

Welcome

Thank you for leading the Student Vote program for the 2021 local government elections.

We know that this is a challenging school year, and we are grateful to be working with you and your students.

In times of crisis, we believe that government matters more than ever. The decisions made by governments are critically important for the health, safety and well-being of our communities now and in the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the value of social responsibility. We live in shared communities, and our actions and choices matter to those around us.

It is our hope that Student Vote presents an opportunity to help students understand the importance of being an informed, caring and contributing member of society. The program is an exercise in deeper learning, exploration and connectedness, and in allowing students to practice the habits of engaged citizenship.

Student Vote teaches students that the role of a citizen is a critical one if our democracy is to thrive and succeed. The publication of the Student Vote results allows students to feel that their voice matters and helps them understand that they are part of something larger than their school.

The Student Vote program evaluation conducted by Abacus Data in 2019 found that participating in the program had a positive impact on students' knowledge and understanding of government and elections, on their sense of civic responsibility and likelihood to vote in the future.

The program also provides families with opportunities to learn about elections and politics, with students taking their newfound knowledge home and engaging in conversations about the candidates and issues with their family. Where possible, we encourage you to amplify these teachable moments and turn the program into a family affair.

To adapt to the new safety guidelines and protocols related to the pandemic, our team has put together some considerations to help you implement the program. Please see page 5.

As always, if you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact our team at hello@civix.ca.

Please be sure to visit the project website for videos, slide decks, digital activity sheets and more:
www.studentvote.ca/nblocal2021

Wishing you and your students a great election,

The CIVIX team

Acknowledgements

Student Vote is the flagship program of CIVIX.

CIVIX is a non-partisan registered Canadian charity dedicated to strengthening democracy through civic education.

The Student Vote project for New Brunswick's 2021 local government elections has been made possible by the Government of Canada, and other private foundations.

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Resource Development Team

We would like to thank the countless educators who, over the years, have contributed their ideas and feedback to the development of this resource.

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How To Use This Resource

This resource is intended to improve civic literacy, introduce the concepts of democracy and elections, increase awareness about the workings of government in Canada, and teach students how to effectively participate as responsible citizens in their community.

The lessons build upon each other, but they can also be used as stand-alone activities depending on the needs of your classroom and schedule. Below is a brief description of the components of each lesson.

Guiding Questions:

Critical queries to bring a clear focus to the lesson and direct student learning. Share these questions with students at the beginning of the lesson to support an awareness of the overarching learning outcomes and to enhance engagement.

Overview:

Provides a brief summary of the learning and activities of the lesson.

Learning Outcomes:

Concrete knowledge and competencies that students are expected to have acquired from the activities completed in each lesson.

Suggested Strategies:

Each lesson has been broken down into three segments. You are encouraged to pick and choose from the strategies and related support tools that would work best in your classroom and within your time frames.

- **Starter:** Suggested opening activity, meant to pique interest in the topic and unit.
- **Activities:** A series of activities for learning and instruction to help students understand or apply the essential concepts and key competencies.
- **Consolidation:** Concluding activities and questions to summarize and demonstrate what was learned throughout the lesson.

Suggested Assessment:

Possible ideas that teachers can use to assess student comprehension, learning needs and progress during the lesson or unit.

Adaptations and Supports:

A few reminders and suggestions for Language learners, culturally responsive pedagogy and accessibility and accommodation considerations have been included.

Background Information for Teachers:

This information covers key terms and concepts related to the theme of the lesson. The purpose is to enhance teacher knowledge and understanding. Not all terms and concepts are covered in the lesson.

COVID Considerations

We realize that the COVID-19 pandemic is resulting in some changes to the way schools operate and your own teaching practices.

In preparation for the 2021 local government elections, CIVIX has put together some considerations for implementing the program activities. Due to some uncertainty around what safety protocols will be in place, and when, we have consulted with teachers on some of the expected limitations and how best to overcome them.

Be sure to also 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.

Classroom Activities

Below is a list of reminders and possible accommodations for you to keep in mind when delivering the learning activities.

- Full-class discussions can be held in place of work in pairs or small groups.
- Google Docs, Google Jamboard and other messaging apps can be used for collaborative work and discussions.
- Take advantage of video resources to facilitate distance learning, if needed. Activity sheets to accompany each video can be found on the project website (studentvote.ca/nblocal2021).
- Digital templates are available for all of the student activity sheets found in this resource, including Google Docs and Google Forms versions (studentvote.ca/nblocal2021).
- Ensure enough materials are available to reduce the need for sharing between students.
- All outputs can be produced digitally. This reduces the need for paper and allows the finished products to be shared online with the rest of the class.

Specific considerations can also be found in the *Accommodations* section at the end of each lesson.

Campaign Events

Instead of in-person meetings or debates with candidates, consider holding a virtual event or asking candidates to submit written or video answers to student questions.

Rather than holding a school wide assembly, consider using videos or morning announcements to increase awareness about the program and the upcoming local government elections.

The Voting Process

Below are some considerations for holding your vote. An online voting option will be provided if you are uncomfortable or unable to vote with paper ballots.

- Hold the vote within classrooms to minimize contact with other students in the school.
- Be sure to practice physical distancing if using a stationary polling station.
- Have students use their own pencils or pens to mark their ballot.
- Consider having students vote at their own desks to limit movement or contact.
- Teachers can count the ballots, or election officers can be limited to a small group of students.
- Use gloves when counting ballots and/or wait several hours before handling them.

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.

Lesson 1

Democracy



GUIDING QUESTIONS

❶ What does it mean to live in a democracy?

❷ Which principles of democracy are most important?

PURPOSE

There are several guiding principles that act as the foundation of a democracy, such as fair elections, fundamental freedoms, political tolerance, citizen participation and the rule of law.

In this lesson, students explore what democracy means and what the implications are for them as members of a democratic society. After learning about key democratic principles, they investigate how the principles look in practice. In the *Consolidation* activity, students reflect on the significance of democratic principles for themselves and society.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- explain the meaning and characteristics of democracy;
- analyze fundamental principles of democracy and how they are reflected in real-world examples;
- evaluate the significance of democratic principles and which principle they think is most important.

Starter

1. Give students time to work in pairs or small groups to activate any background knowledge they have about the term 'democracy' using a *Frayer Model* (Activity 1.1). Students can also use images to communicate their thinking.

TEACHER NOTE

Consider providing some key terms to support their thinking, such as political power, leadership, government, citizen participation, viewpoints, rights and freedoms.

1. Watch the "Government and Democracy" video and have students add to their notes on Activity 1.1.
2. Afterwards, debrief as a class and create a class definition for the term 'democracy'. Students should add the class definition to their activity sheet.

Activities

1. Using the "Democratic Principles" video, Slide Deck 1 and/or Handout 1.2, explain to students that there are several guiding principles that act as the foundation of a democracy.
2. Have students work together to complete Activity 1.3. For each principle, students should summarize the meaning in their own words. Afterwards, review the responses as a class and ensure there is a solid understanding of the principles.
3. Next, students should investigate what the principles look like in practice through real-world examples and complete the second column of Activity 1.3.

Option A:

Ask students to come up with examples from their own lives or to find examples through news stories from reliable sources. Students can work independently or collaboratively.

Option B:

Provide students with news stories and have students identify which principle is relevant to the issue or event (see list below). One approach is to divide students into small groups and have each student review one news story and share their findings with the rest of their group.

Sample news stories:

- **Trudeau prorogues parliament, ending WE investigations and leaving Commons empty for weeks** <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/liberals-to-prorogue-parliament-until-fall/wcm/d0649671-0e12-4646-a6f8-f12efc4a2c36/> (Democratic principles: accountability and transparency, citizen participation)
 - **MLA defends attending rally against New Brunswick's COVID-19 restrictions** <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/new-brunswick-mla-miramichi-1.5950459> (Democratic principles: citizen participation, human rights and equality)
 - **Muslim group calls for 'serious action' after mosque vandalized for 6th time since June** <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-mosque-vandalized-for-sixth-time-since-june-1.5692084> (Democratic principles: human rights and equality, political tolerance)
 - **MPs convene first special virtual sitting via Zoom amid security questions** www.ctvnews.ca/politics/mps-convene-first-special-virtual-sitting-via-zoom-amid-security-questions-1.4915386 (Democratic principle: accountability and transparency, citizen participation)
 - **Raptors' Masai Ujiri releases statement: 'Keep demanding justice'** www.sportsnet.ca/basketball/nba/raptors-masai-ujiri-releases-powerful-statement-keep-demanding-justice/ (Democratic principles: rule of law, human rights and equality)
 - **Prisoners say they were denied their constitutional right to vote** <https://www.halifaxexaminer.ca/featured/prisoners-say-they-were-denied-their-constitutional-right-to-vote/> (Democratic principles: human rights and equality, free and fair elections)
 - **New Brunswick to appoint a commissioner to address systemic racism** <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/brunswick-appoint-commissioner-address-systemic-172157610.html> (Democratic principles: human rights and equality, citizen participation)
4. Invite students to share their own examples, or findings from the news stories provided.
 5. Afterwards, ask students to rank the principles in order of importance on Activity 1.3.

Consolidation

Using a 'Quick Write' strategy, have students reflect on the significance of democratic principles using one of the prompts below. Provide students with 3-5 minutes to write a response within their learning journal. Inform students that they will be assessed on their ideas and content, not grammar or organization, so they should write freely.

- The democratic principle that most affects my life is... because....
- The democratic principle that I think is most important is... because....

