

## Action-Ed Newsletter

Dear Reader,

When the wife of a *Civic Mirror* pilot teacher threw her keys on the kitchen table after a long day of work, she noticed a folded up piece of paper beside her husband's wallet. "What's this?" she wondered. Curiosity peaked, she carefully unfolded it, realized it was a note, and read the words written in teenage print:



**"Mr. Vierra, Can we assassinate our president?"**

She burst out laughing and thought, "Oh man, I can't believe how *into* the simulation his twelfth grade students are. It's incredible!" This is just one of many, many great stories of how students in *Civic Mirror* pilot classrooms are actively and eagerly learning how to become effective citizens, in a day and age when civic education is needed more than ever!

To learn more about Action-Ed's [Civic Mirror](#) simulation and how it is transforming classrooms across the Pacific Northwest, *please* keep reading!

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## School District & Research Opportunities

Action-Ed knows that *The Civic Mirror* is going to revolutionize the way we teach government, economics, and citizenship. That said, we are also aware that school districts often need proof that the learning resources they purchase "do what they claim to do".

Therefore, Action-Ed is seeking the following partners in efforts to procure a grant that would allow for the wide-spread use of *The Civic Mirror* for the 2008/09 school year:

**Principle Investigator:** A primary researcher who, ideally, is an opinion leader in Political Science and/or Education, that would lead the research endeavor and help Action-Ed prove what all of us who have used the *The Civic Mirror* know intuitively: it improves learning and increases student interest and engagement, increasing teacher satisfaction in turn.

**School District:** A school district that would like to run *The Civic Mirror* simulation in at least 40 middle school or high school classrooms, and one that could make arrangements with its teachers for a Summer Institute that would train teachers how to use *The Civic Mirror*.

**Civic Organization:** A reputable & established organization as concerned about the state of citizenship education as we are, and equally motivated to make it one of the most exciting subjects taught. The organization would be a grant co-applicant and co-advocate.

**Grantor Organization:** A "granting" institution interested about improving the delivery and effectiveness of civic education in the United States and/or Canada, and excited to fund the project outlined above.

**CONTACT** [Regan Ross](#), CEO & founder of Action-Ed, if you or your organization would be interested in one of roles described above.

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## The Civic Mirror at Lake Chelan

Every spring the Washington State Council for the Social Studies hosts a retreat at beautiful Lake Chelan, always loaded with great workshops. At this year's retreat (March 9-11), Action-Ed hosted a *Civic Mirror* game that was played by 12 participants. All weekend-long, they cooperated & conspired, legislated & traded, debated & defended!

The event was a blast! In fact, some of the participants enjoyed it so much that they've decided to join *The Civic Mirror* pilot team this Spring.

## Classroom Pilot Update

*The Civic Mirror* is up and running in 10 schools in Oregon, Washington state, British Columbia, and south Korea, with 4 more schools slated to start later this spring. The early feedback has been incredibly positive and lots of great ideas on how to make the simulation better have been generated. Check out the *From The Civic Mirror Trenches* section (bottom) to read some entertaining stories of how the simulation ignites students interest and gets kids excited about law, government, economics, culture, and citizenship!

visit [civicsmirror.com](http://civicsmirror.com)

## Interested in a Free Workshop?

If you would like Action-Ed to deliver a FREE *Civic Mirror* workshop for your school or district, don't be shy -

Email [Regan](mailto:Regan) and he will happily work with you to set one up!



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## From The Civic Mirror Trenches

**Country: Shire  
BC**

**Module: Canadian Parliamentary**

**Location: White Rock,**

**Gr.11 Civic Studies course**

After playing three simulated years of *The Civic Mirror*, the 27 "Shironians" learned many things about living in a corrupt and apathetic nation. Their first government lasted less than 60 seconds before the leader of the opposition successfully called a vote of non-confidence, ousting their prime minister out of power. The new prime minister was criminally and kicked out of office after a Facebook conversation proved that he bribed and coerced the other politicians to vote in his favor. Their third prime minister - who revealed his plan to implement a secret police - was kicked out of office when he was out of town for a lacrosse field trip. And their fourth prime minister - who promised the starving & homeless citizens of his nation a legitimate welfare program - cut income tax rates to 0% and gave them nothing.

What, they were asked, was the cause of all this instability? What was it about their collective 27 personalities that led to such corruption and selfishness? Their answers to these questions were rich & plentiful and will stay with them the rest of their lives. All agreed that they were lazy

and came to view this as a problem with our society today. To quote one student: "I realized how much I hate politics, but I realized how important they are - how much we need good politicians." Through discussion they came to understand that an apathetic citizenry is a dangerous threat to any democracy and active citizenship is a must.

