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Simulation/Role Play Lesson Plan

Title: Simulation of Iowa Caucus and Presidential Primaries – 11th grade U.S. Government.

Essential Question(s): How do politicians get voted into office? What leads up to a Presidential Election?

Resources: A projector connected to computer, Access to the YouTube clip <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fobO82jbNRg>. Peeps, Cadbury Crème Egg, Reese's, and Jellybeans .

Key Terms/Ideas: Iowa Caucus, Elections, Voting, Republican vs. Democrat Caucus, Delegates, Presidential Election, Swing Voters, Battleground States, Platform, Keynote Address, National Conventions, Presidential Primaries, Winner-Take-All, Proportional Representation, Super Delegates

Rationale: The purpose for this lesson is to inform students of how politicians get elected into office. This simulation of an election allows for students to actually experience what it is like to vote in the Iowa Caucus for both the Republican and Democratic parties (which is strikingly different). This participatory lesson will allow for students to understand how certain types of elections operate, and how this may affect the outcome at the polls. They will also consider why upcoming elections are important by discussing current events and how public opinion should be reflected in elected officials.

Standards:

3.5.8 Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the formation and implementation of a current public policy issue, and examine ways to participate in the decision making process about the issue.

6.2.3 Describe how, when, and where individuals can participate in the political process at the local, state, and national levels (including, but not limited to voting, attending political and governmental meetings, contacting public officials, working in campaigns, community organizing, demonstrating or picketing, boycotting, joining interest groups or political action committees); evaluate the effectiveness of these methods of participation.

6.2.4 Participate in a real or simulated election, and evaluate the results, including the impact of voter turnout and demographics.

6.2.9 Evaluate the claim that constitutional democracy requires the participation of an attentive, knowledgeable, and competent citizenry.

6.2.10 Participate in a real or simulated public hearing or debate and evaluate the role of deliberative public discussions in civic life.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to actively participate in a simulated election process.
2. Students will be able to define “caucus,” and explain its role in the election process.
3. Students will be able to explain the difference between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party in terms of their process of electing a candidate at the Iowa Caucus.

Specific Procedures:

Warm up (15 minutes): Students will do a warm-up written reflection based on their research of 2016 potential Presidential Candidates, and identifying major current events.

Lecture (25 minutes): Teacher will introduce the concepts with visual aids via a PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint will specifically define the electoral process that is used for presidential primaries, and explain how caucuses are used to elect candidates to represent a political party for a national convention. The lecture will introduce Presidential Elections after the National Convention process, but will be covered more in depth (as well as the electoral college system) the following class period.

Activity (Simulation – 25 Minutes):

**IEP and ELL students are encouraged to participate as best they can. If participating in an activity such as this is not suited to their needs, they can write a response instead of actively participating. In the event of a kinetic limitation, the student will be responsible for voting from their location and submitting in on paper to the teacher. “Skype” will be used to keep these students involved.

Students will watch YouTube clip of Katie Couric explaining how the Iowa Caucus works on the CBS news. (link provided above)

Students will participate both in a simulation of a Democrat election at the Iowa Caucus, and a Republican election at the Iowa Caucus. Students will be voting for their favorite candy in this election, much like a citizen would be voting for their favorite candidate. First, the Republican simulation will have students privately cast their vote for their favorite candy. After giving students one minute to consider their feelings, they must write down their vote and give it to teacher. Whichever candy wins the popular vote will win that election.

The Democratic election is much more sophisticated for three reasons; The vote is public, voters may be swayed, and a “level of viability” must be reached (in this case, four students). In four different areas in the room, a sign will be posted for each different type

of candy. Voters will stand in the location that represents their vote. Only groups with six students make it to the second round. Voters that have already achieved this level of viability must collaborate and create a one-minute argument to persuade voters why their candy is best (i.e. “I like Swedish Fish, because they are sweet and long-lasting.”). After the first round of voting, students of voting minority may elect to not participate anymore. This process is continued until only two types of candy are left, and one wins with a majority over the other. (This simulation will almost certainly take exactly two rounds)

Discussion (10 Minutes): Students will sit in a circle around the room, and the teacher will facilitate a class discussion on the activity, how the process of voting works in Iowa Caucus, and how this might be important for our government (both local, state, and federal).

Example Prompt Questions: Which method was more effective? Do you think both are fair? How would campaigns and advertisements affect your opinion? Was anyone “swayed” by other people to join their group as a result of the public vote? Why might the Iowa Caucus specifically be important? What is the significance of this activity? Should members of a “constitutional democracy” be using these methods to vote in caucuses?

Post-National Convention Presidential Campaigns

Students will view a brief history on Presidential Debates:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Y8SZDH3B_4 (Hubert Humphrey against Agnew)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YmCDaXeDRI4> (“I Like Ike”)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbIfVEboAzg> (1964 President Johnson)

Students will read a short article from TIME magazine:

Activity #2 (15 Minutes): Students will be familiarized with two court cases, Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission (2010) and Bush vs. Gore (2000) Supreme Court case ruling, and how they have effected Presidential elections. They will be covering Presidential Elections the following class period. Students will do a think, pair share in pairs as a closing activity before class ends.

Assessments: During the activity and classroom discussion, teacher will make note of students who actively participated and followed directions. Participation includes both in small group work, individualized voting, and whole class discussion. For homework, students are to write a one-page summary of the differences between Democrats and Republicans in terms of voting in the Iowa Caucus.