MVPCS MOCK GOVERNOR ELECTION

Grades 1–2 History & Social Science Unit • October 1–November 3, 2026

Teacher Guide, Lesson Plans, Standards, Assessments & Answer Keys

Unit at a Glance

Big idea: In a democracy, people learn about leaders and issues, share ideas respectfully, and vote to choose leaders.

Authentic context: The mock election ends Tuesday, November 3, 2026, the same date as the Massachusetts state election. The two classroom candidates are completely fictional and are not connected to real candidates or political parties.

Culminating task: First- and second-grade students become campaign educators/promoters, create balanced voter information and persuasive campaign materials, give short speeches, and help run a schoolwide mock election.

MVPCS connection: Democracy - listening to different ideas, making fair group decisions, voting, accepting results, and continuing to work together.

1. Massachusetts Standards Alignment

The strongest direct content alignment is Grade 1 Topic 1, “Civics: communities, elections, and leadership.” Grade 2 revisits and extends that learning through Topic 4, “Civics in the context of geography: countries and governments,” plus the Pre-K–12 History and Social Science Practices.

Standard	Student-friendly meaning	Where taught	Evidence
1.T1.3	A leader is part of a group and has extra responsibility to organize, inspire, and help the group make decisions.	Lessons 1–2	Leader-quality sort; discussion
1.T1.4	Describe qualities of a good leader.	Lessons 1, 3	Leader shield; exit ticket
1.T1.5	Groups can make fair decisions or choose leaders by voting.	Lessons 4–5	Practice vote; democracy reflection
1.T1.6	An election is voting to select leaders.	Lessons 4–5	Election-sequence page
1.T1.7	Some leaders, including the Massachusetts Governor, are chosen by elections and have specific roles.	Lessons 2–3	Governor job page; quiz
1.T1.8	Citizens elect leaders, pay attention to their actions, and decide whether to elect them again.	Lessons 4, 12	Voter responsibility reflection

Standard	Student-friendly meaning	Where taught	Evidence
1.T1.10	Use evidence to describe good citizenship/community membership.	Throughout	Discussion norms; reflection
2.T4.2	Countries have governments, leaders, and citizens, and government has purposes such as public safety and education.	Lessons 2–3	Government-purpose organizer
HSS Practice 1	Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions.	Throughout	Vocabulary, voting, respectful participation
HSS Practices 4 & 6	Distinguish fact/opinion and explain conclusions with reasons/evidence.	Lessons 7–10	Fact/opinion activity; speeches
HSS Practice 7	Take informed action as appropriate.	Lessons 8–12	Campaign education and mock election

Primary standards source: Massachusetts 2018 History and Social Science Curriculum Framework. Open framework

2. Teacher Background: What Does the Massachusetts Governor Do?

Kid-friendly definition

The Governor is the elected leader of the executive branch of Massachusetts state government.

The Governor helps carry out state laws, leads state agencies, proposes a yearly state budget, appoints leaders of many state departments, and can sign or veto bills passed by the Legislature.

The Governor also helps coordinate state responses during emergencies and represents Massachusetts when working with the federal government.

Current office-holder to teach by name: Maura Healey is the Governor of Massachusetts as of September 2026. The Massachusetts Governor's office is in the State House in Boston.

Important "scope of power" lesson

A governor is powerful, but does not make every decision alone.

A governor cannot simply create a state law without the Legislature.

A governor does not run every town, every school classroom, or every local service directly.

For island topics such as transportation, housing, schools, beaches, and emergency planning, a governor may propose budgets, direct executive agencies, sign or veto legislation, and work with local/state partners. The exact authority depends on the issue.

Teacher source links:

- Massachusetts government structure and Governor duties: https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/cis/government/politics-counties.htm
- Massachusetts Kids' Zone: Governor's Office: https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/cis/ciskid/kidugd/office.htm
- Kids' Zone: People at the State House: https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/cis/ciskid/kidugd/state.htm
- Kids' Zone: Making State Laws: https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/cis/ciskid/kidugd/laws.htm
- Current Governor page: https://www.mass.gov/orgs/governor-maura-healey-and-lt-governor-kim-driscoll