SUPPORTS AND ADAPTATIONS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide students with terms and definitions in advance.• Share the lesson videos before class discussions and activities.• Ensure that subtitles are on during videos.• Support students' understanding of democratic principles with real-world examples.• The sample media articles could be replaced with articles at a lower-reading level, or with fictitious examples.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare democracy to other forms of governance representing different countries and cultures that have meaning for your students.• Students will come from different backgrounds and may have different opinions on democracy. Ensuring a safe place for respectful discussion is encouraged.• Review democratic principles in various social settings, inclusive of Acadian, Black New Brunswickers, Gaels, Mi'kmaq, and additional diverse cultural groups.• Discuss the systemic barriers to equality faced by Mi'kmaq and Black communities.
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Democracy means rule by the people. It is a type of government where a majority of the people are included in political decision-making.

There are several guiding principles that act as the foundation of a democracy. Citizens have a responsibility to uphold and support these principles.

Human Rights and Equality: In most democracies, individuals are valued equally regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, language, gender or sexual orientation. Fundamental rights include freedom of thought, opinion and assembly.

Economic Freedom: The government allows some private ownership of property and businesses. People are allowed to choose their own work and join labour unions. It is generally accepted that a free market should exist in a democracy and that government should not control the economy.

Protected Rights: In a democracy, there is a formal declaration of citizens' rights and freedoms. This document limits the powers of government, explains the freedoms that are guaranteed to all people and protects people from a government that might abuse its powers.

The Rule of Law: All are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law without discrimination. Laws are enforced equally, fairly and consistently. No one is above the law – this includes elected officials, the police and members of the military.

Control of the Abuse of Power: To protect corruption and abuses of power, democratic governments are often structured to limit the powers of government offices and those who work for them.

Free and Fair Elections: Elected officials are chosen every few years by the people in a free and fair manner. Adult citizens have the right to vote and run for office regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or economic status.

Multi-Party Systems: Multiple-party systems provide the government with different viewpoints on issues and voters are given a choice of candidates, parties and policies to support.

Citizen Participation: Participation can take the form of running for office, voting in elections, being an informed citizen, debating issues, attending community meetings, paying taxes, serving on a jury and protesting. Citizen participation builds a stronger democracy.

Accountability and Transparency: Elected and appointed officials are responsible for their actions and are accountable to the people. A transparent government holds public meetings and allows citizens to attend. The press and the public are kept informed regarding decisions being made.

Independent Judiciary: Courts and the judicial system are impartial. Judges and the judicial branch are free to act without influence or control from the executive and legislative branches of government. They should also not be corrupted or influenced by other individuals, businesses or political groups.

Political Tolerance: People who belong to different socioeconomic and ethnic groups, all hold unique and valued political views. Democratic societies strive to be politically tolerant, and the rights of minorities and other groups are protected. Those who are not in power must be allowed to organize and share their opinions.

Accepting the Results of Elections: Free and fair elections have both winners and losers. The losers and their supporters must accept that they have lost an election as democracy depends on the peaceful transfer of power from one party to the next.

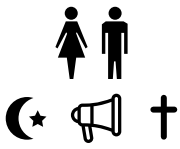




ACTIVITY 1.1: What Does Democracy Mean?

DEFINITION		RELATED WORDS	
WHAT IT IS		WHAT IT IS NOT	

CLASS DEFINITION:

HANDOUT 1.2: The Principles of Democracy

There are several guiding principles that act as the foundation of a democracy.

 <p>HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All people living in a democracy have guaranteed rights, such as freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of religion, and the right to organize and take part in peaceful protests. • In most democracies, individuals are valued equally regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, language, gender or sexual orientation. • In Canada, our fundamental freedoms and equality rights are protected by the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i>, part of Canada's Constitution.
 <p>FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult citizens have the right to vote in elections to choose their political representatives. • Adult citizens also have the opportunity to run for political office. • There are no obstacles to voting and no threats made to citizens before or after an election. • In Canada, there must be elections to choose a federal government every five years or less.
 <p>ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected representatives are accountable for their actions. They must perform their duties according to the wishes of those they represent, not for themselves or other interests. • In a democracy, the press holds government to account and aims to keep citizens informed. • In Canada, elected representatives participate in activities like Question Period to be held to account for their actions and respond to questions from the opposition parties, and engage in meetings with the public.
 <p>THE RULE OF LAW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws are enforced equally, fairly and consistently. This means that everyone, including government officials, the police and members of the military, must obey the law. • It also means that governments cannot punish people unless they have broken the law. • All Canadians have a responsibility to respect the laws of the land, even if they disagree with them.
 <p>POLITICAL TOLERANCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society is comprised of people with different cultural backgrounds, who practice different religions, come from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, who have different gender identities or sexual orientations. The voices of these different groups are valued. • Democratic societies strive to be politically tolerant and the rights of minorities are protected. • Those who are not in power must be allowed to organize and share their opinions.
 <p>CITIZEN PARTICIPATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen participation in government is more than just a right – it is a responsibility. • Participation includes voting in elections, being an informed citizen, debating issues, attending community meetings, paying taxes, serving on a jury and protesting. • Citizen participation builds a stronger democracy.

ACTIVITY 1.3: The Principles of Democracy in Action

PRINCIPLE	WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME <i>Summarize the definition in your own words or use images to explain your thinking.</i>	EXAMPLES OF THIS PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE <i>Look for examples in the media of the principle being supported or challenged.</i>	HOW IMPORTANT? <i>Rank the principles in order of their importance to you. Be prepared to explain why.</i>
Human Rights and Equality			
Free and Fair Elections			
Accountability and Transparency			
The Rule of Law			
Political Tolerance			
Citizen Participation			

Lesson 2

The Right to Vote



GUIDING QUESTIONS

❶ How have voting rights evolved in Canada?

❷ Is it important to vote?

SUMMARY

Universal suffrage is the right of all citizens to vote in elections and it took decades of people and groups campaigning for equality for this to be achieved.

In this lesson, students learn about the struggles some groups experienced in gaining the right to vote in Canada. After summarizing key milestones, students create a visual timeline of events in history that shaped our voting rights today. In an alternative activity, students form groups to investigate and analyze the actions of individuals and groups that contributed to universal suffrage and improved accessibility of the electoral process in Canada. In the *Consolidation* activity, students discuss the importance

of participating in the local government elections and create a digital product of their choice to encourage people to vote.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- describe key milestones in the history of voting rights in Canada;
- analyze the actions of individuals and groups that contributed to universal suffrage;
- assess the importance of voting in elections;
- demonstrate effective communication skills using words and graphics.

Starter

1. Inform your students about the upcoming local government elections and the Student Vote program.
 - In Canada, we have different levels of government: federal (responsible for the country), provincial or territorial (responsible for each province or territory) and municipal or local (responsible for towns and cities). There are also Indigenous governments responsible for managing their own communities.
 - Every four years, voters across New Brunswick elect politicians to sit on their local government councils and make decisions for their communities. The upcoming local government elections will take place on May 10, 2021.
 - Elementary and high school students will also have an opportunity to take part in the elections through a program called **Student Vote**.
 - After learning about local government and researching the candidates, students will vote in a parallel election.
 - Although the votes will not count in the official tallies, the Student Vote results are released publicly and through the news media. This allows young people to have a voice in the election and have their opinions shared.
2. Watch the "Student Vote Vancouver 2018" video to hear students and teachers speak about their experience with the program during the 2018 Vancouver municipal elections and why they believe voting is important.
3. Afterwards, ask students to share their own thoughts about voting and/or participating in Student Vote. Discussion questions: Is voting important? Should students learn about voting before they are eligible to vote?

Activities

1. Briefly review the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the idea that our rights have evolved over time. See Slide Deck 2.
 - The Charter has seven distinct categories: Fundamental freedoms, Democratic rights, Mobility rights, Legal rights, Equality rights, Official language rights, and Minority language education rights.
 - Democratic rights include the right of every Canadian, 18 years of age or older, to vote in an election, and the right to be a candidate in an election.
 - Rights are often fought for and claimed (in courts or through protests), and less often simply granted.

2. Watch the "Right to Vote" video as a class. This video reviews the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and summarizes the history of voting rights in Canada.

Video clarifications:

- Although women in Canada gained the right to vote by 1918, there were still many exclusions due to race, ethnic origin and religion. Universal suffrage for all women was not achieved until the 1960s.
 - Voter turnout has been slightly higher in the last two federal elections (66% and 67%, respectively).
 - Electoral participation has increased among youth in recent years but it is still lower than rest of the population. Only 54% of youth, aged 18-24, cast ballots in the 2019 federal election.
3. Distribute copies of Handout 2.1 and Activity 2.2. In pairs or individually, ask students to review the handout and record the date when voting rights for a particular group were changed or access was improved, and summarize the details and actions leading up to it.
 4. Afterwards, have students create a visual timeline, in print or digital format, showing the most significant milestones or the years when various groups received the right to vote or when access was improved. Encourage students to use any design and format they like and find ways to emphasize the most pivotal aspects.

Alternative Activity

1. Divide the class into groups to research the major developments in the history of voting rights in Canada. Groups could focus on one particular time period or be assigned a specific group (e.g., women, Indigenous Peoples, Canadians in prison).
2. Using Handout 2.1 as a starting point, have each group conduct research into which historical action or condition was most responsible for their designated group achieving the right to vote and create a visual presentation to share with the rest of the class.

