

The Politics of Food: How the American Government Contributes to Public Health

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Overview

So many messages reach children and the adults responsible for them through mass media and so few of these messages support better public health. While the American government funds scientific research to inform its policy decisions for health and food programs, the regulation of these public health laws are marred by special interest groups concerned with their bottom lines. The role of the federal government to help its citizens is constantly under attack by the capitalist machine. How can students be expected to become conscientious political beings if they are disenchanting by or uninformed about the relationship between the government and capitalists in regulating their health?

This unit asks students to understand the process whereby a bill becomes a law, including all of the messy revisions of bills to reflect the interests of political action committees (PACs) and congressional constituents. It also highlights the methods for and motivations behind analyzing scientific evidence to inform lawmaking, and converting that analysis into the implementation of public health recommendations at the federal government level.

Many age groups of students could be reached with this unit, but the content lends itself to older students with knowledge of government processes or as a companion to teaching government processes. Terms such as “lobbyist”, “policy”, and “legislation” will be used frequently and government agencies such as the USDA and FDA will play a role as large as the legislative branch of the government. Methods such as debate, critical analysis of text and filmed discussion/debate, and observational surveys and analyses will be employed to better comprehend the concepts explored in this unit. Considering all of this, the recommended age group for this unit would be 11th grade United States History, 12th Grade American Government, or a mature/advanced group of 8th Grade United States History students.

Rationale

Any conversation about health in America seems to stem from science. That we rank our cities from the most obese to the most healthful, that we work for companies that provide free gyms and treadmills instead of chairs, that we send our children to schools with cuts in the physical education budget as well as revamped salad bars, says a lot about how our country and its laws prioritize our health. Of course, most Americans don't consider how obese or healthful a city is before we buy a house or start a life; the average worker still uses a chair and pays for a gym membership (or doesn't); many schools still offer gym classes and recess, and many don't offer salad bars or other "healthy" options. These discussions and the movements that come out of them are validated when some kind of scientific evidence can rescue legislators from making emotional or culturally biased statements to making decisions (laws) based on fact.

How do legislators establish "fact" when drafting the legislation of health and food distribution? How can the citizenry illuminate the process of interpreting these facts into practicable laws that the public must follow? Lastly, in the case study of school lunch programs, can the effectiveness of these laws be tracked through their everyday regulation? The answers to these questions can help to answer the eternal question of whether we as a society can ever hope to change the behaviors of our citizens through proactive legislation.

The purpose of social studies education in America is to create a knowledgeable and empowered citizenry that can evolve into voters, activists, and legislators. All three of these jobs require basic skills of communicating as well as interpreting various sources of information to make the best decision for a particular situation. If training for these jobs is the goal of social studies education and the above skills are required for these jobs, than what lessons must be taught in the curriculum to cover a wide range of possible decisions that future citizens will have to make? While the answers are hotly contested in the current day and age, there is much less argument over the bare essentials comprising an American social studies education.

Laws affect every citizen at every important milestone. Laws and the consequences for breaking laws exist at local, state, national, and even international levels. The cooperation between human beings that is codified with words is a basic element of human nature. Given a name by Jean Jacques Rousseau in the 18th century, the "social contract" is a way for citizens to agree upon governing themselves to mutual benefit. Laws and their consequences are elementary to society and so exploring how laws are made and understanding the nuance of legislation at the national level (those laws that affect all citizens of a country) is essential to becoming a good citizen. Social studies education should start with how laws are made.

Lawmaking on the surface appears overly simplistic: someone has an idea to improve society, lawmakers debate on the proper wording of the idea, everyone votes on whether it should or should not come to fruition, the law passes and is implemented or dies. At the core of this process is the well-being of the citizenry; someone has to promote an idea that would change society for the better. In addition, democratic-republics elect special citizens to keep the well-being of society in mind and to make decisions based on the feelings of a majority of their constituents. Lastly, the concept of majority rule dictates that if more than half of the citizenry agree with an idea, then the idea should be implemented.

