

Candidate Guest Speakers

Activity Description: Candidates running for election for local offices (e.g, first selectman, state senator, representative for state house, etc.) are invited to speak to students in Civics, Advanced Placement, U.S. History, and or Advanced Placement U.S. History classes. Prior to candidate guest speaker visits, students will utilize various forms of media to research local and state issues. Using the Question Formulation Technique (QFT), students will generate questions for the speakers. On the day of the guest speaker visits, candidates will give a brief description of their experiences and explain their decision to enter into local or state politics, but the session will be driven mostly by the students' QFT questions. Additionally, students will be coached to ask follow-up questions prior to the candidate visits. A debriefing session will occur following candidate guest speaker visits, in which students share overall observations of candidate's appearance, demeanor, ability to connect to the student audience, knowledge of the issues, stands on the issues, ability to answer student questions, and whether students feel the candidate will be successful on Election Day. To encourage interdisciplinary involvement students in a Video Production class or Journalism class could be invited to film the candidate guest speaker sessions and produce a film narrative of the event, which could include brief interviews with students, candidates, teachers, and/or administrators. The student produced film could be viewed by students in the school that did not attend the event and/or could be broadcast on a district television channel or website to further engage community members. Additionally, students in English Language Arts classes could be asked to write a journal reflection about their impressions of the candidates, for whom they would vote for and why if they had the opportunity to do so, and their overall thoughts on the electoral process.

Age Level: High School

Red, White & Blue Schools Rubric Connections:

- Electoral process taught in social studies classes uses innovative approaches and involves student-centered hands on learning.
- Electoral process is taught through active engagement and participation with school and community partners.
- Electoral process is taught in an interdisciplinary fashion, involving other disciplines beyond social studies, and whole school participation.
- Electoral process is taught by examining the process, candidate's views on issues, and their impact on daily lives.
- Electoral process is taught by utilizing various forms of media and outreach to communicate projects and learning.
- Students personal understanding of and participation in the electoral process grew.