

The Pre-Forum Planning Meeting

At the point of the pre-forum planning meeting, you enter the most active period of the Capitol Forum year. This flurry of activity will last right through the online submission of ballots following the forum.

Goals of the Pre-Forum Planning Meeting

- Prepare teachers for the classroom work prior to the forum.
- Review expectations for the forum.
- Prepare teachers to facilitate deliberation in breakout sessions at the forum.
- Review expectations for work in the classroom after the forum.
- Offer a speaker who can discuss the domestic impact of one or more of the international issues under consideration.

As the title suggests, the primary goal of the pre-forum planning meeting is to help teachers prepare for the forum. They will want a very clear picture of what to expect at the forum so that they can prepare their students appropriately. They will also want to know in detail what they are expected to do with their students prior to the forum. Finally, each of your participating teachers will have a specific leadership role at the forum, serving as a breakout leader during one of the three breakout sessions. You will need to devote a significant portion of the pre-forum meeting to preparing participating teachers for this role.

To add content interest to the day, it is also suggested that you take this opportunity to draw on some of the resources of the capitol area to offer a thought-provoking session on an international issues and its domestic connections. This, however, should not take the place of the important work of preparing all teachers for the work in the classroom before and after the forum and their role at the forum.

With the approach of the pre-forum planning meeting, it is also time for your lead teacher to call (or email, if that is a preferable approach) all participating teachers to see how things have been going with their classes, ask about any work that they have done in a broad sense to prepare their students (e.g., What Choices unit(s) have they used with their students and how did it go? What other approaches have they used?), and be sure that they have received the mailing about the upcoming pre-forum meeting.

The Agenda for the Pre-Forum Planning Meeting

The pre-forum meeting is led jointly by the lead teacher and the state organizer. You should both be very familiar with all of the resources in the Curriculum Resource Book—Part II. These include:

- Pre-forum lesson plan
- “Class statements” submission form (on the website - pre-forum)
- Sample agenda for the Capitol Forum
- Facilitator guides
- “Ballot” submission process (on the website - post-forum)
- Individual “Future 5s” (post-forum assignment to write to a legislator, the President or the newspaper)

Logistics of the Forum Day

The pre-forum planning meeting is a good time to acquaint teachers with the spaces and facilities that will be used for the actual forum. If time allows, you might want to include a tour of the capitol, with stops at the meeting room and breakout rooms, as well as the lunch area, etc. There is an annotated sample agenda of the forum and a Facilities Planning Grid in the resource section of this binder.

Preparing Your Teachers as Breakout Facilitators

Participating teachers will serve as facilitators for breakout sessions during the Capitol Forum. In Sessions I and II, teachers will take on this role in pairs (two per breakout). We recommend that you make assignments prior to the meeting so that you have time to think about appropriate partners for each session during each breakout. Be sure that there is at least one teacher in each pair who is familiar with this kind of student-centered instruction

and comfortable with unfamiliar students. You should allow time at the pre-forum planning meeting for breakout leaders for Sessions I and II to get together to begin their preparation. Following the pre-forum planning meeting they can follow up by phone, email, or in person.

It is critical to the process to stress that the breakout leader's role is to facilitate deliberation; not to present to the students and not to foster debate. Debate is easy to fall into as it's familiar, but it will drive the discussion toward winners and losers rather than toward

Pre-Forum Meeting: Sample Agenda

8:00-8:30	Coffee & Pastries
8:30-8:45	Welcome
8:45-9:30	Reflections on Classroom Experiences (Include discussion of their experience with deliberation in the classroom.)
9:30-10:00	An Overview of the Forum Day
10:15-10:45	Preparation for Capitol Forum—Preparing the Class Pre-Forum lesson: As part of this lesson, all students in participating class(es) will complete an exercise in which they deliberate with their peers on a range of international topics and then articulate their concerns about international issues. As a component of the lesson, they will develop a “class statement” which they will post to the Capitol Forum website prior to the forum. In addition, they will be asked to create a poster that expresses the top concerns of the class. Student representatives will present this visual and their class’ concerns during the forum.
10:45-11:15	Preparation for Capitol Forum—Preparing Student Representatives Student representatives will each be assigned a global issue. They are provided with background readings (acquired from the Choices Program). Their Session I Breakout will be assigned based the topic they have prepared.
11:15-11:45	Review Classroom Follow-up After the Forum Class Lesson and Online Ballot
11:45-12:45	Lunch and Logistics for Forum
12:45-2:15	Breakout Sessions: What to Expect, How to Lead (Overview, Assignments, and Work Time)
2:15-3:00	Global Issues—Local Connections (Speaker)
3:00-3:15	Wrap-Up

shared deliberation.