Guiding questions:

- How notable was the event at the time? What was the impact on the period?
- How widespread and lasting were the consequences? Is it still significant today?
- How symbolic or representative of historical issues or trends were the consequences?
- How does it help us understand why voting rights evolved in Canada?

3. Have groups share their presentation through Google Classroom, or re-assign students to different groups for a sharing session.
4. As a class, have a closing discussion about the pathway to universal suffrage.
 - How does each group's pathway to suffrage compare or differ?
 - Were suffrage movements linked to one another? If so, how?
 - What do you think was the most important turning point for universal suffrage in Canada, and why?

Discussion questions:

- Are you surprised by the level of voter turnout?
 - What are the consequences of some people not voting in government elections?
 - Why is it important that our voting process be fair, accessible and as democratic as possible?
2. Ask students to create a digital communications product to encourage an adult they know to vote in the May local government elections. It could be a video, slide deck, digital poster or social media graphic.

Consolidation

1. Share voter turnout statistics from the last local government election and discuss the consequences of low levels of participation, particularly among different groups. Check with your own municipality or local government for voter turnout statistics.
 - The average participation rate for local government elections was 45.4% in 2016.
 - Voter turnout rates differed across the province – from 80.7% in Saint-Léolin to 20.1% in Oromocto.

Suggested Assessment

Ask students to answer the following question (either formative or summative assessment).

Question: What is the most significant historical event that contributed to universal suffrage in Canada?

SUPPORTS AND ADAPTATIONS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance. • Ensure subtitles are on during videos. • Share the lesson videos before class discussions and activities.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind students that new immigrants, adults who have difficulty reading, Language Learners, persons who are homeless, newly arrived refugees, and other specific groups may face challenges understanding or accessing the election system. Keep the focus on ideas to increase access and the benefits our society gets from hearing different voices, not only on the disadvantages these groups face. • When researching the history of voting rights, select groups relevant to your students and/or community (e.g., Black New Brunswickers, Mi'kmaq). • Provide research findings into why young people tend to vote less.
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative discussion/brainstorming.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

A **right** is a legal entitlement or something that we are morally or legally allowed to do or have. Rights are often fought for and claimed (in courts or through protests) and less often simply granted. With all rights come responsibilities.

A **responsibility** is a duty or obligation. It is something you should do in order to respect and maintain certain rights.

All citizens living in a democracy have civil and political rights, which are usually articulated in a legal document as part of a constitution, such as a **bill of rights**. This document limits the powers of government, explains the freedoms that are guaranteed to all people and protects people from a government that might abuse its powers.

In Canada, our rights are protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Canada's Charter is widely admired around the world and is the constitutional document most emulated by other nations.

The Charter has seven distinct categories:

- **Fundamental freedoms** include the freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression including freedom of the press and other media; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association.
- **Democratic rights** include the right of every Canadian, 18 years of age or older, to vote in an election, to be a candidate in an election, the requirement that governments hold elections at least every five years, and the requirement that elected representatives meet at least once per year.
- **Mobility rights** include the right of every Canadian to choose to live and work in any province or territory in Canada. Canadians also have the right to live in, leave or re-enter Canada whenever they choose.
- **Legal rights** include the guarantee that Canadians, when arrested, must be told of their right to see a lawyer and must be tried within a reasonable amount of time. Canadians are also guaranteed the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.
- **Equality rights** include the right of any Canadian not to be discriminated against on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical ability.
- **Official language rights** include the right of all Canadians to use either English or French in communications with Canada's federal government.
- **Minority language education rights** include the rights for French or English minorities in every province and territory to be educated in their own language under certain conditions.



HANDOUT 2.1: History of Voting Rights in Canada

The following outlines some important events regarding the history of voting rights in Canada.

British North America – Only Wealthy Men May Vote (1758-1866)

During this period, very few people were allowed to vote. The law was that you had to own land or pay a certain amount in yearly taxes or rent. Most voters were white wealthy men. Women and many religious and ethnic groups were not allowed to vote.

Women's Efforts (1867-1919)

Starting in the 1870s, women started to campaign for the right to vote. They used petitions, speeches and marches to spread their message. Gaining support was not easy.

Women received help from powerful groups and tried to have the laws changed. However, politicians did not approve the bills. It was disappointing but women did not give up.

Changes started to happen after many years. Manitoba was the first province to let women vote in 1916. Other provinces followed after. Most women in New Brunswick received the right to vote in 1919. Also in 1919, women gained the right to run for federal office after earning the right to vote federally in 1918. It is important to know that the new laws did not include all women. Women from many ethnic and religious groups were still not able to vote.



Nellie McClung, activist for women's suffrage and one of Canada's first female elected politicians.

Extending the Right to Vote to All Groups (1920-1960)

A new law was approved in 1920 that allowed more people to vote. It was called the *Dominion Elections Act*.

However, the system remained unfair. Indigenous peoples, Chinese and Japanese Canadians could not vote. It did not even matter if they had been in the Canadian army. Indigenous peoples could only vote if they gave up their treaty rights. Many religious groups were also treated unfairly for years.



Prime Minister John Diefenbaker oversaw the extension of the right to vote to Indigenous peoples in 1960.

It took many years of protest and debate to achieve equality. All groups were finally given the right to vote in 1960.

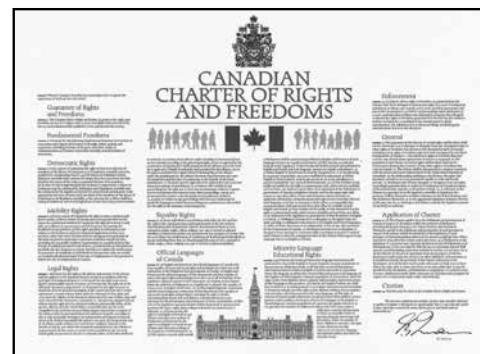
Making Voting Easy (1961-1997)

During this time, more steps were taken to remove barriers and make voting easier.

- Employers had to give their staff enough time off during the day to vote.
- Voting hours were made longer.
- People could vote in advance on certain days.
- People could vote by mail. This is used by students living away from home, people who are travelling or living outside the country.
- Voting places are now selected based on access for wheelchairs.
- New voting tools and extra help were offered to voters. Such as magnifiers to help read ballots, Braille ballots and large-print ballots. Sign language was also provided.
- Voting places were set up at certain locations to make it easier to vote (e.g., colleges, universities, hospitals).
- Information for voters was made available in more languages.
- Learning programs were created to help people become more aware about how to vote.

Charter Challenges (1982 to 2004)

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* was created to protect our rights and freedoms. It has helped several groups force changes to election laws.



The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is part of Canada's Constitution.

- Federal judges could not vote in federal elections until 1988. It was a court decision that changed this law.
- In 1993, election laws were changed to allow people who have a mental illness to vote.
- Prisoners were able to vote starting in 1993. However, this did not include all prisoners. Their sentence had to be less than two years to receive the right to vote.
- In 2002, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that people in prison for more than two years could not be left out. Although the law did not change, they have been able to cast ballots since 2004.

ACTIVITY 2.2: Pathways to Universal Suffrage

For each group, summarize the changes to their voting rights over the years.

GROUP	YEAR(S)	WHAT HAPPENED AND HOW?
Women		
Indigenous Peoples		
Canadians of Chinese origin		
People with physical disabilities		
Judges		
People with mental illness		
Canadians in prison		

Lesson 3

Information in the Digital Age



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 In what way does information influence my decisions?**
- 2 How do algorithms personalize my internet experience?**
- 3 What are the opportunities and challenges with the internet and social media for democracy?**

SUMMARY

Being a responsible citizen involves seeking out information from a variety of sources and comparing perspectives on issues of importance.

In this lesson, students are assigned one of two social media newsfeeds that centre on a controversial issue in the community: the proposed construction of a new solar panel factory. One feed is dominated by posts favouring the factory, while the other includes posts mostly against it. After reviewing their assigned feeds, students vote on whether the proposed solar development should proceed. Next, students review the results of the vote and analyze how the information we consume can affect our decisions. Afterwards, students learn about how the internet has changed the way we

consume and share information, and they evaluate the opportunities and challenges for citizens and democracies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- analyze how news and information can influence our opinions on people, events and issues;
- describe how algorithms personalize the information they see online;
- evaluate the opportunities and challenges of the internet and social media for citizens and democracy;
- describe strategies for being responsible consumers of information.

Starter

Have a conversation about sources of information. Ask students to consider how they would become informed to vote in the following scenarios.

- a) School council election
- b) Local government elections

Discussion questions:

- What actions would you take to learn about the candidates?
- Which sources of information would you rely on and why?
- Do you think it is important to be informed when making a decision that affects others? Why or why not?

Activities

1. Complete the *Feed for Thought* activity found at the CIVIX website newsliteracy.ca. The activity can be completed with online scrollable newsfeeds or paper versions.

- a) **Introduce the Scenario.** A solar-panel company has submitted a proposal to build a factory next to the school, and community members will vote in a referendum to decide whether or not the development should proceed. Students at the school will also have the opportunity to vote and express their choice.

Before voting, you will become familiar with the issues surrounding the development and the people involved by reading through a social media feed that has a mix of articles from news outlets and posts from community members and friends.

- b) **Read the Feeds.** Without informing students of the two opposing feeds, provide half the class with the "pro" feed, and the other half with the "anti" feed. If you are using the online version, the link provided will randomly assign students one of the two feeds. Give students 10 minutes to review the information.