General knowledge of lawmaking, however, shows us that this quite simple process can take anywhere from months to years. In addition, some citizens have a louder voice than others at key points in the debate – not necessarily because they are the subjects of the proposed laws, but sometimes because they have more money, more to gain or lose, a more amplified voice, or more followers willing to back them up. It is no wonder that such a simple process becomes so difficult to follow for the average American citizen. Not only are there additional steps involved, but the average citizen has very little direct input in the decisions being made at any step, even as a voter and constituent of an elected official. In conclusion, the convoluted nature of legislation at the national level is not empowering to the average citizen and thus creates apathy among the citizenry that promotes misuse of the legislative process by people with more money and power.

Knowing who is potentially involved in the lawmaking process can help to illuminate the process to the average citizen. Additionally, knowing who these people are can help empower the average citizen to leverage these people to create laws in their favor. National legislators such as Congresspersons (representatives) and Senators are the most well-known players. If these legislators are picked from the pool of average citizens in America, then it stands to reason that their expertise would be limited individually, but far-reaching as an aggregate. Many legislators are not knowledgeable on every subject brought up for legislation, and so they rely on other people with supposed specialized knowledge. Looking at food and health legislation as an example, some of these “experts” work for government-created agencies such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as scientists or analysts; some work for PACs as lobbyists; others represent private industry as consultants. How and why are these different persons brought into the legislative process?

The United States Congress has created over the decades several agencies charged with advising its members on matters requiring expertise. In the case of food and health politics, agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Academy of Sciences were granted charters by the Congress to make the knowledge of specialized people such as doctors and scientists available to Congresspersons for the purpose of making informed decisions on legislation.¹ In addition, these agencies are self-sustaining and perform research on topics not requested

by the legislature. Some of this research has resulted in a push to create legislation, showcasing the ability of such agencies to not only inform policies but also initiate them. The argument can be made that the people employed by such agencies are citizens themselves, and thus have a right and responsibility to be involved in the legislative process in this way, but their expertise and the auspices of the office under which they perform their research give them disproportionate access to power. Also, because of their Congressional charter, their research and decisions could be swayed by the political leanings of the time.

Lobbyists – people who work to further the purposes of private or corporate agencies – have existed since the creation of legislative bodies. Their role has been to influence people with legislative power to do things that people without that power would like them to do. Lobbyists can also be experts, but they do not need to have any special skills save the power of persuasion to do their job effectively. Lobbyists may work in concert with government agencies such as the USDA and FDA to further the purposes of the people those agencies regulate or represent. Lobbying the positions of private interests in Congress is legal, though restricted; however very few people have been brought up on charges for illegal lobbying practices.ⁱⁱ Lobbyists are free to contribute to campaigns, sponsor media events, encourage lawsuits, as well as offer their expertise – all methods of persuasion that hit legislators very close to their salaries and livelihoods.ⁱⁱⁱ Lobbyists hold only the interests of their employers when approaching lawmakers.

Most overlooked in the process and arguably much less effective than the previous two groups discussed are activists – grassroots, community organizers who focus their energies on uniting and empowering underrepresented groups of citizens. While similar to lobbyists in some tactics, the focus of activist efforts is on mobilizing constituents to demand direct representation from their legislators. Activists may work for larger corporations and can have ulterior motives, but their methods of persuasion attempt to bring together and give voice to groups of people who would otherwise not have the resources or capital to do so themselves.

In the simplified lawmaking process discussed above, government agencies, lobbyists, and activists can make an appearance at any time. The influence that each holds over laws that eventually get passed may not be as evident as the role these people play in the regulation of said laws. Once a law has been put on the books, those charged with implementation are usually asked to interpret the law so that it achieves basic goals while keeping cost to a minimum. In the case of food and health legislation, regulation of the law entails which vendors are granted government contracts, what foods meet the vague criteria set forth in legislation, and other specifics that can benefit or harm certain special interest groups.

For example, in the case of standards for school lunches as recommended in 2007, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) concedes that successful implementation of said standards

depends on many different individuals and agencies being aware of and understanding the standards being set.^{iv} What does “being aware of and understanding” entail? According to the same source, these interested parties should “support legislation... and regulations issued at the federal, state, and/or local levels”.^v The government expects that citizens will be engaged in the process of proposing laws, making laws, and implementing laws because these laws supposedly support the well-being of the citizenry. That some citizens – private and public – will have more influence than others does not disturb the government so long as laws are enacted and implemented.

