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Introduction

This manual is intended to help you organize your school's Student Vote Day. On the following pages you will find suggestions on how to coordinate the vote using paper ballots and instructions for reporting your results.

If voting with paper ballots is not feasible, please contact the CIVIX team to discuss online voting options.

There are several possible methods for running Student Vote Day at your school, but in all instances, widespread participation is strongly recommended. By practicing now, students will be more inclined and prepared to participate in the voting process in the future.

Some of the suggested voting methods have been adapted slightly because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, please use your best judgment and consult with your school administration to determine an approach that will work best for your school while adhering to the most up-to-date public health guidelines.

Here is a list of items you will need for your Student Vote Day:

- ☑ **Ballot boxes**
- ☑ **Voting screens**
- ☑ **Ballots**
- ☑ **Statement of the Poll (reporting form)**
- ☑ **Seals or tape**

You will need to provide your own seals or tape for securing the ballot boxes to ensure they are not tampered with during the voting process.

COVID Considerations

Below are some considerations for holding your vote with physical materials:

- Have each class coordinate their own vote to avoid large gatherings or co-mingling of students from different classes or cohorts.

- Be sure to practice physical distancing if using a stationary polling station. Add markers on the floor if possible.

- Have students use their own pencils or pens to mark their ballot.

- Consider having students vote at their own desks to limit movement or close contact.

- Teachers can count the ballots, or election officials can be limited to a small group of students.

- Ask poll officials to wear masks if possible.

- Use gloves when counting ballots and/or wait several hours before handling them.

Be sure to check with your school administration to ensure that all activities are being conducted in accordance with the most up-to-date health and safety requirements.

If you have any questions or concerns about how any materials or activities could be adapted to meet the specific requirements at your school, please contact our team.

Student Vote Day

If possible, we suggest you hold your Student Vote Day in advance of the official election day.

Results should be reported to CIVIX by 2pm on Monday, May 10.

Voting and submitting your results by the posted deadline provides CIVIX with time to prepare the results platform and media announcements. It also gives students a chance to share their enthusiasm with their families and encourage voter turnout.

Voting Methods

The following voting methods have been designed to assist in the organization of your vote. You may choose to use one or more of these suggestions or develop another method that works for your school.

Method A: VOTE BY CLASSROOM (stationary voting scenario)

Teachers take their classes to the polling station at pre-set times throughout the day. An arrangement in which classes are called down by class or grade is suggested to ensure that students do not have the opportunity to vote more than once. When students arrive at the voting booths, designated election officials instruct them on where to line up to cast a ballot. This method of voting allows for an authentic experience of visiting a polling station. Consider offering additional voting booths in order to process the number of students in the time allotted. Alternatively, consider arranging for classes to vote over a number of days so that all students have the opportunity to participate.

Method B: VOTING ON OWN TIME (stationary voting scenario)

The polling station is open all day, and students are only able to vote on their own time. When students arrive at the polling station, designated election officials tell them where to line up to cast a ballot. While it is the most authentic, this method of voting often leads to a lower voter turnout and a surge of voters in short periods of time, such as between classes and during lunch. Consider offering more voting booths in order to be prepared for high voter traffic.

Method C: HOMEROOM VOTING (in-class voting scenario)

Before the school day begins, distribute ballots to all participating teachers and classrooms. At the beginning of homeroom class, each teacher hands out the ballots to students in their class. Students will vote immediately, and the teacher will collect the ballots shortly thereafter. Designated election officials collect the ballots from each class before the end of the period, using either a ballot box or envelope. All ballot boxes and/or envelopes are then taken to a secure room, where the ballots can be counted immediately or later in the day. This method makes voting very quick and easy, as it is completed in just a few minutes at the start of the day. However, student voters do not get the authentic experience of visiting a polling station. Consider providing an alternative voting option for students who do not have homeroom at the beginning of the day.

Method D: MOBILE polling STATION (in-class voting scenario)

During the first period of the day, designated election officials take voting booths from classroom to classroom. Generally, this method works well with three election officials per group: one poll supervisor and two election officers. When every class has had an opportunity to vote, all ballot boxes are taken to a secure room, where the ballots can be counted immediately or later in the day. This method of voting eliminates long lines, delays and the disruption caused by moving an entire class to a new location. Plan ahead so that there are enough mobile polling stations for all students to participate within one period of the day. It is suggested that you allow approximately 15 minutes for the mobile polling station to visit each classroom.

Suggested Guidelines

Roles for Student Vote Day

Usually students take on the roles of election officials so that they have a greater experience of the election process. However, due to the pandemic, it is suggested that roles be kept to a minimum. Below is a summary of key roles in an election.

- **Poll supervisors** are the officials responsible for conducting the student election and ensuring the vote is carried out in an efficient, orderly and voter-friendly fashion at all times.

