



Perelman Jewish Day School Student Council

Development of Critical and Creative Thinking

November 2016

Rachel Korman

Abbye Cornfield

Perelman Jewish Day School
Stern Center
49 Haverford Road
Wynnewood, PA 19096
(610) 658-2518
rkorman@pjds.org
acornfield@pjds.org



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Overview

The Perelman Jewish Day School Student Council inspires authentic learning of civic engagement in our school. We began developing the plan for Student Council during the 2014-2015 school year. Our ideas grew out of a desire to teach civics in a real world setting and the Student Council provides students with opportunities for leadership and ownership of actual student issues. It also provides students with a forum for discussing our school environment and culture. Student Council was first implemented at PJDS - Stern Center during the 2015-2016 school year.

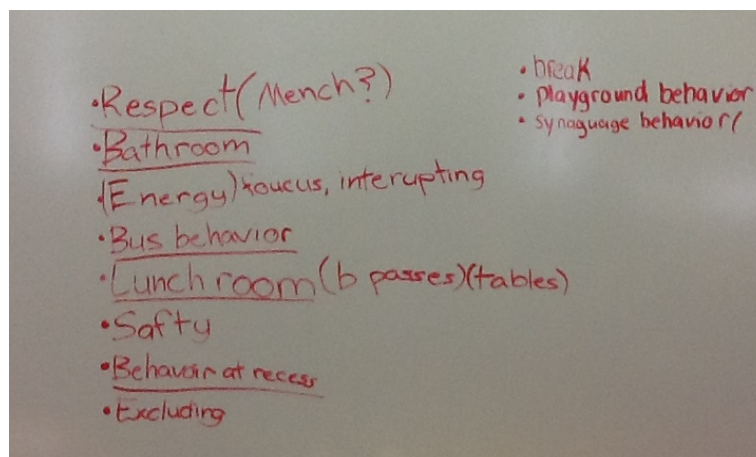


Meeting in Session

Goals

The goals of the PJDS Student Council include opportunities for students to do the following:

1. **Democracy in action** - Students select representatives who work together to address issues on behalf of the student body.
2. **Serve the school** - Students aim to improve the school in ways that they decide will affect the overall well-being of the institution.
3. **Exemplify good citizenship/Derech Eretz** - Elected students must maintain good standing in our school environment. The Student Council leaders serve as role models and teach their peers about respecting each other.
4. **Connect students and faculty** - Issues are proposed to the school principal and shared with the faculty. Faculty support the initiatives chosen by Student Council members.
5. **Collaboration and teamwork:** - Student Council meetings and committees bring together 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders. Some of the activities are programs in which the upper and lower grades interact.



Example of Meeting Ideas

Structure

Election: In the beginning of each school year, third, fourth and fifth graders elect an Executive Board from the fifth grade. The Executive Board consists of co-presidents, a vice president and a secretary. Fifth graders who are interested in a position on the Executive Board must complete an application and present their ideas to the third, fourth and fifth grade student body. Students make speeches during an upper school lunch and then members of the student body complete confidential ballots. The Executive Board remains the same throughout the entire school year.

Following the election of the Executive Board, the third, fourth and fifth grade homerooms each elect two representatives and an alternate for the first half of the school year. Each student who is interested submits a paragraph explaining why he or she should be a representative to his or her homeroom teacher. To allow for greater student body participation, new representatives become members of the Student Council halfway through the year.

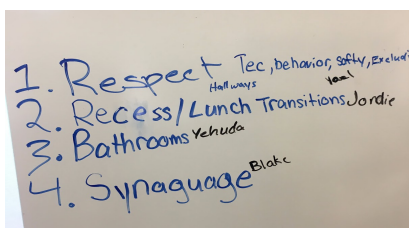
Meeting: Most Student Council meetings take place during lunchtime. During these meetings, students discuss and pick school initiatives for the first half of year. In February, new classroom representatives either continue the original initiatives or pick new ones. Ultimately, students focus on issues they believe will improve our school.

Each Student Council lunch meeting consists of reading the prior week's minutes. Students also contribute ideas and take new minutes.

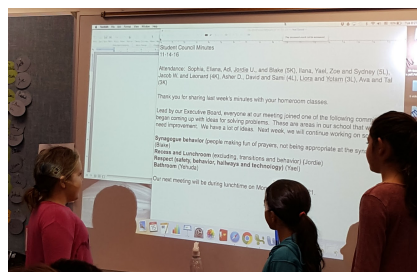


Sharing Minutes: Minutes from each meeting are distributed by e-mail to the faculty and can be printed out or projected from the Apple TV onto the whiteboard in each classroom. Classroom representatives read the minutes to their homeroom classes during a Second Step lesson or homeroom time. During classroom meetings, students discuss the initiatives in their homerooms, take notes on ideas and bring them back to the Student Council to share.

