Preparing for Mock City Council Meeting

Suggested age group – Junior or Senior High School students

If there is more than one school in a municipality, establish criteria to select the school. You could also start with a random selection of those schools that are interested.

The Mock Council meeting will be held at school assembly (30-40 minutes). If possible, have the council meeting videotaped.

Invite the participating students to the next regular City Council meeting, where the students will be presented with a certificate of participation by the mayor.

Teachers may also want to use this as an opportunity to teach students about the voting process, using the "Notice of Candidacy and Affidavit" and "Voter Registration" information from the Georgia Secretary of State's Office.

Two weeks prior to your event, do the following:

- Provide students with handouts explaining Georgia's city government overall
- Provide students with information on your city's government structure
- Discuss with students:
    - Federal, state and local (county and municipal) levels of government
    - The roles of elected city government positions and appointed positions
    - Your city's organizational structure
    - Budget
    - Types of issues with which the council deals
    - Municipal departments and how they affect citizens' lives
- Read and discuss the scenario, including some of the possible responses of citizens, business, elected and appointed officials
- If students will be running for offices, hold an election at least one week prior to the mock council meeting

Other Options:

- Students may be encouraged to visit city hall and the city departments for a better understanding of how the city operates
- Invite representatives from throughout the community – including homeowner associations and local businesses – to discuss the scenario and how they might represent their perspectives on the issue.

The Meeting

Municipal Roles

Mayor -- In a council-manager form of government, the mayor is the ceremonial head of the city, presiding over meetings and making appointments to city boards. The student assigned to this role will preside over the meeting, ensuring that it moves along

and runs smoothly. The mayor will have the same authority and voting privilege as other council members.

Councilmembers -- Councilmembers set policy for the city, using input from the city administrator/manager, department heads, citizens and other groups. The students in this role will analyze the situation, ask questions of city staff, get input from other groups and citizens and make a decision based upon their vision of the city and what is right for the community as a whole.

City Manager -- The city manager handles the day-to-day operations of the city. He or she is called on to present facts, do research, make recommendations and carry out the policies set by the council. The student in this role will be responsible for presenting the overall view to the city and calling upon the city department heads for input into the issue.

City Clerk -- The city clerk is responsible for taking minutes at the meeting and maintaining records and archives for the city. The student in this role will take and transcribe the minutes of the meeting.

City Attorney -- The city attorney serves as a legal advisor to the city, giving legal opinions on issues affecting the city. The city attorney also drafts ordinances for the city and keeps the council informed on any laws or rulings that may affect the city. The student in this role will be responsible for ensuring that parliamentary procedures are followed in the mock city council meeting.

Other Appropriate Staff

Audience Roles
Citizens
Reporters

Citizens can present self-interest type issues or complaints under a Public Forum item on the agenda.