

Democratic Voting Processes



GROUP VOTING METHODS Facilitator Resource

Learning Objectives: To vote in a youth-adult partnership, while maintaining student buy-in.

Added Information: These methods can be used in conjunction Lesson 5 climate solution strategy decision making. Teacher facilitator can choose a method that works best for their classroom.

Scaffolds: These voting methods can help break decisions into smaller, bite sized pieces, making them more manageable as needed.

Open Voting Methods

DOT VOTING Write each of the issues or strategies on the board in large letters. Distribute three dot stickers to each student. Explain the rules of voting: students may use their three votes in any way they choose, from one vote on each, to all three votes on one. Invite students to walk up to the board and place their dots next to the issue(s) or strategy(ies) of their choice.

4 CORNERS Write the numbers 1-4 on 4 pieces of paper and tape them on each corner of the room (or place them on the floor). Review the criteria chosen by the group. Then, read each issue out loud and ask students to move to the number that they think that issue meets the suite of criteria. (1= does not meet the suite of criteria, 4= meets them very well). Tally the votes. If the votes do not identify a preferred issue, have more discussion before casting another vote.

HUMAN CONTINUUM Two signs, one saying “High” and the other “Low,” are placed on opposite sides of the wall (or on the floor) to form the ends of a continuum. For each issue, students stand somewhere along the continuum to demonstrate their point of view. A student standing at the high end volunteers to describe why they have taken that position; similarly, a student at the low end describes their reasoning. Then hold a brief discussion. After discussion, students have the opportunity to change their location on the continuum. Repeat this for each issue. Tally the results. If the votes do not identify a preferred issue, have more discussion before casting another vote.

Anonymous Voting Methods

MAJORITY VOTE Review the criteria chosen by the group. Give students time to review, in pairs or alone, which issue best meets the set criteria. Hand out pieces of paper and have students write down one issue each. Collect the papers and count how many votes each issue was given. This is an opportunity to discuss a number of factors:

- There is a difference between majority rule and consensus building.
 - Majority Rule is a good tool to **begin the conversation or to narrow the options** so that the group can use consensus to reach a final decision. It is important to facilitate the group so that those who “lose” the vote stay vested.
- Our political system is based on majority rule with strong protections that guarantee respect for minority views.



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HEADS DOWN, THUMBS UP Incorporating at least one type of anonymous voting can allow students a chance to vote without feeling self-conscious about their choice, and may reduce the “group-think” and peer influence that can sometimes dominate classrooms. Try voting with students at their desk, heads down. Ask them to vote for their issue or strategy of choice by raising their hand when you call it out loud. Tally the votes. If the votes do not identify a preferred issue, have more discussion before casting another vote.

5 FINGERS To add an additional layer to the Heads Down, Thumbs Up method described above, ask students to put their heads down at their desk. But this time, instead of just putting their hand up for their issue/strategy of choice, ask them to vote with their fingers. 0 finger (their fist) means they don't think that issue meets the suite of criteria, all the way up to 5 fingers which means they think that issue/strategy thinks it meets that suite of criteria really well. Tally the votes. If the votes do not identify a preferred issue, have more discussion before casting another vote.

ELECTRONIC POLLS Polling apps or websites allows for students to cast votes without the pressures of peer opinions. You can structure the voting method like a majority vote, or a Dot Vote, but use an online method! Try polleverywhere.com if interested.