

Mock Elections



Created for high school teachers and faculty

Most high schoolers are too young to vote, but that does not mean that they are too young to be civically engaged. One way to get high school students invested in the political process is to host mock elections. A mock election is an educational event where students practice voting for political candidates. Students fill out sample ballots using voting machines or mock voting booths. Results of the election are then shared around the school. By getting a realistic experience of voting when students are young, any initial anxieties surrounding the logistics of voting are diminished and students are educated about the political process. Mock elections can also be supplemented with lessons and discussions about voting in the classroom.

Planning

The School Should Pick a Time, Date and Setting for the Mock Election

The setting and timing (e.g., virtually, during lunch, in class or after school) to host the mock election should consider how to get as many students as possible to participate.

The School Should Create a Mock Ballot

A mock ballot is a fake ballot that allows students to practice filling out a ballot. The mock ballot should look like an official ballot, but schools can be creative with the content. If you do not want to use real political candidates, use mascots, superheroes, or other fun characters. CEEP has created a mock ballot with animals competing against one another and a blank mock ballot for schools to use to create their own characters.



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The School Should Create a Mock Election Booth

To help simulate the experience of voting, designate an area, like a classroom or library, as the school polling place. Set up mock election booths where students can individually fill out their ballots. A mock election booth should resemble an actual election booth and have a place to fill out the ballot as well as a divider to promote privacy. It can be as simple as a desk with partitions or you can follow [Scholastic's instructions](#) to build a more elaborate booth with cardboard and paper.

Host Virtual Mock Elections If Needed

If you cannot host an in-person mock election, host a virtual mock election. You can send an e-survey or online poll to students and post the results on the school's social media page. Host Q&A sessions and discussions over video conference software like Zoom.

Reach Out for Help

[Washington](#), [California](#), [Iowa](#) and [Minnesota](#) offer statewide mock elections for high school students. Reach out to your Secretary of State office to see if they can help with your school's mock election.

Implementation

Educate Students

Students should be given [nonpartisan candidate guides](#) prior to the mock election to compare their personal values to the stances of the candidates. If your school decides to use mascots or superheroes, a candidate guide should still be created. This educational guide teaches students how to become informed voters.

Advertise and Build Momentum for the Mock Election

Encourage school media teams to cover the mock election on their platforms. Work with student organizations, sports teams, and student leaders, like class presidents, to promote the event. Also, have teachers, librarians, and other staff members talk about the mock election, lead in-class discussions on voting, and otherwise motivate students to participate.

Give Students Privacy and a Space to Ask Questions



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On the mock election day, students should have both the privacy to fill out a ballot and the ability to ask questions from teachers or staff members. Set up a table near the mock election booth with volunteers who can answer questions.

Announce the Results

Results should be announced to the entire school through the school's news or announcement team. The results can also be announced during a pep rally or a school athletic event.

Discussions After the Mock Election

Educate Students

After the mock election, teachers can talk to their students about why the school had a mock election and why it is important to participate in elections. Teachers can lead students in a [series of discussions](#) about voting rights, the history and origin of democracy and the importance of voting.

Journal Experiences

Students can journal about their voting experience and discuss the results. If your school uses the presidential candidates in their mock election, students can compare the results to the real results once Election Day has passed.

Get Prepared for the Next Mock Election

Once an election passes, there is always room for another election! While the presidential race happens every four years, many state and local races happen every year. If your school decides to hold an election every year, be sure to advertise and discuss it with your students.

About Us



CAMPUS ELECTION ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) is a national nonpartisan project that helps administrators, faculty, staff and student leaders at America's institutions of higher education engage students in federal, state and local elections. CEEP views voting as a means to promote a more equitable and inclusive democracy and to address past and present disenfranchisement. To learn more, visit campuselect.org or contact us at info@campuselect.org.

Looking for More Resources?

Visit campuselect.org for more resources and case studies to get students involved in the voting process.