

Lessons On Local Government Presents

Enlisting High School Students in Local Policy Analysis

A Continuum of Ideas
Connecting Kids and Councils

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Description

- Enlisting High School Students in Local Policy Analysis Learn about a template for engaging high school students in the analysis of local policy issues. Hear about Democracy Day events held annually in Longmont over the past six years involving St. Vrain Valley School District high school students and public and local elected officials within the district. Each year, students tackle local issues, arriving at policy solutions that are voted on by the local officials and students. The policy analyses and proposed solutions have, on numerous occasions, proved useful in subsequent policy debates of these local communities. Participants will depart the session equipped to involve students in their own policy processes. Presenters: Ken Bickers, University of Colorado Boulder Political Science professor; Kent Willmann, University of Colorado Boulder School of Education instructor

Lessons On Local Government Presents:

**Connecting Kids and Councils
Local Leaders In The Classroom**

“There for the Asking”

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Hopes – Fears - Experiences

- What brings you to this session?
- What experiences have you had with students?
 - Highlights
 - Lowlights
- What are your concerns about engaging with students?

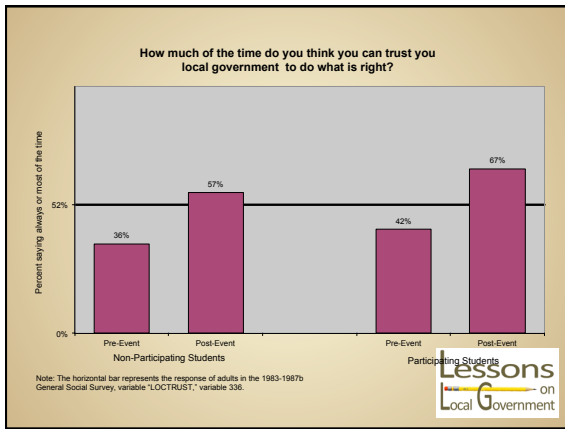
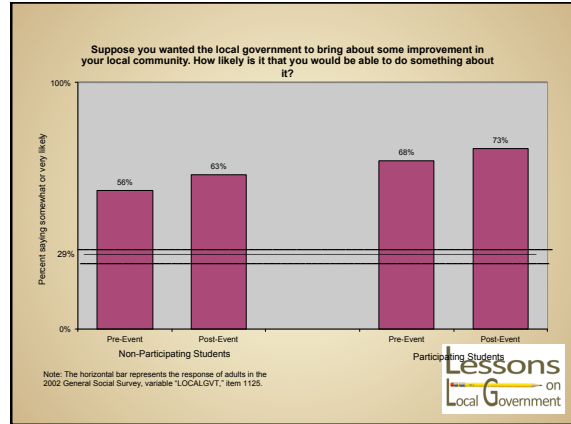
Why engage students with local leaders?

- It is required by the standards
- Creates an authentic audience for your students.
- Local issues and programs connect kids directly to government
- Builds community.
- Builds life skills – Hand shakes, eye contact and formal emails
- Provides real leadership opportunities
- Students are empowered

CMAS Test

- The Colorado Social Studies Test at 4, 8, & 12 asks students to analyze non-fiction texts, identify key issues and interest groups, and develop detail driven positions/arguments.

- Who's job does that sound like?



Kid Quotes

- "I selected anti-bullying for my CAP project. I interviewed a local leader in the community who is an advocate for anti-bullying. During the interview, we connected with him and this enhanced our project. We are not experts on the topic, but he is. To be honest, it felt validating to have a leader take the time to meet with us," stated Junior Dalton Hasse.

Ideas & Resources

- Lessons on Local Government
 - Leader in classroom kit
 - Tons of other lessons – elementary, middle, high 30+
- Knowledge Now from CML
- City Pages – Scavenger Hunt
- Contests –
 - If I were a Mayor - Essay
 - Local Government is Safe, Clean, Fun, Smart & Helpful Poster
- Local Newspapers & Google Searches



How to engage local leaders in our classroom: The Continuum of Involvement

- 1 **Electronic Q & A.** Students prepare formal emails to local leaders to seek information or ask questions about hot local issues
- 2 **Guest Speakers** as experts on a certain topic or on leadership. Example: Read Across America!
- 3 **Judges** for student work. Examples: essay contests, debates, domestic or foreign policy exhibits, Odyssey of the Mind.
- 4 **Panels, Debates & Election Forum Participants.** Schools can host groups of leaders or candidates discussing local issues.
- 5 **Project Citizen** – Leaders are resources and/or judges in this nationwide program engaging students in civic problem solving.
- 6 **Youth Councils and Government Simulations** - Students and leaders interact with real issues as formal members of councils or in simulated policy discussions.