Meeting Brainstorms



Representatives sharing minutes.



Example of Meeting Minutes

Student Council Minutes 3-3-16

Attendance: And., Eliana, Ben, Avner, Aliyah, Kayla, Ean, Talia, Eden, Ilana, Jack, Abby

Discussion took place about getting the lower grades involved in student council. The idea is to have older kids go to younger grades' classrooms and read minutes or get ideas from them.

We reviewed some ideas to work on:

- Buddies across the school- something to include everyone like clubs or maybe use a Tinker Thinker Tuesday to join grades together.
- Mensch Campaign: Good sportsmanship, nice language (no cursing), stop bullying, making good choices

Next week we hope to split up into groups and start working on these ideas.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, March 10, 2016.



Accomplishment

1. A Sense of Ownership

Students take pride in being stakeholders in our school. They experience empowerment, expressing their feelings about school and how to improve it. Students also assist in making important decisions. During the 2015-2016 school year, among their achievements, committees did the following:

1. Created signs for the hallways and bathrooms requesting respect and listing rules.
2. Prepared a Keynote Slideshow about appropriate bus behavior.
3. Generated ideas for the lunchrooms such as having pitchers of water on the table instead of students needing to get up to use the water fountain.
4. Made announcements on the microphone at lunchtime reminding students to talk quietly and clean up after themselves.
5. Helped with the process of deciding where tzedakah money, collected in classrooms each Friday, should go and presented checks to the charities.

2. Event Planners

Students create, plan and execute programs and events to build community and enhance learning. For instance, the Student Council last year requested that access to educational, hands-on games be part of the curriculum. At a school assembly, the Student Council Executive Board announced a generous Hanukkah gift of educational games from our school PTO. As part of our STEAM program, the whole school now benefits from having curricular time to tinker with these manipulatives on a regular basis.

3. Government in Real Life

Students experience democracy and impact their school community. The process begins with an election. Student Council members have their first experiences at writing campaign speeches when they run for office as part of the election process.

Students bring their own ideas and those of their classmates to the meetings. It is important that everyone's voice is heard through their representatives.

On several occasions, proposals have been made by the students and presented to the principal. Students work and negotiate with each other and with the administration. They learn that their ideas are sometimes accepted, but that occasionally projects are not seen through to fruition. For example, during the 2015-2016 school year, a committee worked on developing a *Mensch Campaign*. They

wanted a school-wide behavior competition between classes, but it was not completed. A continued effort to develop ideas for a competition is being discussed this school year.

4. Multigrade Connections

Student Council programs foster opportunities for older and younger students to work together. For example, students work with the principal and teachers to plan events in which students can be partners across grades. One buddy activity last year challenged cross-grade teams to create containers to safely protect eggs when dropped off the fire escape of our school building.

5. Public Speaking Skills

The Executive Board members, with teacher guidance, direct meetings and takes suggestions from representatives. In addition, classroom representatives lead their homeroom classes by reading aloud the minutes and taking notes to share when they return to Student Council. Through different activities, Student Council members have opportunities to speak at assemblies and to speak at faculty meetings to present schoolwide ideas.

6. Passion/Commitment/Energy

In the second year with a Student Council at PJDS, students showed increased excitement towards the elections. In addition, students eagerly began the school year, looking forward to sharing ideas with the Student Council and having a place for their voices to be heard.

Links to Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

Analysis: "Separates material or concepts into component parts so that its organizational structure may be understood. Distinguishes between facts and inferences."

In our Student Council, third, fourth and fifth graders identify the issues and problems and work to solve them. Sometimes they are successful right away. Other times, their ideas need to be revised and students demonstrate persistence in trying to find ways to rework their ideas. In addition to looking at problems, they distinguish places where they would like to enhance our school environment. One example is creating a buddy program, proposing ideas to have older students work with younger students.

Evaluation: "Make judgments about the value of ideas or materials."

Students brainstorm a wide variety of problems. Problems are grouped. Some are deemed worthy and doable, while others are discarded. Students question the ideas brought to the meetings. For example, students have discussed the idea of creating special clubs in our school. During conversations, they have asked questions such as, "Can students really make an extra period in the school day to offer clubs? Is it really possible to have clubs during recess? What teachers would staff the clubs?" Students need to evaluate the reality of their requests.

