

Develop a Policy Proposal



Grade Level: 9-12
Subject: American Government and Civics
Prepared by: Unicameral Information Office

Overview & Purpose

This lesson is designed to help students understand the definition of public policy and explore avenues to affect change in their local and state governments.

Standards Alignment

- SS 12.1.1.d Analyze and evaluate the foundation, structures and functions of local government (e.g., city council, school board, county government, regional boards)
- SS 12.1.2.a Evaluate how individuals and groups can effectively use the structure and functions of various levels of government to shape policy (e.g., lobbying, voting, contacting government officials, petitioning)
- SS 12.1.2.c Engage in civic activities (e.g., discussing current issues, advocating for personal rights and the rights of others, influencing governmental actions, participating in civil discourse, registering for selective service, participating in community improvement activities, service learning)
- SS 12.1.2.d Analyze an issue and determine which level of government is most appropriate to utilize in addressing the issue
- SS 12.1.2.e Describe the roles and influences of individuals, groups and the media as checks on governmental practices (e.g., interest groups, political action committees, lobbyists, public opinion polls)

Materials Needed

Civic Engagement in Public Policy handout Developing a Policy Proposal worksheet

Preparation (approximately 10 minutes)

- Review the Civic Engagement in Public Policy handout with students. Discuss examples of problems that can be solved through public policy solutions. As a class, select a problem to be addressed.

Activity

- Each group will develop three potential public policy solutions to the assigned problem. Students will fill out the worksheet, identifying advantages, disadvantages, supporters/opponents and further information needed for each policy solution
- Each group will then select one of the three solutions to implement. They will then devise an action plan and work through the Implementing Our Plan section.
- Groups will present their action plans to the class. This can be done in a variety of ways; PowerPoint presentation, posters, video, etc.
- Discuss how to approach the governing bodies that can implement these proposals.

Summary (approximately 15 minutes)

- Ask students what they learned from the simulation and what it reveals about the lawmaking process. Discuss the importance of citizen participation. What makes a good senator?
- Further information and lesson plan ideas for learning about the Nebraska Legislature can be found at http://www.legislature.ne.gov/education/student_programs.php.