

Crime-Free Schools (Day One)

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Crime-Free Schools (I): The Mayor's Task Force

Overview

This two-day simulation lesson introduces students to the context of addressing crime and safety issues in their community and can be introduced before or after the “Police Patrol” session.

In this lesson, students become a Crime-Free Schools Task Force appointed by the mayor of the hypothetical community of Glen Hills. The mission of the task force is to decide on the best way to spend funding intended to address crime by improving school safety. Students will analyze the effectiveness of five proposals before choosing the plan that makes the best use of the funding to improve safety in their community.

In Day One of this lesson, students listen to a reading of “The Mayor’s Speech” before they break into groups to read and analyze five Crime-Free Schools plans.

Teacher Tips

Effective law enforcement requires the cooperation of the communities it serves. The school-community is no exception. This lesson helps students place issues of public safety and law enforcement in the context of their own lives and their school.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Read and summarize five hypothetical plans.
- Identify and describe the main points of each plan.
- Determine and describe the effectiveness of each plan in terms of benefits and costs (pros and cons).

Materials and Preparation

- Handout: The Mayor's Speech: To be read by teacher or student volunteer.
- Handout: Crime-Free Schools Plans: 1 per student
- Handout: Pros & Cons: 1 per student

Procedure

Focus Discussion: School Safety

Inform students about a recent study that shows that about five percent of students nationwide avoid at least one class, school activity, or one or more places in school because they thought someone might harm them. Also, 71% report having witnessed bullying in their school, and over 71% say bullying is a problem. (Sources: [National Center for Education Statistics \(2015\)](#); [Education Corner](#).)

Conduct a brief class discussion by asking:

- How many of you ever have fears about crime or violence at school? How many do not? (Count up the show of hands and calculate the percentages of those who do and do not have these fears. Compare classroom results to the national statistics.)
- What could we all do to make our school and community a safer place? (Students should be encouraged to make suggestions.)

Tell students that in the next activity they are going to explore various ways for them to make schools a safer place.

Set-Up: The Mayor's Speech

Explain that students are going to take the role of a special task force appointed by the mayor of Glen Hills. Their job will be to think about the best ways to fight crime in the community. To begin, the task force will hear a speech from the mayor of Glen Hills.

Read or ask a student volunteer to read [The Mayor's Speech](#) to the class.

After reading the speech, conduct a brief discussion using the following questions:

- What problem is the mayor talking about?
- Who is affected by this problem?
- How does the mayor want to use Crime-Free Cities funding?
- Why does the mayor want to use some of the Crime-Free Cities funding for schools?
- Why has the Crime-Free Schools Task Force been called together?

Small-Group Work: The Crime-Free Schools Task Force

Inform students that, as the Crime-Free Schools Task Force, their job will be to determine the best way to spend \$150,000 to help create safer schools. The first step will be to look at several options and think about the pros and cons of each plan.

To help students understand the concept of pros and cons, ask: "Suppose your city government decided that, in order to reduce teenage crime, people between the ages of 12 and 18 would have to be accompanied by an adult anytime they left their school or their homes. What might be good about this plan? What might be bad?"

Explain to students that most plans, or options, to solve community problems have some good elements (pros) and other elements that might cause other problems (cons). Tell students that before a plan goes into action, it is important to look at its pros and cons to determine how the plan will affect the community.

Inform students that each group should complete the following tasks:

1. Read each of the five plans.
2. Discuss the pros and cons of each plan.

3. On the [Pros & Cons](#) worksheet, list one or more reasons why each plan is good and why each plan might not be good. (Every student in the group should fill out a Pros & Cons worksheet. Students will use this information in the next two lessons.)
4. Choose a Reporter to share the group's findings with the class.

Remind students that they have five plans to consider. They will need to move quickly through each plan. Inform students how much time they will have to complete the tasks.

Group Reports: Pros and Cons of Plans

- Write the number and title of each plan and display where the whole class can see them. For each plan, ask a student to describe what the plan is about and then ask the groups to share their pros and cons about the plan.
- After all plans have been discussed, ask students to describe which plans they like best and why. Point out that thinking about the pros and cons of different plans helps find the best option.

Set-Up: Preparation for Lesson 4

- Ask students what other information they might need to decide which plan is best.
- Remind students to bring their worksheets — [The Crime-Free Schools Plans](#) and [Pros & Cons](#) — to the next lesson.

