

SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE  
AND  
TRUSTEE ELECTIONS

A Curriculum Resource for Educators

Developed by OHASSTA

<https://ohassta-aesho.education/en/>

# INTRODUCTION FOR EDUCATORS

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## Introduction

Civic engagement is how students get involved in what's happening around them. It is the process of making an active civic contribution, which requires awareness and understanding of the issues and perspectives.

School boards are governed by an elected board of trustees. It is the only elected office where students have representation at the decision-making table. This resource aims to support educators and students to enhance civic engagement of students in Ontario's school boards.

Recently, civic engagement in school board elections has been low across the province. Voter turnout is also low, and some trustees are acclaimed. This presents an excellent opportunity for students in the mandatory Civics class where expectations for students include: understanding roles and responsibilities at various levels of governance, explaining their position on civic issues, analyzing ways that citizens can contribute to the common good, assessing ways that people express their perspectives, and planning a course of civic action on a civic issue of personal interest.

## Why Trustee Elections?

School board trustees are members of a district school board. They are locally-elected representatives of the public, and they are the community's advocates for public education.

School board trustees are the oldest form of elected representation in Ontario. Since 1807, trustees have made decisions on behalf of local, publicly funded schools, building the foundation of the system we have today.

There are four types of trustees:

1. **Student trustees** who are elected by their peers to represent the voice of students at the board table. They can be elected for one or two year terms.
2. **First Nation trustees** who are elected by the First Nations band council(s) to represent students who live on First Nation territory and attend Ontario public schools.
3. **Publicly Elected Trustees** who make up the vast majority of trustees of Ontario's 72 district school boards and four school authorities.
4. Ontario has **six hospital boards** whose trustees are **appointed** by the Minister of Education. These boards provide special education programs and services for students in children's treatment centres.

*Boards of trustees are the only elected office where students have representation at the table.* Trustee elections provide a unique opportunity to enhance student civic participation and engage with issues that affect them directly.

## Overview

This resource was designed to be user-friendly for educators and engaging for students.

It provides sample activities that educators can use to increase students' civic awareness and engagement. Activities can be differentiated for election years and non-election years. These series of activities can be used separately or can build upon one another.

This resource has a Backgrounder and a series of four activities. The activities include:

- a. Town Hall Meeting
- b. All Candidates Meeting – Panel Format
- c. All Candidates Meeting – Rapid Rounds Format
- d. Trustee Mock Election

This series of activities is recommended as a culminating task for the C strand of expectations in the Grade 10 Civics course (CHV 2O).

The Backgrounder is to support student understanding of school board governance. It is accompanied by suggested research such as:

- Visiting the local school board website
- Finding out which board policies are currently under review
- Reading past minutes of board meetings
- Finding media stories about local board issues
- Creating a list of student trustees, elected trustees, trustee candidates (in an election year) and First Nation trustees (where applicable)

**More information about the role of trustees and about trustee elections, as well as downloadable resources, can be found at [www.elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org](http://www.elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org).**

Option 1 – Town Hall (for election and non-election years)

- Objective: How do we plan and carry out an effective town hall meeting?
- Objective: How do I formulate effective questions to prepare for an All Candidates meeting? How do I gather questions from my peers? My family? My community, local business owners, etc.?
- Objective: How is my student trustee representative impacting the board's decisions?

Option 2 – All Candidates Meeting – Panel Format (for election years)

- Objective: How do trustees and school board governance affect me, my school and community? Who represents me? Who represents my family?

- Objective: How do we plan and carry out an effective All Candidates meeting?  
Objective: How do I formulate effective questions to prepare for All Candidates meeting? How do I gather questions from my peers? My family? My community, local business owners, etc.?
- Objective: How do candidates influence citizens and how do the perspectives of citizens determine how they cast their ballots?

#### Option 3 – All Candidates Meeting – Rapid Rounds Format (for election years)

- Objective: How do trustees/school board governance affect me, my school and community? Who represents me? Who represents my family?
- Objective: How do we plan and carry out an effective All Candidates meeting?
- Objective: How do I formulate effective questions (to prepare for All Candidates meeting?) How do I gather questions from my peers? My family? My community educators, local business owners, etc.)
- Objective: How do candidates influence citizens and how do the perspectives of citizens determine how they cast their ballots?

#### Option 4 – Mock Elections (for election years)

- Objective: How do candidate priorities and values influence public opinions about school boards?
- Objective: How do trustees/school board governance affect me, my school and community? Who represents me? Who represents my family?
- Objective: How do I formulate effective questions (to prepare for candidates) How do I gather questions from my peers? My family? My community educators, local business owners, etc.)
- Objective: How do candidates influence citizens and how do the perspectives of citizens determine how they cast their ballots?

All activities can be done as public events, as school events, or as mock events.

### Key Considerations

#### Public/School Events

There are many benefits to running these as public or school events, not as mock events. Events of this nature tend to increase engagement and participation, and enhance learning. The experiential learning element also supports student leadership and community engagement.

Public or school events can be held during the school day (just for the class or for groups of students and educators) or in the evenings and weekends with the public invited to attend. For maximum benefit to students, their families, and the broader community, it is recommended that the events take place in the evenings or on weekends where the public may be invited to join. Running the events publicly will

enhance the benefits of running actual sessions and increase the likelihood that trustee candidates and/or sitting trustees will attend.

**NOTE: If you are considering a public event, please consult your board's policy on such events and work with your principal and supervisory officer to coordinate and plan. Support may be available through the board's experiential learning lead, the board's parent involvement committee, and/or your school/student council.**

### Mock Events

Mock events are events where the trustees are not in attendance, but students take on the roles of trustees and members of the public. Mock events can be great ways to keep the event small and contained, but do lack the authenticity and full experience of real events. One way to enhance student engagement with mock events is to have them interview a real person (a peer, parent, neighbour, educator, business owner, etc.) and take on the persona of their interviewee for the mock event. Some students would interview the trustee candidates and/or sitting trustees while most students would interview members of the public. This approach can bring many of the benefits of live events and can enhance community engagement and student learning.

Student Organizers included:

- A. Student Research
- B. Town Hall – Interview Preparation and Exit Card
- C. Exit Card – Panel Format
- D. “I initially think...”/“I now think...”
- E. Exit Card – Rapid Rounds Format
- F. Interviewee notes
- G. Trustee elections in my community
- H. Exit Card – Mock elections

# BACKGROUND

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In Ontario, there are four types of district school boards – English public, English Catholic, French public and French Catholic. All four systems are publicly funded which means that the school boards receive money from the Ontario government to pay school operations.

Ontario has 72 district school boards, each consisting of a number of schools in a geographic area. Ontario also has four isolate school authorities (boards with only one school). Each board is governed by a board of trustees. Most trustees are elected in school board elections that are held every four years at the same time as municipal elections.

All boards of trustees have student trustees who represent the student voice at the board table. Similar to the ways Student Councils represent students at the school level, student trustees represent students at the board level. Student trustees are elected by the student body – either directly by the students of the board or indirectly through student councils. The role of student trustees is to bring the voice of students to the board of trustees for consideration when they make decisions. Student trustees do not have a binding vote, but their perspectives are considered in board discussions and decision-making. Student trustees may attend all board meetings, except for certain closed meetings, and often sit on board committees. Student trustees are elected for one or two year terms.