Moreover, the federal government is happy to leave some decisions solely in the hands of non-government organizations or local governments – such as which foods will supplement school lunch programs (vending machines, etc.) – because regulation would be uneconomical and unwieldy.^{vi} In these cases, those with loud voices and/or low-balled contracts are more likely to make decisions that perhaps should be legislated and closely monitored by the government. It is in these instances that the voices of citizens, especially those most affected and least likely to organize like the urban poor, are the least likely to be heard and the well-being of the citizenry most likely to be ignored.

In this past year, more efforts have been made to force the government to regulate legislation so that it more closely aligns with the well-being of the citizenry that it supposedly serves. In the case of school lunches, several groups are “served”, such as the students eating the lunches as well as the farmers and corporations providing the food and the unionized workers serving on the lunch lines. Historically, lobbyists from individual food lobbies and private food corporations have won out in legislation, allowing foods such as tomato paste and potato products to count as full servings of vegetables.^{vii} In new regulations passed by Congress, the amount of fruits and vegetables offered in school lunches have been doubled, an effort to counteract childhood obesity in the best interests of the health of the citizenry. However, which foods count as fruits and vegetables and the amount of processing those foods undergo before being served has not been restricted; a French-fried potato (arguably a starch) is equal to a serving of steamed spinach (undoubtedly a vegetable, prepared in a non-processed manner).

Considering this, the question of whether a society can change the behaviors of its citizens through proactive legislation seems misdirected. Exactly whose behaviors should be changed? In the case of school lunches, many well-educated and powerful groups believe that legislation should exist to save poor, uneducated families from the “black bag epidemic” of obesity that stems from unhealthy food choices and little access to healthy food options.^{viii} The school lunch program is aimed at these families who are mandated to educate their children (mostly in public schools because they cannot afford other options) and can benefit from subsidized or free meals to lighten the burden of raising a family. But if the situation is examined more closely, perhaps society should be changing the behaviors of PACs and other special interest groups that prey on the government’s need to support this underprivileged population by signing contracts that put their bottom lines

above the health of their nation's children. In most cases, those who can afford lobbyists to further their cause in Congress can also afford to send their children to school with healthfully balanced lunches (or pay for personal trainers if their children overindulge).

If social studies education aims to empower future citizens, then these tough situations must be dissected and discussed often. The case of school lunches provides immediate feedback from the students – while not necessarily forced to consume them, all public school children have at least seen the offerings in the lunch line. To know that what they eat, how much they eat, and what they are even allowed to be served is legislated by Congress and regulated by a myriad of groups is eye-opening to someone on the verge of casting their first vote. The political process seems much closer to home because it is actually *is* close to home in this instance, and it allows students to explore other ways in which their government fulfills the “social contract” with them and their fellow citizens.

Objectives

The over-arching goal of this unit is to encourage students who feel threatened by the complicated political process to be more active in the decision-making processes of their government. Illuminating government processes – such as how a bill becomes a law – and treating the topic as realistically as possible can help to eliminate apathy in the young citizenry. Even though teachers may realize the limitations that individual citizens may have for influencing legislation at the federal level, it is important for students to be knowledgeable on the subject because some high-power individuals are very influential in regulating legislation that affects people nationwide. Advocacy groups function as a way to unite and focus the voices of concerned citizens to address problems and can provide an avenue for effective action. In addition, the role that scientists and government-funded research agencies have on legislation and the regulation of laws could encourage students interested in science professions to comprehend their potential role in shaping laws that could affect their parents, spouses, and progeny.

Students will, by the end of the unit, engage in the following topics of discussion:

- What process does the American government use to make laws?
- How are laws converted to regulations once passed and what government agencies help this process along?
- What role do lobbyists have in influencing how government formulates policy?
- How is scientific evidence converted into legislation?

Each topic will be explored with a different hands-on activity that mimics the ways in which these processes naturally take place. The idea is to showcase the complicated nature of interpretation that eventually leads to legislation and the regulation of American laws at the federal level.

Throughout the unit, students will use the school lunch program in America as a case study, following the process of how the new nutritional standards of 2012 were created and regulated and the roles that government agencies, lobbyists, politicians, and American citizens had in these processes.