As well, the students learned much about the human species - it's strengths, it's weaknesses, and areas for improvement. One student, who loaned all of his money to an attractive young woman at the beginning of the game concluded, "I realized my weakness is hot blondes. And I will always get things in writing if I ever do a business deal." He didn't receive a penny back from his female classmate, nor the pack of smokes she promised him in exchange for his money. This was one of many, many "lessons-learned".

Despite Shire's shortcomings, *The Civic Mirror* experience was a success for the students. They completed the course with an awareness of how things in society are connected and a better idea of what they need to do in order to become active & successful citizens. They're now pressuring their teacher to offer and honors Civics course in Gr.12 so that they can play *The Civic Mirror* all over again.



**Country: Zanzibar**  
**WA**  
**Module: U.S. Presidential**

**Location: Bush Prairie,**  
**Gr.12 Comparative Government**

Zanzibar's first Government Meeting began with President Wagner's State of the Union Address, which ended with "You're all invited to my mansion tonight for the 'After Party.'" The citizen response was mixed, especially considering some citizens are still homeless. Wagner then proceeded to outline his annual budget, which included the idea that government will regulate the energy; leaving it in the hands of the private sector, but granting the government the power to determine price and President Wagner outlined that energy units cannot be used to clear wilderness for economic development, cannot be used for neighborhood security, and that two citizens will not be allowed to power their houses (which will inevitably lead to family tragedies). President Wagner's idea is to get as many economic necessities up and running so that the government can invest existing energy into the development of a second power plant. This, he claims, will benefit everyone in the long term.

President Wagner will undoubtedly face political adversity and citizen backlash; executing a rigid economic development plan like this almost always upsets the ones who get hurt by them. Only time will tell whether or not it works and, if it does, who it *really* benefits.

What intrigued the teacher of these students most was that the Wagner Administration proposed the grand scheme without legislating it into official law; meaning, in a legal sense, that the government does not have the authority to tell the energy owners how they should run their business. The citizens of Zanzibar may not catch on, allowing Wagner to fly this one under the radar; however, if certain citizens do catch on, the political ramifications would be massive.

Side Note: Only one other bill was proposed, an expensive building permit bill that would - through deterrence - protect Zanzibar's environment. This was tabled by Congress for a year.



**Country: Adam's Country**  
**Module: U.S. Presidential**

**Location: Seoul, South Korea**  
**Gr.11/12 U.S. Govt/Economics**

"Mr. Vierra, Can we assassinate our president?"

What would compel a citizen to ask a question such as this? At the start of this course, the

collective attitude in this Gr.11/12 classroom was similar to classrooms all over America: "I don't care and I don't want to learn about government & economics." Then their teacher introduced *The Civic Mirror*, catching the interest and imagination of a select few students.

Fast forward a few months when their simulated nation - Adam's Country - was established, and you have a frightening, yet predictably picture: democracy turned into a dictatorship, and a citizenry waking up to what they lost. They were warned time and time again by their teacher that, "Democracies require active participation," and "This should be the most fun course you ever took because half of it is a game!" Nope, nada, nothing. The citizen base was unmoved and unbothered.

Enter Arthur, a keen, bright, astute young man who saw an opportunity: "I live in a country of citizens who don't care about their success in this simulated life, so why not make the most of it?" He ran for President and won. He tried to move legislation through Congress but was frustrated by its apathy and snail-like pace. So he dissolved it and declared himself supreme dictator, now asking his subjects to refer to him as their "enlightened monarch." Arthur swiftly implemented economic policy that benefited himself and a few of his confederates, much to the expense of his ignorant subjects.

Now, and only now, after their rights & freedoms were stripped away from them and their economic well being & opportunity compromised, do the citizens of Adam's Country care about their fate. Their teacher is doing his best to not say, "I told you so," but is pleased his students have uncovered one of the most important lessons citizens living in a democracy must learn: *It's a responsibility first, a privilege second.*

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**Country: Gilligan's Island**

**Location: Winston,**

**OR**

**Module: U.S. Presidential  
students)**

**Middle School TAG Block (gifted**

The market opened today in Gilligan's Island with a flurry of excitement and many frustrated consumers. The Fascist block immediately gave control of the power plan to Josh "the Mastermind" Davis. He immediately set out the rules for any and all trade: Give the government your hex or you will not get power. As a consolation, Davis agreed to give them half of the units from the hex. Keen observers would notice a very close relationship between Davis and the Speaker of the House, Tyler Foster.

As trading progressed, the government holding grew larger and larger. By the end of the first day's trading, the government owned 2 apartments, 2 farms, the security hex, and the education hex. Many analysts are accusing the President of a socialist agenda. Only time will tell.

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**Sincerely,**

**Regan Ross**  
Action-Ed Founder & Teacher

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