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Learning Activity:
Creating a Budget: Who Wants Pie?

Grade level / Big Idea:
3-6

Provide a short description of the activity you want learners to engage in:

- Critically think about spending priorities and prioritizing the portions of the BC provincial budget.
- This will likely need to be conducted over 3 lessons.

Curricular Competencies *what students will be able to do:*

Social Studies 5

- Use Social Studies inquiry processes and skills to — ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; and communicate findings and decisions
- Develop a plan of action to address a selected problem or issue
- Construct arguments defending the significance of individuals/groups, places, events, and developments
- Differentiate between intended and unintended consequences of events, decisions, and developments, and speculate about alternative outcomes (cause and consequence)
- Make ethical judgments about events, decisions, or actions that consider the conditions of a particular time and place, and assess appropriate ways to respond (ethical judgement)

Mathematics 5

- Connect mathematical concepts to each other and to other areas and personal interests
- Develop mental math strategies and abilities to make sense of quantities
- Estimate reasonably
- Develop, demonstrate, and apply mathematical understanding through play, inquiry, and problem solving
- Visualize to explore mathematical concepts
- Explain and justify mathematical ideas and decisions
- Represent mathematical ideas in concrete, pictorial, and symbolic forms

Core Competencies *how does this activity align with Communication, Personal & Social Responsibility, Creative & Critical Thinking:*

Communication

- Connect and engage with others (to share and develop ideas)
- Acquire, interpret, and present information (includes inquiries)
- Collaborate to plan, carry out, and review constructions and activities
- Explain/recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments

Critical Thinking

- Analyze and critique
- Question and investigate
- Develop and design

Creative Thinking

- Novelty and value
- Generating ideas
- Social Responsibility

Social Responsibility

- Contributing to community
- Solving problems in peaceful ways
- Valuing diversity
- Building relationships

Overview of the learning opportunity:

- 1) Brainstorm with the whole class, “What are all the items we need to run our classroom?”
- 2) Together as a class, group items into similar categories. For example, paint brushes and crayons are Art supplies. Desks and Chairs are furniture. Try to group evenly into 6-10 categories.
- 3) Explain that the school has a set budget and the pie represents the whole budget. They will need to decide how to divide the money/pie up to ensure that all needs are met.
- 4) Evenly distribute your class into groups by category. For example, an Art supply group, a furniture group, etc. Each group needs to brainstorm their arguments to justify how much of the pie they are asking for (they will need these points to support their argument within their next group). Students should have access to internet, flyers etc. to find/research costs of various items.
- 5) Create new groups, with a representative from each category. In these new groups, each category representative tells the rest of the group how much of the pie they feel they need. Students will need to debate and defend the portion of the pie they feel they need. Students will need to compromise in order to divide the pie to best reflect the needs of the whole class. You should tell the students that the pieces of the pie won’t all be the same. They need to prioritize which categories deserve more money than others. Students are analyzing the worth of different

categories and developing a distribution of the pie (budget) which would best serve the whole class community.

- 6) Each group presents their pie to the class. They will probably see differences in the results from each group. Discuss how this reflects the challenges politicians face as they try to best serve their constituencies and its needs.
- 7) After having seen the distribution of each group's pie, give each group the chance to re-evaluate their distribution of the pieces of their pie. Students may redistribute as they see fit. Pieces will be glued onto poster board to display or pie graphs can be created digitally.
- 8) Each group will share the final pie with the class.
- 9) Provide the class with a list of the provincial government's budget categories (Also provide an additional list of student-friendly labels for each category): health (hospitals), education (schools), social services (helping people in need), protection of persons and property (police and natural disasters), transportation (highways and ferries), natural resources and economic development (supporting business and job creation), debt service (paying back borrowed money), general government and other (paying government staff).
- 10) Have students match the official budget labels with the student-friendly ones.
- 11) Provide the class with an unlabelled pie chart of the provincial government's budget. Have students assign categories to which section of the pie they believe represents that particular category. Magnetic labels or just simple tape is recommended.
- 12) Students will share their assigned categories. At this time, the most recent government budget pie graph will be revealed for students to compare their prediction with the actual distribution of spending.
- 13) Closing discussion regarding difference between provincial budget and student created budget.
- 14) Students will then create a 3-2-1 reflection. List 3 areas where government spends money. List 2 ideas on where you feel spending should be focussed. List one word to describe how it felt to work together to find a consensus on classroom spending.

Possible extensions:

- Extend activity to other classes and have discussions regarding different priorities and how MLA's all need to ensure their constituency priorities are supported.
- Write letters to local MLA explaining why individuals believe the province should have different spending priorities.
- Create a bar graph to represent data.
- Invite local MLA to have a discussion regarding budget and constituency's funding priorities.

Suggestions for challenge-based or inquiry and cross-curricular integration

- to calculate percentages of each category students will use a protractor to measure the angle of their wedge and divide their measurement by 360 degrees

Learner self-reflection questions

- Do they deserve half of the pie? $\frac{1}{4}$? Why?
- How did it feel when working together to find a consensus on classroom spending?

Resources

- large poster boards to trace pie and divide into 32 equal pieces (one per group)
- access to internet, flyers etc. to find research cost of various items
- <http://budgetconsultation.ca/budget-basics/>
- <https://nces.ed.gov/nceskids/createagraph/> for creating a pie graph
- Provincial Budget Pie chart (see attached)

Assessment

- Informal observations of students actively participating and respectfully listening to others.
- Pie chart summary demonstrates a summary of the group's discussion and compromises.
- Students use a 3-2-1 reflection at end of activities

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Provincial Budget 2018