- c) **Vote.** Have students vote on whether the factory should be built by raising their hands or by using paper ballots (Activity 3.1). Tabulate the results and announce them to the class.

- d) **Debrief.** Through a whole-class discussion, ask students why they voted the way they did and what information shaped their decision.

Over the course of the discussion, it should become obvious that some students were provided different information than others. At an appropriate point in the discussion, share the fact that there were two different feeds and give students time to review them side-by-side to compare the differences.

Further questions to prompt discussion:

- How did you feel about the results of the vote before you knew there were two feeds? Were you surprised that people voted differently than you?
- How might two people end up with such different news feeds?
- What are the consequences of people consuming different facts and information?
- Do you think people should be exposed to different perspectives or more than one side of an issue before making their decision?

2. Watch the "Behind the Screens – Who Decides What I See Online?" and "Algorithms and Filter Bubbles" videos and/or review Slide Deck 3 to introduce the concepts of algorithms and filter bubbles, and the effects of the internet and social media on democracy. Guiding questions:

- Have you ever noticed information or advertisements online that were based on your previous internet searches?
- How do algorithms personalize your internet experience?
- What are the consequences if we only see information we like or agree with?

Consolidation

In pairs or small groups, ask students to respond to the following questions. Afterwards, discuss the responses as a class.

- What are the opportunities and challenges of the internet and social media for democracy? (This can be completed with a T-Chart.)
- How can we make sure we are informed citizens? Why should we consider different viewpoints before forming an opinion or making a decision?
- How can we be responsible consumers of information?

Suggested Assessment

Ask students to fill out the '3-2-1 Exit Card' (Activity 3.2).

- What are three things you learned?
- What are two actions you will take based on what you learned?
- What is one question you still have?

Extended Learning

Ask students to explore some of the themes in the lesson by completing an online investigation (Activity 3.3). During the activity, students should make notes under the comment section about what they learn through each activity.

- Find out what Google knows about you. For example, find three YouTube videos you watched in January of this year. Select "Filter by Date." (<https://myactivity.google.com/>)
- Find an ad online that has been targeting you. Why are you seeing it? Dismiss it, and click 'why am I seeing this' to learn more.
- Find the 'Terms of Service' for Snapchat – what rights do you give Snapchat when you post a 'Story' that is viewable by 'Everyone'?
- Look into buying a Facebook or Instagram ad. What segment of the population do you want to reach? See how narrow you can target your ad.
- Find a conspiracy theory on YouTube (e.g., Flat earth theory, fake moon landings, 9/11 cover up). How many views does it have? What related content is recommended?
- Go to [google.com](https://www.google.com) and type in "What is". Make note of the options that appear below. Select one option. Now type in "What is" again. How did the list of options change?
- Look at the social media channel of a mainstream news organization (i.e., *The Globe and Mail*, *CBC*, *National Post*). Compare what appears on the social media channel compared to the homepage of its website.

SUPPORTS AND ADAPTATIONS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide students with terms and definitions in advance.• Share the lesson videos before class discussions and activities.• Ensure that subtitles are on during videos.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students may come from households with varying degrees of access to the internet, and have different levels of familiarity with social media. Not all students will have prior knowledge of the social media feeds being emulated in the 'Feed for Thought' activity.• Encourage students to share their own experiences with online platforms and social media.• Ensure that you are open and encouraging of diverse viewpoints your students may share.
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider conducting the referendum vote through an online platform (e.g., Google Forms, SurveyMonkey).• If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative discussion/brainstorming.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

As citizens living in a democracy, we have a responsibility to stay informed about the issues that matter to us and to society. This is true all the time, but especially when we must make a meaningful choice at the ballot box.

The introduction of the internet and the rise of social media have been significant for news and information, and complicated for citizens.

Where traditional news organizations were once the **gatekeepers** of information and the only ones with the resources to disseminate it — printing presses and TV stations are costly to purchase and operate — the internet allows anyone, anywhere to be a publisher.

The rise of blogging and social media a generation ago was widely viewed as the democratization of

information, bringing new voices into public discourse and leading to positive social change. The reality of online communication has been more complex.

When news came only from traditional or **legacy media** — newspapers, TV, and radio — there was always someone who stood between audiences and information, a person or process that filtered the stories or content, checked facts and packaged stories for public consumption.

Where human editors and producers were once the only gatekeepers who decided what news audiences saw, on the internet, that job belongs to **algorithms**, sets of instructions that tell computers how to perform specific tasks, like sorting information.

Social media algorithms work in such a way that we are more likely to see content that is similar to what we already like or agree with. Our social

media feeds never give the whole picture.

Since people have become such heavy adopters of social media, they now rely on these sites (such as Facebook or Snapchat) for news. The problem is that **social media** platforms never intended to be news organizations, and there are consequences for informed citizenship when people rely on friends and algorithms to find out about what is happening in the world.

Informed citizenship involves seeking out news and information from a variety of sources, comparing perspectives and keeping up with new developments. There are things you can do to make sure you are informed, particularly when there is so much information available online.

ACTIVITY 3.1: Community Referendum – Voice your choice

Use the sample ballots below to conduct a vote for the community referendum. Tabulate the results and announce them to the class.

COMMUNITY REFERENDUM	
The proposed factory development should be allowed to proceed.	
YES	<input type="radio"/>
NO	<input type="radio"/>

COMMUNITY REFERENDUM	
The proposed factory development should be allowed to proceed.	
YES	<input type="radio"/>
NO	<input type="radio"/>

ACTIVITY 3.2: Exit Card

3-2-1 EXIT CARD	
3	Things I learned today that I am sure I understand: 1 2 3
2	Actions I will take based on what I learned: 1 2
1	Something I wonder because of this lesson: 1

3-2-1 EXIT CARD	
3	Things I learned today that I am sure I understand: 1 2 3
2	Actions I will take based on what I learned: 1 2
1	Something I wonder because of this lesson: 1

ACTIVITY 3.3: Online Investigation

Explore some of the themes in the lesson by completing an online investigation and making notes about what you learn through the activities.

ACTIVITY	COMMENTS
Find out what Google knows about you. For example, find three YouTube videos you watched earlier this year. Select 'Filter by Date'. (https://myactivity.google.com/)	
Find an ad online that has been targeting you. Why are you seeing it? Dismiss it, and click 'why am I seeing this' or a similar option to learn more.	
Find the 'Terms of Service' for Snapchat – what rights do you give Snapchat when you post a 'Story' that is viewable by 'Everyone'?	
Look into buying a Facebook or Instagram ad. What segment of the population do you want to reach? See how narrow you can target your ad.	
Find a conspiracy theory on YouTube (e.g., Flat earth theory, fake moon landings, 9/11 cover up). How many views does it have? What related content is recommended?	
Go to google.com and type in "What is". Make note of the options Google suggests to complete your search. Select one option (i.e., What is love?). Now type in "What is" again. How did the list of options change?	
Look at the social media channel of a mainstream news organization (i.e., <i>The Globe and Mail</i> , <i>National Post</i> , <i>CBC News</i>). Compare what appears there with the homepage of its website.	

Lesson 4

Levels of Government



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- ❶ **How is government structured in Canada?**
- ❷ **How do the different levels of government affect me?**

SUMMARY

Canada has different levels of government; each with its own elected representatives and areas of responsibility.

In this lesson, students compare the federal, provincial/territorial and municipal levels of government, including leadership roles, elected officials and areas of responsibility. Afterwards, students create a digital presentation where they identify government services or areas of responsibility and explain how they relate to or directly affect their lives using photos and captions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- describe our government system in Canada;
- distinguish between the levels of government;
- analyze the different ways in which government affects their life.

Starter

1. Review the role of government in society. Government is responsible for making decisions and establishing laws for the people living within its borders, and for providing a variety of services.
2. Review the levels of government in Canada and explain the idea that each level is responsible for different issues. In column format, write the following on the board, or in an equivalent forum: federal / provincial or territorial / municipal or local / First Nations, Métis and Inuit.
3. Ask students to consider which level of government they would contact in the following scenarios:
 - You and your friends would like a skate ramp added to the local park
 - You want to apply for government loans and grants to support your post-secondary education
 - You want more bike lanes in your neighbourhood
 - You are traveling to a foreign country and need to find out if there are any travel advisories
 - You want more mental health services for youth
 - You want to know if your local First Nations community has access to clean drinking water
4. Discuss as a class:
 - Why is it important to know which level of government is responsible for which issues?
 - If you needed to, how would you go about contacting each level of government?
 - What would life be like if we didn't have government?

Activities

1. Divide students into pairs and distribute Activity 4.1. Have them work together to fill in what they already know about the levels of government in Canada.
2. Review the structure of government in Canada using the "Levels of Government" video, Slide Deck 4 and/or Handout 4.2.

Guiding questions:

- What kind of government do we have in Canada?
- What is the role of our elected representatives?
- What is the title given to the elected representative at each level?
- What is the title given to the leader at each level? How are they chosen?
- What are the areas of responsibility of each level of government?

Afterwards, have students continue to work in pairs to complete Activity 4.1. Alternatively, students could create a slide deck with the same information and add pictures.

3. Have students create a digital presentation (slides) where they identify three government services or areas of responsibility for each level of government that relate to their lives (Activity 4.3). Ask students to take photos or search online to find relevant pictures to represent the area of responsibility. Students could also find a current article or social media post that shows how the issue is affecting their life.

Consolidation

After the lesson and activities are complete, ask students to fill out the exit slip (Activity 4.4).

