# Teaching Guide and Activities

### LESSON 2: ISSUES FOR LAWMAKERS AND STUDENTS

#### Learning Outcomes

**At the end of Lesson 2 students will be able to;**

* analyze the role of government and non-government influences on the legislative process.
* assess competing ideas about the purposes government should serve.

**Class Activity**

* Read aloud several of the letters generated in Lesson 1. Encourage student reactions to such questions as the following: Did any topics surprise you? Which ones seem particularly relevant to your community? Are any especially appropriate for middle school students?
* Break into small groups to “brainstorm” current issues affecting middle school students or, for younger students, to generate a list of student interests, i.e. what they like to do (hunting, fishing, dancing, sports, and so forth.) The groups might also benefit from thinking about concerns in their neighborhood, their community, their family or their school. Have each group appoint a “reporter” to summarize their findings. Write the findings of each group on the board. Vote as an entire class to select one (or two) issues or interests.
* Ask for student volunteer(s) to invite the local representative or senator to visit the class to discuss this subject as well as to talk generally about his or her responsibilities in the legislature.
* As a class, define “public policy.” Then discuss how to answer the following question: when and/or how does a contemporary topic or a special interest become a public policy issue?

**Materials**

* Computers with Internet access and word processing capabilities
* Blackboard, white board or newsprint
* Folder/Notebook for “Path to Maine Lawmaking”

**Student Activities**

* Do an internet search on the topic(s) voted to be the most important during the group discussions. Individually or in groups, locate at least 3 different sources to provide information on the topic(s). Where could you go to find more information?
* Select the source that you consider to be the most useful and write at least one paragraph (of 5-8 sentences) summarizing the information you found.
* If you are keeping a class journal or using your own notebook, write any additional questions that you have about this topic as if it were a public policy issue.
* Think about how this issue might affect other groups. What governmental or non-governmental groups might try to influence this public policy?

**Assessment**

* Have students successfully located at least 3 relevant, useful and distinctly different internet sources to provide information on their topic(s)?
* Have students identified additional sources for more information?
* Have students written a unified, coherent summary paragraph of their findings?
* Are students' sentences grammatically correct and have they demonstrated their understanding of the conventions of standard written English?
* Through their questions, have students demonstrated their ability to anticipate and analyze the complex nature of public policy issues and the possible influences on the legislative process?
* Has the class adequately defined “public policy"?