CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
President's Leadership Development Program

Mini President

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Leadership Action Project Executive Summary

Submitted to the President's Leadership Development Program
at Case Western Reserve University

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Executive Project

What if leadership didn't begin with a title, but with a choice? Mini President is a children's book that challenges the traditional image of leadership as something reserved for those in power. Too often, children learn about leadership through presidents, authority figures, or adults in charge, which can make leadership feel distant, unattainable, or exclusive. This project redefines leadership as something rooted in everyday actions.

It invites children to understand that leadership can look like helping a friend, speaking up, showing kindness, or choosing to learn. At the individual level, it builds confidence and identity. At the community level, it shifts leadership from hierarchy to connection. At the systems level, it challenges the long-standing narrative that leadership equals power, instead emphasizing service, empathy, and shared responsibility.

Project Type & Approach

Mini President is a creative, arts-based project grounded in storytelling, poetry, and lived experience. At its core is an original poem that serves as both the heart and voice of the book using rhythm, repetition, and affirmation to make leadership feel tangible and personal for young readers. The process was intentionally collaborative and reflective. I drafted and refined the manuscript while connecting it to leadership theory and youth development research.

I then brought the project into the classroom, where it truly came to life. My 8th grade students engaged with the poem by reading it aloud, interpreting its meaning, and connecting it to their own experiences. One student even contributed an original illustration, transforming the project from something I created for students into something created with them. This approach ensured the book was not only educational, but also authentic, engaging, and rooted in real student voice.

Deliverables & Impact

The primary outcome of this project is a children's book manuscript, with plans for digital and self-publication. However, the true impact of Mini President extends beyond the page. Through classroom read-alouds and discussions, students began to recognize leadership in ways they hadn't before. They identified leadership as kindness, responsibility, and everyday decision-making.Student participation through reading, discussion, and illustration demonstrating not only understanding, but ownership.

Educators also noted that the book serves as a powerful tool for teaching both leadership and social-emotional learning. Evidence of success includes student reflections, active engagement, creative contributions, and positive educator feedback. Ultimately, Mini President helps children see leadership not as something they grow into someday, but as something they already carry within them.

Leadership Reflection

Mini President is more than a project, it is a reflection of who I am becoming as a leader. My work is grounded in the belief that leadership should be accessible, inclusive, and rooted in justice. Throughout this process, the four leadership assumptions were not just concepts, they were practices. I built credibility by grounding my work in both research and real classroom experiences. I embraced the idea that leadership is non-positional, not only teaching it through the book, but modeling it by sharing power with my students. Most importantly, this project is values-driven, grounded in integrity, empathy, and a commitment to uplifting others. In creating Mini President, I didn't just teach leadership, I witnessed it. In my students, in their voices, in their

creativity. And in that process, I strengthened my own identity as a leader committed to education, equity, and meaningful social change.