Some boards also have First Nation trustees. Many First Nations communities who live on First Nations territory (sometimes called reserves) have their own schools that are funded by the federal government (as opposed to Ontario's public schools that are funded by the provincial government). First Nations communities may send their young people to Ontario's public schools. When this happens, school boards often appoint a First Nation trustee who is selected by the First Nation Band(s) and represents those students, their parents and communities.

Trustees meet monthly at public board meetings and also serve on committees. School boards are democratic bodies that make decisions “by resolution” – in other words, trustees bring forward motions on what the board should do and the trustees vote whether or not to pass the motion. Through their decisions and policies, they demonstrate to their communities that they are making good decisions on behalf of everyone in the board – students, employees (like educators and principals), and the community as whole.

It is important to understand that boards of trustees makes decisions as a collective. Trustees, as individuals, do not have authority to make decisions or take action on behalf of the school board. They are members of the board and it is the board as a whole that exercises authority and makes decisions in the interests of all students of the board.

Under the *Education Act*, trustees are required to bring forward to the school board the concerns of parents, students, and the community. However, as members of the governing body, they must work collaboratively with fellow board members and make policy decisions that are beneficial to the entire school board community. This means that the final decisions take all interests into account; no one group or particular geographic area takes precedence over another.

Strategic planning is a key leadership responsibility of trustees. The *Education Act* requires school boards to develop a multi-year strategic plan (MYSP) that focuses on achieving the board's goals for student achievement, well-being, equity, a positive school climate, effective use of the board's resources, and the delivery of effective and appropriate educational programs. The MYSP describes what the board hopes to achieve, what its priorities are, and how it plans to meet its objectives. This affects every student directly because all schools within the board are required to follow the MYSP's direction.

Boards also develop board policies on everything from playground equipment to rules on suspensions and expulsions; from special education support to inclusive classroom practices. As boards develop new policies or revise old ones, they often ask the public for their opinions.

You can learn more about your local school board by visiting the board's website and by attending a board meeting. Board websites list all trustees, often with photos and contact information. Board websites also include minutes from board and committee meetings, all policies and procedures, and the board's MYSP.

# ORGANIZER A: Student Research

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My school board is \_\_\_\_\_.

The student trustee(s) who represent me are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

The elected trustee who represents my family is \_\_\_\_\_.

OR

The First Nation trustee who represents my family is \_\_\_\_\_.

The next public board meeting will be held on \_\_\_\_\_  
at \_\_\_\_\_.

Based on a search for my school board in local news outlets, the top issues at my school board in the last 3 years have been:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Currently, my school board is asking for community input on a few issues. The one(s) most interesting to me are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



# Glossary

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**Agenda** – a list of what will be discussed at a board meeting

**Board Chair** - a trustee elected by fellow board members to provide leadership to the board and to preside over board meetings

**By-law** – an internal law established by the board that outlines to how the board works

**Candidate** – a person seeking to be an elected trustee

**Elected Trustee** – a person elected to the board of trustees by the public to represent the residents of a geographical area

**First Nations Trustee** – a person appointed to the board of trustees by one or more First Nations Bands to represent the voice of the Bands at the board of trustees

**Governance** – the responsibility to ensure that the school board fulfills its obligations and responsibilities

**Meeting minutes** – a record of what was discussed at a board meeting and what decisions were made

**Motion** – a proposal formally made to the board by a trustee. Motions require the board to decide if to approve or not approve the motion. For example, a trustee may bring forward a motion that uniforms be required in all schools of the board. The trustees would consult with students, parents and community members, then discuss the motion at the board meeting, and then vote on it. If the motion passed, the board would create a policy requiring uniforms.

**Policy** – a document that articulates what must be done and the rationale for it but does not deal with how it is to be done. For example, a policy on school uniforms would set out the rules for students to wear uniforms. Policies are often accompanied by procedures.

**Procedures** – a document that outlines how a policy is put into practice. For example, to support a policy on school uniforms, the procedure would detail what the school uniforms look like, under what conditions a student may not have to wear a uniform, what would happen if a student arrived at school without one, etc.

**Resolution** – the board voting to formally approve a motion

**Student Trustee** – students elected by their peers to represent the student voice at the board table

# Option 1: Town Hall Meeting

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Course</b>                     | Grade 10 Open Level Civics, Ontario  |
| <b>Curriculum Connections</b>     | <p><b>B: Civic Awareness</b><br/>           B1.Civic Issues, Democratic Values: describe beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada, and explain how they are related to civic action and to one’s position on civic issues (FOCUS ON: Political Significance; Political Perspective)</p> <p><b>C: Civic Engagement and Action</b><br/>           C2. Inclusion and Participation: assess ways in which people express their perspectives on issues of civic importance and how various perspectives, beliefs, and values are recognized and represented in communities in Canada (FOCUS ON: Political Significance; Political Perspective)</p> |
| <b>Political Thinking Concept</b> | <p><b>Political Perspective</b><br/>           This concept requires students to analyze the beliefs and values of various groups, including different governments, in local, national, and/or global communities. Students analyze how these beliefs and values, as well as political ideologies, can affect one’s position on or response to issues of civic importance. Students also develop their awareness of how stakeholder groups with different perspectives can influence the policies and platforms of political parties and the decisions of governments.</p>   |

| Learning Goals  | Success Criteria   |
|---|--|
| Students will... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze local school/school board issues</li> <li>Apply the Political Thinking Concept of Political Perspective: analyze how personal beliefs and ideologies</li> </ul> | Students will know they are successful when they.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can analyze and understand local school/school board issues</li> <li>Can apply Political Perspective to analyze the responses of participants in the mock event</li> </ul> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>can affect one's position on or response to issues of civic importance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess ways in which people express beliefs and values, and how those beliefs and values are recognized and represented in their own community</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can explain how people express beliefs and values, and how those beliefs and values are recognized and represented in their own community</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

### Guiding Questions

How do we plan and carry out an effective town hall meeting? How do I formulate effective questions to prepare for an All Candidates Meeting? How do I gather questions from my peers? My family? My community, local business owners, etc. How is my student trustee representative impacting the board's decisions?

### Description of Activity

#### Preparation

- The class should decide if it will run a live Town Hall meeting or a mock event. If a live one, then the educator will need to do some preparation. [See NOTE in the Introduction above and Educator Tasks below.]
- If the class will be holding a public Town Hall meeting (recommended!), be sure to set a date and location, and invite all trustees to attend. Some trustees may choose to attend via video-conference. Also, see Key Considerations in the Introduction.

#### Minds On

- Begin by asking students what they know about what trustees do in a democratic society. Record students' initial thinking in a visible spot. Ask students to brainstorm some local board or school board issues.
  - Students could conduct some basic internet research on their school board to help with their investigation.
  - The educator may have to do some advance research on local school board issues such as implementing or collapsing after school programs, school closures, French Immersion, changing a school's name, changing the school day schedule (e.g. starting school at 10:00 am) or merging two small schools.
  - Students could also survey community members (school staff, neighbours, parents/guardians) in advance of this activity to contribute more fully to the discussion.
- As a class, narrow it down to a few issues to discuss at the Town Hall Meeting.

