

Teaching About the 2018 Elections Conference Breakout Session Descriptions

(Materials for all sessions will be provided electronically to conference participants.)

Understanding the 2018 Midterm Elections

David Canon, UW-Madison Political Science Department

What can explain the historical patterns of the president's party almost always losing seats in the midterms? Will the 2018 elections be a referendum on President Trump? Will the Democrats regain control of the House? What is likely to happen in the Senate and governors' races and why? Professor David Canon of the Political Science Department at UW-Madison will examine these questions to gain a better understanding of the 2018 midterm elections.

Teaching Gerrymandering with Hershey's Kisses

Cathy Ruffing, Senior Director, Teacher Professional Development Programs & Curriculum, Street Law, Inc.

Partisan gerrymandering will no doubt have an effect on the 2018 elections. It will be important for students to have an understanding of the term and its consequences on the electoral process. The session begins with a quick overview of gerrymandering—packing, cracking, and legal districts. Then, learn a fun hands-on activity using Hershey's Kisses to demonstrate how a state legislature might “pack,” “crack,” and draw legal districts. The session will conclude with an exploration of how to use Street Law's free case summaries to apply these concepts to an actual Supreme Court case.

Using Supreme Court Case Summaries to Teach about Elections

Cathy Ruffing, Senior Director, Teacher Professional Development Programs & Curriculum, Street Law, Inc.

The Supreme Court has recently dealt with several issues—apparel in the polls, partisan gerrymandering, and voting restrictions—that all have the potential to impact the 2018 elections. To help teachers make these cases accessible to students, Street Law has developed seven strategies to use with the hundreds of case summaries available in its free resource library. In this session, you will learn about the strategies and participate in two of them using elections-themed cases. The session will conclude with an overview of Street Law's free online resources, including those recently developed to address the AP US Government and Politics curriculum redesign.

Beyond the Ballot: Engage your students through a public media project

Bridgit Bowden, Reporter, Wisconsin Public Radio

Alyssa Tsagong, Director of Education, Wisconsin Public Television

Activate youth voices in a local journalism initiative to deepen understanding of the topics and issues that impact our local communities and influence voting and civic engagement. At this session, you will learn about WPR's *Beyond the Ballot* project and WPT Education's Click Youth Media network, practice your own interview skills, and leave with strategies for using public media projects to increase your students' engagement in and understanding of the 2018 Elections in Wisconsin.

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PurpleState: Simulating the Role of Media and Special Interest Groups in Campaigns

Jeremy Stoddard, Professor, William & Mary School of Education

The role of media and special interest groups in elections and issues campaigns (e.g., earned media) is rarely included in curriculum but essential to informed citizenship. In this session, you will engage in a shorter version of a simulation designed to help students understand the role of media in political campaigns from the perspective of interns at a political communications firm. We will focus on a statewide electoral race for the simulation that can be modified or replicated for any classroom (all materials provided digitally for participants). Goals include critical media literacy and understanding contemporary political campaigns.

Learning about gerrymandering from *Gill v. Whitford*

Barry Burden, Professor of Political Science, Director of the Elections Research Center, UW-Madison

What is *Gill v. Whitford* and what does it mean for the practice of gerrymandering? In this session we will review the history of legislative redistricting in the United States, the legal and constitutional arguments involved, and the new empirical evidence from Wisconsin at issue in the case.

Ready to Engage: How School and District Leaders Can Support Student Engagement in Elections and Beyond

Jessica Marshall, PhD student Northwestern University; Former Director of Social Science and Civic Engagement, Chicago Public Schools

How do we balance a desire to increase youth civic engagement with the concerns for protecting students during highly charged partisan elections? How can we design policy and guidelines for instruction in elections that both protect students and allow them to engage in authentic and meaningful learning experiences? In this session, we will explore scenarios that ask district and school leaders to consider the best ways to support students and provide meaningful exploration of elections in the classroom and school setting.

Project Soapbox: A Catalyst for School-Wide Civic Engagement

Brian Brady, Executive Director of the Mikva Challenge

The first step to being an active and informed citizen is being able to stand up and speak out on an issue that you care about. When this happens, students become transformed from passive civic actors to active citizens and leaders. Challenging the stereotype that young people are apathetic, Mikva's Project Soapbox curriculum provides an avenue for students to identify their passion and learn effective persuasive speaking skills. Through the process, students develop essential listening and empathy skills and classrooms and schools become powerful communities. This workshop will provide participants with the step by step understanding of how to implement Project Soapbox in their classrooms, how to organize a school wide or community wide Project Soapbox event, and how to use social media to provide a broader audience for student speeches.