Strategies

Because the factual material of this unit could be dry and requires a bit of reading, the intention is to explore some of the nuances of the topic of food politics through fun, hands-on activities. While any assigned reading will be short, there will be several different viewpoints offered and students are bound to agree and disagree about the content. Integrating the skill of analysis/detecting bias/comparison into the unit can be achieved by using the readings as a base for debates. Students will be asked to engage in scientific observational surveying to gather information that will be used to interpret the efficacy of regulations implemented at the federal level. Students will watch a news magazine panel discussion on school lunches from 2005 and compare the information presented there to later and recent legislative changes in the public school lunch program.

Revising the Basic Model to Be More Realistic

Many times over the course of a student's institutional educational life, they are faced with the same information packaged in a different way. The purpose is to reinforce a skill or concept learned in a lower grade and to add new information by approaching the topic from a different angle. In this unit, the intention is to introduce a topic for perhaps the first time (depending on the prior experiences of the students) but in several different ways at once. The hope is to provide a fuller picture of the nuances associated with the topic (in this case, how a bill becomes a law) and to examine how seemingly helpful sequencing can ignore realistic tendencies toward messiness.

Students will be asked to start with a viewing of a children's program giving an elementary treatment of the topic. As a class, we will construct a timeline of how a bill becomes a law from this video. Students will be given the opportunity to amend this timeline with their own personal experiences or good guesses once the video timeline has been approved by the class. The students will then be asked to read a high school textbook treatment of the subject. The class will amend the original elementary timeline with information provided by this new source. Finally, students will read a memoir of how an actual bill became a law and add final information to the chart from this source. The end result will hopefully reflect the nuances of how legislation is made and demonstrate that – while helpful – textbook explanations of a process are meant to simplify best-case scenarios for the purpose of teaching, not necessarily to illuminate students to all of the possible problems one might encounter within a process.

Comparative Analysis

Coupled with both surveys and debates is the skill of comparative analysis. Briefly, comparing texts and/or other artifacts while keeping similar parameters or questions in mind leads to analysis of the two (or more) documents against each other. This critical comparison allows the students to examine bias (in the perspective of the creator of the piece and well as the intended audience), purpose, fact to opinion ratio, and effectiveness of several arguments at the same time. The comparison also helps to highlight the contentiousness of an issue or, in some cases, the government and media's role in providing education to the masses. It showcases the need to critically approach opinionated pieces and to realize that many things touted as factual or canonical are actually opinions craftily wrapped in one or two disparate facts.

Survey

There are many different types of survey, but the two highlighted in this unit are questionnaires and observational surveys. Students should be encouraged to both engage others in the gathering of data (questionnaires) and to use their powers of observation and controlled environments to formulate data independently. Both types of surveys can prove useful in the study of politics and human nature, two topics explored with high frequency in this unit.

Observational Surveys

Students will be asked to create a checklist of the current regulations for school lunches so that they can compare their environment (the school lunch line offerings) with the ideal. The end result will be an analysis of the school's ability to follow the regulations and what food choices they use to satisfy varied requirements. The students will be taking down the actual offerings (i.e. – pizza, chicken patties on a wheat bun, hoagie bar with lunchmeats and cheses and salad toppings) and then asked to break down the components of each of these offerings (i.e. – pizza = crust, sauce, cheese, pepperoni). The goal is to see if the school lunches provide enough choices to satisfy the regulations of the school lunch law; questionnaires will be used to analyze whether students are taking advantage of and consuming the ideal amounts outlined in the regulations.

Questionnaires

If there is enough time within the unit, students will design questionnaires to accompany their observational studies in the lunchroom. The questionnaires will ask questions which it would be difficult to answer simply by observation. A sampling of students will be

used each day in the lunchroom to provide answers to the same small set of questions. The purpose of the questions is to isolate the efficacy of the regulations as far as student participation in the lunch program is concerned. The class will discuss which questions would elicit the best information for analysis to compare with the observational survey.

Debate

Formal debate with teams and timed introductions and rebuttals could be the ultimate goal if students have been properly trained to expect such class participation. Debates modeled by professional staff and/or scaffolding of the debate process and breaking it down into more manageable steps are two methods that can be helpful, especially if the debated topics are controversial. In addition, debate allows students to construct arguments similar to a five-paragraph essay, facilitating growth in writing as well as public speaking. Finally, debate encourages students to listen to others' arguments and viewpoints in order to successfully plug their own point of view, forcing students to master both sides of an issue to be successful.