- The most important thing I learned today...
- The thing that surprised me today...
- I would like to learn more about...

Assessment Suggestion

Students can be assessed on their completed work from Activity 4.3. An Assessment Checkbric has been included.

SUPPORTS AND ADAPTATIONS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide students with terms and definitions in advance.• Share the lesson videos before class discussions and activities.• Ensure that subtitles are on during videos.• Provide examples or photos for each area of responsibility.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the demographic data of one or more elected bodies and discuss the need for more diversity in politics.• Discuss specific questions marginalized groups may have for elected representatives.• Discuss specific political issues facing your community.• Review the governance structure of a neighbouring Indigenous community.
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion.• Activity 4.3 can be created and shared in an entirely digital format, using PowerPoint or Google Slides.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Canada is a federal state, parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy.

A **federal state** brings together a number of different political communities with a central government (federal) for general purposes and separate regional governments (provincial/territorial) for regional/local purposes.

The division of powers is based on the principle of **subsidiarity**, in which the government closest to the issue governs it. The distribution of responsibilities is found in Sections 91-95 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

The **federal government** takes responsibility for the whole country and matters of national concern, such as the armed forces, international relations and trade, currency, fisheries and oceans, criminal law and public safety. **Provincial and territorial governments** are responsible for their own province or territory and issues such as education, health care, social welfare, transportation and highways.

Municipalities or local governments receive their powers from their provincial or territorial governments. These governments are responsible for the planning, growth and safety of their communities. They also handle local matters such as water and sewage treatment, public transit, roads and bridges, local parks and recreational facilities.

For some issues, the different levels of government have to work together and share the responsibility. This is called **concurrency**. For example, federal, provincial and local governments are concurrently responsible for the environment. The federal government enforces the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* and regulates waterways used for fishing and shipping. Provincial governments regulate land use, mining, manufacturing and harmful emissions. Local governments are responsible for zoning, garbage disposal, and sewage and water treatment.

Indigenous Peoples can also have different governance structures. A variety of treaties, agreements, and legislation outline who is responsible for providing services and decision-making in Indigenous communities.

Each level of government has locally elected officials to represent the people (constituents) living in their designated areas. Elected representatives are responsible for proposing, studying, debating and voting on bills (potential laws), and raising issues put forward by their constituents.

Federal representatives are called **Members of Parliament (MPs)** and provincial representatives in New Brunswick are called **Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)**. MPs and MLAs are often affiliated with political parties.

In New Brunswick local governments, elected representatives are called **council members** or **councillors**. Local government representatives in New Brunswick do not have a party affiliation.

The leader of the federal government is called the **prime minister**, whereas **premier** is the title given to the leader of the provincial government. In both of these cases, the leader of the party with the greatest number of elected representatives in the legislative body usually assumes the role of the leader of that government.

In New Brunswick local governments, the head of council is called a **mayor**. Mayors are elected by the people during a local government election.






As a constitutional monarchy, Canada's head of state is a hereditary sovereign (queen or king) who reigns in accordance with the Constitution. The sovereign is represented in Canada by the **governor general**, who is appointed by the sovereign on the advice of the prime minister. In each of the ten provinces, the sovereign is represented by a **lieutenant governor**, who is appointed by the governor general on the advice of the prime minister. Usually, the governor general and lieutenant governors serve a five-year term. There is no sovereign representative at the local government level.

ACTIVITY 4.1: Levels of Government Graphic Organizer

What do you know already? Work with a partner to fill in what you already know first. After reviewing the levels of government, fill in the rest with the support of online resources (e.g., ourcommons.ca, www.gnb.ca/legis/index-e.asp, elections.ca, www.electionsnb.ca, gg.ca)

QUESTION	FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL	MUNICIPAL / LOCAL
What is the title of the role represented by the sovereign at this level? Who currently holds this position?			
What is the official title of the leader at this level of government? Who currently holds this position and which party do they represent?			
What is the official name of the elected members at this level? How many members are there? Who currently holds this position for your geographic area? If applicable, which party do they represent?			
Where does this level of government meet (name of the building and city)?			
What are three responsibilities handled by this level of government?			
How often are elections held? When is the next election?			

HANDOUT 4.2: Government Responsibilities

FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL	MUNICIPAL / LOCAL
 Citizenship and passports	 Colleges and universities	 Animal control
 Criminal law	 Drivers' licensing and highways	 Fire protection
 Currency	 Education	 Land use planning (zoning)
 Federal taxes	 Healthcare	 Libraries
 Fisheries	 Municipalities	 Property taxes
 Foreign affairs and trade	 Natural resources	 Parks and recreation
 Indigenous lands and rights	 Property and civil rights	 Public transportation
 National defence	 Provincial law and courts	 Streets and sidewalks
 Official languages	 Provincial taxes	 Waste management
 Postal service	 Social services	 Water supply and treatment
 Veterans affairs		

ACTIVITY 4.3: What does government have to do with me?

How does government influence your daily activities? Which level of government has the most impact in your life?

ASSIGNMENT: PHOTO CAPTIONS

For each level of government, identify three government services or areas of responsibility and explain how it relates to your life.

- ☐ Select relevant articles or pictures to represent each issue or area of responsibility. You can take your own pictures or find a social media post that shows how the issue is affecting your life. You should have a total of nine pictures, articles or posts.
- ☐ For each picture or article, write a caption to identify which level of government is involved and the name of the related government department.
- ☐ In one or two more sentences, explain the impact of the government area on your life. Use “I” statements to personalize your captions.
- ☐ Write an overall concluding statement to answer the following question: Which level of government has the most impact in my life?

ASSESSMENT CHECKBRIC

limited

somewhat

correct

exceeds expectations

1

2

3

4

Correctly identifies the level of government and area of responsibility.

1

2

3

4

Selects a relevant picture or news story to represent the issue.

1

2

3

4

Explains the impact that each level of government has on their lives.

1

2

3

4

ACTIVITY 4.4: Exit Slip

The most important thing I learned today...	
The thing that surprised me today...	
I would like to learn more about...	

The most important thing I learned today...	
The thing that surprised me today...	
I would like to learn more about...	

Lesson 5

Municipalities and Rural Communities



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- ❶ **How do local governments influence their communities?**
- ❷ **What actions can be taken to improve my community?**
- ❸ **Why should I care about my community?**

OVERVIEW

Local governments provide New Brunswickers with essential local services and are responsible for the planning, growth and well-being of their community through legislation, by-laws and policies.

In this lesson, students begin with an assessment of their community. After learning about local governance in New Brunswick, students complete an online scavenger hunt to learn about their local government. Next, students will work in groups to develop a detailed action plan to improve an issue in their community. In the *Consolidation* activity, students will reflect on why they should care about their community and work with others to create positive change.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- assess their community's strengths and weaknesses;
- understand the structure and function of local governments in New Brunswick;
- identify key information about their own municipality or rural community;
- analyze different actions that could be taken to address an issue in their community;
- evaluate the importance of community engagement.

Starter

1. Ask students to assess their community by responding to the questions on Activity 5.1. Alternatively, the data could be collected through an online survey. A template has been provided on the project website.

TEACHER NOTE

Consider having students and their families fill out the survey in order to analyze findings from the wider community. A family version of the survey is available online.

2. Discuss the results of the survey.
 - What was your overall assessment of our community?
 - What do you think are our community's main strengths and weaknesses?
 - Do your views align with your classmates? What reasons can you provide for the similarities or differences?

Activities

1. Use Slide Deck 5 to review basic information about local governance in New Brunswick. Key questions:
 - What are the features and responsibilities of municipalities and rural communities?
 - How do local government councils function?
 - How do local government councils influence their communities?
2. Ask students to complete an online scavenger hunt about their municipality or rural community (Activity 5.2). Give students time to complete it independently or in pairs and then share their responses in small groups or as a class.
 - Year of incorporation (if applicable)
 - Population and census data (Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2016)
 - Geographic boundaries of the municipality or rural community and three major landforms or waterways within it
 - Composition of the local government council (titles and numbers of positions)
 - Description of five services provided to the community
 - Summary of three recent announcements or new programs offered and who is impacted in the community
 - Additional: Photo evidence of neighbourhood attractions, cultural institutions and activities (four pieces)
3. Divide students into groups and have them discuss their views about the most important needs and opportunities

in their community. Students should reflect on the findings in the *Starter* activity and from their research about their municipality or rural community.

- What do you think are the most pressing issues in our community?
 - Do you see any opportunities for improvement or innovation?
 - How could the health of our community be improved?
4. Ask each group to reach a consensus about one issue they want to address through a detailed community action plan. Using Activity 5.3 as a guide, each group should conduct research, design their plan and analyze the potential results. Students should use primary and secondary resources, such as the local government's website, research studies and media sources.
 5. Allow each group to present its plan to the rest of the class.

Alternative Activity

1. By-laws are the primary legislative instrument of local governments. The local government council makes decisions by adopting or amending recommendations from its committees and local government officials contained in reports and communications. Ask students to research a recent by-law passed by their local government council and complete Activity 5.4. Exemplar 5.5 can be used as a guide.

Key questions:

- Details: What are the details of the by-law?
 - Conditions: What are the underlying conditions?
 - Objectives: What are the goals and objectives?
 - Results: How can progress be assessed?
 - Analysis: Do you think the by-law will be effective? Why or why not?
2. In small groups or through a whole class discussion, have students share their by-law research and analysis.