3. Key Vocabulary

Word	Kid-friendly meaning
government	the people and systems that make and carry out rules and laws for a community, state, or country
governor	the elected leader of a state's executive branch
leader	a person who helps a group organize, decide, and work toward a goal
citizen	a member of a country with rights and responsibilities
democracy	a system in which people have a voice in government, including by voting
election	a vote used to choose a leader or decide an issue
vote	to make a choice in an election or group decision
ballot	the paper or screen used to record a vote
candidate	a person seeking to be chosen for an office
campaign	organized work to help people learn about and support a candidate or idea
platform	a candidate's set of ideas and plans about important issues
issue	a topic or problem people care about and may disagree about
executive branch	the part of government that carries out laws
budget	a plan for how money will be raised and spent
veto	when a governor rejects a bill rather than signing it
appoint	to choose someone for a government job or position
persuade	to give reasons that may convince someone
fact	a statement that can be checked and shown to be true or false
opinion	a belief, preference, or judgment
responsibility	a job or duty a person is expected to do

4. Fictional Candidate Platforms

These candidates are intentionally fictional, nonpartisan, and balanced. Neither is designed as the "correct" choice. Students should learn that voters can care about the same community and still prioritize different approaches.

Avery Shore — "Listen. Protect. Connect."

Avery Shore is a fictional Massachusetts community planner who grew up near the coast and likes solving problems by listening to many people before making a plan.

Coasts & Clean Water: Ask the state to invest more in beach, dune, pond, and coastal-restoration projects that help communities prepare for storms.

Safe Transportation: Prioritize state grants for safer roads, crosswalks, sidewalks, bike routes, and emergency transportation planning, including island communities.

Schools & Libraries: Propose state budget support for school libraries, science materials, arts programs, and field-learning opportunities.

Year-Round Housing: Use state housing partnerships to support homes for teachers, nurses, firefighters, and other year-round workers in high-cost communities.

Jordan Fields — “Strong Communities. Bright Futures.”

Jordan Fields is a fictional Massachusetts small-business owner and youth-sports volunteer who believes communities are strongest when families have useful services and safe places to live, learn, and play.

Energy & Preparedness: Expand state help for energy-saving improvements in homes, schools, and public buildings, and improve storm and power-outage preparedness.

Community Transportation: Support state investments in safer roads, public transportation connections, and cleaner vehicles that help people travel around Massachusetts.

After-School & Recreation: Propose state support for after-school learning, music, sports, parks, and safe community recreation programs.

Homes & Local Jobs: Help communities repair or reuse existing buildings for year-round housing and support programs for local jobs and small businesses.

5. Suggested Platform Topics for Student Discussion

Coastal protection and clean ponds: storm preparation, beaches, dunes, water quality, wildlife habitat.

Transportation: safe roads, crosswalks, buses, bike paths, emergency travel, connections to island communities.

Schools and youth programs: libraries, science, arts, after-school programs, parks and recreation.

Housing and cost of living: year-round homes for workers and families; state-local partnerships.

Energy and climate preparedness: energy efficiency, clean energy, storm and outage readiness.

Local jobs and small businesses: state programs that support community businesses, workers, farms, and fisheries.

Public health and safety: emergency planning, clean drinking water, safe public spaces.

6. Unit Calendar: October 1–November 3, 2026

Time	Focus	Lessons / Activities	Student Products
Week 1: Oct. 1–2	Leaders & community	1. What makes a leader? 2. Groups, rules, responsibility	Leader-quality shield; pre-assessment
Week 2: Oct. 5–9	Massachusetts Governor	3. Governor job; 4. Can the Governor do that?	Governor job organizer; can/cannot sort
Week 3: Oct. 12–16	Democracy, elections & voting	5. What is an election? 6. Practice vote + MVPCS Democracy	Voting sequence; democracy reflection
Week 4: Oct. 19–23	Candidates, platforms & issues	7. Meet fictional candidates; 8. Compare platforms; fact vs. opinion	Voter guide; candidate comparison
Week 5: Oct. 26–30	Campaign creation	9. Posters/flyers; 10. Speech writing; 11. Campaign forum / school voter education	Poster/flyer; speech; campaign presentation
Election Day: Tue. Nov. 3	Vote, tally, reflect	12. Schoolwide mock election; results; reflection	Ballot; post-assessment; reflection

7. Detailed Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: What Makes a Good Leader?

Time: 30–40 min **Standards:** 1.T1.3, 1.T1.4

Learning targets

- Vocabulary: leader, responsibility, group.
- Students identify qualities that help a leader serve a group.

Steps

1. Do a quick “Who helps lead?” brainstorm: teacher, coach, team captain, town/state leaders.
2. Read 4 short scenarios from the workbook. Students hold up a thumbs-up when a character shows helpful leadership.
3. Build an anchor chart: honest, caring, respectful, responsible, brave, fair, good listener, works for the common good.
4. Students complete the Leader Shield.

Assessment: Exit ticket: “A good leader should ___ because ___.”

