

# Albuquerque Model City Council Curriculum

## Model City Council: Lesson 4

**Lesson Topics:** Strengths, weaknesses, and needs of a council district; Participatory Budgeting process

**Aim:** To think as a citizen and decision maker about your community.

**Skills to be Addressed:**

- Digital media skills
- Oral presentation skills
- Brainstorming ideas to solve problems

**Objectives:**

Students will:

- Present photographs and impressions of their council district.
- Understand the participatory budgeting process
- Begin brainstorming ideas to improve their council district.

**Common Core Standards Addressed:**

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5  
Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2  
Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

**Timeframe:** One 60-minute period.

**Materials:**

- Computer with access to Internet
- Projector and screen
- “Sawmill/Wells Park” Community Strengths and Community Issues”
- “Meet the Citizens Who Helped Decide Their City’s Budget—and Got Better Buses, Benches, and Crosswalks,” an article from *Yes Magazine*, either as a handout or at <http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/meet-the-citizens-who-helped-decide-their-citys-budget-and-got-better-buses-benches-and-crosswalks-20160520>

**Procedure:**

### I. Student Presentations about City Council Districts

Students present their slide shows or other presentations about their districts, talking about what they learned. They talk about their responses to their district scorecards.

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## II. Class Write: Community Strengths and Community Issues

- Read together “Sawmill/Wells Park” Community Strengths and Community Issues.”
- As a class, create a similar document for your district.

## II. Learn about Participatory Budgeting

Watch the 4 minute video, “Real Money, Real Power,” <https://vimeo.com/162743651>.

Tell students a little about Participatory Budgeting:

*Participatory budgeting (PB) is a different way to manage public money, and to engage people in government. It is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. It enables taxpayers to work with government to make the budget decisions that affect their lives.*

*The process was first developed in Brazil in 1989, and there are now over 1,500 participatory budgets around the world. Most of these are at the city level, for the municipal budget. PB has also been used, however, for counties, states, housing authorities, schools and school systems, universities, coalitions, and other public agencies.*

*Though each experience is different, most follow a similar basic process: residents brainstorm spending ideas, volunteer budget delegates develop proposals based on these ideas, residents vote on proposals, and the government implements the top projects. For example, if community members identify recreation spaces as a priority, their delegates might develop a proposal for basketball court renovations. The residents would then vote on this and other proposals, and if they approve the basketball court, the city pays to renovate it.*

More info at the PB FAQ page: <http://www.participatorybudgeting.org/about-participatory-budgeting/faq/>

Explain that young people in Boston took part in participatory budgeting. Show the 1 minute video, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdkPhHEkDt0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdkPhHEkDt0), about “Youth Lead the Change” in Boston.

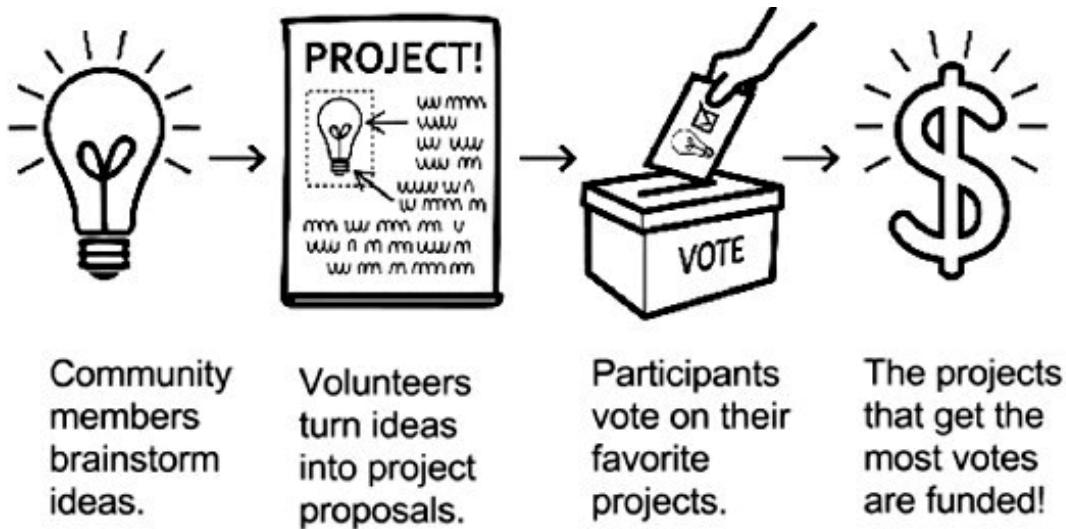
## III. Begin mock Participatory Budgeting for your district.

Explain:

*We’re going to run PB in our class. In groups, you’re going to come up with ideas to spend \$1 million to improve our district.*

Show or draw this graphic:

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*We'll brainstorm ideas, in groups. You'll turn those ideas into project proposals. We'll vote on our favorite ideas, and in our case, we'll present our idea to our city councilor. Maybe he or she can propose legislation that will be voted on by the City Council and maybe it will get funded. Who knows?*

Call on students for ideas about what could be done in their district to improve the lives of people. Consider:

- Expanding business opportunities
- Park improvements
- Gardens
- Art
- Activities for babies, toddlers, children and teenagers
- Activities for senior citizens
- Activities for people with disabilities
- Stopping bullying
- Recycling
- Projects for schools
- Transportation

Record and save those ideas for the next lesson.

### IV. Possible Homework:

- Look at ideas that have been implemented in other cities. Use google, or these examples:
  - Klyde Warren Park in Dallas, <https://www.klydewarrenpark.org>
  - Community gardens. <http://about.greeni.us/10-coolest-urban-gardens-world/>

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- Ideas from around the globe: <http://architizer.com/blog/change-your-city-top-10-urban-transformation-projects/>
- Read about participatory budgeting in Greensboro, North Carolina, “Meet the Citizens Who Helped Decide Their City’s Budget – and Got Better Buses, Benches, and Crosswalks,” (handout); also at [www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/meet-the-citizens-who-helped-decide-their-citys-budget-and-got-better-buses-benches-and-crosswalks-20160520](http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/meet-the-citizens-who-helped-decide-their-citys-budget-and-got-better-buses-benches-and-crosswalks-20160520)