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Unlocking the Potential of School Administrators to Support Civic Learning

Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, Director, CIRCLE (The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement), Tufts University

In this session, CIRCLE Director Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg will facilitate a participatory session using the [Charrette Protocol](#). Based on research findings and field-level trends, CIRCLE is interested in helping to enhance school administrators' capacity to develop a civic learning framework for their students, staff, and in some cases, parents. The overarching goal of the session is to directly inform the future direction of this work-in-progress at CIRCLE with educator inputs. Facilitator will first present an emerging data points and examples then will ask participants to work in small and large groups to deliberate on the questions posed by the facilitator.

Rise Up & Write: Supporting Civically Engaged Writing

Mark Dziedzic, Director of the Greater Madison Writing Project

Jen Doucette, High School English Educator at Waunakee High School, Greater Madison Writing Project Fellow, and Rise Up & Write Facilitator

Skylar Primm, Middle & High School Science Educator at High Marq Environmental Charter School, Greater Madison Writing Project Fellow, and Rise Up & Write Facilitator

Rise Up & Write--a project from the University of Wisconsin and the National Writing Project--supports youth in using words, language, and writing to create change for issues that matter to them. Young people have always been at the forefront of progress; Rise Up & Write brings adults into partnership with youth to develop skills of effective and impactful communication and provides access to spaces where youth voice can be heard. This session will be facilitated by youth and adult Rise Up & Writers and will share resources, methods, and ideas for supporting young people in civically engaged writing. From research strategies, to models for intersectional thinking, to creative modes of publication, this session will offer tools and inspiration for all participants.

Teaching about elections through gaming

David Olson, Social Studies Teacher, James Madison Memorial High School and iCivics Educator Network Member - 9th-12th Grade

Engage your students and provide support for deeper learning about the framework and challenges of elections and media through free interactive games and lessons. With the help of iCivics Educator Network member David Olson, teachers will leave this session with:

- an organizational framework for thinking about and presenting these topics in the classroom
- free high-quality, off-the-shelf solutions—lesson plans, games, or projects—that teachers can deploy in their classrooms with minimal preparation
- an opportunity to connect to iCivics and other educational organizations that provide high-quality resources to teach elections.

Bring your own device (laptop or tablet preferred) to explore and play!

Elections and Civic Engagement: Recommended Books for K-5 Students

Merri Lindgren and Madeline Tyner, Librarians, Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Find out about recommended fiction, nonfiction, and picture books for kindergarten through grade five at this presentation highlighting civic and community engagement, voting rights, and elections. A hands-on opportunity to examine books will be part of the session.

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Current and Controversial Issue Discussions and Classroom Practice: Responding to Contemporary Challenges of Polarization

Mary Ellen Daneels, National Board Certified Teacher who has taught the Legislative Semester at West Chicago Community High School for 27 years. She currently works at the Robert R. McCormick Foundation at the Lead Teacher Mentor, developing and leading all social studies teacher professional development sessions.

Explore the promise of current and controversial issue discussions in classrooms to mitigate political polarization's long-term, harmful effects. Walk away with applicable classroom resources and strategies to respond to contemporary challenges in this interactive session that demonstrates pedagogy in practice.

International perspectives on teaching about electoral systems and manipulation

*Li-Ching Ho, Associate Professor, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Sean Corrigan, Lauren Bagwell, and Marilyn Lim, PhD students, Curriculum & Instruction, UW-Madison*

Around the world, there is significant diversity in the ways election are structured, how votes are cast and counted, how electoral rules are formulated and applied, and how political power is subsequently distributed. This session helps teachers identify and develop curricular content and strategies in order to help students recognize and evaluate the affordances and limitations of different electoral systems.

Should we lower the voting age in Wisconsin? Using deliberation to frame controversial issues

*Kate Ullman, Instructor of Education, Northland College; Curriculum Development, School of Education
University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Elections are full of hot-button controversial issues, and encouraging students to understand and carefully consider multiple perspectives through deliberation is a great way to promote learning, maintain civility, and encourage students to develop well reasoned positions. In this session, we will work through an example deliberation lesson plan (a structured academic controversy) developed by the UW-Madison School of Education. The deliberation question is "*Should we allow 17 year olds to vote in Wisconsin primary elections?*" Teachers will take home materials about deliberation, and a lesson plan for use in their classrooms.