

Solving the Problem

Benchmark: SS.7.C.2.12 Develop a plan to resolve a state or local problem by researching public policy alternatives, identifying appropriate government agencies to address the issue, and determining a course of action.

Clarifications/Objectives:

- Students will identify the appropriate level of government to resolve specific problems.
- Students will identify appropriate government agencies to address state or local problems.
- Students will analyze public policy alternatives to resolve state and local problems.
- Students will compare public policy solutions and private community service solutions.

Time: One to two class periods

Materials:

- PowerPoint
- Computer
- Projector
- Handout A – What is Public Policy?
- Handout B – Solving the Problem
- Computer/tablet access for small groups

Lesson Preparation

- Review all handouts and PowerPoints
- Print and review the PowerPoint in “notes view”. The PowerPoint includes notes to guide the lesson.
- Make copies of handouts

Lesson Overview

Warm Up: Watch the Center on Congress’ Facts of Congress on Federalism (link provided in PowerPoint). The following slide will show students the levels of government in the form of a cake. Have students draw this image into their notes for the different levels of government.

Using the PowerPoint link to the Center on Congress’ activity “Where To Go With a Problem”. Directions to this interactive module are provided in the notes of the PowerPoint. Once you click the image you will see an e-learning module titled “The Importance of Civic Participation”. Enter the module, and then select the **“Where to Go With a Problem” module**. This will provide scenarios that students then have to classify as local, state, and/or federal problems.

Students will then work individually to identify community problems. Once they have created a list of problems in their community, have students share and combine lists with a small group. As the students are working, post three pieces of chart paper throughout the room labeled “Local”, “State”, and “Federal”. As a class, go through the list of problems identified and classify the problems by the level of government that would address the problem. Continue with the PowerPoint by discussing how to identify a problem and differentiating between public policy and community service.

Distribute Handout A. Working in small groups students will work to define public policy in their own words. Next, students will read scenarios and identify if the solution to the problem described is public policy or

community service. When debriefing, have students discuss each problem and type of solution, and then discuss how the same problem could be solved using the opposite type of solution. For example, if the solution to pollution in a park is to volunteer to clean it up (community service), a public policy solution would be for city government to create a policy that imposes fines on those who are littering.

Distribute Handout B. Have students select one problem to work with in their small group. Students should select a problem from either the local or state category. Have students identify 3 public policy solutions (in which government is involved) to their problem. Check in on each group to make sure they have selected public policy solutions. Once they have created some solutions, have them evaluate and rank those solutions in order of effectiveness. Students should identify and highlight the most effective policy to solve their problem.

Webquest: Now that students have identified their problem and a most effective public policy to solve that problem, they will need to identify which agency would handle their problem. Using **Handout B** students will work in small groups to locate the local or state government agency that would help implement their public policy. Suggested links are provided to guide their search. Students will identify contact information for the agency that would be most helpful to them in solving their problem.

Review the steps of solving community problems. Emphasize that it is important to:

- Identify the problem and who it impacts;
- Create and research alternative policy solutions;
- Identify the government agencies that would help solve the problem;
- And determine a course of action (identifying the appropriate person to contact/present to).

Check for Understanding The final slide of the PowerPoint will include a question from the End of Course Exam Item Specifications book. Have the students independently write down their answer and ask student to explain how they made their decision.

What is Public Policy?

How would you define:	Definition
Public	
Policy	
Public Policy	

Below are 5 scenarios from a community.

Your task: Decide with your group if each scenario involves public policy. Check the box marked “public policy” if the scenario does involve public policy. Check the box “not public policy” if the scenario does not involve public policy. Explain your answers.

	Public Policy	Not Public Policy	Explanation
Students in the 7 th grade form a club to clean up the park behind your school because there is too much trash everywhere. This club meets after school and the science teacher serves as your club sponsor.			
There have been a lot of problems at school with students texting answers to test to one another. The principal, along with the faculty, has decided to ban student cell phones. Students may only have their cell phones if they are turned off and placed in their locker during the school day.			
The local Elks Club is collecting items for the homeless and will be having an “open house” where people can come to get items such as food, clothing, and toiletries they can use. The Club will also be accepting donations so they can make purchases in the future for more items to give out in the community.			
The road at the local soccer complex has become really worn down and unsafe – there are potholes, drop-offs, and there is not lighting. Students are often at this complex after dark and the lack of lighting makes it dangerous. The city has decided to charge a fee to come into the complex in order to pay for the repairs to the road.			
There has been a high rate of bicycle accidents in your community. The local police department has decided to host free bicycle safety seminars at a local community center. The officers who conduct the trainings are being paid for the time they conduct these seminars.			

Solving the Problem

Step 1 Identify the Problem

The problem is...

Step 2 Research Public Policy Alternatives

Three ways to solve this problem with public policy:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

*Make sure the government is involved in your policies!

Step 3 Identify Government Agencies to Address the Issue

Webquest! Working with your group, use a computer to research agencies that might be able to help with your problem. Think through your problem: does it deal with the environment? Schools? Parks? Law Enforcement? Animal services?

If you have a state-level problem, visit <http://www.myflorida.com/directory/> to find the appropriate agency!

If you have a local problem, visit your city or town government website and look for a list of agencies!

The agency that would most help in implementing our policy would be:

Contact information for this agency:

Website: _____

Who is in charge of this agency? _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Step 4 Determine a Course of Action

One the back of this handout, write out a list of things you would do to get your policy implemented. Who would you contact? Where would you want to present? Whose support would you want?