- **Election officers** are the individuals who staff the polling location:

    - **Voters list officer:** responsible for crossing voters off the voters list;

    - **Ballot issuing officer:** responsible for providing ballots to voters;

    - **Ballot box officer:** responsible for monitoring the ballot boxes and verifying the initials on the ballot before it is placed in the ballot box;

    - **Ballot counting officer:** responsible for counting the ballots and filling in the vote tally sheet.

- **Scrutineers** are the individuals appointed by a candidate to act as an observer of the election process on election day. In the case of the Student Vote program, the Team Leader can appoint scrutineers for each candidate or race. Scrutineers may also be present when ballots are counted, but they may not handle the ballots in any way.

- **Student Vote Team Leader (an educator or administrator)** is the official liaison between the school and CIVIX and in charge of overseeing the entire process.

If you proceed with having students take on the roles of election officials, consider providing identification badges (refer to page 18 for templates).

Creating and Using a Voters List

A voters list is recommended when using a stationary voting scenario to provide authenticity and to ensure that students do not vote multiple times.

An extra copy of the class attendance sheet is a simple way to create the voters list for each class.

As with an actual voting scenario, when a student enters the polling station and is handed a ballot, the election officer will cross off the name of the student to indicate that they have participated in the election.

Ballots

Student Vote ballots include all or some of the candidates running for various positions in your local elections (e.g., mayor, councillor, education councillor).

If your ballot has multiple district, ward or subdistrict, you will need to provide guidance about which races are applicable to your students.

It may also be helpful to identify the applicable races in which students can vote by highlighting the title of each and/or ward/subdistrict number with a marker or highlighter.

It is strongly recommended that the Team Leader (or an appointed poll supervisor) initial the reverse side of each ballot before the commencement of Student Vote Day. This helps to validate the official Student Vote ballots for your school and ensure a secure process. This can be completed well in advance to avoid paper being handled by several people in a short amount of time, or you can use gloves.

Student Vote Election Requirements

Regardless of the voting method you select, the following is a list of requirements for Student Vote Day.

Before You Begin

- No campaign materials are permitted in the polling station or on those who work at the polling station. This rule is to ensure a completely impartial environment.

Sealing the Ballot Box

- Once the ballot box is folded together, the poll supervisor will show the inside of the empty box to the election officers and scrutineers so that all of the election officials can verify that the box is empty;

- The ballot box will be sealed using tape or seals;

- The tape or seals will be initialed by the Team Leader to show that they have authorized the ballot box for use at the polling station.

Receiving a Ballot at the Polling Station

- When a voter requests a ballot at the polling station, the ballot issuing officer will fold a ballot into thirds;

- The ballot issuing officer will verify that the ballot has been initialed by the Team Leader (or appointed poll supervisor) and will hand the folded ballot to the voter;

- The voter will take the ballot behind a voting screen to unfold the ballot in private, mark the ballot as they choose and refold the ballot;

- The voter will take the marked ballot to the ballot box officer monitoring the ballot box;

- Without unfolding the ballot, the ballot box officer will verify that the Team Leader's initials are visible on the ballot;

- The ballot box officer will return the verified ballot to the voter, who will put the ballot in the ballot box;

- In the event that a voter tears a ballot or makes a mistake on their ballot, the voter may return the ballot and request a new one. The first ballot will be declared a spoiled ballot, and the ballot issuing officer will write "spoiled" on the back of the ballot and keep it to the side.

Counting the Ballots

- The Team Leader will confirm that each ballot box is still sealed by the tape that they initialed before the polls opened and that neither the box nor the seal has been tampered with;

- The tape will be broken by the election officer who will open the box to count the ballots;

- Scrutineers may be present to observe that the process is completed fairly.

- The ballots will be separated, counted and recorded as accepted, rejected or spoiled.

  ACCEPTED – A ballot that has been properly marked for each office (see page 13). In most cases, there will be more than once race on the ballot. Therefore, one ballot section may be declared valid and another section rejected.

  REJECTED – A ballot that has not been marked properly and declared invalid by the DRO (see page 14). One ballot section may be declared valid and another section rejected.

  SPOILED – A ballot that has been kept out of the ballot box because it was mistakenly marked or torn and exchanged for a new one.

- Due to the composition of local government election ballots and the number of races, we suggest that you review and count one race at a time. Once all the ballots have been tallied for one race, you can move on to the next. The counting process takes longer than federal or provincial elections.

- Any questionable ballots will be left to the Team Leader to categorize according to the criteria describing a properly marked ballot;

- Ballots will not be counted again unless the Team Leader orders a recount to confirm the totals;

- Consider using a Tally Sheet to assist in the tabulation of votes (page 19).

Statement of the Poll

- The Statement of the Poll is an accounting of the ballots for Student Vote Day at your school;

- This accounting includes the number of accepted ballots, rejected ballots and spoiled ballots;

- The Team Leader will verify the results and sign off on the form;

- This form will constitute the official results of the election at your school.

