Elections in Scrappyville

The students will:
1. Understand the importance of voting in state, local, and national elections.
2. Identify leadership qualities of elected officials
3. Use problem-solving and decision-making skills

TEKS: SS K.5, K.9, 1.13, 2.7, 2.10, 3.5, 3.9, 4.15, 4.16, 5.17, 5.19

Vocabulary: voting, registration, majority, plurality

Materials: Online book, *Learning to Be a Good Citizen: Scrappy Explores His Community*, map of Scrappyville, large paper or poster board, markers

Teaching Strategies:

1. Begin by reading *Learning to Be a Good Citizen: Scrappy Explores His Community* to the class from the LRE website (www.texaslre.org)

2. Provide students with a copy of the map of Scrappyville or project on the screen. Ask students the following questions:
   ○ What is going on outside the Courthouse, at a table? (registering to vote)
   ○ Why is voting important?
   ○ What do people vote for? *This would be a good time to discuss that there are many offices that we vote for at the national, state, or local levels. Depending on the age level of students you could also mention that we vote on constitutional amendments to the Texas Constitution as well as other issues.*
   ○ When do people vote? *We vote for President every four years in November. Every two years in November we have elections for the House of Representatives and some members of the Senate. Many local elections happen in May.*

3. Explain to students that in this activity they will be electing a Mayor for Scrappyville. The following dogs are in the running.
   Caddo – delivering blankets to homeless shelter
   Buster – planting tree in park
   Ayra –   owner reading book to children
   Lucy –   building house
   Tucker – food bank
   Jack –   service dog

4. Assign students (individually or in groups) one of the above candidates and explain to them that they will be creating a campaign poster for this candidate. The poster should include:
   - a campaign slogan, phrase, or saying that expresses a belief that they have about the dog they chose. ("Vote for _____ because _____")
   - a picture of the dog and
   - a list of 3-5 reasons or arguments explaining why this dog would be the best mayor of Scrappyville.

   Additional options: A political button, a yard sign, the internet web address of the candidate, and/or a bumper sticker.

5. Once students have completed their posters, display the posters so that students have an opportunity to view the different candidates.

6. Provide the students an opportunity to vote for their favorite candidate.

7. When students are done voting, the teacher should tally the votes and announce the winner. *Note: A candidate may win by securing a plurality of the votes. This means the person with the most votes wins. This might be a good time to discuss how this is different from a majority.*

8. Discuss possible reasons this particular dog got the most votes and won the election. How much of it had to do with the poster, campaign products, etc., and how much had to do with the personality or looks of the dog? Which should be most important?

9. Allow students to respond to the following prompts:
   I thought _____ should win because _____.
   When my dog (won/didn't win) I felt _____ because_____.
   It's important to vote because _____.