

## **Budget Cuts**

### **Lesson Plan for Middle School students**

#### **LEARNING GOALS:**

Students will develop an understanding of the budgeting process in the legislature.

#### **COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVE:**

Students will role play the budgeting process; write an analysis of their understanding of the budget priorities; and evaluate the collaborative process by which budget decisions are made through a class discussion.

#### **EALRS:**

V4 The student understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and the principles of democratic civic involvement.

4.1 Understand individual rights and their accompanying responsibilities including problem-solving and decision-making at the local, state, national, and international level;

E3. Students understand the role of government and institutions in past and present economic systems.

3.1 Analyze the role of government as participant in an economy through taxation, spending and policy setting.

#### **CBA REQUIREMENT: GOVERNMENT REVENUE AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Resources: 2003 Washington State Budget: the internet, especially, [www.leg.wa.gov/legislature](http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature)

#### **LESSON PLAN BY DAY**

##### **DAY 1**

Students receive a card labeled with one of the 4 major interest groups and a number

Education (pre-post graduate) 1, 2, 3                      Health care 1,2,3

Judicial/prison system 1,2, 3                              Other state needs 1,2,3

There will be 3 people who will also draw a card labeled committee counsel.

Students will receive a copy of the 2003 budget with the directions to find a way to cut \$1 billion dollars from the budget due to income shortage for the fiscal year. Students meet in their interest groups this day to decide what, if any, of their programs can be cut. They need to prepare arguments to support their concerns. Committee counsel members meet with the teacher who will explain their job is to familiarize themselves with the terminology of the budget. They are to remain neutral through the process and not give any opinion. They will be the only ones allowed to access the teacher with questions and for purpose of clarification. They will have access to computers during the next 2 days, but committee members will not.

### **DAYS 2 AND 3**

Students meet in debate groups, 1,2 or 3 to discuss and debate methods of meeting the necessary cuts in spending. Although they are to support their interest, they also have a responsibility to the state to make necessary budget cuts and behave in a diplomatic manner. Each group will elect a chairperson to facilitate, a budget calculator to keep a record of cuts, and a reporter who will report back to the class the decisions of the committee. Each debate group also has a committee counsel who is available for clarification and liaison with the teacher/governor.

### **DAY 4**

Students meet back as a class and reporters share with the class their group's solution to the budget crisis. After that process, ask the class to discuss why the groups had different proposals/solutions. It is important for students to understand the group process. Finally, the teacher will share a copy of the 2007 state budget. The goal is for students to see that each year, the budget is rewritten (sometimes numerous times) depending upon revenue and needs.

### **DAY 5**

Students will write a persuasive essay to “Analyze and Prioritize the Top Three Items You Consider Most Important and Defend Your Decision.” Teachers may choose this as a CBA and develop their own guidelines.