Q&A – Simple Google Search

A quick Google search turns up contact information for local leaders. Students can easily engage leaders on local issues,



Search for:
City Councils,
Special Districts,
School Districts
&/or
County Commissioners,

Q & A = Good Questions



- What do you think are the characteristics of a good question?
- You have to be professional, you can't be a kid and walk in and say 'what's up.' You have to prepare questions in advanced, be thoughtful and be dynamic. You need to be very respectful and engage in a serious civil discourse," said Junior Charles Sigwarth

Kid Quotes

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Officials as Guest Speakers




Local leaders love connecting with kids for special events or as a guest speakers. Staff members from public works departments can discuss programs career possibilities.

Leaders in the Classroom Kit

Lessons on Local Government

Curriculum resources to meet local government civics standards in Colorado

- Home
- About
- Lessons
- Highlighted Lessons
- Links and Resources
- Local Leader in the Classroom Kit
- Standards
- Contact Us
- Feedback

4.4.1 Local Leader Classroom Visit Kit
A set of materials (lessons, do's and don'ts, contact ideas) for hosting a successful visit from local leaders.


Consider doing something similar to what the mayors of the Towns of Ophir, Mountain Village, and Telluride did. Mayors Todd Rutledge, Bob Delveia, and Stu Fraser participated on a mayoral panel for 7th eighth-graders to discuss community action and citizen participation and involvement.

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Lessonsonlocalgovernment.org has resources to help you bring leaders into your classroom.

LOLG: Local Leader Classroom Visit Kit

- **Contents:**
 - How to Contact a Leader
 - How to Prepare Your Students and School
 - Typical Issues for Discussion
 - Questions Students May Ask
 - Sample Note Taking Form
 - Advice for Local Leaders Visiting Classrooms
 - Multiple Leaders or Candidate Visit Ideas
 - Variations, Follow-up Activities, and Assessment Ideas
 - Pre and Post Test



Engaging Students in Class

Turn the Tables – Ask them to be “The Deciders”

1. Pick a current issue facing your community and describe two or more possible policy choices. Let students select the issue if possible.
2. Provide 5 or so key background details necessary to see how difficult the idea is. Don't do too much. 10 minutes max. (Perhaps send a short reading to the teacher the day before. 3-2-1 assignment. 3 key details 2 interest groups 1 question.)
3. Identify and help students describe interest groups with varying opinions on the issue. (Who do you get phone calls from?)
4. Ask students to select a policy choice that will be supported by the most people. Are those always the best policy choice? Is it the policy choice each student would have supported?
5. Issues of Interest to students:
 - Playground equipment
 - Race and Justice
 - Youth voting
 - Walking to school safely
 - Skate Parks
 - Mosquito Control
 - School Safety
 - Marijuana Regulation
 - Fracking
 - Gun Regulation


Practice Time

- Issue
- Key Details
- Policy Choice
- Interest Groups

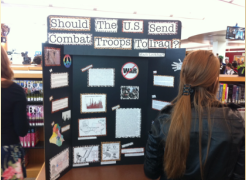
Practice Time 2

- What 5 items would you put on a scavenger hunt of your cities web site?
- Match items with each word
 - Safe
 - Clean
 - Fun
 - Smart
 - Helpful

Leaders as Judges/Audiences




Students crank up their performance levels when they get to share their products with adults.



Local leaders walk away with new found respect for students and teachers. School board member make great judges.

Contest Winners



- Local Leaders add a sense of authority and ceremony to award presentations. It says, “school matters and you matter.”
- Honor Roll – Letters

Debates and Campaign Forums



Local candidates face prepared questions from students on a in school field trip.