Classroom Activities

How a Bill Becomes a Law

The objective of this lesson is to orient students with the process of making laws in America. The class will discuss the purpose of lawmaking to build a simple flowchart then revise the chart when more specific information is presented through film and the textbook. Finally, nuances of the process will be introduced and added to the flowchart to provide a more detailed and truer-to-life portrayal of the process.

As a pre-class assignment, students should be asked to brainstorm what purpose laws serve in society. When they share out their answers to the assignment, a short discussion may begin on the foundations of government in American society. If this unit is used in an American Government class, this lesson should be used after at least a basic introduction to great thinkers in political theory (Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau, etc.); if used in an American History class, this lesson should be used after an introduction to the US Constitution. The depth of the discussion on what purpose laws have in society should be limited to that which was discussed in the "Rationale" section above in the interest of time.

After the pre-class assignment and discussion, students and teacher together should create a simple flowchart for how the process of lawmaking should take place in America. Refer to "worksheet one" for an example. Once this simple version of the flowchart is in place in front of the students, the School House Rock episode "I'm Just a Bill" should be viewed; students should be instructed to revise their personal flowcharts as they watch the episode so that class sharing will be easier. Once the film is over (it

may need to be watched 2 or 3 times for full effect), students should share out their changes to the flowchart as referenced in the episode.

Most government and history textbooks also provide a treatment of how a law is made in the national legislature. If there is time in class and such an article exists in the classroom text, a similar exercise should be conducted, further revising the flowchart with the additional information.

Students should be given the opportunity to read the three summaries of government agencies, lobbyists, and activists from the “Rationale” above. After reading, students should be asked to discuss where these players would fit into the flowchart, adding them appropriately. At this point in the lesson, after all of the additions have been made, the flowchart should be reexamined. An appropriate homework assignment might be to ask students why the process becomes so complicated when the original purpose of lawmaking is arguably simple. If checks and balances have been discussed in class previously, another homework assignment could be to circle instances of checks and balances in the revised flowchart. The revised flowcharts should be kept for reference in future lessons.

Food, Science, and Politics: From Laws to Regulations

The objective of this lesson is to isolate the difference between laws that are passed and the regulations created to effectively carry out the laws. Students should understand that these are two different processes and that sometimes the players remain the same, but often the letter of the law gets convoluted in the regulation of the law.

As a pre-class, ask students how they would act on the following statement: “Schools must offer free or reduced-price lunches that meet national nutrition standards to all students.” Many of the responses will include the creation of mandatory programs, such as a school lunch program or a national academy to determine nutrition standards. There should be the suggestion by the teacher that while these very concrete things are called for by law, there are many ways to interpret the implementation of those concrete things; what is defined by the law is often interpreted widely in practice.

The pre-class assignment should begin the discussion of the difference between laws and regulation of said laws. The flowchart from a previous lesson only details how laws get made at the national level, not how these laws are then carried out. This lesson gives students the opportunity to see who has a say in implementing a law once it has been approved by the government and exactly how closely (or loosely) regulators must follow the laws.

Students should be asked to create a list of people that would be affected in a law about school lunches like that proposed in the pre-class (we call these people

“stakeholders”). A sample list might include parents, students, cafeteria workers, food vendors, school administration, and farmers. Then, students must extend their list to mention additional people that might represent the voices of these stakeholders, though might not be directly affected. See “worksheet two” below for an example of how to create this chart.

Once the representatives of the stakeholders have been identified, students should list the biases of each group, the credentials each group has in helping to make educated decisions, the funding each group has for furthering their agenda, and where each group is getting their information or expertise. Once the chart is completely filled out (the sample chart below has the first row filled out as an example), students should then be asked to analyze the data. Appropriate questions at this point to spark discussion are which group should have the most say in the regulating process? Does that group match up with who has the most say in reality? Why or why not? These questions illuminate the role of power, voice, money, and effective organization in the process of regulating legislation.