Consolidation

Through a written reflection or class discussion, have students respond to one or more of the following questions:

- Why should we care about our community?
- What can young people do to make changes in their communities?
- Why is it important to collaborate with others on addressing community needs?
- Why is it important to have diversity in government and within groups tackling change in our communities?

SUPPORTS AND ADAPTATIONS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with terms and definitions in advance. • Allow students to explore home communities as well as the community in which they now live.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may have different feelings towards their local government. Encourage empathy and foster a safe place for respectful discussion. • Depending on the community, students could choose to focus on a particular ethnic or religious group and see how they fit into the larger community. • Focus research on programs and services for youth or relevant other groups in the community. • If applicable, encourage students to explore nearby Indigenous communities, and their changes over time, or how these communities fit into the larger community.
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion. • The community action plan presentation can be created and shared in an entirely digital format, using PowerPoint or Google Slides.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Most communities in New Brunswick are classified as either a **city, town, village, regional municipality** or **rural community**.

A town, city, or village operates on its own and is categorized as a single municipality, whereas regional municipalities and rural communities include one or more communities. This allows various local responsibilities to be shared among a group of communities for efficiency.

Municipalities or **rural communities** represent the most local level of government in New Brunswick. They are responsible for meeting their communities' needs and fulfilling duties, such as managing the growth and well-being of the community.

There are 104 **local governments** in New Brunswick and they receive their powers and responsibilities from the provincial government.

New Brunswick also has 236 **local service districts** (LSDs). An LSD is a structure that allows for the administration and delivery of local services such as streetlights, recreation, garbage collection, and fire protection to areas of the province that are not incorporated (do not have a mayor and councillors). These services are coordinated by the provincial government through the Department of Environment and Local Government.

Each municipality and rural community has a specific geographic area and is responsible for delivering local services for the people living within its jurisdiction, such as water and sewage treatment, public transit, roads and bridges, local parks and recreational facilities.

Local governments also have the ability to tax people in order to pay for the services they provide to citizens.

Property taxes are established by each local government and may vary, based on the type of property owned. Each year, local governments determine how much money they need to collect from property taxes to contribute to the cost of services, and determine the tax rate based on that amount.

Local government councils are the democratically elected bodies that make decisions on behalf of the municipality or rural community, and are accountable for those decisions to their community. They are comprised of a head of council called a **mayor** and several **councillors**, collectively called **council members**.

Councils are responsible for the planning, growth and safety of the community. Council members govern by listening to the concerns of their constituents (people living in their community), attending meetings and creating, discussing and voting on bills and by-laws they believe will improve their community. Councillors also support and participate in various activities and events in their communities.

A council makes decisions collectively, meaning that it is not individual council members but rather the council as a whole, based on a majority vote, that decides and acts for the community.

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITIES

- Tracadie

RURAL COMMUNITIES

- Beaubassin-est/East
- Campobello Island
- Cocagne
- Hanwell
- Haut-Madawaska
- Kedgwick
- Saint-André
- Upper Miramichi

VILLAGES

- Alma
- Aroostook
- Atholville
- Balmoral
- Bas-Caraquet
- Bath
- Belledune
- Bertrand
- Blacks Harbour
- Blackville
- Cambridge-Narrows
- Canterbury
- Cap-Pelé
- Centreville
- Charlo
- Chipman
- Doaktown
- Dorchester
- Drummond
- Eel River Crossing
- Fredericton Junction
- Gagetown
- Grand Manan
- Grande-Anse
- Harvey
- Hillsborough
- Lac Baker
- Le Goulet
- Maisonnnette
- McAdam
- Meductic
- Memramcook
- Millville
- Minto
- Neguac
- New Maryland
- Nigadoo
- Norton
- Paquetville
- Perth-Andover
- Petit-Rocher
- Petitcodiac
- Plaster Rock
- Pointe-Verte
- Port Elgin
- Rexton
- Riverside-Albert
- Rivière-Verte
- Rogersville
- Saint-Antoine
- Saint-Louis de Kent
- Saint-Léolin
- Sainte-Anne-de-Madawaska
- Sainte-Marie-Saint-Raphaël
- Salisbury
- St-Isidore
- St. Martins
- Stanley
- Sussex Corner
- Tide Head
- Tracy

TOWNS

- Beresford
- Bouctouche
- Caraquet
- Dalhousie
- Florenceville-Bristol
- Grand Bay-Westfield
- Grand Falls
- Hampton
- Hartland
- Lamèque
- Nackawic
- Oromocto
- Quispamsis
- Richibucto
- Riverview
- Rothesay
- Sackville
- Saint Andrews
- Saint-Léonard
- Saint-Quentin
- Shediac
- Shippagan
- St. George
- St. Stephen
- Sussex
- Woodstock

CITIES

- Bathurst
- Campbellton
- Dieppe
- Edmundston
- Fredericton
- Miramichi
- Moncton
- Saint John

ACTIVITY 5.1: Assessing My Community

1. Use the following score card to assess your community's strengths and weaknesses. Determine if you 'Strongly Agree', 'Somewhat Agree', 'Somewhat Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with each statement.

CATEGORY	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
I feel a strong sense of belonging in our community.				
I feel that our community is safe.				
We have plenty of parks and green spaces and they are well kept.				
Our community has enough recreation facilities and recreation programs.				
Access to community programs and services is not an issue.				
Our community has increased alternative methods of transportation, including public transit, carpooling or bike lanes.				
Poverty and food security (availability and access to nutritious food) is not a problem in our community.				
Our community does a good job in celebrating its history and culture through festivals, museums and galleries.				
Internet connections are fast and reliable in our community.				
Our local government is successful in promoting tourism and attracting visitors.				
Affordable housing is not a problem in our community.				
I am confident I will find a job that interests me in our community.				
I am planning to stay to live and work in our community after school.				
I have a great deal of trust in our police.				
I have a great deal of trust in our local government politicians.				

2. Calculate your community's score by calculating the totals for each response below.

Strongly Agree	Number of responses	_____	x 4	_____
Somewhat Agree	Number of responses	_____	x 3	_____
Somewhat Disagree	Number of responses	_____	x 2	_____
Strongly Disagree	Number of responses	_____	x 1	_____

Your local government score (out of 60): _____

3. What are your local government's main **strengths** and **weaknesses**? Identify three of each.

ACTIVITY 5.2: Learning About My Community

Complete a scavenger hunt to learn more about your municipality or rural community. Use your local government's website, Statistics Canada's website, local media, or other information sources.

Name	Community Type	Year of incorporation
Population and census data (Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2016)		
Geographic boundaries of the municipality or rural community and three major landforms or waterways within it		
Composition of the local government council (titles and number of positions)		
Description of five services provided to the community		
Summary of three recent announcements or new programs offered and who is impacted in the community		

Additional: Photo evidence of neighbourhood attractions, cultural institutions and activities (four pieces)

ACTIVITY 5.3: Community Action Guide

<p>Identify an issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the most pressing need in your community? Does an opportunity exist to create positive change in your community? • How can you frame it as a question? 	
<p>Find the facts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the issues related to the problem/opportunity? • Who is affected? How are they affected? • What research or statistics is available? • What steps has your local government taken to address the issue? 	
<p>Proposed actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What actions can be taken to address the issue? • Who can make things happen on this issue? • What individuals are in a position to create or block change? (government officials, community groups) • In which ways can we advocate for action or change in the community? 	
<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the intended outcomes of the actions? • What are some possible unintended consequences? • How can we evaluate the success of our plan or proposed actions? 	

ACTIVITY 5.4: By-law Analysis

By-laws are the primary legislative instrument of local governments. The local government council makes decisions by adopting or amending recommendations from its committees and local government officials.

Visit your local government's website and find a recent by-law to analyze using the questions below.

BY-LAW INFORMATION: Number, subject, date	
DETAILS: What are the details of the by-law?	
CONDITIONS: What are the underlying conditions?	
OBJECTIVES: What are the goals and objectives?	
RESULTS: How can progress or changes in behaviour be assessed?	
ANALYSIS: Do you think the by-law will be effective? Why or why not?	

EXEMPLAR 5.5: By-law Analysis

Sample by-law analysis.

BY-LAW INFORMATION: Number, subject, date	#1234 To provide new regulations for the care and control of dangerous dogs to protect the public. Enacted January 31, 2020.
DETAILS: What are the details of the by-law?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No person shall allow an animal to remain outdoors during extreme weather unless the animal has access to an enclosure that will adequately protect the animal from the elements. • No person shall keep an animal tethered where a choke collar, choke chain, pronged collar or any similar device forms part of the tether. • No person shall tether an animal unsupervised for longer than one hour. • No person shall use a choke collar, choke chain, pronged collar or any similar device at any time on a dog. Does not apply to the use of a martingale collar on a dog.
CONDITIONS: What are the underlying conditions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfair treatment of animals, including exposure to extreme weather and tethering for an extended period of time and use of harmful collars.
OBJECTIVES: What are the goals and objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the frequency of animals being left outside during extreme weather conditions and resulting ailments. • Reduce animal injuries and abuse due to harmful collars and neglect.
RESULTS: How can progress or changes in behaviour be assessed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring the number of injuries or fatalities of animals due to extreme conditions or tethering.
ANALYSIS: Do you think the by-law will be effective? Why or why not?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. It will be effective if the by-law is enforced and citizens are aware of it.

Lesson 6

Local Government Elections



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- ❶ How is my local government elected?
- ❷ How can I learn about the election candidates?
- ❸ Which candidate(s) do I support and why?