Creation: "Builds a structure or pattern from diverse elements. Put parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure."

Students have created a Keynote presentation (dealing with bus safety), posters and signs around the school (hallway and bathroom respect), the idea for water pitchers at tables in the lunchroom to limit the need for disposable water bottles everyday (to be more environmentally friendly and also keeping students from constantly getting up to get drinks - cups are filled and made available).

Students demonstrate stronger connections to our school, using Student Council as a forum to express their opinions.

Curriculum Connections

Social Studies National Curriculum Standards:

Thematic Strand 5:

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

Thematic Strand 6:

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.

Thematic Strand 10:

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

Jewish Studies: Perelman Jewish Day School Curriculum

Jewish Life and Observances: On a daily basis, students have opportunities to practice the mitzvot they are taught. This is accomplished through Torah (study), Avodah (prayer and ritual), and Gemilut Hasadim (acts of loving kindness).

1. Gemilut Hasadim: Lovingkindness--the act of caring for others
2. Tzedakah: Monetary charity
3. Derech Eretz: Proper behavior

Perelman Jewish Day School: Joan and Arlen Specter Civics Program:

1. Strand 2: Student Council
2. Chesed/Service Learning

Sources:

Social Studies National Curriculum: <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands>

Forehand, M. (2005). Bloom's taxonomy: Original and revised. In M. Orey (Ed.), Emerging perspectives on learning, teaching, and technology. Retrieved , from <http://projects.coe.uga.edu/epltt/>

Attachments

Attachment 1: Student Council Application

Attachment 2: Agenda

Attachment 3: Sample Minutes from 2015-2016 school year

Attachment 4: Sample Minutes from 2016-2017 school year

Attachment 5: "Perelman Jewish Day School: Joan and Arlen Specter Civics Program"

Attachment 6: Student Council Constitution

Attachment 7: Bus Rules Slideshow

Attachment 8: Student Council Structure

APPLICATION FOR STUDENT COUNCIL BOARD

(Check one) I am applying to run for the office of:

_____ President

_____ Vice President

_____ Secretary

Please write answers to the following questions. You may use the back of this paper, if you need more room.

1. What idea(s) do you have that could improve our school?

2. What leadership qualities do you possess?

3. How do you, personally, demonstrate good citizenship at PJDS?

PRINT YOUR NAME _____

YOUR SIGNATURE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

Sample Agenda for Student Council

1. Welcome and Introduction from the Executive Board.
2. Roll Call of Attendance (a sheet can also be circulated for each person present to sign).
3. Read minutes from the last meeting (these should be circulated in advance).
4. Matters Arising from the last meeting. Presidents and Vice President share goals, plans and what has been accomplished.
5. Classroom representatives report (share ideas and opinions from their classmates).
6. Specific Agenda Items (these main topics listed for discussion).
7. Any other business (items that are not on the agenda, but that may need to be raised).
8. Date of Next meeting.

Attachment 3

Student Council Minutes
3-3-16

Attendance: And,, Eliana, Ben, Avner , Aliyah, Kayla, Ean, Talia, Eden, Ilana, Jack, Abby

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We reviewed some ideas to work on:

- Buddies across the school- something to include everyone like clubs or maybe use a Tinker Thinker Tuesday to join grades together.
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Our next meeting will be on Thursday, March 10, 2016.

Attachment 4

Student Council Minutes 11-7-16

Attendance: Sophia, Eliana, and Blake (5K), Ilana and Yael (5L), Emily and Leonard (4K), Asher, David and Sami (4L), Liora and Yotam (3L), Ava and Tal (3K)

We shared the minutes from last week's meeting. Unfortunately, only one class shared last week's minutes in their homerooms. So, we didn't have a lot of input from the student body. Please remind your teachers to let you read the minutes. Student Council representatives will try to remind their teachers.

We looked at the list we made of areas that we want to improve in our school. We added some ideas to last week's list.

Issues/Ideas:

- Respect (last year we started working on a mensch campaign)
- Safeties/5th Grade Leadership
- Bathrooms (behavior and cleanliness)
- Playground issues (excluding, language)
- Synagogue behavior
- Excessive energy/breaks between classes
- Lunchroom behavior and issues (such as hot and cold lunch can't sit with each other, maybe there can be ways to avoid crowds like go sit down at your table and then call tables to get food)
- Technology (logging off, eating around computers, not plugging in)
- Have a box/place to jot your ideas to share with student council

Then we grouped the list into four main initiatives. One member of the Executive Board will be the leader for each committee, beginning next week.