Once this discussion has died down, students will watch a short *Nightline* episode from 2005 entitled “Food Fight”. The episode starts with a documentary highlighting celebrity chef Jaime Oliver’s trials in changing the school lunch programs in the United Kingdom. Following the documentary is a short debate between Oliver, an academic nutritionist, and a former food lobbyist on the topic of what ails the American school lunch program and what changes could be made to start improvement. While viewing the episode, students should be keeping in mind their stakeholders chart and writing in any additional information that is presented in the newscast. A short discussion of additions to the chart may follow the viewing.

At this point in the lesson, a comparison chart of how school lunches are currently regulated (2012) and past regulation can be brought out for perusal. Students should note which stakeholders benefit the most from the changes in regulation. Is there a shift in power, and if so, what do they think contributed to this change. How did the arguments presented in the newscast “Food Fight” play out in these changes in regulation, if at all? Are there any ambiguities in the new regulations that could be exploited by any of the stakeholders? These questions could be addressed directly in class or reserved for homework essays.

Survey of School Lunches

The objective of this lesson is to have the students create their own data that tracks the effectiveness of regulation in their own environment. Any disappointments in the findings could then be channeled into a civic learning project where the class creates an action plan for spurring change in their school, hopefully empowering these future citizens to be agents of change. If the data supports fidelity to the new regulations, the

empowerment happens in learning that faith in the political process can produce positive results for the community.

As a pre-class, have students share their answers to the take-home essays on laws v. regulations. Then, students will create a checklist of the current (2012) regulations for the school lunch program in their school. They will employ this checklist in an observational survey of the same lunch period (not their own, since they will be collecting data with little time to eat) over the course of the week. The data of this survey should reflect *offerings* of the school lunch line, not what is consumed or taken by students (as the regulations only pertain to offerings). While some students are conducting the observational survey, other students can be distributing questionnaires to the students eating the lunches (optional). The questionnaires can reflect what choices students made based on the offerings, what foods were avoided (due to taste/looks), and what students actually consumed (as opposed to what they took). The questionnaires should also ask what supplemental foods (vending items, item brought from home or bought on the way to school) were added to each student's lunch.

At the end of the week, students should tally their findings from the observational study. The observations must last a week because the regulations are based on a week's worth of offerings. Once the data has been tallied, students should rate the school's effectiveness as meeting the requirements of the new regulations. If the questionnaires were employed as well, students should compare the consumed lunches of students with the regulations and decide whether the regulations actually make a difference in the health and habits of the students they target.

A final discussion to wrap up the unit could have students rate their faith in the legislative process and whether or not they would be likely to participate as active and informed citizens by voting, running for office, becoming activists/lobbyists, etc. The discussion should be followed by a capstone essay where students would rate their experience with the unit and whether or not it affected their likelihood of participating in the political process in the future. They should be required to give specific examples from the unit to support their feelings and encouraged to make suggestions as to what would make them more likely to actively participate in the legislative/regulatory process.

Annotated Bibliography/Resources

Teacher Bibliography

Levine, Susan. *School Lunch Politics: the Surprising History of America's Favorite Welfare Program*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008. Print.

This book gives a history of the nutritional science behind the foundation of school lunch programs and also the evolution of nutritional standards.

Nestle, Marion. *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. Print.

This book provides insight into lobbying and nutrition standards, food advertisements to children, and how science and politics help and hinder each other.

Nixon, Ron. "New Rules for School Meals Aim at Reducing Obesity." *New York Times* 25 Jan 2012, n. pag. Web. 28 Feb. 2012.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/26/us/politics/new-school-lunch-rules-aimed-at-reducing-obesity.html?_r=1>.

This news article provides a link between government lobbying, scientific evidence, and policy creation for the school lunch program.

Sandler, Jen. "Reframing the Politics of Urban Feeding in U.S. Public Schools: Parents, Programs, Activists, and the State." *School Food Politics: The Complex Ecology of Hunger and Feeding in Schools Around the World*. Eds. Robert, Sarah A. and Marcus B. Weaver-Hightower. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2011. Pp 25-45.

This chapter looks at a specific instance of implementing changes in feeding policies that are largely left to corporations and leave out the interests of those being fed – the urban poor without appropriate voice or recourse.

Stallings, Virginia A., and Ann L. Yaktine, Eds. *Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way Toward Healthier Youth*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2007. Print.

