

# **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.