

## MHCC UNIT PLAN #3

**Grade Level:** High School

### **ABSTRACT:**

Students will collectively determine a course of action based upon extensive research of a public policy issue and develop an action plan. Students will report the results of their plan and evaluate its effectiveness.

### **PRIMARY STANDARD AND BENCHMARK ADDRESSED:**

VII.1HS 2

**ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE ALL COMPONENTS OF LESSON:** 4 class sessions of approximately 55 minutes for each session.

Note: These sessions should not be scheduled on consecutive days as students will need time to conduct activities outlined in their local action plan.

### **MATERIALS:**

- Overhead transparencies
- All documents pertaining to work completed (research, personal writings, survey results, interviews, policy evaluations, etc.) with regard to Units #1 and #2.

### **PROCEDURE:**

Day 1

Using class discussion outcomes from Unit #2, the teacher will facilitate a decision-making exercise for students to select the most appropriate course of action. The teacher may say to students, “You have each presented an individual analysis of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of an issue of public policy. As a class, we must decide upon the best course of action for ourselves to become involved with this public policy issue. Therefore we need to determine what our main purpose for citizen involvement is and arrive at the best possible course of action for our class to become engaged in this public policy issue.” Download #1: *Desired Outcomes of Citizen Involvement* may assist students with the identification of their desired outcome for involvement.

## Day 2

Once students have identified the most important outcome of their public policy endeavor, the teacher will facilitate the design of an action plan.

Download #2: ***Developing an Action Plan: Asking the Important Questions*** will help ensure that all important tasks to the completion of engagement will be addressed as students plan and conduct activities to advance their views on public policy issues.

## Day 3

\*Note: It is important to provide students with appropriate timelines to conduct activities listed in the action plan before the reporting of results.

The teacher will facilitate the reporting of results from conducted activities that were addressed in the action plan. Download #3: ***Guidelines for Reporting Results*** will provide students requirements and grading criteria for reporting their results.

## Day 4

Now that students have reported the results of their conducted activities, the teacher will facilitate a class discussion for the creation of evaluation criteria for the action plan. The teacher may address specific categories of the action plan with regard to process, results, personal learning, overall project success, etc.) The teacher might say to students, “You have conducted your planned activities and gathered the results from those activities. Now it is time to establish the criteria you will use to evaluate whether your activities were or were not successful.” Download #4: ***Possible Criteria for the Evaluation of an Action Plan*** may be used as a comparison to the student-designed criteria for action plan evaluation.

Once students have established the evaluation criteria for the action plan, the teacher will assign a written reflection about the action plan. Download #5: ***Reflection: Individual and Team Assignments*** may be used to help students reflect upon the process of design, implementation, and evaluation of the action plan.

Assessment: An overall assessment of the elements of responsible personal conduct could be used to evaluate students as they plan and conduct activities to advance their views on public policy, report the results of their plan, and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. Download #6: ***Holistic Features for Responsible Personal Conduct and an Analytic Scoring***

***Guide for Responsible Personal Conduct*** could be used to assist with the overall assessment of students.

## **WEB SITES:**

Michigan Legislature: This site provides information on all pieces of State legislation as well as a listing of State Representatives, a calendar of legislative events, and an on-line version of the publication, ***A Citizen's Guide to State Government***. [www.house.mi.gov/citizen.asp](http://www.house.mi.gov/citizen.asp)

Michigan Youth Caucus: This interactive web site for high school students provides them an opportunity to debate issues important to Michigan's youth online with peers across the state. It may also be used as a resource for issue topics: [www.michiganyouthcaucus.org](http://www.michiganyouthcaucus.org)

The Civics Institute (formerly, Michigan Civics Institute): This web site is a great free resource of local and state of Michigan government lessons for secondary teachers to use. It could be helpful for preparing students to present to the Michigan House Civics Commission: [www.civicsinstitute.net](http://www.civicsinstitute.net) or [www.civicsinstitute.com](http://www.civicsinstitute.com)

Highestwire: This web site is an online news service for young people between the ages of 15-22. It can be used to generate possible topics for issues: <http://highestwire.com/>

Public Achievement: This organization's web site provides tools for getting students actively involved in civics projects:  
[http://www.publicachievement.org/5\\_resources.html](http://www.publicachievement.org/5_resources.html)

*Active Citizenship Today*: This section of the Close Up Foundation's web site provides ordering information for their Active Citizenship Today Field Guide:  
<http://www.closeup.org/cgi/pubs/pubs.pl?action=media&type=1&id=11210318485852>