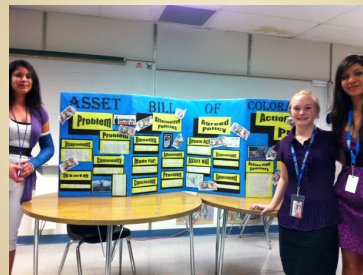
Center High School Hosts a Debate

- Scott Poole Government Teacher Reports:
 - "We had some students who took a leadership role and helped with getting the moderator...and with creating flyers for the debate and helped with the advertising of it in the local newspapers in Center and in Monte Vista. I had students put up flyers at the local grocery store, the Post Office and at Town Hall, they were printed in English and Spanish. The school district found funds to pay for the Moderator and they allowed us to use the school auditorium. Our Superintendent George Welsh and our Principal Kevin Jones were extremely supportive in our endeavor."

Leaders as Judges/Audience



CAP & Project Citizen Sources & Judges



Local leaders are can serve as both resources of information and/or judges for problem solving projects involving local or national issues.

Kid Quotes

- "For my CAP project, I was working with special needs students. I interviewed local leaders at Tiny Tim development center. Seeing their passion made me more passionate about what I was doing," Junior Mahala Willmann stated.

Youth Councils and Local Government Simulations



Local government simulations provide students with experiences solving real world problems facing their communities.

Some cities offer students the opportunity to serve as advisory groups.



Doing Democracy Day is Famous

St. Vrain Valley School District teens dive into local issues at third Doing Democracy Day

By Scott Rocket Longmont Times Call
Published: 06/02/2015 02:22PM MDT
Updated: 06/02/2015 02:22PM MDT

LONGMONT -- Sometimes all politics needs is a little class.

High school students from across the St. Vrain Valley School District poured into the civic center Tuesday for the third annual Doing Democracy Day. The event lets local students grapple with local issues, advised by local leaders.

http://www.timescall.com/news/longmont-schools/ci_20418509/st-vrain-valley-school-district-teens-dive-into



- ### DDD Key Features
- Students as local problems solvers
 - Leaders as resources
 - Stand alone event – little teacher planning
 - Diverse participants
 - American Idol style judging
 - City Council Chambers

Online connections with leaders

How do I contact local Leaders?

- A simple internet search can produce names and contact information for dozens of local leaders.
- [Lessons on Local Government's links is a good place to start.](#)
- <http://www.lessonsonlocalgovernment.org/11.html>

Local Leaders in the Classroom: A Continuum of Ideas

- **Overview:** This resource presents a continuum of ways to involve local leaders in your classroom. The ideas range from very simple, easy and low maintenance to very complex, involved and time consuming. All result in students who feel more connected to government and are better able to be productive citizens. Local leaders often are excited to take time from busy lives for classroom activities. They are "there for the asking."
- **Grade Levels:** Can be adapted for grades pk-12
- **Time:** Varies
- **Colorado Civics Standards Evidence Outcomes:**
- **Engaging students with local leaders meets these and other standards.**
- Identify which level of government is appropriate for various policies and demonstrate an ability to appropriately engage with that level of government.
- Engage ethically in civic activities including discussing current issues, advocating for their rights and the rights of others, practicing their responsibilities, influencing governmental actions, and other community service learning opportunities.
- Evaluate how individuals and groups can effectively use the structure and functions of various levels of government to shape policy.

Hot Local Issues

- **Issues**
 - Marijuana, fracking, Gun Safety, School Funding, Curriculum Control, Flood Recovery, Minimum Wage, School Safety, Recreation Opportunities,
- **Why**
 - Direct Interest to students
 - Availability of live local resources
 - Think Global, Act Local
- **Resources from CML**
 - [Local Leader in the Classroom Kit](#)
 - **Firearms**
 - http://www.cml.org/uploadedFiles/CML_Site_Map_Global/Information/now_firearms_web.pdf
 - **Oil and Gas**
 - http://www.cml.org/uploadedFiles/CML_Site_Map_Global/Information/now_oil_2013.pdf
 - **Marijuana and other legislative issues facing cities**
 - http://cml.informz.net/admin31/templates/1/Template_Html_Adv.asp?MFQID=9972107&test=1

Connecting Kids and Councils

- Local leaders, public officials and government employees are "there for the asking" to make your classroom come alive.
- Meeting real leaders connects kids with government in personal ways.
- Student learn that government is made of real people who work to solve problems and provide necessary services.

