

Suggested Role-Play Exercise

Flint, Michigan: Lethal Water

2017

Read the case “Flint, Michigan: Lethal Water” carefully, trying to understand the perspective and decision making of each person who played a role in the events it discusses. In class, break up into small groups of four or five students per group. Each member of the group then chooses to assume the role of one of the individuals listed below who had some influence in the Flint water crisis. Take time to think about how you would defend that individual’s position; refer to the information in the case. The teacher should decide whether students might also take the opportunity to re-read the case and/or do further research on their “persona.” With each student assuming their “role,” groups take about 20-30 minutes together to debate on finding a solution that will (a) improve children’s health potential, (b) support citizens who wish to remain in Flint, and (c) guarantee safe housing and water access in equitable measure. If the class is large enough, some students may play the role of “ordinary Flint citizens.”

State Government

- Governor Rick Snyder
- Emergency Manager Darnell Earley

Government Agencies

- Brad Wurfel, Former Communication Director of the Michigan Dept. of Environmental Quality
- A representative of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (based in Chicago)

Activists

- Leanne Walters, Flint mother

Researcher

- Marc Edwards, Professor, Virginia Tech

Physician

- Mona Hanna-Attisha, Pediatrician who studied rising blood levels in infants and children in Flint

Local Government

- Karen Weaver, Mayor of Flint

This role-play exercise accompanies a case which was originally developed by the Global Health Education and Learning Incubator at Harvard University. It is used and distributed with permission by the Global Health Education and Learning Incubator at Harvard University.