## Desired Outcomes of Citizen Involvement

	<b>INFORM/EDUCATE</b>	<b>INFLUENCE/CHANGE</b>	<b>CREATE/BUILD</b>	<b>SERVICE</b>
<b>Reasons for involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To raise public awareness of issue</li> <li>▪ To educate a specific population</li> <li>▪ To engage more people in the work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Affect legislation</li> <li>▪ Influence public opinion</li> <li>▪ Change school/site or local policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community pride</li> <li>▪ Available public facilities</li> <li>▪ Make your mark</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Help others</li> <li>▪ Address a need</li> </ul>
<b>Examples of student involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make a brochure</li> <li>▪ Write a book</li> <li>▪ Make a video</li> <li>▪ Hold a public meeting</li> <li>▪ Presentations</li> <li>▪ Perform a play</li> <li>▪ Organize a peace march</li> <li>▪ Distribute magnets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with legislators and lobbyists</li> <li>▪ Change INS policy on the Citizenship test</li> <li>▪ Organized off-leash pet running areas</li> <li>▪ Changed a school mascot</li> <li>▪ Changed attitudes on sexual harassment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the park board to install recycle bins at park</li> <li>▪ Start a community garden</li> <li>▪ Build a playground</li> <li>▪ Plant trees</li> <li>▪ Paint a mural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clean up a park</li> <li>▪ Work at food shelf</li> </ul>

## Developing an Action Plan Asking the Important Questions Guide

The following questions are those that you will probably want to ask before you take any action regarding an issue of public policy. Once you have the answers to these important questions you can begin to build a plan of action that you will undertake.

### **Defining the Issue and Identifying Problems**

What is the issue? Are there any problems associated with this issue?  
In what ways does this issue or problem affect your community?  
What groups or individuals are the most affected by this problem or issue?  
Are there already people or groups in your community that are trying to “tackle” this issue or problem? If so, what are they trying to do?

### **Defining Goals**

Do you have any goals with regard to your issue? If so, what are they?

### **Consideration of Options**

Do you have options as you address this issue or problem? If so, what are they?  
Can you determine your best option?  
Do you have the time, money, materials, and contacts that you might need to exercise your best option? If not, are there ways that you might attain these things?

### **Identifying and Assigning Tasks**

What tasks and or activities must you complete in order to reach your goal (s)? (Be as detailed as possible as this is an important step.)  
Who will take care of each of the listed tasks and or activities?

### **Identification of Obstacles**

Are there any major obstacles that might stand in your way? If so, who or what are they? How will you overcome those identified obstacles?

### **Timeline for Completion of Tasks**

Each task or activity must be assigned to a person or group of people. When is a reasonable amount of time for each task or activity to be completed? Be sure that each task or activity is given a deadline for completion.

### **Identification of Partners**

Are there people in your community who might support your project? (Examples of institutions that might lend support could include: government, businesses, non-profit organizations, the media, etc.) If so, who should be contacted and how? Who will make those contacts? Again, at this step a deadline should also be assigned.

### **Evaluation Plan Design**

How will you decide if your project is successful? Who should be involved in the decision?

### **Establishment of a Budget**

Will you need resources such as money, skills, materials, and/or people to help with the project? Where and how will you get the help you need? List all materials and supplies that you will need along with the amount of money that you might need for each item? How will you meet your needs, including the raising of money to obtain supplies and materials?

## GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING RESULTS OF ACTION PLAN

You have taken the time to carefully plan and conduct the activities in your action plan. It is now time to report the results of your actions. Whether your actions included research (letter writing for information, surveying, attendance at meetings, etc.) or actual participation in an activity (creation of a product, assistance with an on-going project, etc.) you will need to record what happened during the time spent engaging in your action plan activities. For example, if you contacted a State Representative for information about a public policy issue, were your questions answered? What did you find out from the contact? Were you referred to the appropriate information?

A good way to help keep track of the information that you have gathered or the results that you have obtained is to keep these things in mind:

- **Create a “before” and “after” grid.** Examine your actions both before you get started and after you have finished. Descriptions and pictures can provide you with a “before snapshot” and an “after snapshot” for purposes of comparison during a final report.
- **Keep track of your actions.** Record the amount of time spent on each task and the direct results (if possible) of the time spent. This will help you later determine if the time you spent on a task yielded any specific results.
- **Record your progress.** Document any direct result of your actions. Pictures, video recordings, answered requests for information, and minutes from meetings can all be helpful with evaluation at a later time.
- **Make comparisons.** Compare your specific efforts in a specific location with similar surroundings. If your project is occurring at a local level, compare your actions to similar actions taken in another local community.

Based upon information gathered, you must find a way to report your outcomes. Powerpoint presentations, posters, picture boards, petitions, charts, graphs, diagrams, and models are just some of the many ways that you may choose to display your results for presentation.

Just a few reminders when preparing your results presentation:

- Be careful with statistics. Numbers can often be displayed in a misleading manner. Watch for easy patterns or extrapolations. Watch for differing scales or graphs when comparisons are being made. Ask the following questions of all statistics:
  - Are the statistics relevant to the subject?
  - Where are the statistics coming from?
  - Is the source of the statistics valid and reliable?
  - Do the statistics make sense?

- Are the statistics complete?
- Are the statistics accurately presented on a graph?
- Watch out for irrelevant arguments that avoid the public policy issue.
- Be on the lookout for arguments that offer no proof.
- Watch out for propaganda. Two (2) questions to help avoid this are:
  - What is a particular message or statement supporting and why?
  - Is this a good idea?

## EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR ACTION PLAN

You have spent a considerable amount of time and effort planning and conducting the activities in your action plan. It is now important to evaluate whether or not your activities were successful. Use the following questions to assist you with determining whether or not the action plan was effective.

With regard to the measurement of results:

- As you look back upon your original goals, do you think that overall, you met your goals? Did your project make a difference? If so, how? Do you think that the results achieved will be long-term results?
- Do you think that you had to work too hard and for too long a time to achieve your goals? Why or why not? Think about the concept of opportunity cost—what did you give up to achieve some of your specific goals?
- If you had to create an action plan all over again, what would you do differently?

With regard to your action plan:

- How well did your plan work? Were you able to accomplish your group's goals? Did you and your classmates spend an appropriate amount of time on each task? Was there anything that might have been left out? Was your planning effective or could it have gone better? If so, how?
- Did your team work well together? Were there any ways that you could have worked better through a more effective design of an action plan?
- What problems did you encounter? Were you able to solve them? Was this because of the design of the action plan?

Use these questions to prepare your written reflection about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the action plan. In your reflection be sure to:

- ✓ Address the above questions completely.
- ✓ Evaluate both the process of creating the action plan as well as the overall results of the plan itself.
- ✓ Provide insight as to what could've made the entire process better.

<p>Reflection Individual and Team Assignments</p>
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As part of a class and as an individual, you have taken the time to select, research, discuss, and write about an issue of public policy in your local community or at the state level of government. You may have even established an action plan to thoroughly research your issue and develop steps of action to take to resolve your selected issue. Now, it is time to reflect back upon the entire process. Consider the following questions for reflection:

Individual Reflection: (Answer this question on your own)

- Have you personally changed as a result of this project? If so, how?
- Did you learn anything while working on this project? What new ideas or knowledge did you obtain by working on this project?
- Will you do anything differently in the future when you work with a team on a project that might be similar to this? What changes would you make?

The BIG picture: (Answer this question with a partner or with your small group)

- How well did you plan? Was your planning effective?
- Did you encounter any problems? If so, how did you solve or overcome them?
- Did your group work well together? Did you learn anything new about working as a team? If so, what did you learn?
- What have you accomplished? Is there more that needs to be done? Is it something that your group or class can reasonably do?
- Do you think that your project made an impact? Were you able to solve a problem or bring more knowledge to a community because of what you did?
- Have you learned anything about your school or local community because of your efforts? If so, what have you learned?

**HOLISTIC FEATURE SCORING FOR  
RESPONSIBLE PERSONAL CONDUCT:  
HIGH SCHOOL**

<b>Points</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>3</b>	<p>In order to receive a 3-point score, the student must independently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plan and conduct activities intended to advance their views on public policy</li> <li>• report result of plan in clear and concise presentation</li> <li>• evaluate the effectiveness of the plan</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p>In order to receive a 2-point score, the student must independently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plan and conduct activities intended to advance their views on public policy</li> <li>• achieve the standard on 1 of the remaining 2 elements</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p>In order to receive a 1-point score, the student must independently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plan and conduct activities intended to advance their views on public policy</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<p>In order to receive a 0-point score, the student will show no evidence of any of the elements.</p>

**PLEASE NOTE:** This scoring guide is designed to be used with its corresponding Classroom Analytic Scoring Guide. There are four elements (features) to this task. The four elements are listed in the 4-point score description. To receive credit for the elements listed above, a student must reach or exceed Performance Level 3 (see Classroom Analytic Scoring Guide) for that element.

## CLASSROOM ANALYTIC SCORING GUIDE

<b>Standard: VII.1</b>		<b>Responsible Personal Conduct</b>		<b>High School</b>
	<b>Plan and conduct</b>	<b>Report</b>	<b>Evaluate Effectiveness</b>	
<b>Performance Level 4</b>	Plans and conducts activities well suited to advance their views on matters of public policy.	Acknowledging complexities and opposing viewpoints and utilizing a variety of resources and technology the student reports the results of the plan in a clear and concise presentation.	Determines criteria by which to assess the results of the plan and credibly defends its fairness; and evaluates the plan's effectiveness based on the criteria in a logical and defensible manner.	
<b>Performance Level 3</b>	Plans and conducts activities intended to advance their views on matters of public policy	Reports the result of the plan in a clear and concise presentation acknowledging views of others.	Determines criteria by which to assess the results of the plan and evaluates the plan fairly.	
<b>Performance Level 2</b>	Planning or implementation of activities intended to advance their views on matters of public policy was incomplete	Reports the result of the plan but description is unclear or incomplete.	Criteria are not well described or incomplete and the connection to the plan's evaluation is unclear or confusing.	
<b>Performance Level 1</b>	Did not plan or conduct an activity intended to advance their views on matters of public policy.	Does not report the result of the plan.	Does not produce an evaluation of the plan based on any criteria.	

**PLEASE NOTE:** Performance Level 3 is the standard. The student is successful and has met the standard when he/she reaches Performance Level 3. Performance Level 4 is included for comparison purposes only.