Where to find leaders

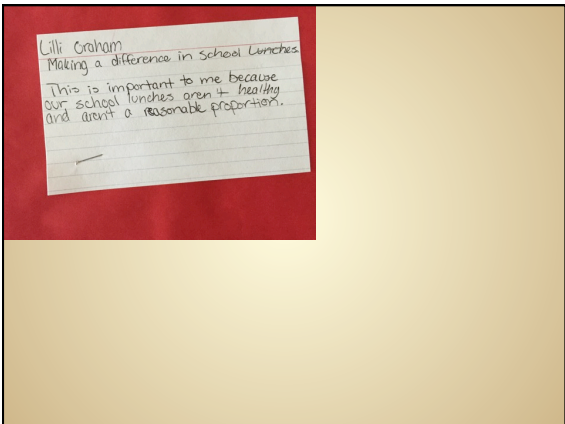
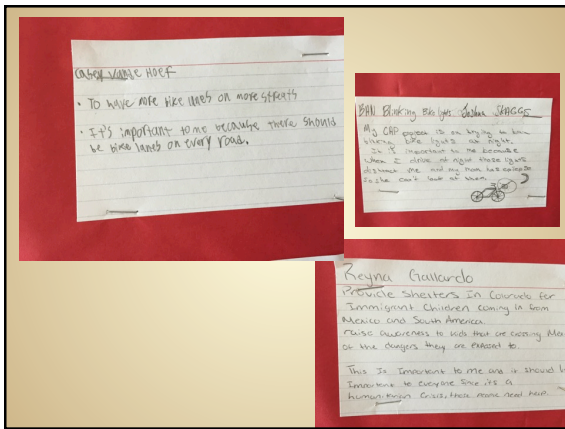
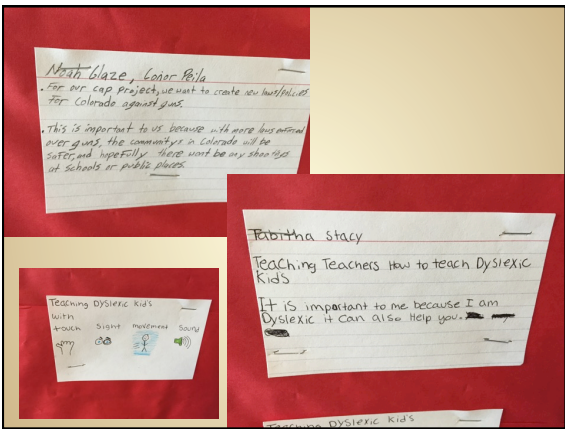
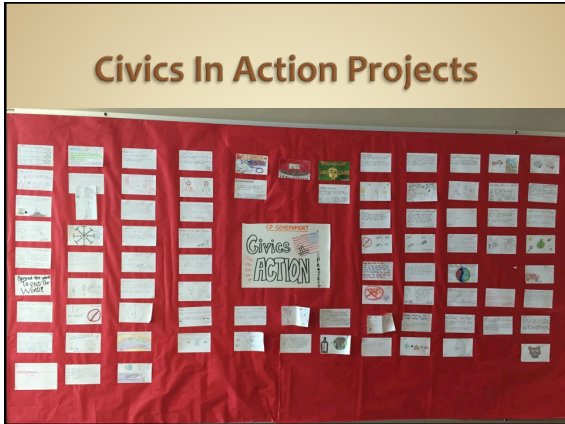
- Lesson On Local Government Local Leaders in the Classroom Kit
- http://www.lessonsonlocalgovernment.org/local_leader.html
- LOLG Links
- <http://www.lessonsonlocalgovernment.org/12.html>

Kid Quotes

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Who are local leaders?

