



# Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING: REAL LESSONS FROM HISTORY**

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum in Abilene, Kan, recently unveiled *Five Star Leaders (FSL)*, an experiential-learning program that teaches leadership and decision making based on a civic-education model. The program uses role-playing and original documents to recreate moments in history. Students are invited to “walk in the shoes” of top-level leaders as they wrestle with the same issues and problems as did the original decision makers decades before.

*FSL* was developed for a wide range of participants, from students in grades 8-12 to college students and adults. The first scenario to be completed is the D-Day decision of World War II. In time for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1957 Little Rock School Crisis, the second *FSL* scenario will be introduced in 2007.

“Choosing the D-Day decision was easy,” said Kim Barbieri, Eisenhower Library’s education specialist. “Because Eisenhower was universally admired for his leadership qualities, we knew that his example of leadership would be our inspiration and beginning point.”

*FSL* is the second experiential-learning program to be developed within the presidential library system. *The White House Decision Center*, created by the Truman Library Institute in Independence, Mo. was the first. Similar programs will follow.

The program is organized into six modules. Modules one through four take place in the classroom and each requires one class period to complete. Module five is a half-day experience at the Eisenhower Library and, lastly, is a post-visit module completed in the classroom.

Modules one and two explore a variety of leadership theories and utilize original documents to identify leadership examples. Students are introduced to the historical background of the scenario and become acquainted with the historic characters they will portray in module three. The fourth module places students in planning groups, or teams, where they read and analyze original Operation Overlord documents. The fifth module takes place at the Eisenhower Library where students put into practice what they have learned about history, leadership, and decision making while completing their mission. The final module encourages students to reflect on what they have learned about leadership and to consider how they might apply the principles of *FSL* to the challenges of today and tomorrow.

*Five Star Leaders: D-Day* uses documents such as confidential Eisenhower papers, oral history interview transcripts of Eisenhower associates, Operation Overlord documents, and Eisenhower's pre-presidential papers to prepare students to make the best possible decision.

A recent national survey conducted by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools and the Alliance for Representative Democracy states that, even though an overwhelming majority of Americans agrees on the importance of civic education, young people today receive a C- for their civic awareness and engagement. The primary objective of *FSL* is to impart the knowledge, skills, and practical tools to support responsible and participatory citizenship.

“*Five Star Leaders* addresses this deficit with an approach to civic learning that breaths life, excitement, and purpose into what it means to be an engaged citizen,” said Barbieri. “Participants complete the *FSL* experience with a deeper understanding for the requirements of leadership and decision making in a democratic society.”

The education office of the Eisenhower Library is currently booking schools to participate in *FSL* for the spring semester.

The Eisenhower Library is one of eleven presidential libraries operated by the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.