## Action

### Research in advance of the Town Hall Meeting

- After the Minds On, the educator discusses with students how town hall meetings work and why they are such an important part of the democratic process, enabling discussion and problem-solving with the public and elected officials together.
- Distribute a copy of the Backgrounder to each student Have each student highlight descriptors and explanations of the role of trustees and student trustees. Discuss as a class to ensure there is a basic understanding of these roles.
- Distribute a copy of Organizer A: Student Research to each student.
- Students can complete the research organizer in pairs or small groups.
- Each student chooses a community member to interview to find out that person's opinions on the issues that the class has decided will be discussed.
  - NOTE – if the meeting will be run as a mock event, the students can take on the persona of their interviewee for the meeting.
  - In this case, some students must interview the trustee(s) and student trustee(s).
  - The list of interviewees should include a mix of students, parents, educators, neighbours, local businesses, and school support staff.
  - Students can use Organizer B: Town Hall Interview Preparation (below) to guide their interview.
- Each student will conduct individual research on the issues and complete all but the last section of Organizer B: Town Hall Interview Preparation.
- Establish agreed-upon timelines for students to complete interviews.

### Planning and Preparation

- Divide students into small groups of 3-4 and assign roles and duties for organizing the Town Hall Meeting (see below).
- As a class, brainstorm how to promote the meeting to ensure strong attendance by students, families, educators, and other members of the public.
  - The students who are tasked with promotions/marketing should take careful note and devise a plan to implement the class ideas
- Have students formulate questions based on their interviews. Students should post these questions in a visible location and as a class work to organize them into themes, types or categories.
- Finalize a list of questions that can be used at the Town Hall Meeting.
  - The students who are tasked with collating the questions should take careful note and devise a plan of how to deliver these questions during the meeting

### The Event

- Students to fulfill their tasks (See Student Tasks below).
- Trustees will discuss issues in response to questions by students.
- Students complete the last section of Organizer B: Town Hall Interview Preparation.

### Consolidation

- Students can submit Organizer A: Student Research, Organizer B: Town Hall Interview Prep for feedback/assessment.

### Organizing a Town Hall Meeting

#### Educator Tasks (2-4 weeks before the event)

- Obtain permission from school administration and set a date.
- Book and confirm the location. The location should be wheelchair accessible.
- Book audio/visual equipment with appropriate tech people to set up and monitor. In some cases, video-conferencing equipment may be needed.
- Invite the student trustee, board trustee, and First Nation trustee, where applicable, to attend and confirm their attendance.
- Book a translator, where appropriate.
- Educator may choose to create a speakers list in advance, so each student chooses 1 or 2 issues to speak on.

#### Student Tasks

- Make **placards and thank you cards** for the trustees (2 students).
- Create promotional materials to invite attendees (3-5 students) – be sure the promotional materials include title of the event, date and time, location, and why it's important to attend.
- **Promote** the event – post promotional materials and ensure diverse groups know about the event - students, educators, administrative staff, parents, neighbours, local business owners, local community groups, etc. Promotional spaces can include the board/school website, through School Council and Student Council, in stores and community spaces in the neighbourhood, etc.(5-10 students)
- **Collate questions** and prepare to ask them at the meeting (3-5 students)
- Establish a set of **Rules and Procedures** (sample is below). (2-3 students).
- Set the **agenda** (sample is below) (2-3 students). Students will need to make sure the agenda is visible to attendees.
- Choose **time-keepers** whose job is to make sure that the event stays on schedule (3 students)
- **Choose a moderator** for the meeting (could be 2 strong students, a teacher, a member of Student Council, a member of School Council, etc.) – this includes opening and closing remarks, and working with the timekeepers to keep the meeting on schedule.
- **Assign greeters** to meet the trustees when they arrive and see them out when they go (2-5 students, depending on number of trustees)

- Create an **information sheet** for attendees with information about the issues and the agenda of the meeting (3 students)
- **Have in place runners** to attend to last minute details (2 students)
- Invite the **Media** to get involved by promoting the event, attending, interviewing students or trustees about the issues, etc. (2 students)
- **Encourage Provincial Registry** sign-up (2 students). Elections Ontario is keen for students in grades 11 and 12 to sign up on their provincial registry. Students can contact Elections Ontario and find out how to support the program at the event.

### Sample Rules and Procedures

An effective and well-run meeting will follow a set of rules. Here is a sample set of rules and procedures you can tailor to your meeting. These rules offer a good starting point and can be adapted to suit your meeting format. Ensure that each trustee and the moderator receive a copy of your rules in advance of the meeting. Also, have the moderator read the rules at the meeting itself. This will set the tone and let trustees and attendees know that the meeting has a planned structure and that the rules will be enforced.

1. Trustees should present themselves to the moderators 15 minutes prior to the call to order.
2. Meeting to be called to order promptly.
3. Trustees will be seated at the speakers table and will be introduced by the moderator(s).
4. The moderator(s) will list the issues to be discussed during the meeting and the amount of time that will be dedicated to each issue.
5. For each issue, the moderators will explain the issue. Each trustee will then have 2-3 minutes to share their perspective on the issue.
6. Attendees will then have a chance to ask questions and state opinions with rationale on the issues. A speakers list can be created. This open forum discussion should last between 5-15 minutes.
7. Trustees then have a chance to respond to what they've heard
8. The moderators will rule out of order any questions deemed inappropriate, offensive and derogatory or that would seem to attack the integrity of the trustees.
9. The moderator(s) will rule out of order any person who attempts to use discussion time for making a speech rather than asking a question or explaining a point of view.
10. Questions from the floor will be limited to one per individual to ensure as wide a participation from the audience as possible. If everyone who wishes to ask a question or make a statement has had the opportunity to do so and there is still time left, members of the audience may ask a second question.
11. Answers to questions should be limited to 2 to 3 minutes to ensure a wide ranging discussion.
12. Following the discussion of the issues, the moderator(s) can ask if the room wishes to phrase a motion and ask the trustees to bring it to the board. Moderator facilitates the process.

13. Allow 3 to 5 minutes for closing statements from the trustees.
14. Moderator(s) thank everyone and close the meeting.

### Sample Agenda

A well-run Town Hall Meeting will follow a defined format. Here is a sample agenda you may choose to follow. The key is to ensure that enough time is allotted to each issue for discussion and debate.

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 6:30 pm | Doors open   |
| 6:45 pm | Trustees present themselves to the moderators  |
| 7:00 pm | Call to order. Designated students welcome the community and introduces the moderator(s). Moderator(s) deliver remarks and reads the rules and procedures. |
| 7:10 pm | Introduction of the trustees and list of the issues  |
| 7:15 pm | First issue – trustee comments and discussion  |
| 7:30 pm | Second issue – trustee comments and discussion   |
| 7:45 pm | Refreshment Break  |
| 8:00 pm | Third issue – trustee comments and discussion  |
| 8:15 pm | Open Questions   |
| 8:30 pm | Closing comments from trustees   |
| 8:45 pm | Adjournment  |

# Organizer B: Town Hall Meeting

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Name:

Date:

## Interview Preparation

### 1. Personal biography.

Explain your interviewee's life (age, occupation, political views)

### 2. Beliefs about the issue.

► What issues will be the focus of your interview (from class discussion)? Select 2-3.

| What does your interviewee believe are the root causes of the issues? | What do they think would be a fair resolution? |
|---|--|
|   |  |

► How do the personal beliefs and values of your interviewee affect their position on or response to these issues? How does it compare to your views?



### **3. Compromise.**

Select one of the following prompts, and use evidence from your interview to support your ideas:

- a) What opportunities exist for all stakeholders to come together and find a win/win solution?
- b) If not a win/win, is there a compromise that is possible?
- c) How can we balance the needs of individuals with the needs of the community?
- d) Are there issues of rights and/or responsibilities part of this issue? Explain.