- The family of local government includes these four groups
 - **City or Town** council members, mayors, city managers and other city employees.
 - **County** Commissioners, sheriffs, assessors and other elected county leaders or employees.
 - **Special District** Board of Directors Members and employees
 - **School District** Board of Directors Members, administrators and other employees
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Planning a Park Elementary Kids Get in the Act

Cooperation with City Government

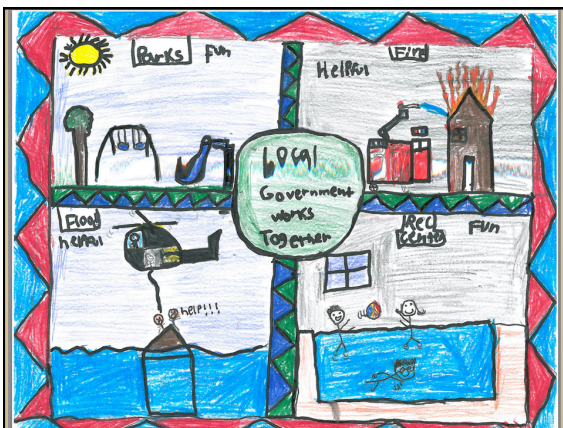
4th Grade Teacher Quote

- “Connecting with local government has empowered my kids....”
 - They participated in a local government poster contest.
 - The awards were presented by a city council person.
 - Then the city came back and asked us to help plan the park next to our school.
 - Students met officials, they were listened to, they applied all kinds of classroom skills, and were inspired to learn even more.”

LOLG Poster Contest Winners



- City Council Member handing out awards. Proud parents in the background.
- Local Leaders add a sense of authority and ceremony to award presentations. It says, “school matters and you matter.”



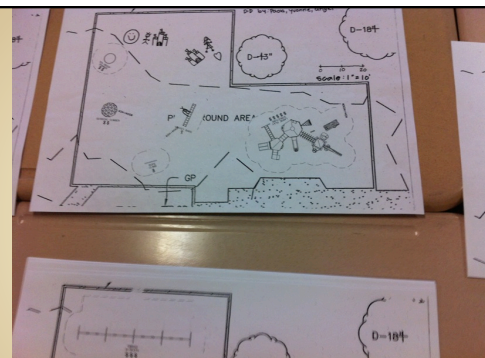
Primary Source:
Park Characteristics,
Goals and Objectives
from City Planners

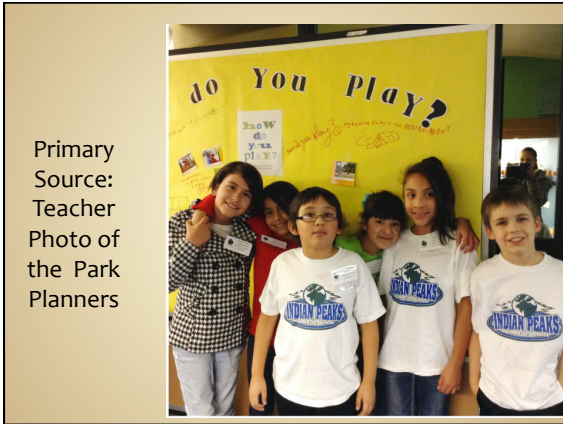


Primary Source:
City and School
District web site photos



Primary Source:
City government park plans based on kid ideas





Primary Source: Teacher Photo of the Park Planners

4th Grade Teacher Quote II

- “Now I can ask those kids and those parents to do anything and they believe they can!”

Civic Action Projects

- *A requirement for a high school government class
- *Connections with many local governments

Primary Source:

Local newspaper online video

CAP Projects - Testing

Primary Source:

Questionable choice of experts

TIMES-CALL

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Jenna Latsko: Monthly blackouts could reduce Longmont's light pollution and reduce energy

POSTED: 11/05/2014 08:15:05 PM MST
UPDATED: 11/05/2014 08:19:12 PM MST

My name is Jenna Latsko, and I am a Junior at Silver Creek High School. I have been researching light pollution and I have learned that light pollution affects the ecosystem, human health, nocturnal animals, astronomical research, and it wastes energy. Something needs to be done in the city of Longmont to reduce the amount of light pollution. Longmont does have a lighting code. This code provides for maximum allowable output from outdoor light sources, depending on the application. We have also revised the lighting methods for each outdoor lighted areas as gas stations and loading areas.