- Please keep the Statement of the Poll form for one month after the Student Vote election in case your results need to be confirmed by CIVIX.

Properly Marked Ballots

Accepted ballot

To be counted for a candidate, a ballot must clearly indicate the preference of the voter. A voter may mark their ballot in any way they choose in the circle next to the name of the candidate(s) they wish to vote for in each applicable race.

The following examples have been provided to demonstrate a properly marked ballot:

· The voter uses a checkmark;
· The voter marks an X;
· The voter uses another type of mark;
· The voter shades the circle.

Please note that students may vote for more that one candidate if it is a multi-member race where multiple candidates are elected (e.g., five council members elected at-large, two council members in one ward).

BRODY BLUE	○
TONY TEAL	✓
VERONICA VIOLET	○
YASMIN YELLOW	○

BRODY BLUE	○
TONY TEAL	○
VERONICA VIOLET	✗
YASMIN YELLOW	○

BRODY BLUE	○
TONY TEAL	○
VERONICA VIOLET	○
YASMIN YELLOW	⊘

BRODY BLUE	●
TONY TEAL	○
VERONICA VIOLET	○
YASMIN YELLOW	○

Rejected ballot

A ballot will not be counted towards any candidate when it does not clearly indicate whom the voter is selecting.

The following examples have been provided to demonstrate a rejected ballot:

· The voter marks the ballot for more candidates than are being elected in a specific race (e.g., the voter selected two candidates, but only one candidate is elected in that race). This applies even if different symbols are used for different candidates, such as a checkmark for one candidate and an X for another;

· The voter marks the ballot in a way that identifies themselves;

· The voter leaves the ballot blank.

BRODY BLUE	①
TONY TEAL	②
VERONICA VIOLET	③
YASMIN YELLOW	④

BRODY BLUE	◯
TONY TEAL	◯
VERONICA VIOLET	◯
YASMIN YELLOW	◯

BRODY BLUE	◯
TONY TEAL	◯
VERONICA VIOLET	◯
YASMIN YELLOW	◯

BRODY BLUE	◯
TONY TEAL	◯
VERONICA VIOLET Bob	◯
YASMIN YELLOW	◯

Reporting Results

Step 1: Select your method of reporting

(A) **Report by phone**

Contact the CIVIX team at 1-866-488-8775 to report your school's results.

(B) **Report online**

Please visit http://studentvote.ca/vote/nblocal2021 and follow the prompts to submit your school's results.

Step 2: Enter/provide your School ID and Poll Code

Your school ID and poll code are located on your Statement of the Poll. These credentials will allow you or a CIVIX team member to access your school and local government information.

Step 3: Report your results

Report the results of your parallel election using the Statement of the Poll form and a ballot for reference. You will be asked to report the number of votes for each candidate and the number of rejected ballots. Please review the definitions on page 12.

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTE:

We require that you and your students keep your school's Student Vote results confidential until the closing of official polls on Monday, May 10.

This confidentiality is very important to ensure that the Student Vote results are released at the appropriate time and do not interfere with the official election in any way. There has been some concern that an early release of results could influence the outcome of the election.

Any school that releases the results of its election early will be removed from the Student Vote tallies and will be indefinitely suspended from participating in future programs.

Media Relations

While it is not necessary to contact the media regarding your Student Vote Day, media engagement is an option that you may wish to consider. Always remember to consult your school administration or department of education policies regarding media contact.

While media may be unable to visit your school during the COVID-19 pandemic, media outlets may be interested in publishing photos of your Student Vote Day or setting up virtual interviews with you or your students. If you are interested in media attention for you and your students, please contact the CIVIX team at hello@civix.ca or by phone at 1-866-488-8775.

Alternatively, you and your students can contact members of the media and make your own arrangements:

- Consider developing a working relationship early on – reporters tend to enjoy tracking the progress of one school or class in their community;
- Consider asking editorial staff to print articles or op-ed pieces written by students.
- Offer to share your own high-resolution photos or videos for publication.

We highly recommend keeping CIVIX informed of all of your media activities. Always ensure media releases have been signed in advance by any students in the photos.

Please remember that no matter how close a relationship you form with the media, you cannot divulge the results of your school's election before the close of the official polls.

VOTER IDENTIFICATION

NAME _____

CLASS/HOMEROOM _____

BIRTHDAY _____

SIGNATURE _____

VOTER ID CARD

NAME _____

CLASS/HOMEROOM _____

BIRTHDAY _____

SIGNATURE _____

POLL SUPERVISOR

NAME _____

🍁 **STUDENT VOTE 2021**

ELECTION OFFICER

NAME _____

🍁 **STUDENT VOTE 2021**

SCRUTINEER

NAME _____

CANDIDATE NAME _____

Tally Sheet

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Tally Sheet

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