### **4. Understanding Others.**

Find two students in the class and interview them. Explain their perspectives/viewpoints on the issues. (NOTE – not their interviewees, but their own).

Student 1:

Student 2:

## Exit Card – Town Hall Meeting

► After the Town Hall Meeting, what new perspectives did you hear that helped you understand the complexities of the issue(s)?

► During the meeting, did you think some voices were heard more than others? Which voices were most dominant? What voices were excluded? Was there an effort balance everyone's needs?

► What did you learn about the role of trustees? How has the Town Hall Meeting informed/explained your understanding of the issues trustees deal with?

# Option 2: All Candidates Meeting – Panel Format

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|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Course</b>                     | Grade 10 Open Level Civics, Ontario  |
| <b>Curriculum Connections</b>     | <p><b>B: Civic Awareness</b><br/>           B2. Governance in Canada: explain, with reference to a range of issues of civic importance, the roles and responsibilities of various institutions, structures, and figures in Canadian governance (FOCUS ON: Stability and Change; Political Perspective)</p> <p><b>C: Civic Engagement and Action</b><br/>           C1. Civic Contributions: analyze a variety of civic contributions, and ways in which people can contribute to the common good (FOCUS ON: Political Significance; Stability and Change)</p>  |
| <b>Political Thinking Concept</b> | <p><b>Stability and Change</b><br/>           This concept requires students to analyze how and why political institutions and government policies change over time or why they remain the same. Students will determine how political structures and decisions contribute to stability and change within various local, national, and/or global communities. They analyze ways in which various institutions, groups, or individuals resist or support change, as well as how a variety of factors, including civic action, can contribute to change or stability. Students also apply this concept to help them determine when change is necessary and how they themselves can contribute to change or help ensure stability through civic action</p> <p><b>Political Perspective</b><br/>           This concept requires students to analyze the beliefs and values of various groups, including different governments, in local, national, and/or global communities. Students analyze how these beliefs and values, as well as political ideologies, can affect one’s position on or response to issues of civic importance. Students also develop their awareness of how stakeholder groups with different perspectives can influence the policies and platforms of political parties and the decisions of governments.</p> |

|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| Learning Goals | Success Criteria |
|----------------|------------------|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the roles and responsibilities of school board trustees and student trustees</li> <li>• Apply the Political Thinking Concept of Stability and Change: analyze how trustees resist or support change</li> <li>• Apply the Political Thinking Concept of Political Perspective to plan, carry out and analyze interviews with community members</li> <li>• Assess ways in which trustees contribute to the common good</li> </ul> | <p>Students will know they are successful when they....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can analyze and understand the roles and responsibilities of their local school board and student trustees</li> <li>• Can apply the concept of Stability and Change to analyze how trustees resist or support change in their school board</li> <li>• Can apply the concept of political perspective to plan, carry out and analyze interviews with community members</li> <li>• Can explain how trustees contribute to the common good, or how they can be accountable to do so</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

### Guiding Questions

How do trustees/school board governance affect me, my school and community? Who represents me? Who represents my family? How do we plan and carry out an effective All Candidates meeting? How do I formulate effective questions (to prepare for All Candidates meeting?) How do I gather questions from my peers? My family? My community educators, local business owners, etc.) How do candidates influence citizens and how do the perspectives of citizens determine how they cast their ballots?

### Background Information on All Candidates Meetings

#### *What is an All Candidates Meeting?*

All Candidates Meetings are an ideal way for voters to discover, before an election, where local candidates stand on the issues that matter to the electorate. At an All Candidates Meeting, those individuals running for trustee in a particular ward or geographic area are invited to gather and share their views on issues affecting education. Attendees have the opportunity to hear from each candidate and ask questions. Local media often cover and sometimes moderate these events.

#### *Why Host an All Candidates Meeting?*

Hosting an All Candidates Meeting provides a public service and offers community members the opportunity to engage with their school board trustee candidates. This is critical to making sure the community is electing the best possible trustee to represent them. All Candidates Meetings are the perfect platform to assess who would be the most effective representative and bring the candidates together to talk about the issues

that make a difference in education at the local level. Hosting a meeting is a great way to participate in the democratic process. It is an opportunity to increase civic engagement and civic participation, even for those who are not yet of voting age or are not citizens. Hosting a meeting is also an opportunity to demonstrate the interest and concern that your school has for ensuring quality public education in the community and in the province.

## Description of Activity A

### Preparation

The class should decide if it will run an actual All Candidates Meeting or a mock event. If an actual one, then the educator will need to do some preparation. [See NOTE in the Introduction above and Educator Tasks below.]

If the class will be holding a public All Candidates Meeting (recommended), be sure to set a date and location, and invite the candidates to attend. Some candidates may choose to attend via video-conference.

The educator should email each of the candidates to ask them what they have done to promote the common good and make positive change. Ask the candidates to provide a list of duties and accomplishments to support their statements.

### Minds On

- As a class, come up with criteria for how to define ‘positive change’ and ‘common good’. Post the thinking in a visible spot. Students can add their own thinking to the criteria if they wish.
- Ask students to look at the email responses and rank the responses according to whether the values of the candidates align with the student’s own criteria as well as the class criteria of what ‘positive change’ and ‘common good’ means. Keep this thinking in a visible spot.
- Tell students about the upcoming All Candidates Meeting and explain how All Candidates meetings are an opportunity to ask questions in order to understand the values and priorities of the candidates.

### Action

#### Research (at least 2 weeks before the All Candidates meeting)

- After the Minds On activity, the educator discusses with students how all candidate meetings work and why they are such an important part of the democratic process.
- Provide copies of the Backgrounder for students. In small groups, students should discuss what attributes would make a good trustee – and how to look for these attributes during an All Candidates Meeting. Discuss as a whole group and come to a consensus as a class of the criteria for a good trustee.
- Provide time for the students to complete the Organizer A: Student Research (web access required). Class identifies the issues currently facing the school board, based on their research.

- Discuss with students the importance of understanding different perspectives in order to increase civic awareness and knowledge of issues of civic importance. In order to practice this skill, students will interview community members about their political perspectives.
- As a class, come up with a list of questions students can use to interview a community member in their lives (parent/guardian, school staff, neighbor, etc.) about school board election issues and their past voting experiences. Questions could include:
  - What issues do you think are important for trustees to take into consideration?
  - Are you pleased with how the school board is doing? What changes would you like to see?
  - Did you vote in the last trustee election? If not, why not? If yes, how did you choose who to vote for? OR, FOR NEWCOMERS: When you are able to vote, will you vote for school trustee? Why or why not?
  - Do you think you would ever want to be a school board trustee? Why or why not? OR, FOR NEWCOMERS: When you become a citizen, do you think you might run for trustee one day? Why or why not?
- Establish agreed-upon timelines for students to complete interviews.

### **Planning and Preparation**

- Divide students into small groups of 3-4 and assign roles and duties for organizing the All Candidates meeting(see below)
- As a class, brainstorm how to promote the meeting to ensure strong attendance by students, families, educators, and other members of the public.
  - The students who are tasked with promotions/marketing should take careful note and devise a plan to implement the class ideas
- Have students formulate questions based on their interviews. Students should post these questions in a visible location and as a class work to organize them into themes, types or categories.
- Finalize a list of questions that can be used at the All Candidates meeting.
  - The students who are tasked with collating the questions should take careful note and devise a plan of how to deliver these questions during the meeting

### **The Event**

- Students to fulfill their tasks (See Student Tasks below).
- Candidates will discuss topics in response to questions by students.
- Students record their thinking on the Exit cards.

