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Lesson Plan for Grade 3-5 (with upper grade level extensions)

LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

Objectives:

1. Understand the difference between state, federal, and local government.
2. Understand the job of a mayor
3. Identify issues in their community ☐
4. Understand the interrelation among various issues in the community ☐

Materials:

1. Levels of Government (activities)
2. What does the Mayor do? (activities)
3. Business letter template
4. Speech outline

Warm-up (5 minutes):

Students are going to guess the profession. Give them key words.

- City
- City Hall
- Laws

You can write them on the board so the whole class will guess or set a challenge by giving the key words written on a paper and 1 minute to think about the possible profession. At the end of the minute the students will share their answers.

Activity #1

1. Explain to students the different levels of government
2. Using Federal, State & Local worksheet allow students to identify the people who hold these offices in the US at the State, Local, & Federal levels.

Activity #2

1. Explain to students the role of a mayor.
2. Have students read and complete what does the mayor do worksheet in groups. They will need computer access to look up telephone and address information.

Activity #3

1. Have students review the Ken Gibson panels and newsletter and allow them to identify some of the changes he made in Newark as mayor.
2. Fill out the Pros & Cons chart (activities)

The issue: _____

PROS	CONS

Activity #4

1. Encourage your students to be active members of their communities. Brainstorm ideas that can help improve the entire community. Ideas can include:
 - A new park
 - A community center
 - A new public library
 - Programs to help the homeless
 - Activities for the young or elderly

Activity #5

1. Start a letter-writing campaign in your class, to your mayor. This will also provide an opportunity to teach how to write a business letter.
2. Use the business letter template provided to allow students to express their concerns about Newark to Mayor Ras Baraka.
 - a. Explain to students that writing a formal letter to a mayor is a way for citizens to express concerns and offer solutions to problems facing a community.
 - b. The mayor is in a position of authority and should be treated with the proper respect in the letter.
 - c. A right way and a wrong way exist to write a formal letter to the mayor, and writing the letter correctly guarantees better results.

Activity #6

Run for mayor:

1. Let students brainstorm ideas about Newark. What do they like about Newark? What would they like to see changed?
2. Have students work in groups to write a mayoral speech announcing their candidacy.
3. Allow Students to choose one group member to read/rehearse the speech while the others critique the presentation for 10 minutes.
4. Allow one student from each group to present their candidacy speeches to the class after the rehearsal period.
5. During the speeches require students to take notes by creating a pro & con charts for each candidate as they did with the Ken Gibson panels:

The issue: _____

PROS	CONS

6. After on the candidacy speeches, allow your students to review and share their pro con charts with the class.
7. Based on the candidate speeches, allow your student to participate in a formal or informal vote for mayor.
8. In groups or as a class ask the students to share why they voted for a certain candidate over the others.

Lesson Extensions:

Street Fight PBS POV Series: Film & Lesson

<https://pov-tc.pbs.org/pov/downloads/2005/pov-streetfight-discussion-guide-color.pdf>