**Public Achievement – Core Concepts**

**Core Concepts Assignment:**

Part 1: (5-7 sentences) Explain what Public Achievement is and how our group has incorporated the three core ideas. Can everyone really do citizen work? What obstacles have we encountered? What have we learned by doing?

Part 2: (5-7 sentences) Explain how we have met each of the four goals for PA participants? What has kept us motivated? How have we empowered ourselves? What skills have we learned? What have we learned about democracy (see definition)?

Part 3: (3-5 sentences each) Pick 2 out of the 4 starred\*\*\* terms and explain what you have learned about them and how we have specifically applied them to what we have done so far this year.

Part 4: (2-3 sentences each) Pick any three other terms from the list and explain what you have learned about them and how we have specifically applied them to what we have done so far this year.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**What is Public Achievement?**

Public Achievement is an experimental civic education program based on the idea of citizenship as public work. It was designed to give young people the opportunity to be producers and creators in their community, not simply customers or clients. The initial goals are to bring civic education into institutions that work with young people and test whether young people could have an impact on problems in their schools and neighborhoods in a serious way and define this work in political terms.

**Core Ideas of PA**

1. Everybody can do citizen work.
2. Citizenship isn’t easy.
3. We learn by doing.

**4 goals for PA participants**

1. Motivation
2. Empowerment
3. Skill Development
4. Understanding Democracy

**Core Concepts**

Accountability – One is accountable to themselves, group, site, and community. To be accountable is to be able to explain whether you did or did not what you said you were going to do. In PA, accountability often means following through with goals you have set out for your group.

Anarchy – The absence of any form of political authority or government. It can also mean disorder and chaos. The absence of rules and absolute freedom is *not* Public Achievement. Democracy is self-rule, which means making the rules and procedures you’ve agreed to follow.

\*\*\*Citizenship – Being an ideal citizen is being an active and participating member in the community. Citizenship involves both rights and responsibilities. In PA, we look at citizenship more as opportunities. We search for opportunities to demonstrate active participation, leadership, and involvement in our communities. Citizenship in Public Life can also be compared to maturity in private life. You want to influence the decisions that shape your life. As you become more mature, you want to have more power over these decisions. The same goes for citizenship. As you mature, you want to have more say in what goes on in your community. This means we should all take responsibility for public affairs and become co-creators of the world.

\*\*\*Democracy – The literal meaning of democracy is rule by the people. In government, a democracy is ruled directly by the people or indirectly through representatives elected by the people (like the President of the United States). In PA, this is viewed more than just a person’s right to participate, it means all people can hold power and exercise it to create a common world. This means democracy applies not just to government, but to all groups. Democracy can be understood as a matter of degree, which means groups can be seen as more or less democratic. A group in which everyone had equal power/influence would be the most democratic. Democracy cannot exist unless the members of the group participate and attempt to influence or shape the decision and life of the group.

Dictatorship – This means rule by a small group of people sometimes even one person, in which the leader(s) impose their will on others. One person speaks and others must listen. This is a very unequal distribution of power and responsibility.

Diversity – In public life we will always have differences in ideas, experience, culture, ages, races, religions, political opinions, personal histories, etc. In turn, we must learn to listen, appreciate, and work with others who, while different from ourselves are also affected by the main issues and problems of public life.

Equality – Equal means the same or equivalent. In PA, the best definition of equality is “the state of being equal, especially the state of enjoying equal rights as in political, economic, and social.”

Free Spaces – These refer to spaces, places, gatherings, times, institutions, and situations when people have what they need to work together and experiment with citizenship and democracy. During the Civil Rights Movement, African-American churches were free spaces where new understandings of citizenship were developed. PA is a free space because it is a time, place and pattern of action where the team members have the freedom and discipline to act as democratic citizens.

\*\*\*Freedom or Liberty – Freedom refers is an area of action where individuals can chose their life and their ends unobstructed by others. A second, more difficult meaning of freedom is having the ability and opportunity to realize your full potential and living under rules you and your community have made. These two meanings can sometimes contradict each other because community rules can overpower personal freedom. In PA, teams and coaches have the freedom to meet, discuss, and make decisions, but still must work inside the rules. If there were no rules, that would be anarchy, which is not how we run PA. We run PA under a democracy which means we are free if we live under the laws, society, or world that we have made for ourselves.

Interests – Interests signify why a particular group is connected to or interested in an issue or problem. They can range from one’s “Self interest to “other’s interest” to a broader conception of the “public interest”. In civics and community service, people are more likely to become active on issues they feel strongly about. In PA, by giving students and coaches a chance to pick what they want to do, we hope to produce the most effective and efficient groups.

Monarchy – Monarchy is a form of government by one high and might person (Kings and Queens ruling over people and land). Power is very unequally divided and can sometimes be close to a dictatorship.

Politics – This is the way groups, communities, and nations resolve disputes about important public matters. It can also be described as the practice of power and governance and the art of how public decisions get made.

Power – The ability to influence other people, institutions, or processes. Power gives people the ability to make a difference. A fully participating citizen has the power to shape, create, and remake public events, institutions, people, and issues.

Public – A group of people, a kind of space, and a common interest. It is anything that concerns or affects a community or group of people and is open to the knowledge and judgment of all.

\*\*\*Public Work – The visible effort of ordinary citizens who cooperatively produce and sustain things of lasting importance in our community, nation, or world. Public work is the organizing concern of PA. Effective citizenship depends on people thinking of themselves as productive people who can creatively build things, do things, and develop ideas and resources. Too often, politics and public affairs are seen as the work of politicians and citizens’ role in public life is unimportant. In PA, the goal is to show and encourage the teams that public work involves everyone, regardless of age or experience in society.

Responsibility – This is to have the ability to be trusted and depended upon or to be reliable and to answer to commitments you have made. It also refers to participation as the responsibility of a citizen. In PA, one of our biggest goals as a team is to show that with responsibility remarkable things can be accomplished.

Stakeholders – Those who have an interest or reason to care about an issue or problem, whether it is resolving or not resolving it. Stakeholders have something to win or lose. In PA, the teams are the initial stakeholders, and it grows to exclude anyone potentially affected by their actions.