

# Leading the Way: Designing a Just and Fair School Council

## Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will explore the concepts of justice and fairness within a leadership context. They will learn the specific duties of various leadership roles and apply this knowledge by designing a comprehensive School Council structure that ensures every student's voice is heard.

## Learning Objectives

- **Objective 1:** I can explain the difference between "Justice" and "Fairness" and how they apply to representing others.
- **Objective 2:** I can identify the specific responsibilities of key leadership roles (President, Secretary, Treasurer, Representative).
- **Objective 3:** I can design a School Council structure that gives every grade level a voice in decision-making.

## Materials Needed

- Large sheet of paper or poster board
- Markers or colored pencils
- Sticky notes
- A "Gavel" (can be a wooden spoon or any household object)
- Scenario Cards (included in the lesson)

## 1. Introduction: The Great Playground Crisis (The Hook)

**Scenario:** Imagine the school principal decides to replace all recess equipment with only jump ropes because "jump ropes are cheap and everyone knows how to use them." The 6th graders think it's boring, and the 1st graders are tripping over the ropes. Nobody asked the students what they wanted.

### Discussion Questions:

- Is this decision *fair*? Why or why not?
- Is it *just*?
- Who should have been involved in this decision?

**The Concept:** Explain that **Fairness** is treating everyone without favoritism (everyone gets a rope), but **Justice** is fixing the system so everyone gets what they actually need to succeed (making sure everyone has a voice in the choice of equipment).

## 2. "I Do": Understanding Leadership Roles

To have a fair school, we need a Council. Each person has a specific job. Think of it like a sports team or a movie crew.

- **The President (The Visionary):** Leads meetings, meets with the Principal, and makes sure everyone is following the plan. They don't "boss" people; they "guide" them.
- **The Vice President (The Support):** Steps in if the President is away and usually manages the special committees (like the "Party Committee" or "Safety Committee").
- **The Secretary (The Record-Keeper):** Takes "minutes" (notes). If we don't write down what we decided, did it even happen? They keep the history of the council.
- **The Treasurer (The Money Manager):** Tracks the budget. If the council wants to buy new soccer balls, the Treasurer tells them if they have enough saved up.
- **Grade Level Representatives (The Ears):** These are the most important roles for fairness. Their job is to talk to their classmates and bring their ideas back to the big meeting.

## 3. "We Do": Solving the Representation Puzzle

### Activity: The Voice Map

If a school has 100 Kindergarteners and only 10 6th graders, how should the council be set up?

- **Option A:** One leader from every grade. (Is this fair? The 10 6th graders have the same power as the 100 Kindergarteners).
- **Option B:** Only 6th graders lead because they are the oldest. (Is this just? Do the little kids get a say?)

**Guided Task:** Together, brainstorm three ways to make sure a 1st grader's idea gets to the President's desk. (Example: Suggestion boxes in every hallway, "Buddy" meetings between 5th graders and 1st graders, or a monthly "Open Mic" at lunch).

## 4. "You Do": Design the Ultimate School Council

**The Mission:** You are the founder of a brand-new school. You must create the "Constitution" for your School Council.

**Instructions:** On your poster board, create a visual map of your Council. It must include:

1. **The Hierarchy:** Draw the roles (President, etc.) and list 2 "Must-Do" responsibilities for each.
2. **The Representation Plan:** Explain exactly how you will ensure every grade (from the youngest to the oldest) gets to vote or share ideas.
3. **The Justice Clause:** Write one rule that ensures the Council stays "Just and Fair." (Example: "No decision can be made without a vote from at least one person in every grade.")
4. **The Visual:** Use colors or symbols to show how information flows from a student to the Council.

## 5. Conclusion & Recap

**Summary:** Leadership isn't about being the "boss." It's about creating a system where justice and fairness allow everyone to be heard.

### Review Quiz (Oral or Written):

- Who is responsible for the budget? (Treasurer)
- What is the difference between fairness and justice? (Fairness = no favoritism; Justice = fixing the system for everyone's needs).
- What is the main job of a Grade Representative? (To listen to their classmates and bring ideas to the council).

**Final Reflection:** Which leadership role do you think you would be best at, and why?

## Assessment & Success Criteria

Criteria	Needs Work	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
<b>Understanding Roles</b>	Can name 1-2 roles.	Can name and describe 4 main leadership roles.	Can explain how roles work together to solve problems.
<b>Fairness &amp; Justice</b>	Uses terms interchangeably.	Clearly defines both and applies them to the council.	Provides real-world examples of justice in school settings.
<b>Representation Plan</b>	Only focuses on older students.	Includes a way for all grades to have a voice.	Creates a creative, multi-layered system for communication.

## Differentiation Options

- **For Advanced Learners:** Ask them to create a "Conflict Resolution" flow chart. What happens if the President and the Treasurer disagree on a project? How is that handled fairly?
- **For Struggling Learners:** Provide a pre-drawn "Tree Map" where they just fill in the names of the roles and draw a picture of what that person does.
- **For Kinesthetic Learners:** Role-play a 2-minute "Emergency Council Meeting" where they have to decide how to spend \$50 on a school party while keeping it fair for everyone.