### **Consolidation**

- Students will complete Organizer C: Exit Card at the end of the forum or the next day.
- Students can submit their Student Research (Organizer A), interview notes, final All Candidates meeting questions for feedback and/or assessment.

Extension activities can include:

1. Making student podcasts of the forum.
2. Conducting a mock vote.
3. Creating political cartoons about some of the issues discussed at the forum.

## Organizing an All Candidates Meeting – Panel Format

### Educator Tasks (2-4 weeks before the event)

- Obtain permission from school administration and set a date.
- Book and confirm the location. The location should be wheelchair accessible.
- Book audio/visual equipment with appropriate tech people to set up and monitor. In some cases, video-conferencing equipment may be needed.
- Invite candidates to attend and confirm their attendance.
- Book a translator, where appropriate.

### Student Tasks

- Make **placards and thank you cards** for the candidates (2 students)
- Create promotional materials to invite attendees (3-5 students) – be sure the promotional materials include title of the event, date and time, location, and why it's important to attend.
- **Promote** the event – post promotional materials and ensure diverse groups know about the event - students, educators, administrative staff, parents, neighbours, local business owners, local community groups, etc. Promotional spaces can include the board/school website, through School Council and Student Council, in stores and community spaces in the neighbourhood, etc. (5-10 students).
- **Collate questions** and prepare to ask them at the meeting (3-5 students)
- Establish a set of **Rules and Procedures** (sample is below). (2-3 students).
- Set the **agenda** (sample is below) (2-3 students). Students will need to make sure the agenda is visible to attendees.
- Choose **time-keepers** whose job is to make sure that the event stays on schedule (3 students)
- **Choose a moderator** for the meeting (could be 2 strong students, a teacher, a member of Student Council, a member of School Council, etc.) – this includes opening and closing remarks, and working with the timekeepers to keep the meeting on schedule.
- **Assign greeters** to meet the trustees when they arrive and see them out when they go (2-5 students, depending on number of trustees)
- Create an **information sheet** for attendees with information about the issues and the agenda of the meeting (3 students)
- **Have in place runners** to attend to last minute details (2 students)
- Invite the **Media** to get involved by promoting the event, attending, interviewing students or trustees about the issues, etc. (2 students)
- **Encourage Provincial Registry** sign-up (2 students). Elections Ontario is keen for students in grades 11 and 12 to sign up on their provincial registry. Students

can contact Elections Ontario and find out how to support the program at the event.

### Sample Rules and Procedures

An effective and well-run All Candidates meeting will follow a set of rules. Here is a sample set of rules and procedures to tailor to the meeting. These rules offer a good starting point and can be adapted to suit the meeting format. Ensure that each candidate and the moderator receive a copy of the rules in advance of the meeting. Also have the moderator read the rules at the meeting itself. This will set the tone and let participants, as well as the audience, know that the meeting has a planned structure and that the rules will be reinforced.

1. Candidates should present themselves to the moderator 15 minutes prior to the call to order to draw names for order of speaking.
2. Meeting to be called to order promptly.
3. Candidates will be seated alphabetically at the speakers table and will be introduced in this order.
4. Each candidate will be allotted 3 to 5 minutes to make an opening statement. The order of these statements will be determined in advance by draw.
5. Candidates will be asked not to interrupt other candidates' opening or closing statements.
6. During the Question and Answer period, questions will be received from the floor in either written or oral form. The moderator will have the responsibility of making sure that questions are directed to the appropriate candidate and that the questions are balanced among candidates.
7. The moderator will rule out of order any questions deemed inappropriate, offensive and derogatory or that would seem to attack the integrity of the candidate.
8. The moderator will rule out of order any person who attempts to use the question period for making a speech rather than asking a question.
9. Questions from the floor will be limited to one per individual to ensure as wide a participation from the audience as possible. If everyone who wishes to ask a question has had the opportunity to do so and there is still time left in the Question and Answer session, members of the audience may ask a second question.
10. Answers to questions should be limited to 2 to 3 minutes to ensure a wide ranging discussion.
11. Allow 3 to 5 minutes for closing statements. The order should be the same as opening statements.



## Sample Agenda

A well-run All Candidates Meeting will follow a defined format. Here is a sample agenda you may choose to follow. The key is to ensure that each candidate has enough time to make a prepared opening and closing statement and, more importantly, to make sure there is plenty of time for a question and answer session.

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| 6:30 pm | Doors open  |
| 6:45 pm | Candidates present themselves to the moderator to draw for order of speaking  |
| 7:00 pm | Call to order. A representative of the meeting organizing group welcomes the community and introduces the moderator. Moderator delivers remarks and reads the rules and procedures. |
| 7:10 pm | Introduction of the candidates in alphabetical order  |
| 7:15 pm | Each candidate to be given 3 to 5 minutes for their opening presentation  |
| 7:45 pm | Break for refreshments  |
| 8:00 pm | Question and Answer session   |
| 8:40 pm | 3 minute closing statement by each candidate  |
| 8:55 pm | Moderator's concluding remarks  |
| 9:00 pm | Adjournment   |

# ORGANIZER C: Exit Card – Panel Format

---

Name:

Date:

1. List all of the candidates in attendance.
  
2. List three questions asked during the meeting and summarize your understanding of the responses given by different candidates, as well as your thoughts on the responses.

| Question | Candidate 1 | Candidate 2 | Candidate 3 | My Thoughts<br>(strengths/weaknesses of responses and why) |
|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--|
|          |             |             |             |  |
|          |             |             |             |  |
|          |             |             |             |  |

3. Based on the research you conducted in preparation for this meeting and the performance of the candidates at the meeting, which candidate do you support? Give three reasons to support your selection.

4. Considering the criteria established for positive trustee attributes, rank the candidates below placing the candidate on top that meets the criteria the most, providing examples and reasoning to justify your ranking.

Record the criteria in the left column and the candidates in the top row. Using the following scale, rank your candidates: (you can adjust the scale)

- 1 = negative comments, ideas, behaviours
- 0 = neutral
- + 1 = positive comments, ideas behaviours

|             |  |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|--|
| Candidate → |  |  |  |
| Criteria ↓  |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |
|             |  |  |  |
| Ranking     |  |  |  |

# Option 3: All Candidates Meeting – Rapid Rounds Format

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|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Course</b>                     | Grade 10 Open Level Civics, Ontario  |
| <b>Curriculum Connections</b>     | <p><b>B: Civic Awareness</b><br/>B2. Governance in Canada: explain, with reference to a range of issues of civic importance, the roles and responsibilities of various institutions, structures, and figures in Canadian governance (FOCUS ON: Stability and Change; Political Perspective)</p> <p><b>C: Civic Engagement and Action</b><br/>C2. Inclusion and Participation: assess ways in which people express their perspectives on issues of civic importance and how various perspectives, beliefs, and values are recognized and represented in communities in Canada (FOCUS ON: Political Significance; Political Perspective)</p> |
| <b>Political Thinking Concept</b> | <p><b>Political Perspective</b><br/>This concept requires students to analyze the beliefs and values of various groups, including different governments, in local, national, and/or global communities. Students analyze how these beliefs and values, as well as political ideologies, can affect one’s position on or response to issues of civic importance. Students also develop their awareness of how stakeholder groups with different perspectives can influence the policies and platforms of political parties and the decisions of governments.</p>  |

| Learning Goals  | Success Criteria  |
|---|---|
| <p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the roles and responsibilities of school board Trustees</li> <li>Apply the Political Thinking Concept of Political Perspective: analyze how Trustees respond to issues of civic importance based on their own beliefs and values</li> </ul> | <p>Students will know they are successful when they....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can analyze and understand the roles and responsibilities of their local Trustee</li> <li>Can apply the concept of Political Perspective to show how Trustees use their own beliefs and values to inform their response to important issues at the school and board level</li> </ul> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess ways in which Trustees ensure that the various perspectives and values of their constituents are reflected in their decision making process</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can explain ways in which Trustees attempt to ensure that the various perspectives and values of their constituents are reflected in their decision making process</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

