

## **What are Legislators?**

### **3 - 5 Grade Lesson Plan**

#### **Overview:**

This lesson plan will give students the opportunity to share their ideas as to what legislators do, who they are, and how they are chosen/elected in their state. They will see the process taken to write a bill, which may become law in their state.

#### **Objectives:**

- Know the difference between state and U.S. legislators as to the work they accomplish.
- Research their state legislators to find out their names, their parties and what they care about.
- Craft a bill as a small group to share with the larger group.
- Understand the basic process of a bill becoming a law.
- Knowledge of 1-2 state education bills that will be a part of the current legislative session or ones that have gone through in the past and have either become law or were set aside.

#### **Duration:**

Two 45 minute classes.

#### **Materials:**

Access to computers for research.  
Paper for writing their bill.

#### **Colorado State Standards - 4th Grade:**

- Civics 1-Analyze and debate multiple perspectives on an issue
  - Evidence Outcomes
    - Give examples of issues faced by the state and develop possible solutions
    - Provide supportive arguments for both sides of a current public policy debate
    - Discuss how various individuals and groups influence the way an issue affecting the state is viewed and resolved
  - 21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies
    - Inquiry questions
      - How can government answer questions about issues in a state in various ways?
      - How do diverse opinions enrich a community?
      - How does an individual's experience and background influence perception of an issue?
      - Why is it important to research issues and engage in civil debates?



restaurant can visit the Department of Health website to get information.

- Nature of Civics
  - Responsible community members understand the structure, function, and origin of the state government.

**Vocabulary:**

- Legislator
- Legislation
- Capitol
- Bill
- Debate
- Law
- Political Party
- Platform
- Election
- Vote
- Collaborate

**Lesson Plan:**

**1. Introduction**

- a. Ask students to share what they know about legislators and where the state capitol is located. ([Colorado General Assembly](#))
- b. Share how legislators are chosen through an election and the work it takes to become a legislator. ([FAQ information on the state legislature](#))
- c. Explain the difference between state legislators making laws that apply to Colorado and U.S. Congress legislators that make laws that apply to the nation. ([Differences explained](#)) ([Colorado US Senators and Representatives](#))
- d. Give an overview on the crafting of a bill by multiple legislators, sharing it with others to gain advice and persuade, as well as how it becomes law, or not. ([FAQ information on the process](#))
- e. Engage students in processing why bills and laws are necessary yet may not be the best in all situations. Give examples, both good and bad, of state education laws that have been passed. As an educator, it is important to remain neutral. ([Examples of 2019 bills that passed and/or failed](#))
- f. Share the relevancy of elections for legislators based on voter understanding of the laws that have been passed, or not passed.

**2. Activity:**

- a. Students will be placed in small groups of 3 or 4 in order to research the names, party and platform of their legislators. They will share this information with the class.
- b. Students will be given a bill as an example in order to begin the process of crafting their own within their small groups. Students will collaborate in order to decide upon their issue. Let them know that the class will vote on the bill(s) that should pass on to become law and these will be presented to their legislators during a visit to the state capitol.
- c. Student groups will write their bills on paper and present as a group before the class.
- d. The class will vote on the presented bills with a Yay or Nay.
- e. The passed bills will be compiled into one document, which will be shared with their legislators.

**3. Closure:**

- a. Have students prepare questions they may want to ask legislators at their Day at The Capitol.
- b. Review the process of a bill becoming a law.

**4. Extension Activities:**

- a. Students will write emails to their legislators letting them know what they believe is important in education.