

# Local Government and Urban Farms Unite!

## A lesson on Participatory Government

### TEACHER GUIDE

*Lesson developed by Anthony Rau and Raquel Vigil, MCEF consultant.*

#### SYNOPSIS

This lesson takes students to MCEF to explore the farm in connection to economic viability and local government. Students will determine what role local government should play in supporting urban farms and gardens.

#### LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

Students will...

- Understand the role government plays in supporting local and community programs
- Understand the economic viability of local urban agriculture efforts

#### LITERACY AND LANGUAGE OBJECTIVE(S)

*Language objectives clarifies how students will learn and/or demonstrate the content knowledge by reading, speaking, writing, or listening.*

This lesson emphasizes:



writing

Students will express opinions in writing based on their experiences visiting our campus farm.

#### LITERACY: KEY VOCABULARY


*We recommend introducing students to key vocabulary terms before the lesson begins or having a vocabulary guided worksheet for students.*

Word	Definition
Economic Viability	Means <b>economic</b> feasibility i.e. it should be able to secure financing – whether from public, commercial, or concessional sources – while having a positive impact on society and the environment. Avoiding the wasteful consumption of material resources.
Expenditures (n.)	the action of spending funds.

## STANDARDS

12G5c

12.G4e

 CCLS: NYS Standards for Social Studies Grade 12

Participation in Government:

- 12.G4e Civic participatory action, citizens as activists
- 12G5c- Government action across levels of government.

## MINDFUL PRACTICES

Mindfulness practices for this lesson will take place in the second part of this lesson when students go to the farm. Please see the *MCEF Mindful Activities Sheet* for suggestions of mindfulness activities.

## ASSESSMENTS

Performance Task:	Other Evidence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Prompt: Students will write a business letter to a local politician about the importance of funding MCEF campus farm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group discussions</li> <li>• Farm expenses sheet</li> </ul>

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#### LESSON PLAN

<b>Prior Knowledge/Anticipated Misconceptions:</b>	<p>The section that follows the “do now” is part of a student discussion without any resources besides the prompts provided. Students responses might determine how the rest of the lesson will proceed, depending on what their existing knowledge consists of.</p>
<b>Materials/Handouts:</b>	<p>Student Handouts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business Letter to Local Politician Worksheet</li> <li>- Farm Expenses Sheet</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson Procedures</b>	<p><u>Do now and Mini-lesson:</u> (Classroom activity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to brainstorm everything you know about Morris campus farm</li> <li>• Discuss student responses to “do now” activity             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussion of DOK question- How can a farm like this exist financially? – Responses will be related to funding, benefactors, and what role local/federal/state government should play in its existence, if any.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Activity:</u> (Farm activity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will visit the farm.</li> <li>• They will participate in any activities going on there on that particular day.</li> <li>• Students will walk around and assess the financial needs of the farm, asking the adults in charge where the farm receives its funding.</li> <li>• Students will list items of cost that are necessary to keep the farm running based on what they see and hear from those in charge. Student will use the <i>farm expenses sheet</i> to write down what they discover.</li> </ul> <p>Summative Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will write a business letter to a local politician about the importance of funding our campus farm.</li> <li>- They will provide examples of the costs associated with sustaining the farm based on their visit. They will also stress the importance of healthy food that is produced and available locally.</li> <li>- Conversely, if students do not believe in the importance of the farm, their letter may be focused on another initiative that they will justify as being more important than supporting our farm.</li> </ul>

- Responses will be peer edited and then typed and (hopefully) submitted to a local legislator (at least the ones favoring more funding).
- The teacher handout: letter format, below can either be written up on a board or handed out to students and discussed. *Teacher handout adapted from "Business Letter" and "How to write a letter"*
- Debrief activity with students

## REFERENCES

Business Letter Format (n.d). *Money Instructor*. Retrieved from <https://www.moneyinstructor.com/lesson/businessletter.asp>

How to write a letter to a politician (2018, November 14<sup>th</sup>). *Education.com*. Retrieved from [https://www.education.com/magazine/article/How\\_Write\\_Letter\\_Politician/](https://www.education.com/magazine/article/How_Write_Letter_Politician/)

## Global IV Lesson- Green Revolution

### *Letter Format*

#### TEACHER HANDOUT

#### Business Letter Parts

(Block Style Format):

In order from top to bottoms:

- **Return address** – address of letter writer.  
First and last name, address, city, state and zip code.
- **The date**
- **Inside address** – of recipient (who you are writing the letter to) First and last name, title, Company, address, city, state and zip code.
- **Salutation** – If the person is not a friend, write “Dear Mr. Smith”. If the person is a friend, you may say “Dear Sally”.
- **Body of Letter** – this is the purpose of the letter. Should be clear and concise, with more than one paragraph. Write in a respectful and positive tone.
  - **Write your letter:**
    - *Opening:* Your pitch should be in your first paragraph, if not your opening sentence. Introduce yourself and why you are qualified to speak on this issue.
    - *Supporting paragraphs:* Pick at least three strong reasons why your local government must listen to your proposal. You can explain each reason in a single paragraph, or present all three in one long one.
    - *Last words:* Restate your pitch and thank your politician for taking the time to read your letter. Leave contact information (email address, school name, etc.). Sign your letter!
  - *Quick Writing Tips:*
    - Keep your letter short – definitely not more than a page.
    - Use accurate facts, quotes from community members, and statistics – but don’t overuse them. (A few sprinkled in each paragraph is a good amount.)
    - Provide real-life examples in your neighborhood to illustrate your reasons.
    - DON’T TYPE IN CAPITAL LETTERS IN THE HOPE OF CONVINCING YOUR READER. It’s not only hard to read – it’s unprofessional.
- **Closing** – “sincerely”, or “best regards”, “yours truly”, etc...
- **Space for a handwritten signature**
- **Typed name of writer**

**Global IV Lesson- Green Revolution***Business Letter to Local Politician***STUDENT WORKSHEET**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

**Direction:** Write a business letter to a local politician about the importance of funding our campus farm. Use the guidelines provided to help you with the structure of the letter. Once you have written a draft of the letter submit to be peer reviewed for review. Lastly, type out your letter making sure to use the business letter format.

Letter formatting:

*Write opening:* Your pitch should be in your first paragraph, if not your opening sentence. Introduce yourself and why you are speaking on this issue.

*Write supporting paragraphs:* Pick at least three strong reasons why your local government must listen to your proposal. You can explain each reason in a single paragraph, or present all three in one long one.

Reason One:

Reason Two:

Reason Three:

*Write last words:* Restate your pitch and thank your politician for taking the time to read your letter. Leave contact information (email address, school name, etc.). Sign your letter!

*Peer-editor Name:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Comments:*

**Global IV Lesson- Green Revolution**  
*Farm Expenses*  
**STUDENT WORKSHEET**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Financial Students will walk around and assess the financial needs of the farm, asking the adults in charge where the farm receives its funding.

Farm Expense Category	Your guess (amount per year and item)	Actual Cost