

## Virginia Council on Economic Education (VCEE): Mini-Economy

“Mini Economy is experience-based instruction used to teach concepts of entrepreneurship, economics and government in the classroom. Conducted as a unit of study, this high-energy simulation focuses on economic concepts, financial literacy, classroom management and real-world market situations. Students establish their own society, design currency, plan and open businesses, and create a functioning government.”

([vcee.org/mini-economy/](http://vcee.org/mini-economy/))

- A student-structured economic society (with the guidance of a trained teacher)
- Goal setting and responsibility
- Cooperative learning
- Experience with entrepreneurship in an authentic market situation
- Creative problem solving
- Crossover instruction in language arts, math, art and social studies

“The mini-economy is a dynamic and effective form of instruction which can be integrated easily into the curriculum. True, it will require some extra work on your part, especially at the beginning. But after the economy is up and running, you will be surprised how smoothly it operates and how minimal the extra work is, especially if you give enough responsibility to the students. The mini-economy is a challenge, but a truly rewarding one, for both teachers and students. It is a unique and effective form of instruction which not only teaches basic economic concepts, but also encourages a more integrated curriculum.”

“Are student-directed mini-economies better than teacher-directed ones? The limited research on this subject indicates that students who participate in student-directed mini-economies develop more autonomy, assertiveness, and economic understanding than students who participate in teacher-directed ones. However, a student-directed economy may not develop the desired degree of realism and complexity or meet other desired goals. Also, teacher-directed mini-economies are easy to implement and control, and are practical for most learning situations.”

([www.unm.edu/~jbrink/365/Documents/ClassroomEconomyBooklet.pdf](http://www.unm.edu/~jbrink/365/Documents/ClassroomEconomyBooklet.pdf))

VCEE Workshops (<http://vcee.org/workshops/>)

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## Mini Society: Government, Economics, Finance

Overview: This year we will create a schoolwide government and economics system based on the principles found in *The Classroom Mini-Economy Integrating Economics into the Elementary and Middle School Curriculum*. (<http://www.unm.edu/~jbrink/365/Documents/ClassroomEconomyBooklet.pdf>)

Our intention is to learn and apply governmental and economic concepts and practical function by creating and maintaining a functional mini society.

INTRODUCTION- Thursday 8/25 PM (History/Humanities)

- Constitution & Name (8/25 & 8/30)
- Monetary System & Accounting (9/8 AM & PM)
- Jobs and Salary (9/13 AM) / Speeches (9/13 PM)?
- Speeches/Debate & Elections (Thurs 9/15 AM & PM)
- “Town Hall Meeting” (Tues 9/20 AM & PM): Government, Laws, Economy, etc.

- Jobs & Entrepreneurialism Fair (Thurs 9/22)
- 2nd PAYDAY (Thurs 9/15)?

### **Job Hiring/Salary**

We will use a Mixed-Economic System (pg. 21, 2-3). Prices and wages will be subject to and fluctuate according to market pressures including, supply, demand, and labor productivity.

1. Income
  - a. Chores (Command Economy)
    - i. Chore Wage starting point - \$10/hour (\$50/week)
    - ii. Community Work Day - \$20 [10/hr]
  - b. Additional Specialty Jobs -- See below (Free Market Economy)
  - c. Entrepreneurial opportunities - (Regulated Free Market) Students and teachers may create businesses, produce goods, and offer services within agreed upon guidelines.
2. General School Occupancy Fee/Rent (\$120/month base) - students must sign a general lease agreement.
3. Other details of income and expenses will develop as the economy is created

**Example Contractual Classroom HOA/District Requirements & Expectations:** (set by individual classroom) - cleaning, submitting work on time, tutoring, participation, timeliness.

### General Requirements:

Constitutions generally define and limit government responsibilities and processes as well as delineating rights and protections for citizens. They provide mechanisms for creating laws, judging disputes, and enforcing laws. A defined process for changing or Amending the constitution is important.

Suggested Constitutional considerations include:

- Rights
- Amendments
- Government function and structure (Executive-Judicial-Legislative-Treasurer?) (This is student council too.)
- Official/s
- Taxation to pay officials and government expenses. (There are going to be costs that aren't anticipated.)

Government set up:

Currency

Tax Responsibilities

Trade Days

Partial list of Jobs/Salaries and who is responsible for hiring and salary : chores, entrepreneur, etc - job descriptions (Job Description Creation Responsibility: S= Student SG=Student Government T=Teacher K/A/J=Kimber/Alex/John, M=Mike)

- Government/Officials
  - Executive? SG
  - Legislators? SG
  - Judicial Official SG
  - Tax Collector SG
  - Secretary/Clerk/Recorder (meetings, deeds, contracts) SG
  - Law Enforcement? SG
  - Other governmental jobs SG

- Mail? SG or Private S entrepreneur
- Farm Assistants (chores)\* T
- Banker/Accountant T
- Kitchen Manager A
- Mail Carrier? S
- Editor/Reporters (newsletter) T
- Computer Technician T
- Yearbook Staff J/S
- Band/Entertainer (per gig.) K/S
- Event Coordinator & Staff T
- Photographer? T
- Social Media Ambassador T
- Teaching Assistants (tutor) T
- Travel Agent (organizing field trips, etc) T
- Entrepreneur (Everyone) S
- Lawyer T
- Debt Collector T
- Law Enforcement ?
- Licensed Farm Equipment Operator T/M
- Recruiter T

Students are required to create a budget and keep an accounting record of all of their finances and transactions.

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