Synagogue behavior (people making fun of prayers, not being appropriate at the synagogue) (Blake)

Recess and Lunchroom (excluding, transitions and behavior) (Jordie)

Respect (safety, behavior, hallways and technology) (Yael)

Bathroom (Yehuda)

Our next meeting will be on Monday, November 14.

Perelman Jewish Day School Joan and Arlen Specter Civics Program

Perelman Jewish Day School provides students with a Jewish values-based education within the context of a rigorous academic program. The goal of the school is to develop confident, accomplished, and caring graduates who have a solid understanding of their history and culture as both Americans and Jews.

The ***Joan and Arlen Specter Civics Program*** grew out of the desire for Perelman Jewish Day School to honor a great American Jewish statesman who served his country and the state of Pennsylvania for thirty years. The Specter Civics Program addresses our adopted “Big Ideas of Social Studies” that includes *Governance and Civic Practices* through developmentally appropriate, spiraling experiences designed for active participation of our kindergarten through grade five students:

Governance and Civic Practices (National Council for the Social Studies):

Big Idea #1: The development of civic competence requires an understanding of the foundations of political thought, and the historical development of various structures of power, authority, and governance. It also requires knowledge of the evolving functions of these structures in contemporary U.S. society, as well as in other parts of the world.

Essential questions: -What are the purposes and functions of government?

-What are the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a constitutional Democracy?

Big Idea #2: An understanding of civic ideals and practices is critical to full participation in society and is an essential component of education for citizenship which is the central purpose of social studies.

Essential Questions: -What is civic participation?

-How do citizens become involved?

-What is the role of the citizen in the community and the nation, and as a member of the world?

-How do we learn from different points of view?

Our Perelman Jewish Day School students meet weekly at every grade level to learn and practice social skills using the *Second Step Program*. This program integrates positive classroom behaviors, emotional management and problem solving skills into the classroom. There are goals at each grade level that build

on each other providing the students opportunities to practice monitoring their own emotions and solving their own problems as well as working on these skills in relation to other students. These are essential skills in building the groundwork for becoming good citizens of our school community as well as in the larger world.

At Perelman Jewish Day School, we feel very strongly that the ancient texts we teach are more than that: They are a living, vibrant part of each student's daily life as a Jewish -American citizen. Text studies at Perelman are brought to life through experiential real-life practicing of the lessons taught each day. We view chesed (social action) as a fundamental goal, and we strive to promote in our students a sense of obligation on to serve the Jewish people and all humanity as they engage in tikun olam (repair of the world).

Our philosophy is that as students grow and mature, learning by doing is the best way to prepare for life in the "real world," and to become a contributing member of society. Fostering leadership is one of the cornerstones of the Perelman experience, and the school believes the leaders of tomorrow are sitting in our classrooms today. Accordingly, we expect our Perelman students to uphold the highest standard of menschlichkeit (showing good character) in their attitudes and behavior which must reflect morality, decency, modesty, and kindness.

The Rendell Center for Citizenship and Civics at Arcadia University raises the question of ***Why Civics Education?*** "Research shows that students who are experiencing effective civic learning are: More likely to vote and discuss politics; Four times more likely to volunteer and work on community issues; and, More confident in their ability to speak publically and communicate with their elected representatives." (Arcadia.edu/RendellCenter)

The Joan and Arlen Specter Civics Program enriches the elementary Social Studies curriculum, and consists of four strands:

1. Chesed/Service Learning

2. **Student Council in Forman and Stern Centers**
3. **K-5 Social Studies Curriculum**
4. **Enrichment Experiences**

1. **Chesed/Service Learning:**

To experience the rewards of social work, and learn that the actions of a few can make a difference for many.

2. **Student Council:**

To give students practice in democracy in action.

3. **K-5 Social Studies Curriculum:**

To provide democratic life skills-the emotional and social capacities-to prepare the whole child to participate in a modern, diverse, and complex democratic society through the *Second Step Program*.

To provide the study of civic ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic society through our Social Studies program.

Civic learning, informed by the National Standards for Civics and Government, is guided by the following essential questions:

“What are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy”

- What does it mean to be a citizen of the United States?
- How does a person become a citizen?
- What are important rights in the United States?
- What are the important responsibilities of Americans?
- What dispositions or traits of character are important to the preservation and improvement of American democracy?
- How can Americans participate in their government?
- What is the importance of political leadership and public service?
- How should Americans select leaders?

Resources/instructional plan/materials

4. **Enrichment through related trips/speakers**

Resources

Garttrel,D. (2012) *Education for a Civil Society: How Guidance Teaches Young Children Democratic Life Skills*.Washington, D.C. National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Attachment 6

PJDS STUDENT COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

The name of this organization shall be Perelman Jewish Day School Student Council.