Standards Addressed

National Civics Standards

Standard 1: Understands ideas about civic life, politics, and government. **Middle School Benchmark 3:** Knows institutions that have the authority to direct or control the behavior of members of a society (e.g., a school board, state legislature, courts, Congress). **Middle School Benchmark 4:** Understands major ideas about why government is necessary (e.g., people's lives, liberty, and property would be insecure without government . . .). **Middle School Benchmark 5:** Understands competing ideas about the purposes government should serve.

Standard 3: Understands the sources, purposes, and functions of law, and the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good. **Middle School Benchmark 1:** Understands the difference between the “rule of law” and the “rule of men” (e.g., government decisions and actions made according to established laws vs. arbitrary action or decree).

Standard 28: Understands how participation in civic and political life can help citizens attain individual and public goals. **Middle School Benchmark 1:** Understands how participation in civic and political life can help bring about the attainment of individual and public goals. **Middle School Benchmark 3:** Understands how Americans can use the following means to monitor and influence politics and government at local, state, and national levels: joining political parties, interest groups, and other organizations that attempt to influence public policy

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The Mayor's Speech

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. For most of us, Glen Hills is a good place to work, live, and raise our children. But today Glen Hills faces a growing problem.

This problem touches all of us. I am talking about crime and safety in Glen Hills. I do not want to blame any group. I want us to work together to make our community a safer place to live, work, and play for everyone.

Glen Hills is not alone. Cries for help in preventing crime have been heard all across the nation. As a result, Congress has approved a new anti-crime program called Crime-Free Cities. Through this funding, \$750,000 will be made available to our community. It is our job to use this Crime-Free Cities funding to make Glen Hills safer for ourselves and our children.

Crime often strikes at young people. Violence is now one of the leading causes of death among people under the age of 18. Many schools across the country, once safe havens of learning, are now fighting crime both inside and outside their campuses.

In making Glen Hills a safer community, we cannot overlook our schools. As our schools and the neighborhoods surrounding them become crime-free, our entire city benefits. For this reason, I am setting aside \$150,000 of the Crime-Free Cities funds to be used strictly for fighting crime and improving safety in and around our schools.

I have created a special Crime-Free Schools Task Force made up of young people. You are members of this task force and your job will be to decide on the best way to spend the \$150,000 to make schools and the communities surrounding them safer.

I firmly believe that this \$150,000 for schools will be the most important money we spend on combating this serious community problem. Remember, by investing in our youth today, we create a better future for tomorrow.

I wish the Crime-Free Schools Task Force good luck, and I look forward to hearing your ideas soon.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Crime-Free Schools Plans

Plan #1: Crime-Prevention Classes Cost: \$75,000

Glen Hills police officers would come to classrooms during the fall semester to teach students ways to prevent becoming a victim of crime. At school in the evening, officers would teach adult classes for parents and community members. These classes would help citizens learn how to organize neighborhood watch groups and would teach other forms of crime prevention. The classes would be videotaped. The videotapes would be used to train other officers to teach classes at other schools.

Plan #2 Tools for Safety Cost: \$100,000

This plan would pay for new fences, lights, and metal detectors in Glen Hills school buildings and grounds. These improvements would make each school more secure and might help fight on-campus violence. Parents have volunteered to help make these improvements.

Plan #3 First Step: In-School Detention Cost: \$60,000

First Step would be an in-school detention program for students who keep disrupting classes. A teacher and part-time counselor would help First Step students improve their attitude, behavior, and study skills. Separate classrooms at each school would allow these specially trained teachers to work closely with First Step students during school hours. This would allow other students to continue their normal studies with less disruption. First Step teachers would teach units on crime, violence, and school safety and would give extra help to any students with learning problems.

Plan #4 Safety Patrol Cost: \$150,000

This plan would pay for two full-time security officers to patrol the streets around Glen Hills' schools. These officers would patrol weekdays from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. They would protect students traveling to and from school. These officers would also assist Glen Hills' school security officers with problems on the school grounds and keep in radio contact with the Glen Hills Police Department.

Plan #5 Crime Prevention Hot-Line Cost: \$60,000

This plan would provide a 24-hour telephone hot-line. Information received on the hot line would be passed on to the Glen Hills Police Department. The identity of the caller would be protected, and callers would receive reward money for information that helps locate and convict violent offenders.

Name:_____ Date:_____

Pros & Cons

Read each plan. Write down the main idea of the plan. Identify things that are good about the plan in the “Pros” box. Write what you think are problems with the plan in the “Cons” box.

