

REPLICA VOTING DESK FOR MR. BROWN'S ATTIC

Background

Speaker Andrew Romanoff, with the idea of involving young people in the legislative process, commissioned the creation of a duplicate of a legislator's desk to be placed in Mr. Brown's Attic. The desk is a working replica of the representatives' desks, and will give visitors a chance to vote yes or no on questions. The questions will be displayed in a monitor embedded in the display sign above the desk. The target audience is 3rd graders.

Current Status

On March 23, 2010, a meeting was held with state architect Lance Shepherd, dome supervisor Theresa Holst, Richard Raedeke and another associate from Condit Exhibits, two electricians, and Diana Barney, legislative aide, to discuss the steps needed to finalize this project.

Lance Shepherd is coordinating installation of the electrical needs and the physical space requirements. He will have all work completed before May 1, 2010.

Condit Exhibits built the desk and the display sign which will hang above the desk, and will install both when the space is ready. This includes providing the monitor and questions. The display sign artwork will remain as is, with the exception of removing the Daniels Fund logo; the language on the display sign has been changed to the following:

VOTE!

1. In the Colorado State Legislature, the House and the Senate vote differently. When it's time for a final vote on a bill in the Senate, each senator's name is called out loud, and each senator answers "yes" or "no".
2. Lawmakers in the House use desks like this one. They vote electronically by pressing the green button for "yes" or the red button for "no".
3. If a bill passes through the House and Senate, the governor can sign it so it becomes a law, veto it so it does not become a law, or do nothing for ten days at which time it will automatically become a law.
4. Now *you* be the lawmaker and vote "yes" or "no" just like the representatives!

Still to be Done

Determine responsibility for maintenance.
Select the ten questions for the display.

Maintenance

The computer, monitor, desk, and display are all new and come with a year's warranty. Day to day operation will be turning the display on and off. The computer will not be connected with the Internet or subjected to operator error. The designers at Condit Exhibits anticipate that year in and year out, no maintenance will be necessary. Documentation for changing out the questions and resetting the voting totals will be given to the Capitol staff.

Questions

Guidelines

Working with a group of third grade teachers and a reading teacher, the following guidelines were suggested:

1. All sentences be in the form of a question.
2. Questions uniformly begin with "Should . . ."
3. There are no negatives in the questions (no, not, never, etc).
4. The questions relate to students' immediate concerns, i.e. school, the Capitol.
5. The ten questions be a mixture of serious and amusing while still thought-provoking.
6. The purpose of the questions is to add to the enjoyment of the visitors.

The Capitol Building Advisory Committee has suggested the following:

1. All questions be generic enough to stand the test of time.
2. The questions be simply written.

Sampling of third grade vocab and spelling words: since, silver, price, rough, fastest, shelf, clothes, choose, space, eighteen, safety, famous, clever, parallel

The favorite questions chosen by approximately 75 3rd graders and their teachers are:

Should we change the state animal from the big-horned sheep to a bobcat?

Should school buses have seat belts?

Should students wear school uniforms?

Should everyone in Colorado help pay to keep the gold on the Capitol Dome nice?

Should students call their teachers by their first name?

Should there be orange soda in the water fountains on Fridays?

Should kids get an allowance for doing chores?

Should kids be able to vote?

Should elementary schools have different teachers for every subject?

Should schools have fire drills and tornado drills?

Original Ten Questions Presented in 2008

1. Should the voting age be lowered in the State of Colorado so that all kids may vote?
2. Should there be stronger laws regarding the mistreatment of animals?
3. Should everyone be required to have health insurance?
4. Should Colorado have the death penalty?
5. Should mint chocolate chip be Colorado's state ice cream?
6. Should helmets be required on ski slopes?
7. Should the police be able to pull someone over if they see they are not wearing a seat belt?
8. Should the school day and school year be longer?
9. Should physical education classed be reintroduced into middle and high schools?
10. Should recycling in the State of Colorado be mandatory?

Questions the Third Grade Students and Teachers Considered/Proposed

Are the Broncos the best football team?

Is soccer better than football?

Should teachers give homework?

Should old teachers have to quit?

Is rap music better than country music?

Should kids be able to skateboard at school?

Should we change the state animal from the big-horned sheep to a bobcat?

Should you be able to canoe and raft down Colorado's rivers even if the river goes through someone else's yard?

Should people who need more water be able to take it from other people who had it first?

Should all kids have to wear a helmet when they ride on anything with wheels, like a bike or roller skates?

Should kindergarteners go to school all day?

Should students have an art class every year they're in school?

Should it be against the law for any kids to buy spray paint and big markers because some kids use them for graffiti?

Should schools have fire drills and tornado drills?

Should school buses have seat belts?

Should students wear school uniforms?

Should parents decide which books can be in the school libraries?

Is it okay for your neighbors to say what color you can paint your house?

Should school lunches have to be healthier than the dinners kids eat at home?

Should people who get out of prison ever be able to vote again?

Should everyone in Colorado help pay to keep the gold on the Capitol Dome nice?

Should libraries be free for everyone to use?

Is it okay to make someone sell their house, even if they don't want to, if the house is in the way of a new road or new hospital?

Should students call their teachers by their first name?

Should 4th graders be able to use sharp scissors in school?

Is it okay that the only bathrooms in the Capitol are in the basement?

Do you like school desks in rows instead of in groups?

Should there always be recess time after lunch?

Is red your favorite color?

Does spinach taste good?

Should there be orange soda in the school water fountains on Fridays?

Does your neighborhood have enough parks to play in?

Should the big kids have to play with their little brothers and sisters?

Do you want see-saws on the playground?

Should kids get an allowance for doing chores?

Should schools have salads at lunch?

Should kids be allowed to run for Mayor or President?

Should there be vending machines at school?

Should bullies be expelled from school?

Should baseball be the State's sports symbol?