Breakout Leader Guides for all breakout sessions and an annotated agenda of the forum day are included in the Curriculum Resource Book and in the Pre-Forum Planning Meeting section of the online resources. It will be important that all participating teachers have a clear understanding of the goals and methods of each of the breakout sessions as well as an overview of the day in order to understand how the various pieces of the day fit together.

Discussion of and work on breakout sessions is included in the agenda for the pre-forum planning meeting. During this discussion, the lead teacher should provide all participating teachers with a clear understanding of the purpose and goals of these breakout sessions within the context of the Capitol Forum day. Breakout facilitators will need this context before they make their specific plans within the parameters of the breakout facilitator guidelines provided. Other teachers will find this helpful as they prepare their students for the forum. The lead teacher should check in with all breakout facilitators prior to the forum.

The Capitol Forum Curriculum

The Choices office will send to you booklets with the background readings for each of the teachers. These background readings will prepare the four student representatives for the Capitol Forum. They can also be used with the whole class. Additional materials they will use in the classroom prior to and following the forum are in the Curriculum Resource Book.

This includes the pre-forum lesson plan that is used by the entire class. The booklet will also contain the teacher's guides to the breakout sessions and a sample agenda outlining the Capitol Forum day. The post-forum lesson plan and ballot information are also part of this curriculum.

Pre-Forum Lesson: International Events, Values, and History

The pre-forum lesson plan, found in the Curriculum Resource Book, includes a homework assignment and an in-class lesson. It should be done in the two to three weeks prior to the Capitol Forum. Poster guidelines are also included to help students create a poster that reflects the concerns and opinions of their class for presentation at the forum. Finally, all participating classes are expected to draft and post to the Capitol Forum web site a "class statement" reflecting the concerns of the class.

Background Readings

Prior to the forum, the four students selected from each participating class to represent their classmates at the Capitol Forum will each be assigned a global issue topic. (There will be one set of readings for each of the four issues covered at the forum.) In addition, they should receive an overview of the Futures that address the central question of the forum: What should the role of the United States be in the changing international environment? Students attending the forum should review all four Futures prior to attending as they will not know which one they are presenting until the day of the forum. Teachers will find these instructions in the Curriculum Resource Book.

A Powerpoint Overview

Your participating teachers will need a frame of reference as they hear about all of the aspects of the Capitol Forum — classroom activities, preparation of student representatives, the day at the forum, breakout sessions, classroom follow up after the forum. In several states, organizers and lead teachers have prepared a powerpoint presentation that can be used as an introductory presentation and/or as a guide throughout the meeting. A printed copy may also be useful to teachers after the meeting.

Post Forum Lesson Plan and Ballot Materials

The Capitol Forum program does not end at the close of the day at the state capitol. Each participating teacher and the four students who accompanied him or her to the forum will bring some of the forum deliberation back to their classrooms. This is accomplished through a post-forum lesson on the Four Futures that culminates in the entire class completing the Student Ballot on America's Future. Finally, all students are asked to develop their own Future 5 as a letter to an elected official or to the local paper. Teachers will find these materials in the Curriculum Resource Book.

Other Resources

Each participating teacher will need a

posterboard (that meets the specs outlined in the pre-forum lesson). You may purchase these and distribute them at the pre-forum meeting or provide your teachers with the specifications and the name of a chain store where they can buy their own. We recommend three-panel corrugated or foam-core boards that can stand on tabletops for easy display.

Selecting Students for the Forum

The Capitol Forum is intended to be a citizens' gathering that includes voices and perspectives from a range of students. It is not a competition. Students should be chosen for their interest and potential to benefit from the program. The program should include stu-

Objectives of the Pre-Forum Lesson:—Students will:

- Examine a variety of current topics and concerns on the international agenda.
- Relate these topics and concerns to the four global issues of this program.
- Using the issues and related concepts, make connections between history and present day international issues.

The pre-forum lesson culminates in a “class statement” and a poster presenting the views of the class as a whole.

Class Statement—Posted on the Web

As part of the pre-forum lesson, students develop a class statement and post it to the Capitol Forum web site in the weeks preceding the forum. The class statement need not present a single viewpoint. It should reflect the range of opinion in the class.

