Grade Level: 5-12
Time: Several Class Periods

Objectives

- Develop a method of effecting change in the community
- Experience first-hand the creation of a political cartoon
- Practice analogical thinking

Curricular Connections: Civics, visual arts

Materials: Example cartoons can be obtained from the internet, for example:
http://www.nytimes.com/pages/cartoons/index.html; http://www.cagle.com/;
Procedure:

1. Start by having the students read an example cartoon and journal about it.
   - What event or issue is the cartoonist covering?
   - What is the cartoonist's point of view?
   - Would this cartoon change your mind about the issue?
   - Did it make you think?
   - What symbols did the cartoonist use to visually represent something he/she didn't say in words? (elephant/donkey for the political parties, Pinocchio's nose for a liar, etc.)
   - Are there any real people in the cartoon? Who is portrayed in it?

2. Political cartoons are frequently based on familiar literature (emperor's new clothes; I'll huff and puff and blow your house down; and never-never land, etc.). Students can learn to use a familiar story and create an original cartoon, creating a metaphor from the story. If students need limited choices, they could choose from a select number of familiar stories (Cinderella, The Three Bears, Snow White, Peter Pan, Jack and the Beanstalk, The Three Pigs, and Aladdin) and use one of them to address an issue they choose (pollution, gun control, TV violence, endangered species, recycling, drugs, or homelessness). You will probably want them to start with a single panel cartoon, moving to multiple panels if they need an extension.

3. Once students get the hang of the technique, they can turn to the issue/problem they've selected for their PA work and develop a cartoon that sends a message. You could put together a class publication of all of the cartoons or even submit them to the local newspaper (with the parents' permission).

Reflection:

1. Was this an effective strategy for addressing the problem you selected?
2. How could it be improved?
3. What problems did you run into?
4. How do you know whether it changed minds/opinions?

Assessment: Review the cartoons.