### Guiding Questions

How do trustees/school board governance affect me, my school and community? Who represents me? Who represents my family? How do we plan and carry out an effective All Candidates meeting? How do I formulate effective questions (to prepare for All Candidates meeting?) How do I gather questions from my peers? My family? My community educators, local business owners, etc.)? How do candidates influence citizens and how do the perspectives of citizens determine how they cast their ballots?

### Background Information on All Candidates Meetings

#### *What is an All Candidates Meeting?*

All Candidates Meetings are an ideal way for voters to discover where local candidates stand on the issues that matter to the electorate. At an All Candidates Meeting, All Candidates running for trustee in a particular ward or geographic area gather to share their views on issues affecting education. Attendees have the opportunity to hear from each candidate and ask questions. Local media often cover and sometimes moderate these events.

#### *Why Host an All Candidates Meeting?*

Hosting an All Candidates Meeting provides a public service and offers community members the opportunity to engage with their school board trustee candidates. This is critical to making sure the community is electing the best possible trustee to represent them. All Candidates Meetings are the perfect platform to assess who would be the most effective representative and bring the candidates together to talk about the issues that make a difference in education at the local level. Hosting a meeting is a great way to participate in the democratic process. It is an opportunity to increase civic engagement and civic participation, even for those who are not yet of voting age or are not citizens. Hosting a meeting is also an opportunity to demonstrate the interest and concern that your school has for ensuring quality public education in the community and in the province.

#### *What are Rapid Rounds?*

Rapid Rounds are a way of organizing an All Candidates Meeting that can be useful with a smaller number of attendees. In Rapid Rounds, each candidate sits or stands in a different area of the room (or in breakout rooms), and attendees rotate in groups to spend up to 10 minutes with each candidate. This format enables smaller discussion groups and more attendees to be able to ask questions.

## Description of Activity

### Preparation

- The class should decide if it will run an actual All Candidates meeting or a mock event. If an actual one, then the educator will need to do some preparation. [See NOTE in the Introduction above and educator task list below]
- If the class will be holding a public All Candidates Meeting (recommended), be sure to set a date and location, and invite All Candidates to attend. Some candidates may choose to attend via video-conference.

### Minds On

- The educator should display a copy of the board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP), available on the board's website. Define for students what a MYSP is and the inform students (in a joking/humorous way) that the board hasn't made it a priority to provide chocolate chip cookies to all educators on Mondays.
- Use this "complaint" to start discussion about what board priorities should be.
- In small groups or pairs, students should discuss what priorities the board should have.
- As a class, narrow down the thinking to a list of 3-5 priorities.

### Action

#### Research (internet access preferred)

- Give each student a copy of the board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan (for students who need accommodations, the educator should provide an excerpt or summary in student-friendly language).
- Keeping in mind the class list of priorities from the Minds On activity, ask students to choose the one MYP priority they think is most important. Students should highlight and jot down a few points to record their initial thinking as to why they have made this initial selection.
- Students should then record their thinking in the first section of the Organizer D: 'I initially think; I now think'.
- Students should then group themselves based on agreement on the most important priorities. Number the groups for organization purposes (i.e. Groups 1-6)
- Invite students to write down what they have found to be current board issues in a visible location.
- Have each group pair up with another group to discuss and/or debate the board's current priorities. Students should use the following question to guide their discussion/debate:
  - Do the board's current priorities align with your initial thinking on the most important priority? Why or why not?
- Is it possible for students' thinking to shift during this discussion/debate.
  - Tell students to refer back to Organizer D: "I initially think, I now think" and see if their ideas have changed as a result of what they discussed and to record their revised or confirmed thinking in just a few sentences. They should complete the second section of the organizer.

- Have students share and explain their shifts in thinking. Initially it is good to do this as a whole group so that you can probe students' thinking and push them to explain. Once students become accustomed to explaining their thinking, students can share with one another in small groups or pairs.
- Distribute the Backgrounder and have each group highlight descriptors and explanations of the role of trustees and student trustees. Discuss as a class to ensure there is a basic understanding of these roles.
- In their groups, have the students complete Organizer A: Student Research.
- At the end of the discussions/debates, tell students about the upcoming All Candidates meeting – rapid rounds format, and that they will play key roles in the event.
- Discuss with students the importance of understanding different perspectives in order to increase civic awareness and knowledge of issues of civic importance. As a class, come up with a list of questions students can use to interview a community member in their lives (parent, school staff, neighbor, etc.) about school board issues and their past voting experiences. Questions could include:
  - What issues do you think are important for trustees to take into consideration?
  - Are you pleased with how the school board is doing? What changes would you like to see?
  - Did you vote in the last trustee election? If not, why not? If yes, how did you choose who to vote for? OR, FOR NEWCOMERS: When you are able to vote, will you vote for school trustee? Why or why not?
  - Do you think you would ever want to be a school board trustee? Why or why not? OR, FOR NEWCOMERS: When you become a citizen, do you think you might run for trustee one day? Why or why not?
- Establish agreed-upon timelines for students to complete interviews.

### **Planning and Preparation**

- Divide students into small groups of 3-4 and assign roles and duties for organizing the All Candidates meeting (see below).
- As a class, brainstorm how to promote the meeting to ensure strong attendance by students, families, educators, and other members of the public.
  - The students who are tasked with promotions/marketing should take careful note and devise a plan to implement the class ideas.
- Have students formulate questions based on their interviews. Students should post these questions in a visible location and as a class work to organize them into themes, types or categories.
- Finalize a list of questions that can be used at the All Candidates Meeting.
  - The students who are tasked with collating the questions should take careful note and devise a plan of how to deliver these questions during the meeting.

### **The Event**

- Students to fulfill their tasks (See Student Tasks below).

- Trustees will sit at stations while groups of students visit them and engage in discussion.
- Students record their thinking on Organizer E: Exit Card – Rapid Rounds.

### Consolidation

- Students can submit their Organizer A: Student Research, interview notes, Organizer B: 'I initially think, I now think' for feedback and assessment as learning
- Students will complete Organizer E: Exit Card – Rapid Rounds at the end of the forum or the next day. Students will consider: 3 things they want to remember about the candidate's values, 2 things they want to remember about how the candidate includes perspective in decision making and 1 thing that is the most significant about the trustee candidate

Extension activities can include:

1. Students can create political profiles of each candidate in poster format that demonstrate how candidates' positions/ideas meet the board's MYP priorities.
2. Create a chart of possible political coalitions between trustee candidates and City Councillors, MPs and MPPs who share values and priorities.
3. Create podcasts about each candidate (for classroom use only).

