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GETTING READY TO VOTE

I. LESSON OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will research and prioritize the critical issues in 2008 campaign.
2. Students will reflect on their own positions on the critical issues.
3. Students will research and compare the positions of the candidates on the critical issues.
4. Students will understand that informed voters attempt to select a candidate who has taken positions that reflect their own.

II. STANDARDS: Civics Standards and Benchmarks (Standards established by McREL at www.mcrel.org)

1. Standard 20: Understands the roles of political parties, campaigns, elections, and associations and groups in American politics.
2. Standard 28: Understands how participation in civic and political life can help citizens attain individual and public goals.

III. PROCEDURES:

1. Brainstorm the hot topics in the presidential campaign. The list should include but not be limited to: (1) Economy, (2) War in Iraq, (3) Health Care, (4) Immigration, (5) Taxes, (6) Environment, (7) Homeland Security, (8) Education, and (9) Foreign Policy.
2. Discuss other factors that could affect a voter's decision. For example, how important are the factors of age, race and character in this election?
3. Use the Internet to research the positions of the candidates on the issues that are important to your students.
4. Create a chart that includes a brief description of the issue and the positions of each of the candidates' positions on that issue.
5. Discuss the differences between the candidates on the issues.
6. Ask the students to add another column to the chart that includes their own personal view on each of the issues.
7. Ask the students to prepare for voting by reviewing their own positions before choosing the candidate whose views are the most similar on the critical issues.

IV. ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES: Determine if students understand the issues and the positions of the candidates by asking the students to complete one of the following assignments:

1. Write an op-ed article supporting the candidate of their choice.
2. Create a 30-second political advertisement for their candidate.
3. Deliver a 3-minute speech as the victorious candidate.
4. Deliver an on-air analysis as a news reporter of either a pre-election review of the critical issues of the election or a post-election analysis of the outcome.
5. Work with another student to prepare and conduct a 10-minute interview with one of the candidates.