**Social Studies Home Learning Activities**

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| Standard BenchmarkCivics 4 | Develop and employ the skills necessary to work with government programs and agencies.Students will understand the process of working within a political party, a commission engaged in examining public policy, or a citizen's group. |
| Grade Band | 9-12 |
| Vocabulary/Key Concepts |  |
| For the Teacher | In this activity, students role-play as participants in a youth citizens group to develop recommendations for a return to school transition plan. This can be done individually, whole class, or both. If individually, students propose their own recommendations. If as a whole class, assign students to committees in which they work on separate return-to-school issues then bring their committees’ recommendations to the whole class for consideration. If done online, you can explain the activity, give students their assignments, and then have them work in breakout rooms committees “during class” or in their own social media groups after making assignments. When the breakout committees conclude their meetings, committee chairs can share their committees’ recommendations with the entire class for consideration. Then the teacher or student chairperson can allow time for whole class discussion, amendments, and votes (use Zoom polls?) on each aspect of the plan.As an authentic extension, students can then submit their recommendations to the school board, or have one or more school board members join an online class session to hear and respond to students’ ideas. A handout containing basic parliamentary procedures that students were introduced to in grades 4-5 is included for teachers who wish to structure the youth “citizens group” meeting and give students additional practice using this “formal method” used by democratic groups function (see civics standard 4 for grades 4-5). |

**Participate in a Return to School Citizen’s Planning Group**

**Directions**

Schools have been closed since March due to the coronavirus and will remain so through the rest of this school year. While online and at-home teaching and learning continue, schools and districts are now thinking about safe and effective ways to transition back into schools in the fall. In fact, leaders around the country are formulating plans as you read this.

Policymakers are interested in students’ ideas about what the “return to school” plans should look like, as you were the ones experiencing many of the shifts from classroom to at-home learning. There are five specific return issues that they want you to consider.

**Scenario:** Your school board announced plans to set up a youth-citizens group to begin planning for students to return to school in the fall of 2020. You and members of your class are asked to serve and contribute ideas for the return to school plan. They hope that students can come up with great ideas that they have not thought about. In this activity, your group’s task is to create recommendations for the “return to school” plan with an opportunity to suggest some or all of them to members of your principal or school board members.

The first step is for each member of the student citizens group is to think of ideas independently, then discuss and choose the best ones in small committees. Each committee’s recommendations will then be shared, discussed, and voted upon by the entire class.

Before deciding on which recommendations to make, do cost-benefit analyses for each idea. What will the costs of each recommendations be, and what will the benefits be? Use the results of your cost-benefit analyses to decide what to recommend and how to support each recommendation.

The issues that your class has been asked to consider appear below.

**Issues to Consider and Required Elements of this Return to School Plan**

* **Social Distancing** – experts from the field of medicine believe that the coronavirus will still be around in the fall and that social distancing will be necessary to ensure that it does not spread. Among the matters to consider are: will all grades return every day; the numbers of students who may be in classes, on busses, in the cafeteria for breakfast and lunch, in hallways before and after school as well as between classes; how to prevent crowds entering and leaving the school building at the beginning and end of a school day; a school-wide hall pass policy that limits the number of students in the hallways; staggered bell schedules etc.

How should a return to school plan address the issue of social distancing?

* **Learning Loss** – Learning loss is a term used to describe the phenomenon whereby students forget what they learned due to being out of school for an extended period of time. It can also refer to content that was not covered because schools were closed. In many cases, less learning occurred during the time when schools shifted to online instruction, and when schools decided not to move forward with “new learning”. Additionally, many students may not have had access to laptops or the internet while others did. As a result, those students were unable to participate in online learning sessions. Therefore, there may also be gaps in how much was learned between the “hads” (had technology) and the “had nots” (did not have technology).

How should a return to school plan address the issue of learning loss?

* **Safety** – we should assume that the coronavirus will still be around and that we will not know definitely know who has had it, who has it, and who does not have it. In addition to social distancing, what other measures might be put in place to limit chances that the virus will spread throughout the school building (e.g. require masks, testing negative, taking temperatures, handwashing, sanitizing the building and busses, borrowing of school supplies such as pencils, trading food/snacks etc.)?

How should a return to school plan address the issue of safety?

* **Event Planning** - there are many events that take place during the school year such as dances, proms, graduations, awards nights etc. Some students are missing-out on those this year. Should they be rescheduled? You also have to think about events that will normally occur next school year.

How should a return to school plan address the issue of event planning?

* **Extra-Curricular Activities** – in addition to scheduling classes, any return to school plan must include recommendations for extra-curricular activities such as sports and clubs. Some sports can pose higher risks of spreading due to close contact, perspiration etc. In addition, will fans be permitted to attend any activities that might be held?

How should a return to school plan address the issue of extra-curricular activities?

* **Plan B Group** – smart citizens always have a Plan B in mind. What if schools cannot re-open? Based on what you are experiencing during school closure this semester, what recommendations do you have if schools remain closed in the fall? Focus on the following issues:
	+ test everyone at the beginning of the year to determine what they know or skip the testing and begin teaching on day 1?
	+ continue online learning or use packets of lessons sent to students?
	+ let teaching proceed as if it is a normal school year or pick-up with the content where schools left off when schools closed back in March?
	+ grade work or pass-fail?

**Cost-Benefit Analysis Worksheets**

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| **Costs of the Recommendation** | **Benefits of the Recommendation** |
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**Recommendations**

**Return to School Planning**

**Youth Citizen Group**

**Issue**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Modified Parliamentary Procedures**

**Rules of Debate**

**Formal Method by Which Democratic Groups Function**

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| **If You Want to Do This…** | **Say This…** | **Must You Wait for the Chairperson to Call on You?** | **Must it be “seconded?”** | **Majority Needed to Approve** |
| **Debate a particular resolution.** | *“Motion to discuss resolution # \_\_\_”* | Yes | Yes | Simple Majority (1/2 plus 1) |
| **End debate on a resolution and vote.** | *“Motion to end debate.”* | Yes | Yes | Simple Majority (1/2 plus 1) |
| **Put a resolution aside for while to discuss another resolution.** | *“Motion to table resolution # \_\_\_”* | Yes | Yes | Simple Majority (1/2 plus 1) |
| **Hold a short meeting to plan a strategy or to discuss an idea with your supporters.** | *“Motion for a \_\_\_ minute caucus.”* | Yes | Yes | Simple Majority (1/2 plus 1) |
| **Ask for the group to be quiet so you can hear the speaker or ask the chairperson a question.** | *“Point of personal privilege.”* | No | No | None |
| **Ask the chair to enforce the rules.** | *“Point of order.”* | No | No | None |
| **Bring the meeting to an end.** | *“Motion to adjourn the meeting.”* | Yes | Yes | Simple Majority (1/2 plus 1) |