## Organizing an All Candidates Meeting – Rapid Rounds Format

### Educator Tasks (2-4 weeks before the event)

- Obtain permission from school administration and set a date
- Book and confirm the location. The location should be wheelchair accessible.
- Book audio/visual equipment with appropriate tech people to set up and monitor. In some cases, video-conferencing equipment may be needed.
- Invite candidates to attend and confirm their attendance.
- Book a translator, where appropriate.

### Student Tasks

- Make **placards and thank you cards** for the candidates (2 students)
- Create promotional materials to invite attendees (3-5 students) – be sure the promotional materials include title of the event, date and time, location, and why it's important to attend.
- **Promote** the event – post promotional materials and ensure diverse groups know about the event - students, educators, administrative staff, parents, neighbours, local business owners, local community groups, etc. Promotional spaces can include the board/school website, through School Council and Student Council, in stores and community spaces in the neighbourhood, etc.(5-10 students)
- **Collate questions** and prepare to ask them at the meeting (3-5 students)
- Establish a set of **Rules and Procedures** (sample is below). (2-3 students).
- Set the **agenda** (sample is below) (2-3 students). Students will need to make sure the agenda is visible to attendees.



- Choose **time-keepers** whose job is to make sure that the event stays on schedule (3 students)
- **Choose a moderator** for the meeting (could be 2 strong students, a teacher, a member of Student Council, a member of School Council, etc.) – this includes opening and closing remarks, and working with the timekeepers to keep the meeting on schedule.
- **Assign greeters** to meet the trustees when they arrive and see them out when they go (2-5 students, depending on number of trustees)
- Create an **information sheet** for attendees with information about the issues and the agenda of the meeting (3 students)
- **Have in place runners** to attend to last minute details (2 students)
- Invite the **Media** to get involved by promoting the event, attending, interviewing students or trustees about the issues, etc. (2 students)
- **Encourage Provincial Registry** sign-up (2 students). Elections Ontario is keen for students in grades 11 and 12 to sign up on their provincial registry. Students can contact Elections Ontario and find out how to support the program at the event.

### Sample Rules and Procedures

An effective and well-run meeting will follow a set of rules. Here is a sample set of rules and procedures you can tailor to your meeting. These rules offer a good starting point and can be adapted to suit your meeting format. Ensure that each candidate and the moderator receive a copy of your rules in advance of the meeting. Also have the moderator read the rules at the meeting itself. This will set the tone and let participants, as well as the audience, know that the meeting has a planned structure and that the rules will be reinforced.

1. Candidates should present themselves to the moderators 15 minutes prior to the call to order to draw names for order of speaking.
2. Meeting to be called to order promptly.
3. Candidates will be seated alphabetically at the speakers table and will be introduced in this order.
4. Each candidate will be allotted 3 to 5 minutes to make an opening statement. The order of these statements will be determined in advance by draw.
5. Candidates will be asked not to interrupt other candidates' opening or closing statements.
6. During the Rapid Rounds time, questions will be asked directly of each candidate. The moderator in each rotation will have the responsibility of making sure that questions are appropriate and that the candidate has time to answer.
7. The moderators will rule out of order any questions deemed inappropriate, offensive and derogatory or that would seem to attack the integrity of the candidate.
8. The moderators will rule out of order any person who attempts to use the question period for making a speech rather than asking a question.
9. Questions from the floor will be limited to one per individual to ensure as wide a participation from the audience as possible. If everyone who wishes to ask a

question has had the opportunity to do so and there is still time left in the Rapid Rounds session, members of the audience may ask a second question.

10. Answers to questions should be limited to 2 to 3 minutes to ensure a wide ranging discussion.

11. Allow 3 to 5 minutes for closing statements. The order should be the same as opening statements.

### Sample Agenda

A well-run All Candidates Meeting will follow a defined format. Here is a sample agenda you may choose to follow. The key is to ensure that each candidate has enough time to make a prepared opening and closing statement and, more importantly, to make sure there is plenty of time for a Question and Answer session.

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| 6:30 pm | Doors open  |
| 6:45 pm | Candidates present themselves to the moderator to draw for order of speaking  |
| 7:00 pm | Call to order. Designated students welcome the community and introduces the moderator. Moderator delivers remarks and reads the rules and procedures. |
| 7:10 pm | Introduction of the candidates in alphabetical order  |
| 7:15 pm | Each candidate to be given 3 to 5 minutes for their opening presentation  |
| 7:45 pm | Break for refreshments  |
| 8:00 pm | Rapid rounds take place (10 minutes per rotation)   |
| 8:40 pm | 3 minute closing statement by each candidate  |
| 8:55 pm | Moderator's concluding remarks  |
| 9:00 pm | Adjournment   |

# ORGANIZER D:

## I initially think; I now think

---

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Keeping in mind the class list of priorities from the Minds On activity, choose one priority from the school board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan that you think is most important.</p> |   |
| <p>I initially think...</p>   | <p><i>Write down the most important priority and a few sentences to explain your selection:</i></p>   |
| <p>I now think....</p>  | <p><i>Did your group's discussion align with your initial thinking on the most important priority? Has your thinking shifted? Why or why not? What do you now think is the most important priority for your school board? How does this impact you at school?</i></p> |

# ORGANIZER E: Exit Card – Rapid Rounds

---

Name:

Date:

| Trustee candidate: |   |  |   |
|--------------------|---|--|---|
| Topic              | 3 things I want to remember about this candidate's values | 2 things I want to remember about how this candidate includes all perspective in decision making | 1 thing that is most significant (important) about this candidate |
|                    |   |  |   |

| Trustee candidate: |   |  |   |
|--------------------|---|--|---|
| Topic              | 3 things I want to remember about this candidate's values | 2 things I want to remember about how this candidate includes all perspective in decision making | 1 thing that is most significant (important) about this candidate |
|                    |   |  |   |

| Trustee candidate: |   |  |   |
|--------------------|---|--|---|
| Topic              | 3 things I want to remember about this candidate's values | 2 things I want to remember about how this candidate includes all perspective in decision making | 1 thing that is most significant (important) about this candidate |
|                    |   |  |   |

| Trustee candidate: |   |  |   |
|--------------------|---|--|---|
| Topic              | 3 things I want to remember about this candidate's values | 2 things I want to remember about how this candidate includes all perspective in decision making | 1 thing that is most significant (important) about this candidate |
|                    |   |  |   |

# Option 4: Mock Elections

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Course</b>                     | Grade 10 Open Level Civics, Ontario  |
| <b>Curriculum Connections</b>     | <p><b>B: Civic Awareness</b><br/>           B1. Civic Issues, Democratic Values: describe beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada, and explain how they are related to civic action and to one’s position on civic issues (FOCUS ON: Political Significance; Political Perspective)</p> <p><b>C: Civic Engagement and Action</b><br/>           C1. Civic Contributions: analyze a variety of civic contributions, and ways in which people can contribute to the common good<br/>           C2. Inclusion and Participation: assess ways in which people express their perspectives on issues of civic importance and how various perspectives, beliefs, and values are recognized and represented in communities in Canada</p> |
| <b>Political Thinking Concept</b> | <p><b>Political Perspective</b><br/>           This concept requires students to analyze the beliefs and values of various groups, including different governments, in local, national, and/or global communities. Students analyze how these beliefs and values, as well as political ideologies, can affect one’s position on or response to issues of civic importance. Students also develop their awareness of how stakeholder groups with different perspectives can influence the policies and platforms of political parties and the decisions of governments.</p>   |

| Learning Goals   | Success Criteria   |
|--|--|
| Students will... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the various points of view of community members on issues, values and beliefs associated with democratic citizenship</li> <li>• Understand the views/political perspectives of candidates running for the position of school board trustee</li> </ul> | Students will know they are successful when they.... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the various points of view of community members on issues and topics dealing with school trustee elections</li> <li>• Identify the candidates running for the position of school board trustee and describe their key platform</li> </ul> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | stances on the issues brought up by the class. |
|--|--|

### Guiding Questions:

How do candidate priorities and values influence public opinions about school boards? How do those priorities and values impact the decisions that get made at the school board level every day? How do I formulate effective questions (to prepare for candidates) How do I gather questions from my peers? My family? My community educators, local business owners, etc.) How do candidates influence citizens and how do the perspectives of citizens determine how they cast their ballots?