Poster Project

The pre-forum lesson will culminate in a poster, developed by students from the class, communicating the class' concerns and values. Posters are presented at the opening of the forum in order to give voice to student views at the outset of the forum and communicating that this is a day for students to be heard. Student posters should:

- Reflect in a creative visual fashion the concerns expressed by the entire class during the pre-forum lesson.
- Show how these concerns relate to some of the four global issues to be addressed at the forum. [Need not address all]
- Reflect the values at stake in these international concerns, along with the values that students themselves believe should shape U.S. policy.

State organizers may wish to give students a specific question to address as the focus of their prepared poster presentation at the Capitol Forum.

dents from many different courses and ability levels. The day should provide students with a forum to thoughtfully refine or formulate some of their views, not a competitive battleground. We recommend that participating teachers select students who possess the following characteristics:

- Ability and motivation to participate effectively in discussion of international topics
- Ability to listen to others, respond thoughtfully, and formulate challenging questions
- Comfort and inclination to work effectively with others in small groups, even if other group members are not close friends
- Willingness to follow directions
- Displays attentive and appropriate behavior in educational settings
- Can wait for his/her turn to talk without interrupting others or disrupting class
- Will responsibly attend to the background readings and assignments in preparation for the forum
- Ability to be an effective presenter during the classroom post-forum exercises

Each participating teacher will bring four students to the forum. It is recommended that a fifth student is selected as an alternate in case one of the students is unable to attend due to illness.

Identifying a Speaker for the Pre-Forum Meeting

You will have limited time during this workshop to give to a topic specialist who will explore the local implications of one of the four global issues to be addressed at the forum.

Whatever format you choose, make sure that you prepare your speaker so that he or she understands the goals of the Capitol Forum program and is able to help teachers draw local-global connections in their own classrooms. In selecting a topic, give some consideration to issues that may have particular relevancy or currency for your state. Is there a major corporation in your state that has won a lucrative defense or overseas contract? Have significant numbers of immigrants, perhaps from an area of conflict, moved into the area? Is a task force looking at ways to train your state's students for careers in a global economy?

Who are you looking for? Look for a speaker who has frontline experience with one of the issues, as well as "book knowledge." You might find an environmental lobbyist who can speak to the local impact of climate change policy or an aide who has studied global environmental issues and now drafts state legislation. It could be a business leader who can provide background on your state's foreign trade position or a local official who has been part of an international trade delegation. Perhaps there is a social worker who serves the immigrant population.

Your speakers will appreciate some background on the Capitol Forum program and some coaching as to what teachers may find interesting and useful. Your lead teacher is in a good position to provide this preparation and can serve as a moderator during the program to keep presentations focused and discussion on track.

Publicity

The pre-forum planning workshop is a good time to shift your media relations campaign into high gear. You will be about six

Inviting Special Guests

Having 80 high school students from across the state gathered in the House Chamber of the state capitol engaged in substantive discussion with elected officials on public policy issues they have studied in their own classrooms offers a wonderful opportunity to showcase this program to superintendents, curriculum directors, and other education leaders.

weeks away from the actual forum day. Your teachers will be well along in their classroom preparatory work. You may even have confirmed panelists for the forum day. Include a few minutes on the agenda to bring teach-

ers up-to-date with coverage so far and to tell them what additional efforts are planned. (You might include copies of articles in teacher's packets and encourage teachers to do some publicity in their own schools and regions.)

Defining a role for a fifth student at the forum

Noting that it can be difficult to assign an "alternate" and then not bring him or her to the forum. A fifth student can be an observer in the breakout sessions and the Four Futures hearing in preparation for playing a lead role when the students return to their classroom and participate fully in the forum with elected officials. Instructions for this role are available. This student could also have the role of reporter or photographer. In Illinois these students met with the Capitol press core during part of the day.

Involving the rest of the class on the forum day

On the day of the forum, students in the home classroom can be assigned to work in four breakout groups each preparing one of the four Futures from the U.S. role curriculum unit. These students will then be ready for a role-play on the Futures when their student representatives return to class. Choices is working with ICONS from the University of Maryland to create Capitol Forum internet discussion groups between classes within states and between classes in different states prior to and after the Capitol Forum.

Getting Local Publicity

Wouldn't you love to see coverage for your Capitol Forum in the hometown newspapers of all of your participating schools? These students deserve this. And it could turn into a follow-up story on the debate in the classroom or school after the forum.

Plan ahead. There is nothing like a picture of hometown students in legislators' seats debating policy. Encourage participating teachers to bring their cameras to the forum. They can take pictures of their own students in action and then send them to the local paper.



Springfield, Illinois



Hartford, Connecticut