SUMMARY

Elections present an opportunity for citizens to discuss and debate political issues and have a voice about the future direction of their community.

In this lesson, students will become acquainted with the local government election process and analyze ways to compare the candidates. In groups, students will collect information about or from one of the candidates and share their findings with the rest of the class. In the *Consolidation* activity, students will reflect on which issues are most important to them and which candidate(s) they will vote for, and why.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- analyze issues facing the community;
- explain details about the local government election process in their community;
- analyze different ways to compare the candidates;
- research the candidates running for election using primary and secondary resources;
- evaluate which candidate(s) they support and why.

Starter

1. Share the following with students.

In any given place – a neighbourhood, community, province or country – anywhere that groups of people live together and where the laws of the land affect everyone in a similar way, there will be differences in opinions about how government and society should work, which issues are most important and how best to take action. Giving citizens an opportunity to have a voice in the debate is fundamental to a democracy.

2. In small groups, have students brainstorm some of the most pressing issues in your community.
3. As a class, co-create criteria to evaluate the list of community issues. Sample criteria: Ask students to respond to the following questions for each issue – Definitely / Probably / Probably not / Definitely not
 - Is the impact long lasting?
 - Is the impact extreme – positively or negatively?
 - Are many people affected?
 - Does it directly affect you, your family and friends?
 - Are many people for and/or against it?
 - Are the differences between supporters and opponents substantial?
4. Return to small groups and have students rank the issues from the earlier discussion using the criteria established.
5. Follow up with a class discussion to review the small group rankings and as a class come to a consensus on the top three issues facing the community.

Activities

1. Review the local election process in New Brunswick using the following guiding questions and Slide Deck 6. Add specific information about the election races in your community.
 - What is the purpose of elections?
 - Who is responsible for running the local elections?
 - What is an electoral system or voting system?
 - How does First-Past-the-Post work?
 - How many candidates can I vote for in each race?

2. Find out which candidates are running for election for which positions in your community. Show students where they can find this information by visiting your local government's website.

3. On a blackboard or whiteboard, write down the following question: How do voters decide who to vote for?

Through a class discussion, generate questions to frame this decision. For example:

- Why do they want to be on council?
 - Who would make a good leader for the community?
 - Who would work well with the rest of council to make decisions for our local government?
 - What experience does the candidate have in serving the community?
 - What are the most important issues in the community? Do they matter to candidates? Do they have ideas to address these issues?
 - What ideas or goals do the candidates have for our local government? Which do I support the most?
4. Divide the class into pairs or small groups to research the candidates running for election (Activity 6.1). As a class, develop a checklist for the candidate profiles. Have students choose how the information will be presented (e.g., poster, slide deck, video, mock Facebook or Instagram profile).

Sample candidate profile:

- Name and photo
- Personal information (What skills or experience do they have for the job?)
- Reason for running (Why do they want the job?)
- Priorities (What issues are most important to the candidate?)
- Issues (What is their position or proposed ideas for the three election issues?)

TEACHER NOTE

Encourage students to use primary and secondary resources, including news articles and commentary, candidate websites and social media, or even contact the candidates directly.

5. Have each group present their candidate profile and research to the rest of the class. Alternatively, you can post the group work on a digital platform and allow students to review each profile.

Consolidation

Have a brief closing discussion about the candidates running for election, or ask students to write a reflection on one or more of the following questions.

- Which candidate did you find most appealing on a personal level and why?
- Which candidate aligns with your views? Which candidate do you think will best address the issues that matter most to you? Explain your reasoning.
- Which candidate will you support and why?
- What do you think has shaped your political views the most? Why is it important to respect others' viewpoints even if they differ from your own?

SUPPORTS AND ADAPTATIONS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide students with terms and definitions in advance.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze the diversity of the candidates running in your community and discuss the need for diversity in politics.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fredericton group aims to get more women running in municipal elections this spring: www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/fredericton-women-municipal-1.5853705- Women in Politics: https://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/women-politics/- MP Mumilaaq Qaqqaq: https://globalnews.ca/news/6071654/mumilaaq-qaqqaq-nunavut-mp/- Refugees in Politics: https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/11/04/maryam-monsef_n_8468048.html
Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion.• Consider using a digital format for the candidate research and profile so that it can be shared online, in order to limit interactions or movement in the classroom.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Local government councils are made up of elected officials. They are comprised of a head of council called a **mayor** and several **councillors**, collectively called **council members**. Local government councils make decisions together to meet your community's needs now and in the future.

Local government elections in New Brunswick must be held every four years, on the second Monday in May. Although local government elections were scheduled to take place in May 2020, the provincial government passed legislation to postpone elections due to COVID-19. The next local government elections will be held on Monday, May 10, 2021.

A **voting system** (or electoral system) is the way in which we elect our representatives. The voting system includes set rules for how preferences are recorded and the method used for determining which candidate wins. There are many different voting systems used around the world.

New Brunswick uses a system called **First Past-The-Post** (FPTP). A successful candidate must receive the most votes in order to be elected.

In order to be eligible to vote in the local government elections in New Brunswick you must:

- Be a Canadian citizen;
- Be eighteen years of age on or before polling day;
- Have been or will have been ordinarily resident in the Province for a period of at least 40 days immediately before the election; and
- Be living in the local government area, school district, or health region on Election Day.

Depending on where you live, you may be able to vote for mayor (head of a local government council) and councillor (one or more members of your local government council). You may also be able to vote for representatives for your district education council or regional health authority.

Mayors are elected **at-large** (by all eligible voters in the community). Councillors can be elected at-large or by a **district** or **ward system**, where the local government is broken down into smaller geographic areas with their own designated councillor(s). Some local governments use a mix of district and at-large systems.

In local government elections in New Brunswick, there are two types of elections: **single-member elections** and **multi-member elections**. In single-member elections, only one candidate is elected, such as in the case of a mayoral race or a council race where only one person is selected to represent one **district** (also known as a **ward**). Voters can only choose one candidate on the ballot and the candidate with the most votes wins. However, in multi-member elections, more than one member is elected so voters can choose more than one candidate if they choose (up to a maximum). For instance, if six councillors are elected at-large for the entire local government, then voters can select up to six candidates. The six candidates with the most votes are elected to council.

Voting in elections is done by secret ballot. This ensures the privacy of each voter's choice. No one except the voter knows the choice that was made.

A ballot lists the names of the candidates running for each position in your local government election. There is a space beside each candidate's name on the ballot. As long as you clearly mark the ballot for the appropriate number of candidates, your votes will be counted. This includes a checkmark, X, shading-in or another marking. Regarding the number of choices on a ballot, if six council members are elected at-large, you can vote for up to six candidates. Alternatively, if only one candidate is elected in a given race, you can only vote for one candidate.

A **rejected** vote is declared invalid by the deputy returning officer because it was not properly marked (e.g., the voter selected more than the allowed number of candidates). In the case of local government elections, one race or section may be declared valid and another may be deemed invalid.

A **spoiled** ballot is a ballot that is mistakenly marked or torn and exchanged for a new ballot. It is kept separate and never placed in the ballot box.

Across all local governments, there may be two, three, four or more candidates running for a position on council, depending on the race. A candidate is elected by **acclamation** if they have no opponents, or if the number of candidates match the number of council members to be elected. In that case, no vote is held for that race.

In order to run as a candidate in the local government election in New Brunswick, you must 18 years of age on or before Election Day; a Canadian citizen; a resident of the province and the local government area for at least 6 months immediately preceding election day; and in a local government that is divided into wards for election purposes, a candidate for ward councillor must be a resident of that ward when they are nominated.

There are many ways to gather information about the local government election candidates. Community groups hold in-person or virtual town hall meetings or all-candidate debates where citizens are invited to listen to candidates speak on the issues and ask questions. Information can also be found on radio and television, media websites or in newspapers and local magazines. Individuals may also visit campaign offices, attend campaign events or have a chance to talk to candidates when they visit homes during door to door canvassing, when possible. Information may also be accessible online through candidate websites and social media pages. This is one of the first elections in Canada to happen during the COVID-19 pandemic, so you can expect to see a much greater focus on virtual outreach compared to traditional methods.

ACTIVITY 6.1: GRAPHIC ORGANIZER – Getting to Know the Candidates

Fill out the graphic organizer below with information about the candidates running for election.

NAME	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
REASON FOR RUNNING	
PRIORITIES IF ELECTED	
IDEAS OR PROPOSALS ON KEY ISSUES	

NAME	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
REASON FOR RUNNING	
PRIORITIES IF ELECTED	
IDEAS OR PROPOSALS ON KEY ISSUES	

NAME	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
REASON FOR RUNNING	
PRIORITIES IF ELECTED	
IDEAS OR PROPOSALS ON KEY ISSUES	

NAME	
PERSONAL INFORMATION	
REASON FOR RUNNING	
PRIORITIES IF ELECTED	
IDEAS OR PROPOSALS ON KEY ISSUES	

Lesson 7

District Education Council Elections



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- ❶ What makes an ideal education councillor?
- ❷ How can I learn about the education councillor candidates?
- ❸ What improvements would I like to see in my school or the school community?

SUMMARY

New Brunswickers elect their district education councils (DECs) to improve student achievement according to the diverse needs, priorities and unique educational requirements of the communities they represent.

