

2018 Midterm Election- Where the Candidates stand on Key Issues

Grades 9-12

Big Ideas: Long-Term Effects, Systems, Ability to Make a Difference

Education for Sustainability approaches learning as a way to foster community connections and grow awareness of the interconnectedness of all living things. This fall we are looking at how the candidates running for office in the midterm elections on the national and state levels can affect our local and global communities, and consider an alternative position.

Activity Description:

In this activity, students will research and analyze candidate's position on issues that matter most to them. Viewing the issue through the lens of sustainability by focusing on the three E's; environment, economy, and equity, students will create an alternative to the candidates plan. Students should consider how their alternative plan affects interested stakeholders in the short and long-term.

Essential Questions:

- What are the environmental, economic and equity factors that inform and result from policy?
- Who are the interested stakeholders in this issue?
- What are the long-term effects of a public policy?
- What role does the individual play in the national political system?

Medial Literacy questions:

- Why was the article on this issue written?
- Who wrote the article and what message are they sending?
- How might various stakeholders understand this message differently from me?
- What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented and what are omitted?

You will need:

- Access to research material on the candidates

- Pencil/paper

Time:

Three 45-minute class periods

Activity Instructions:

- 1) *What are the critical issues that concern you, as youth in America, today?*
Brainstorm with your students to create a list of issues.
- 2) Create student partnerships or small groups around their interest in an issue.
- 3) Research the facts on each candidate's positions on your selected issue. Did your group verify facts by checking the source?
- 4) Create an alternative to the candidate's position on your selected issue.
- 5) Analyze the positions according to the 3E's of sustainability: Environment, Economy, and Equity
- 6) Create a gallery by taping the chart paper on walls around the classroom.
- 7) Poster Session: Each pair or small group presents their issue and analysis.

Debrief and Reflection Questions:

Here are some sample questions to consider when engaging your class in the debrief discussion after they have completed the activity.

- Are the three E's evident in your poster?
- What could be some short and long-term consequences, (both positive and negative) of your position on the issue?

Variations and Extensions:

- Pick an issue and hold a debate.
- Stage a town meeting on local issues in the town government. Role play some of the local stakeholders.
- Create a class action plan to address the issue.

Resources:

<https://newsela.com/read/young-people-young-leaders/id/45050/>

<https://www.edutopia.org/discussion/14-examples-high-quality-civic-learning-opportunities>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/elections/midterm-2018-election/>