Lesson 2: Groups, Rules, Roles & Responsibility

Time: 30–40 min **Standards:** 1.T1.1, 1.T1.2, 1.T1.3

Learning targets

- Students explain that leaders are still members of the group.
- Students connect roles to a shared goal.

Steps

5. Give each table a tiny challenge (organize 8 cards, build a paper tower, or arrange books). Assign rotating roles: leader, recorder, materials helper, reporter.
6. Debrief: Did the leader do everything? How did every role help?
7. Connect to campaign teams: researcher/fact-checker, artist/designer, speaker, materials manager.

Assessment: Observation checklist: follows group rules, listens, completes role.

Lesson 3: Meet the Massachusetts Governor

Time: 35–45 min **Standards:** 1.T1.7, 2.T4.2

Learning targets

- Students can name Maura Healey as the current Massachusetts Governor.
- Students explain 3–4 governor responsibilities.

Steps

8. Locate Massachusetts and Boston on a map. Explain that Boston is the capital and the State House is the center of state government.
9. Teach Governor Job: leads executive branch; carries out laws; proposes budget; appoints agency leaders; signs/vetoes bills; helps during emergencies.
10. Show the Kids' Zone Governor's Office page or QR code.
11. Complete the "Governor Job" page.

Assessment: Check: circle three jobs a governor really does.

Lesson 4: Can the Governor Do That?

Time: 35–45 min **Standards:** 1.T1.7, 2.T4.2, HSS Practice 1

Learning targets

- Students distinguish state leadership from school/local decisions.
- Students understand that the governor works with other branches and communities.

Steps

12. Sort scenario cards into "Governor has a role," "Local/school decision," and "Needs many parts of government."
13. Emphasize: promising a result is different from having sole power to make it happen.
14. Use island examples: coastal protection, roads, housing, schools, emergency response.

Assessment: Students explain one sorted card using "I put it here because…"

Lesson 5: What Is an Election?

Time: 30–40 min **Standards:** 1.T1.5, 1.T1.6, 1.T1.8

Learning targets

- Students define election, vote, ballot, candidate.
- Students put the voting process in order.

Steps

15. Watch PBS KIDS "Together We Can: Election" (optional).
16. Model a simple vote between two read-aloud choices. Use secret ballots.
17. Count together, announce the result, and model respectful reactions.
18. Students sequence: learn → choose → mark ballot → cast ballot → count → accept result.

Assessment: Voting sequence worksheet.

Lesson 6: Democracy at MVPCS

Time: 30–35 min **Standards:** 1.T1.5, 1.T1.10, HSS Practice 1

Learning targets

- Students connect democracy to the MVPCS pillar.
- Students practice disagreement with respect.

Steps

19. Define democracy in child-friendly language.
20. Create class norms: listen, ask questions, use facts, disagree with ideas not people, one person/one vote in the mock election, accept the count.
21. Role-play: "My friend supports a different candidate." Practice respectful responses.

Assessment: Reflection: “Democracy works best when people…”

Lesson 7: Meet the Two Fictional Candidates

Time: 35–45 min **Standards:** 1.T1.6, 1.T1.7, HSS Practice 3

Learning targets

- Students define candidate, campaign, platform, issue.
- Students identify each fictional candidate’s four platform topics.

Steps

22. Teacher reads both candidate profiles with equal time.
23. Clarify that the candidates are not real and have no political party.
24. Students highlight or draw an icon for each issue.
25. Quick compare: What is similar? What is different?

Assessment: Candidate comparison organizer.

Lesson 8: Facts, Opinions & Fair Campaigning

Time: 35–45 min **Standards:** HSS Practices 4 & 6

Learning targets

- Students tell the difference between a platform fact and an opinion.
- Students learn fair-campaign rules.

Steps

26. Sort statements: “Avery’s platform includes coastal restoration” (fact) vs. “Coastal restoration is the most important issue” (opinion).
27. Teach fair-campaign rule: never invent a promise, insult the other team, or hide information.
28. Teams practice turning opinions into reasoned persuasion: “I think ___ matters because ___.”

Assessment: Fact/opinion sort and correction.

Lesson 9: Create Posters & Flyers

Time: 45–60 min **Standards:** HSS Practice 6, Grade 1/2 writing and speaking/listening

Learning targets

- Students use accurate platform information to persuade.
- Students include candidate name, slogan, issue, plan, and reason.

Steps

29. Assign balanced teams. Use campaign-kit templates.
30. Require a fact-check before coloring/finalizing.
31. Display both campaigns in comparable locations/amounts.

Assessment: Completed poster or flyer with teacher fact-check stamp.

