

Appendix I

Teacher resource: Town hall meeting format

Here is a sample set of rules and procedures, you can tailor to your meeting.

1. The teacher can act as the moderator or a student volunteer.
2. The moderator calls the meeting to order.
3. The moderator introduces the groups at the meeting; consider using a sign for each group and seat them in a designated area (parents of elementary students, elementary students, government officials, elementary teachers, before and after school care providers, school board officials, summer camp operators).
4. Set up a speaking area like a table or desk. Bonus points if you have a microphone as a prop. When it is time for attendees to ask questions, they will do so from the speaking area.
5. The moderator will identify the issue to be discussed (“Should our town’s school board change the school year?”) during the meeting and the amount of time that will be dedicated to each group to present their perspective (suggested time is three to four minutes).
6. Each group will then have three to four minutes to share their perspective on the issue. They can do this from their seated area. Groups can decide to share the speaking role or designate one speaker on their behalf.
7. Attendees will then have a chance to ask questions and state opinions on the issue. A speakers list can be created and displayed in a visible spot. Speakers should ask questions from the speaking area and wait in line until it is their turn. This open forum discussion should last between five and fifteen minutes.
8. The moderator will rule out of order any questions deemed inappropriate, offensive, and derogatory.
9. Questions from the floor could be limited to one per individual to ensure as wide a participation from the audience as possible. The following rule could apply: If everyone who wishes to ask a question or make a statement has had the opportunity to do so and there is still time left, members of the audience may ask a second question.
10. Answers to questions should be limited to an agreed upon time (e.g. one minute).
11. Following the discussion of the issue, the moderator will ask the government officials group to go to a secluded area to discuss the issue and return within an agreed upon time to inform the attendees of the decision they are considering making along with their reasoning.