This book, published by an association given a US Congressional charter, contains recommendations for improving the nutrition of school lunch programs, as well as competitive food sources within schools (vending machines, fundraisers, etc.). There is a table in the back on the current requirements at state levels for nutrition standards of school lunch programs.

Stallings, Virginia A., and Christine L. Taylor, Eds. *Nutrition Standards and Meal Requirements for National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs: Phase I. Proposed Approach for Recommending Revisions*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2008. Print.

This book, a revision of the above source from a year later, contains concrete tables with nutritional standards and how these deviate from recommendations being made to ensure future healthfulness of the school lunch program.

Student Bibliography

Donvan, John, anchor. "Food Fight." Correspondent, Sue Ellicott. *Nightline*. ABC News: 30 Sep 2005. DVD.

This DVD contains a news report on Jamie Oliver’s school lunch food revolution in England as well as a panel discussion between the anchor, Oliver, Marion Nestle (a professor on food politics), and Gene Grabowski (a grocery lobby executive). The discussion is about the role of governments in school lunch policy.

McCall, David, prod. “I’m Just a Bill.” *School House Rock*. Writ. Dave Frishberg. Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 1975. Film.

This episode of the beloved children’s program from the 1970s is a surprisingly detailed treatment of how a bill becomes a law in the national legislature in America.

U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs: Comparison of Current and New Regulatory Requirements*. January 2012. Web 28 Feb 2012.

<<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/comparison.pdf>>.

The chart gives current (2012) nutrition standards for the school lunch program. This can be used in comparison to both “Stallings” citations above.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005*. 6th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2005. Web 28 Feb 2012

<<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/>>

This website contains a document with guidelines for Americans aged 2 and older on their nutritional intakes and is the basis for creating government food programs such as school lunches.

Classroom Materials

Students will use school lunch periods to survey their classmates and collect data on the implementation of school lunch regulations. Also, access to a DVD player and television or projector will be required.

Appendices

Pennsylvania State Academic Standards Met By This Unit

Civics and Government Standards

5.1.A – Purpose of Government

5.1.I – Sources, Purposes, and Functions of Law

5.3.A – Structure, Organization, and Operation of Governments

5.3.C – How a Bill Becomes a Law

5.3.D – Services Performed by Governments

5.3.H – Impact of Interest Groups on Government

5.3.J – Influence of the Media

Health, Safety, and Physical Education Standards

10.2.B – Health Information and Consumer Choices

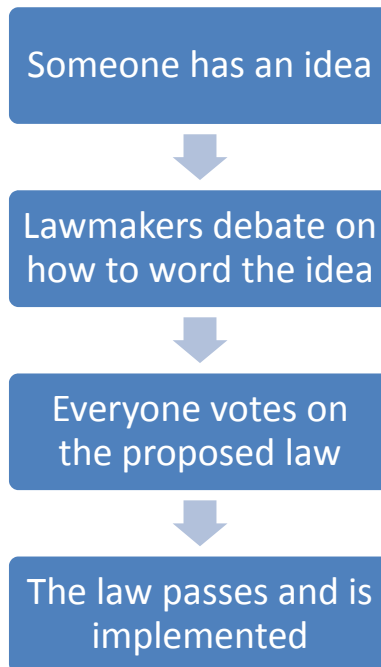
10.2.C – Health Information and the Media

Family and Consumer Sciences

11.3.C – Nutrient Analysis

11.3.D – Nutrition and Health

Worksheet One – “How a Bill Becomes a Law” Simplified Flowchart



Worksheet Two – “Roles in Legislative Regulation” Chart

Stakeholders	Agents of the Stakeholders	Bias	Credentials	Sources of Information/ Expertise	Sources of Funding
Parents	Legislators, Activists	Pay taxes to support program; concerned with well-being of children	They are the parents of children who attend schools	Years of parenting, some may have medical backgrounds based on employment	Self
Students					
School Administrators					
Cafeteria Workers					
Food Vendors					
Farmers					

ⁱ Stallings 2007.

ⁱⁱ Nestle, 96.

ⁱⁱⁱ Nestle, 95.

^{iv} Stallings 2007, 13.

^v Stallings 2007, 13.

^{vi} Sandler, 26.

^{vii} Nixon.

^{viii} Sandler, 25.