Lesson 10: Write a Campaign Speech

Time: 45 min **Standards:** HSS Practice 6

Learning targets

- Students give a claim, accurate platform detail, and reason.

Steps

32. Model the 4-part speech: greeting → candidate → issue/plan → reason + respectful close.
33. Grade 1 may use sentence frames and drawings. Grade 2 adds two reasons and a closing.
34. Rehearse voice, pace, eye contact, and respectful wording.

Assessment: 30–60 second student speech.

Lesson 11: Campaign Forum & School Voter Education

Time: 45–60 min **Standards:** HSS Practices 1,6,7

Learning targets

- Students answer questions using the fictional platform sheet.
- Students listen to both sides before asking others to vote.

Steps

35. Run a neutral forum: equal time, alternating order, same questions.
36. Suggested questions: What would your candidate focus on for schools? For the environment? For transportation? For families?
37. Teams visit classrooms or display a voter guide. Remind audiences: choose the candidate whose ideas matter most to you.

Assessment: Teacher rubric for accurate information, reasons, teamwork, respectful communication.

Lesson 12: Election Day: Vote, Count, Reflect

Time: 45–60 min plus schoolwide voting **Standards:** 1.T1.5, 1.T1.6, 1.T1.8, HSS Practice 7

Learning targets

- Students help administer a fair mock election.
- Students explain how voting connects to democracy.

Steps

38. Set up polling station, ballot box, signs, ballots, and tally sheet.
39. Have campaign materials stop at a clearly marked distance from the voting table.
40. Voters mark one candidate, fold ballot, deposit it, and receive an “I Voted” badge.
41. Count with two student observers from each team plus an adult. Record totals.
42. After results, explicitly teach: democracy continues after an election; people with different choices remain one community.

Assessment: Post-assessment and reflection.

8. Grade 1 / Grade 2 Differentiation

Task	Grade 1 support	Grade 2 extension
Vocabulary	Picture/icon + oral definition + trace/write key words	Write own definition and use word in a sentence
Governor role	Choose from pictures/statements; oral retell	Explain why a duty belongs to the executive branch
Candidate comparison	Draw/star one platform issue and dictate a reason	Compare two platform positions in 2–3 sentences
Poster	Name + slogan + one accurate issue + drawing	Name + slogan + two platform facts + persuasive reason
Speech	4 sentence frames; partner reading allowed	6–8 sentences; two reasons; answer one audience question
Assessment	Read aloud; allow drawing/pointing/oral response	Independent short response with evidence from platform sheet

Accessibility supports

Use dyslexia-friendly spacing: 14–16 pt Arial, generous line spacing, uncluttered pages, no justified text.

Preteach vocabulary with picture cards and gestures.

Allow oral responses, speech-to-text, partner reading, and teacher scribing.

Color-code the two fictional campaigns consistently, but never use red/blue party symbolism.

Read all candidate materials aloud to every class before schoolwide voting so access to reading does not determine access to information.

9. Fair Campaign Rules for a School Mock Election

- Both candidate teams receive the same amount of class time, paper, display space, and speaking time.
- Students may persuade classmates about the fictional candidates, but may not insult, threaten, pressure, or offer rewards for votes.
- Campaign claims must come from the official candidate platform sheet; no invented promises.
- No real political party names, logos, slogans, or real 2026 candidate messaging.
- Students should say what their candidate plans to do, not claim that the other candidate is "bad."
- Voters may keep their choice private. No student is required to tell anyone how they voted.
- After the count, both teams congratulate one another and remove campaign materials together.

10. Campaign Speech Models

30-second model for Avery Shore

"Hello, MVPCS! I am speaking for Avery Shore. Our campaign slogan is 'Listen. Protect. Connect.' One issue we care about is coasts & clean water. Avery Shore's platform says: Ask the state to invest more in beach, dune, pond, and coastal-restoration projects that help communities prepare for storms. This matters because our communities need leaders who listen to what people care about. Please learn about both candidates and vote for the ideas that matter most to you. Thank you!"

30-second model for Jordan Fields

"Hello, MVPCS! I am speaking for Jordan Fields. Our campaign slogan is 'Strong Communities. Bright Futures.' One issue we care about is energy & preparedness. Jordan Fields's platform says: Expand state help for energy-saving improvements in homes, schools, and public buildings, and improve storm and power-outage preparedness. This matters because our communities need leaders who listen to what people care about. Please learn about both candidates and vote for the ideas that matter most to you. Thank you!"

Sentence starters

- Our candidate is _____.
- One issue our candidate cares about is _____.
- The platform says _____.
- This matters to Martha's Vineyard because _____.
- I think this is a strong idea because _____.
- Please learn about both candidates before you vote.
- Even if you choose differently, we can still listen and work together.