### Description of Activity

#### Preparation

- The educator should conduct research in the media and recent board minutes to learn about the current issues facing the school board
- The educator should conduct research to find out who the candidates are in the school board election. A great place to start is the [Ontario School Trustees website](http://elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org/en/). [<http://elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org/en/>]

#### Minds On

- Present the students with an issue currently facing the school board
  - issues could include school closures, academic policies, uniforms, safety issues, or any other issue current and relevant at the community/school level.
- Alternatively, present students with the current school board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) and ask them to share their opinions about the board's priorities and goals. The sharing can take the form of a Think-Pair-Share, individual answers, or a 3-Step-Interview. (Groups of 3: Interviewer, Interviewee, recorder; then they switch roles 3 times so all take all roles).
- Students will be informed that the class will be running a mock trustee election and that they will need to:
  - research the candidates,
  - research the issues,
  - conduct an interview and
  - vote in a mock election.

#### Action

##### Research and Interview preparation – internet access preferred

- Distribute the Backgrounder to each student.
- Have each student highlight descriptors and explanations of the role of trustees and student trustees. Discuss as a class to ensure there is a basic understanding of these roles.

- If there is internet access, have the students complete Organizer A: Student Research. This could be done in groups, or dividing the sheet into groupings and having each group look up different sections of the worksheet.
- As a class, discuss the issues currently facing the board. Have students brainstorm questions they would want to ask the elected and student trustees about the issues.
  - Record a final list of questions in a visible spot.
- Explain the idea of conducting interviews as a way to gather information and practice the political thinking skill of understanding political perspectives both of candidates and of members of the public. Every student will interview a community member.
- Have students choose who they will interview and as a class, develop questions (Organizer F: Interviewee notes) based on the issues facing the board and/or the board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan. Interviewees can include:
  - A peer
  - A student council member
  - A parent or guardian
  - A neighbour
  - A educator in the school
  - Other school staff – custodian, office staff, social worker, guidance counsellor, nurse, etc.
  - Business owner in the community

Establish agreed-upon timelines for students to complete interviews

- Next, students will research the candidates running for the role of trustee in their region. (Note: the role of trustee is sometimes acclaimed and/or only includes two candidates. In this case, allow students to include all of the school boards in the region and research candidates for the Public, Catholic, French-Public, and French-Catholic school boards.) This can take anywhere from 15-30 minutes, depending on the number of candidates as well as the number of students and their varying abilities. Students can visit the [Ontario School Trustees website](http://elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org/en/) <http://elections.ontarioschooltrustees.org/en/> for a full listing of the candidates in each board. **Organizer G: Trustee elections in my community** can provide focus for student research.
- For each candidate, students will answer the following questions via a Google Form or paper-based organizer
  - a. Does this candidate provide any insights on the issue I am concerned about?
  - b. Does this candidate oppose any of my spiritual/human rights/philosophical/religious/economic, etc. beliefs?
  - c. Does this candidate offer any other information about what their hopes are for the school board, if elected? What do I think about what the candidate has to say?
  - d. What values does the candidate seem to believe in and what types of character does he/she seem to embody?
- Establish agreed-upon timelines for students to complete research of trustees
- Once students have researched the candidates, the educator will re-center the discussion into a whole-group format. The class will have a discussion about some of the key issues/main issue that the school board is currently dealing with and the potential candidates' impact on these issues if they are elected.



- As a class, students will be asked to formulate 5-10 questions for each candidate as well as the student trustee that student volunteers will draft into a Google Doc. Several student volunteers from the class will then send those approved questions to the candidates via e-mail or through other methods of contact.

### **Vote and Discuss**

- The class reviews the answers from the trustee candidates and their responses from the interviews with the educator moderating a short discussion.
- After researching the candidates, students will be asked to submit their Google Form/worksheet in order to receive a “ballot”. They will then proceed to the voting screen set up in the classroom and submit their ballot into the ballot box. (Educator to prepare ballots and voting stations in advance)
- Once the results are determined, the class can debrief the election results using key issues within their school board. This will allow students to connect the candidates to the issues that are important to them as well as recognize that there are many viewpoints that contribute to the electorate.

### **Consolidation**

- After the election, students can fill out Organizer H: Exit Card – Mock Elections or respond to the following prompts using a platform such as Padlet or FlipGrid: (or other appropriate apps)
  - How do candidate priorities and values influence public opinions about school boards?
  - How do those priorities and values impact the decisions that get made at the school board level every day?
  - In what ways did your interview with another member of the public change or re-inforce your own views?

## **Organizing a School-Wide Mock Election**

### **Educator Tasks**

- Obtain permission from school administrator and set a day, time, and location
- Recruit additional staff to monitor and run the mock election

### **Student Tasks**

- Create **Voters List** (2-4 students)
- Create **Ballots** (2-4 students)
- Create **Voting Stations** (3-5 students)
- Create **Ballot boxes** (2-4 students)
- **Count Ballots** (4-6 students, each to count on their own)
- Invite the **Media** to get involved by promoting the event, attending, interviewing students or trustees about the issues, etc. (2 students)

- **Encourage Provincial Registry** sign-up (2 students). Elections Ontario is keen for students in grades 11 and 12 to sign up on their provincial registry. Students can contact Elections Ontario and find out how to support the program at the event.

# Organizer F: INTERVIEWEE NOTES

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Name/Interviewee:

Role:

Record questions from class discussion about issues important to you and classmates in left column before the interview. Record the answers in the right column. Leave space for questions that may arise during interview

| Questions | Response |
|-----------|----------|
|           |          |
|           |          |
|           |          |
|           |          |
|           |          |

Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date/location \_\_\_\_\_

# Organizer G: TRUSTEE ELECTIONS IN MY COMMUNITY

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Research the candidates running for school trustee in your region/community. Place their name and board in the top row and research the answers for each question below their name.

|   |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Name /Board</b> (Public, Catholic, French-Public, French-Catholic)   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Insights/ideas on issues I am concerned about?  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Does this candidate oppose any of my spiritual/human rights/philosophical/religious/economic, etc. beliefs?   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Does this candidate offer any other information about what their hopes are for the school board, if elected? What do I think about what the candidate has to say? |  |  |  |  |  |
| What values does the candidate seem to believe in and what types of character does he/she seem to embody?   |  |  |  |  |  |

- Are there any key issues that the school board is currently dealing with and the potential candidates' impact on these issues if they are elected?

# Organizer H: Exit Card - Mock Elections

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What factors did you consider when choosing who to vote for? What swayed your decision?
2. In what way did the interview you conducted influence your decision?
3. Were you surprised by the results of the election? Why or why not?
4. What are you hoping to see in your school board as a result of the elections?