

IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT (9-12)

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to understand how checks and balances operate in project implementation through the lens of School Participatory Budgeting and compare them to the United States government systems.

STANDARDS:

- **HS.SP4.1** Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past and present.
- **HS.SP4.3** Integrate evidence from multiple relevant sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument.
- **HS.C3.1** Examine how the United States Constitution established a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits and analyze how those powers, responsibilities, and limits have changed over time. (first half)
- **HS.C4.4** Analyze the purpose, process, implementation, and consequences of decision making and public policies in multiple settings and at various levels.
- **HS.C4.5** Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems, instances of such problems in multiple contexts, and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.
- **HS.C4.6** Assess options for action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.
- **HS.H2.2** Analyze approaches to conflict management and resolution.

CIVICS EXAM QUESTIONS:

- What stops one branch of the government from becoming too powerful? **A:** Checks & Balances

TIMELINE: This lesson is best suited after the Voting phase, during the Implementation and Evaluation phase. This lesson serves as a follow-up on the election results.

APPROXIMATE LESSON LENGTH: One 60-minute class period, plus additional time for creating the specifics of the implementation oversight plan if needed.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS:

- [US Constitution Article II, Section 3: Take Care Clause](#)
- Sticky Notes

VOCABULARY:

- Checks & Balances
- Executive Branch
- Legislative Branch

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Engage

- **Think-Pair-Share:** Pose the following scenario to students to encourage individual reflection: Imagine Congress passes a law and allocates federal funding to provide every K-12 school with free internet access. The Department of Education is responsible for implementing and managing the program. What if the Department of Education just... ignores the law?
 - Have students pair up with a peer to share their reflections on this scenario.
- Bring students back together as a whole group. Invite students to share their own reflections or highlights from the paired conversation.
- Then have the class discuss the following questions:
 - Which branch of government is responsible for the Department of Education?
(A: Executive because *it is a cabinet-level agency*)
 - What are some legitimate reasons for the potential delay in implementing free internet access in every K-12 setting?
 - What should happen when someone in power fails to carry out the law?
- Explain that in School Participatory Budgeting, students vote on projects to fund, which is similar to how Congress passes laws. Once a project is approved, who ensures it actually happens? Let students know that they will explore how checks and balances apply when the executive branch (school leadership) fails to implement a decision, and what can be done about it.

2. Explore

- Display the text of the *U.S. Constitution Article II, Section 3 Take Care Clause* for the students. Provide time for students to read or review, while highlighting specific phrases and language for emphasis or clarification.
- Next, have the students analyze the text to answer the following questions in pairs or small groups:
 - What power does Article II, Section 3 give to the President?
 - Which of these relates to enforcing the laws?
 - What does it mean to “faithfully execute” the laws?
 - In what ways could the executive fail to do that?
 - Why do you think the Constitution includes this clause?

- What might happen if the President could simply ignore laws passed by Congress?
- Bring students back together as a whole group to have students share their responses and foster a class discussion on common themes across responses.
- Now connect the Take Care Clause to the School Participatory Budgeting process by asking the students the following questions in a class discussion:
 - In our School Participatory Budgeting process, who acts like Congress? (Answer: *students*)
 - Who would you say acts like the executive branch? (Answer: *principal, district officials*)
 - Are there ever any valid reasons school leaders might delay or alter a project?
 - How should they communicate these delays?
 - Should there be transparency and/or consequences?
- Explain to students that just as Congress holds the President accountable for executing laws, students have the power to respectfully follow up on School Participatory Budgeting project implementation when the process stalls.

3. Explain

- Even after great ideas are approved, it doesn't always become a reality right away. This happens in schools, cities, and even Congress. Implementation often involves approvals, scheduling, permits, funding, and follow through with several people. Oversight, which is asking the right questions and holding people accountable, is an important part of implementation. Much like members of Congress who conduct oversight of federal agencies, you also have the power to follow up and ask questions about your project.
 - **Practice Scenario:** Let's say students voted to install a water bottle refill station months ago. We might ask, "why hasn't it happened yet"? Some follow up questions might be,
 - Was the funding approved?
 - Did the facilities team have time?
 - Was there an issue in the district we don't know about?
 - Now I can come up with questions to ask adults to find out what is going on.
- **Activity:** Split students up into three groups and assign one scenario to each group.
 - **Scenario #1:** Students voted to install a secure phone charging station in the library. It hasn't been implemented yet.
 - **Scenario #2:** Students voted to turn a classroom into a "calm corner" with bean bags, soft lighting, and journals. It hasn't been implemented yet.
 - **Scenario #3:** Students voted to paint a large mural in the hallway with the school's motto as the theme. It hasn't been implemented yet.

- Have students complete the following based on their scenario:
 - List possible reasons for the delay (funding, permits, scheduling)
 - Develop “why” questions they could ask to understand the lack of implementation.
- Explain to students that, like federal laws, implementation takes time and involves several people, approvals, and systems. Oversight helps ensure follow-through and transparency.

4. Elaborate

- Explain to students how Congress holds the executive branch accountable using hearings, investigations, and follow-up to ensure laws are implemented. This system is part of checks and balances. In PB, students can adopt similar strategies when projects are delayed or ignored.
- **Activity:** Students will create an Implementation Oversight Plan. First, students will consider their winning project and answer the following questions as a class.
 - What questions do we need to ask?
 - Who do we need to talk to?
 - What information do we need?
 - What roadblocks do we expect?
 - What power do we have as students?
 - What can we politely demand, escalate, or negotiate?
- Students will create their Implementation Oversight Plan with three *specific* actions they can take and consider the following:
 - Timeline: when will we follow up?
 - Accountability: who is responsible for each step?
- **Explain** to the students that they should model their role like Congress, who holds the executive accountable with facts, follow-ups, and reasonable pressure.

5. Evaluate

- **Exit Ticket:** Students will contribute to a class “implementation wall,” which serves as a visual display to help track their progress during this process. Each student will receive four sticky notes (additional notes available upon request). On each note, students will respond to the different reflection prompts below. If a student has multiple ideas for a single prompt, they will use additional sticky notes.
 - **Immediate Action:** What is one action I can take this week to move our project forward?
 - **Anticipated Challenge:** What is an obstacle that could interfere with implementation and what can I do to overcome it?

- **Long Term Goal:** What is the outcome I hope to see as a result of this project?
- **Collaboration:** Is there someone on the team whose support or skills I need? What help might I need? Who can I go to?

● Have students place their sticky notes under labeled sections on the wall. Students will go through each section and reflect on the ideas shared with their peers.