11. Assessment Plan

Pre-assessment (5–7 minutes)

1. Draw or write: What does a leader do?
2. Circle: vote / ballot / candidate — which word do you already know?
3. Who is the Governor of Massachusetts? (Accept "I don't know.")
4. What is one way a group can make a fair decision?

Post-assessment (10–15 minutes)

1. Name the current Governor of Massachusetts.

2. Give two jobs of the Governor.
3. Explain what an election is.
4. Explain what a platform is.
5. Name two qualities of a good leader and explain one.
6. Tell one way voting connects to the MVPCS pillar of Democracy.
7. Grade 2 extension: Explain one decision a Governor cannot make alone.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Secure
Governor role	Needs prompting to identify governor/job	Names governor or one duty	Names governor and explains 2+ accurate duties
Election vocabulary	Uses few terms accurately	Uses several terms with support	Uses vote, election, ballot, candidate, campaign/platform accurately
Leadership	Names a trait	Names a trait + simple reason	Explains multiple traits and common-good responsibility
Campaign communication	Needs support to use platform facts	Uses one accurate fact/reason	Uses accurate facts, clear reasons, and respectful language
Democracy	Recognizes voting	Connects voting to group decision	Explains voting, listening, fairness, and accepting results

12. Answer Key / Teacher Notes

Governor responsibilities: Accurate examples include: lead the executive branch; carry out laws; prepare/propose the state budget; appoint many department leaders; sign or veto bills; help direct state emergency response; represent the state in dealings with the federal government.

Not solely a Governor decision: Examples include: creating a law alone, deciding a classroom recess rule, choosing a town's daily school schedule, or personally deciding every local project. Many state issues require the Legislature, agencies, courts, local government, or independent authorities.

Election: A kind of voting in which people select leaders or decide certain public questions.

Platform: A candidate's set of ideas and plans about issues.

Democracy connection: People have a voice; they learn, discuss, vote, respect different choices, accept a fair result, and continue participating afterward.

Current Governor: Maura Healey (as of September 2026).

13. Video, Website & Read-Aloud Resources

Massachusetts Kids' Zone — Governor's Office: https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/cis/ciskid/kidugd/office.htm — Official MA source; quick virtual State House connection.

PBS KIDS — Together We Can: Election: https://www.wpbstv.org/together-we-can-election-pbs-kids/ — Short, early-elementary-friendly voting video.

GPB Education — What Does a Governor Do?: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pVP5Mhz17E — Short public-media explanation of governor duties. It uses Georgia examples, so pause to compare with Massachusetts.

PBS KIDS — I Voted! activity: https://static.pbslearningmedia.org/media/media_files/c3dac3f0-15e0-435e-9c4b-1d6b27eac2ab/f6f54204-0c57-476e-9d7e-bddb8875cc94.pdf — Printable family/classroom voting activity.

Duck for President — Doreen Cronin, illus. Betsy Lewin: https://www.simonandschuster.net/books/Duck-for-President/Doreen-Cronin/A-Click-Clack-Book/9780689863776 — Humorous read-aloud for campaign/election vocabulary; clarify that real governor work is more complex.

Grace for President — Kelly DiPucchio, illus. LeUyen Pham: https://www.littlebrownlibrary.com/titles/kelly-dipucchio/grace-for-president/9780316585798/ — Picture-book introduction to campaigns and elections.

Vote for Our Future! — Margaret McNamara, illus. Micah Player: https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/605173/vote-for-our-future-by-margaret-mcnamara-illustrated-by-micah-player/ — Picture book centered on civic participation and voting.

MA Kids' Zone

PBS KIDS Election Video

MA Governor Duties

14. Election Day Operations Checklist

☐ Print ballots and tally sheets.

☐ Create a private voting space and sealed/closed ballot box.

☐ Post "Polling Place" and "No Campaigning at the Voting Table" signs.

☐ Have one adult election supervisor and student helpers from both campaign teams.

☐ Read the same short voter guide aloud before voting begins.

☐ Keep campaign teams away from the ballot table while voting occurs.

☐ Count ballots with observers from both teams.

☐ Record total ballots, each candidate total, blank/unclear ballots, and verify totals match.

☐ Announce results without celebrating at the expense of the other team.

☐ Complete reflection: what made the election fair?

Teacher fact-check note: Verify the office-holder immediately before teaching the "current governor" slide in case of an unexpected change in office. All fictional candidate content is classroom-created and intentionally unrelated to real 2026 campaigns.