Plan #1: Crime Prevention Classes		
Main Idea	Pros	Cons

Plan #2: Tools for Safety		
Main Idea	Pros	Cons

Plan #3: First Step: In-School Detention		
Main Idea	Pros	Cons

Plan #4: Safety Patrol		
Main Idea	Pros	Cons

Plan #5: Crime Prevention Call In		
Main Idea	Pros	Cons

Crime-Free Schools (Day Two)

 <https://youthandpolice.org>

The Task Force Decides

Overview

This lesson is the second of a two-day simulation activity called Crime-Free Schools. In this lesson, students will meet once again as the hypothetical Glen Hills Crime-Free Schools Task Force. Their mission is to review and select plans to address problems of school safety and crime.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Evaluate and rank options that best address the problems of crime and school safety.
- Describe current police-community relations in their area.
- Prepare to meet with law enforcement resource people to find out more about the problems of crime.

Materials and Preparation

- Handout: [Task Force Report Card](#) — 1 per group of 4–6 students
- Students should bring the [Pros & Cons](#) handout from part I of this lesson.

Procedure

Introduction: Reviewing the Task Force's Mission

Inform students that today the Crime-Free Schools Task Force will meet to decide on a plan to present to the mayor of Glen Hills. Remind students that they have looked at the five plans to address crime and have considered the pros and cons of each plan.

Explain that today they will use what they have learned about the plans to find the best option for spending the \$150,000 of Crime-Free Schools funding.

Small-Group Work: The Task Force Decides

- Divide the class into groups of four to six students.
- Make sure that students form groups that are different from the Task Force teams in previous lesson.
- Distribute a [Task Force Report Card](#) to each group.
- Instruct each group to complete the following tasks:

1. Choose a group Leader and a group Reporter.
2. Review the [Pros & Cons](#) worksheet from previous lesson.
3. Rank the plans in order starting with the one your group likes the best.
4. Decide how your group will spend the \$150,000 to improve school-community safety(will you choose one plan or a combination of plans?).
5. When your group decides, fill out the Task Force Report Card.
6. Prepare to present your plan to the class.

Group Reports: Sharing Proposals

Ask the Reporter for each group to share the group's plan for spending the Crime-Free Schools funding. As each group reports, ask questions that facilitate ability of students to fully explain their decisions.

After all the groups have reported, lead a brief discussion asking the following questions:

- Which of the five plans was most popular? Which seemed weakest? Why?
- Of the five plans, which do you think parents would like best? Teachers? Business people in the community? Police officers? Would any of these groups have strong opinions about any one proposal?
- What additional ideas can you think of that might have been presented to the Glen Hills Task Force?
- Before taking action, why is it important to think about the pros and cons, costs, and how others would feel about a plan?

Debriefing: Crime Issues in Our Community

Lead a discussion asking the following questions:

- What kinds of things does our school/community share in common with Glen Hills?
- Do you think crime is an important issue in our community? Why or why not?
- Several of the options for the Crime-Free Schools Task Force dealt with citizens working with police officers. Why are police-community relations important when we think about safe cities, safe schools, and crime prevention?
- How could better police and community relations affect issues of crime and safety in our city?

Standards Addressed

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Name: _____ Date: _____

Task Force Report

Step 1: Rank the plans in order, from your most favorite to your least favorite.



CHOICE	REASONS	COST
First Place Plan # Title		\$
Second Place Plan # Title		\$
Third Place Plan # Title		\$
Fourth Place Plan # Title		\$
Fifth Place Plan # Title		\$

Step 2: Consider the costs and how effective the plans would be. What can you get for \$150,000?

Step 3: Make a decision!

Our Final Plan	Total Cost
Two reasons why this plan is effective:	
1.	
2.	

Name:_____ Date:_____

Pros & Cons

Read each plan. Write down the main idea of the plan. Identify things that are good about the plan in the “Pros” box. Write what you think are problems with the plan in the “Cons” box.

Plan #1: Crime Prevention Classes		
Main Idea	Pros	Cons

Plan #2: Tools for Safety		
Main Idea	Pros	Cons

Plan #3: First Step: In-School Detention		
Main Idea	Pros	Cons

Plan #4: Safety Patrol		
Main Idea	Pros	Cons

Plan #5: Crime Prevention Call In		
Main Idea	Pros	Cons