



# The 2016 Presidential Election Simulation OVERVIEW

The 2016 Presidential Election Simulation is designed as a school-wide project that gives students a direct and experiential learning opportunity, taking advantage of the information and energy generated and circulated throughout the presidential election season, and injecting some of the fun for students of role-playing. It interleaves civics learning, politic science, and evidence-based argument.

This is an overview of the basic elements of the project.

## 1. Candidates

One student should be designated to take and play the role of each of the five candidates remaining in the 2016 presidential campaign – Hillary Clinton, Ted Cruz, John Kasich, Bernie Sanders, and Donald Trump.

If students cannot be recruited to take all five candidates, four of the five candidates make the simulation viable.

Students do not need to be of the same gender, race, ethnicity or age of the candidate they are representing.

It is possible that one or two of the current candidates will drop out of the race before the end of the simulation. In that event, the simulation will continue as though those candidates were still in, presenting students with their own partially “counter-factual” scenario.



## 2. Campaign Teams

Each candidate needs to have a small campaign team of 2 – 4 pledged and committed team members. The candidates' campaign team members should be submitted to one of the sponsoring teachers or administrators by the date on the implementation timeline. Each campaign team member should have a designated and defined role.

Roles for campaign team members can be defined by each individual campaign, but they can include any of the following.

**Campaign Manager** Person charged with managing all of the other campaign team members and generally ensuring the candidate has the best possible chance of winning the election.

**Communications Director** Person charged with messaging, argument-building, and implementing all voter communications and argumentation efforts, including interpersonal communications, social media strategy, and “PA Days” announcements.

**Debate Prep Director** Person charged with helping prepare answers to all of the debate questions and issues, and practicing them with the candidate in advance of the presidential debate.

**Marketing Director** Person charged with producing all posters, fliers, buttons, bulletin-board hangings, and all other campaign material for the candidate.

**Policy Director** Person charged with researching and formulating the policy positions and the arguments of the candidate for use in all means of campaigning and debating.



### **3. Campaigning**

Campaigning entails everything the candidate and his or her team do to make arguments for the candidate's superiority for the position of president, to communicate the candidate's messaging and issue positions to the electorate, and to try to convince the electorate to vote for the candidate.

Creativity, originality, and freshness are not only allowed in campaigning, they are strongly encouraged.

Campaigning cannot include anything that could be construed as bribery, and must always include some reference to the candidate's position on one or more of the five electoral issues in this simulation.

**Economy/Income Inequality**

**Education/Social Issues**

**Foreign Policy**

**Immigration**

**Taxes/Debt**

Campaigning can and should include creating and putting up "issue posters" (one issue per poster, stating the candidate's position on the issue and arguments in favor of this position), social media postings (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, etc.), lunch room campaign tables, fliers, bulletin board hangings, and interpersonal handshaking, etc.

### **4. PA Days**

For the week of May 16<sup>th</sup>, each candidate will get one of the days of the week to have campaign messages read before every period by the PA announcer (presumably the inimitable Ms. Loranger!). The messages should:

- ✓ Be about two sentences long



- ✓ Each refer to one policy argument
- ✓ Clearly refer back to the candidate
- ✓ Be labelled as to which period it should be read before
- ✓ Be submitted to Ms. Loranger by no later than Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>

Here's an example of a PA Day announcement for Hillary.

Candidate: Hillary Clinton

Period: Before 2<sup>nd</sup>

Text:

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton favors an internationalist, alliance-building, tough but friendly foreign policy, and has more foreign policy experience than all of the other candidates in the race put together. On May 27<sup>th</sup>, Vote Hillary!

## 5. Presidential Debate

On Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> we will have a presidential debate between all five of the candidates, on the stage of the auditorium, during 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> periods. We hope to have as large a student audience as possible. We need ideas and input on how to make that happen.

The candidates and their teams will get a list of the likely questions that they will be asked during the debate, specific probings on each of the five policy issues listed above. The candidates and their campaign teams should prepare and practice answers to each of the questions, though they will also be expected and led to respond to answers given by other candidates.

Les Lynn will moderate the debate (he's looking for a Wolf Blitzer beard and glasses, if anyone knows where to find these . . . .). If anyone wants to serve as co-moderator, just contact Les. We will also take questions from the student audience, including questions submitted by whole classes in advance (screened in advance of course).

## 6. Election



On Friday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, we will conduct the actual voting. This will take place on prepared ballots and voting rolls in the lunch room and media center. We could use Ms. Thomas's help with thinking through the possibility of on-line voting.

Election results will be announced either at the end of the day Friday, or on Monday morning. What we don't know right now is what – aside from the glory – does the winning candidate win? Thoughts and ideas – on this question, or on any of the above – are most invited and welcome.