releases to 40 newspapers, radio stations and cable stations.
- + The students’ interest in the Mock Election, coupled with support from their parents, resulted in 90% parent participation.
- + Students “surfed” the Internet for current news.