ARTICLE II

Purpose: The purpose of this council shall be to

1. Practice government in action (democracy)
2. Serve the school
3. Exemplify good citizenship

ARTICLE III

Membership:

Section I

All students in grades 3, 4 and 5 shall have the opportunity to be nominated, to vote and to present ideas for council action.

Section II

The members of the student council shall be representatives elected by their classrooms.

Section III

Qualifications of Candidates

Candidates will possess the following qualities that exemplify good leaders:

- Strong communication skills
- Ability to work well with others/respectful
- Abilities to negotiate and compromise
- Willingness to commit
- Models good citizenship

Section IV

Eligibility

1. To run for a position on the PJDS Student Council Board, students must complete the application form which must be signed by their parents.

2. To be placed on the homeroom ballot, each student must write one-paragraph about why he or she feels he or she should represent the class.

Section V Elections

1. Election of officers shall take place in September for a term of one year. At a morning assembly, each applicant will read his or her responses to the application for Grades 3, 4 and 5. Grades 3, 4 and 5 will vote in a mock election.

2. Election of homeroom representatives shall take place in September and February. Two students receiving the most votes get elected from each homeroom.

Section VI Powers and Duties

Each officer shall be responsible for performing the duties of the office.

Section VII Term of Office

Officers shall be elected in September with a term ending in June. Homeroom representatives shall be elected in September and February.

Section IX

The advisors shall have the final authority over all actions of the council.

ARTICLE IV Meetings

Council meetings shall take place during lunch once a week following a prepared agenda. In addition, homeroom representative shall report back to homeroom classes once a week after Student Council Meetings.

ARTICLE V Rules

1. Each representative has one vote.
2. All motions require a majority vote of the members in order to pass.
3. Roberts Rules of Order shall be the authority on any question of parliamentary procedure.
4. No action of the council becomes official until approved by the advisor.

Attachment 7

Be safe on the buses

How to make the buses safer

By Student Council (Eliana, Ilana, Abby, and Eden)

How to be safe on buses



Reason 1: Being loud can distract the bus driver. You can get into an accident if you are loud.



Reason 2: Stay sitting down in your seat because you do not have a seatbelt.



Reason 3: No eating because if the bus comes to a sudden stop you could choke.



Reason 4: Make sure you go to the bathroom before you get on the bus....



Reason 5: Make sure you are quiet in the bus room because you can miss your bus.



Reason 6: Don't take pictures and videos of other people in the bus room or on the bus!



Thank you for watching!
We expect you to follow these rules and be SAFE on the buses!

Attachment 8

PJDS Student Council

- Purpose: The purpose of this council shall be to
 - ⇒ Practice government in action (democracy)
 - ⇒ Serve the school
 - ⇒ Exemplify good citizenship
- Faculty Advisors: Rachel (and Jim)
- Student Council shall consist of
 - ⇒ Four 5th-Grade Executive Board members: Co-Presidents, Vice President and Secretary
 - ⇒ Two representatives and an alternate from each G.S. homeroom in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades - halfway through the school year, new representatives will be selected
- Faculty advisors will meet with the 5th grade during the first 5 minutes of recess by Friday, 9/9 to distribute applications for the Executive Board. Applications require a parent signature.
- The campaign for Executive Board will be short (any poster, handout, etc. must be presented to advisors before hung up or distributed– i.e. Rachel, Jim, Wendy, Lauren). Each candidate will read his or her application to the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades at during a lunch period the week of 9/12. Ballots will need to be filled out that day in homerooms the next day and returned to Rachel (or Jim)
- The Executive Board will go to each 3rd-5th grade homeroom to explain Student Council. We will hold representative elections for all 3rd-5th grade homerooms, during the week of 9/19. Two representatives will be elected from each classroom. Another set of elections will take place in February to select new classroom representatives.
- The Student Council will meet weekly on Monday in room 221 during 3rd, 4th and 5th grade lunch. The first 2 lunch meetings will be with only the Executive Board to plan how meetings will be run and what the responsibilities will be.
- Each Student Council lunch meeting will include reading the prior week's minutes. During meetings Executive Board members and representatives will share ideas and take minutes.
- The goal is to ultimately focus on an issue that will improve our school.
- Classroom representatives will read the minutes from the meetings during 2nd Step (or homeroom) in the classrooms. Representatives can also bring back input to share with the Student Council from their homerooms. Minutes will be e-mailed to the faculty.