In this lesson, students will explore consensus decision-making while debating the issue of using mobile devices in the classroom. Students will discuss the role of education councils and research the composition of their DEC. In groups, students will create a profile for an ideal education councillor, before researching and assessing the candidates running for election. In the *Consolidation* activity, students will reflect on ways to improve their school or the school community and articulate these views to the newly elected district education council.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the lesson, students can:

- explain the role of school districts and district education councils (DECs);
- describe the composition of their district education council;
- assess the influence of school district policies and/or decisions on their school experience;
- work collaboratively with their peers to learn about the DEC candidates; and
- evaluate the candidates running for election.

Starter

1. Read one or both of the articles below concerning the use of social media and smartphones in the classroom. Alternatively, you could use a local news article or a story pertaining to your own school district.
 - **New Brunswick has mixed response to adopting cellphone ban in classrooms** (*Global News*, March 13, 2019) <https://globalnews.ca/news/5052715/new-brunswick-ontario-cellphone-ban/>
 - **More Canadian schools move to incorporate, not ban, cellphones** (*CTV News*, February 26, 2017) <https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/more-canadian-schools-move-to-incorporate-not-ban-cellphones-1.3301715>
2. Should smartphones be banned from the classroom? Divide students into groups and ask them to debate this topic using a *Both Sides Now* approach (Activity 7.1). Students will have an opportunity to reflect on the issue and increase their understanding of the arguments that support and oppose the positions. At the end, each group will make a group decision as to whether they approve or disapprove of a smartphone ban in classrooms and provide a reason for their decision.
3. As a class, have a follow up discussion:
 - What are the opportunities and challenges in making collective or group decisions?
 - How do you make group decisions with a group of people who do not all agree?
 - How do you get your point across to someone you are debating with?
 - How can you make sure you understand the points of those you disagree with?

Activities

1. Invite students to share what they know about their school district. Questions to prompt discussion:
 - What is the name of our school district?
 - Who sets the goals and makes strategic decisions for the school district?
 - Who oversees operations and makes management decisions at the school district?
 - What are some responsibilities of the school district?

2. Share background information about school districts and education councillors using Slide Deck 7. Afterwards, review the composition of your school district.
 - Does the district have subdistricts? If so, how many? Which one does our school reside in?
 - How many education councillors are elected? How many in each subdistrict? How many in our subdistrict?
3. Review the term: policy. A policy is statement of intent or action to achieve certain outcomes. A policy also provides rules to be followed. Using a *Turn and Talk* strategy, ask students to think of specific examples of how school district policies and decisions affect their lives.
4. In small groups, ask students to create a profile for their 'ideal' education councillor using Handout 7.2 and Activity 7.3. What personal characteristics, skills, experience and motivations match the responsibilities of the role?
5. Review the list of candidates running for education councillor by visiting the website for your school district and/or municipality. Review the term: incumbent. An incumbent is the existing holder of a political office.

TEACHER NOTE

If your education councillor candidates are acclaimed, skip to the *Alternative Activities*.

6. Ask students to learn about the candidates through web searches, candidate websites and social media pages. This activity can be completed through a jigsaw method or you can assign one candidate to each group and have them present to the rest of the class.
7. Have a closing discussion about the candidates and ask students write a reflection based on their ideal candidate.
 - Which candidate(s) do you think would make the best education councillor and why?
 - Which candidate(s) most closely matches your ideal candidate? Explain with evidence or examples.
 - What are the major issues facing your school district?

Alternative Activities

1. Select three school district policies that directly influence students. In pairs or small groups, ask students to change each policy to their liking, and describe how this change would affect students (consider advantages and potential drawbacks). Ask students to share their changes and as a class determine the best amendments.
2. If your education councillor was acclaimed, invite them into your class for a discussion about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead within the school district. You could also consider framing the discussion regarding the specific policies analyzed in the above activity.

Consolidation

Ask students to reflect on what they would like to change or improve about school or the school community and find a way to articulate this to their newly elected DEC. This can be in the form of a letter, video, slide deck or multi-media piece.

SUPPORTS AND ADAPTATIONS

Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide students with terms and definitions in advance.• Encourage students to compare the education system in New Brunswick to the one of their home country. This can help with a deeper understanding of the institutions.
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some students may be shy or reluctant to vote.• Include discussion of Indigenous schooling options.• Discuss the emphasis many Indigenous groups place on consensus decision-making.
Accessibility & Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If working in pairs or small groups in the classroom is not possible, consider using Google Docs for collaborative activities and discussion.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

District Education Councils (DECs) were first established in 2001 to provide local governance and community input into New Brunswick's education system.

The *Education Act* gives authority and responsibilities to the DECs. DEC members provide local input and set the goals and directions for education in each **school district**. The *Education Act* currently provides for 11 to 13 elected education councillors for each of the school districts. There are 4 Anglophone districts (North, South, East, and West) and 3 Francophone districts (Nord-Est, Nord-Ouest, and Sud), with 7 to 13 elected members on each council.

The provincial Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development meets with DECs bi-annually to discuss major issues, reflect on policy direction and share information. The Minister and Department staff are also in regular contact with DECs to consult on policy development, capital issues, and other business.

DECs focus on the big picture, setting priorities and addressing the needs for education, performance and infrastructure for all schools. This is different from Parent School Support Committees which provide advice to principals at the school level.

The DEC only has authority when it is working as a team to create policies that set boundaries and direct the work of the superintendent. The **superintendent** is responsible for the operational oversight of the school district and day-to-day decisions.

Under provincial legislation DECs have the following responsibilities:

- Approving and monitoring the district education plan
- Approving and monitoring the district expenditure plan
- Maintaining links with the Parent School Support Committees
- Developing district policies and procedures
- Providing for an appeal process
- Determining capital project priorities
- Recommending school closures
- Overseeing trust funds
- Reviewing and approving school improvement and performance reports
- Hiring and evaluating the district superintendent

Find more info about subdistricts on the Elections NB website at *For Candidates > District Education Council Candidates > School Districts Maps*.

To be a candidate in a district education council election, you must be 18 years of age on or before Election Day; a Canadian citizen; a resident of the school district in New Brunswick for at least six months immediately preceding election day; and a resident of the relevant school district and subdistrict or zone when nominated.

Candidates cannot be employees of the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development or school personnel such as teachers; school bus drivers; building maintenance personnel; or secretaries and clerks.

ACTIVITY 7.1: Both Sides Now

BOTH SIDES NOW	
<p>1. Discuss: Have a conversation with your group about the arguments for both sides.</p> <p>2. Record: As a group, record evidence that supports and opposes the proposal being presented.</p>	
Evidence that SUPPORTS the position	Evidence that OPPOSES the position
<p>3. Decision: As a group review your evidence and come up with a decision as to whether you agree or disagree with the proposal.</p>	
<p>4. Reasons: Record your group's reasons for the position it decided to take.</p>	

ACTIVITY 7.2: My Ideal Education Councillor

In the chart below, describe seven key responsibilities of the role of an education councillor in the left hand column. In the right hand column, record what characteristics, skills or qualities would be needed to perform each responsibility.

RESPONSIBILITY	CHARACTERISTICS, SKILLS OR QUALITIES NEEDED

HANDOUT 7.3: The Role of Education Councillors

An education councillor’s role is to maintain a focus on student achievement and well-being, and to participate in making decisions that benefit the entire district while representing the interests of their community.

EDUCATION COUNCILLORS ESTABLISH THE DISTRICT’S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The district education council (DEC) is responsible for setting the overall direction for the school district. Education councillors work together to establish the DEC’s strategic plan, which sets the direction of the district for parents, the public and the superintendent, and lays out the priorities and strategic direction of the school district.

The DEC ensures that the superintendent carries out responsibilities for implementing the DEC’s strategic plan. The superintendent holds the responsibility for the day-to-day work in this area or the delegation of the work to various people and groups within the district.

EDUCATION COUNCILLORS ARE FINANCIAL STEWARDS

DECs have important responsibilities for approval and oversight of school district financial decisions. One of the most important aspects of governance for education councillors is to connect district goals, strategic planning and economic realities, through the establishment of the school district’s annual budget.

The DEC oversees development of a strategic plan and the allocation of resources to support that plan. The DEC ensures the budget and staff allocations are in alignment with the plan and the identified goals that are intended to improve outcomes for students.

EDUCATION COUNCILLORS ARE A PART OF A TEAM

An education councillor is a member of a team: the DEC. While the DEC has the authority to make decisions or to take action; individual councillors in and of themselves do not have this authority.

While healthy debate is an important aspect of good governance, once the DEC has voted, it is the DEC’s decision and an individual councillor’s responsibility to act in a manner that promotes and upholds the DEC’s decision and to communicate the DEC’s decision back to the public.

EDUCATION COUNCILLORS ARE COMMUNITY LEADERS

Education councillors work with their DEC colleagues and with other community partners to ensure that all the students within the DEC’s jurisdiction have equal opportunities to reach their maximum potential.

While members of the DEC act as representatives of their community, their primary job is to participate in policy making and strategic planning that are in the interests of all of the district’s students, and are grounded in promoting student achievement and well-being. Education councillors balance the governance role with the representative role, participating in decision-making that benefits the whole DEC while representing the interests of their community.

DUTIES OF EDUCATION COUNCILLORS:

1. Support public schools and public education.
2. Regularly engage in professional development.
3. Act with commitment.
4. Come thoroughly prepared for meetings.
5. Understand the difference between DEC and staff roles and responsibilities.
6. Consider all viewpoints before making a decision.
7. Work toward consensus on difficult issues.
8. Respect confidentiality.
9. Strive for open and honest communication with DEC members, staff and the community.
10. Respect the final decisions of the DEC.

NOTES