

Tennessee Secretary of State

Blue Book Lesson Plans

The Legal, Fiscal, and Operational Relationship between State and Local Government

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Grade Level: High School, U.S. Government and Civics

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For additional lesson plans, click [here](#).



There are a limited number of hard copies of Blue Books available. To see about ordering a set for your classroom, please contact the Secretary of State's office at (615) 741-2819 or one of your local legislators. The online version of the Blue Book is also available [here](#).

Introduction:

Students will complete this lesson and be able to compare and contrast the workings of state and local government through the lens of the legal, fiscal and operational relationships. Students will see how these relationships and differing structures impact Tennesseans. The lesson can be adaptable to any county or city.

Guiding Questions:

- How does the role of the state and local government differ as it relates to laws, fiscal responsibilities, and day-to-day operations?
- How does state and local government impact Tennesseans?

Learning Objectives: In the course of the lesson, students will...

- Identify state and local laws and their influence on its citizens.
- Explain the operational structures in state and local governments.
- Critique the impact of fiscal responsibility in state and local governments on its citizens.

Curriculum Standards:

GC.58 - Compare and contrast the legal, fiscal, and operational relationship between the state and local governments in Tennessee. (E, P, TN)

Materials Needed:

- 1) Internet access for students
- 2) *Tennessee Blue Book* (PDFs provided)
 - [pgs. viii – ix, graphic organizer for state government](#)
 - [pgs. 687-710, Constitution of the State of Tennessee](#)
- 3) Copies of interactive handout (attached)
- 4) Optional: copies of scavenger hunt handout (attached)

Background:

- Familiarize yourself with the websites used in this lesson plan, especially your local government's website.
- Go through the interactive handout and scavenger hunt to make sure that all of the information can be found. If some of the information does not apply to your local government or cannot be found, you can note that to the students before beginning the lesson plan.

Lesson Activities:

Lesson Activity 1

This activity will have the students create their own flow chart on their local government and compare the structure to state government.

- 1) Pass out copies of the flow chart on state government from the *Tennessee Blue Book*. Let the students observe. Have the students look up their local city/county government website. Have the students create a flow chart on local government using the *Tennessee Blue Book* chart as a template. Some helpful links to find local city/county government websites are below:
 - [CTAS – County Websites](#)
 - [MTAS – City Websites](#)

- 2) Pass out the interactive handout. Have students fill in the chart at the top comparing the similarities and differences in structures between their local government and the state government. Ask students to share their findings with the class.

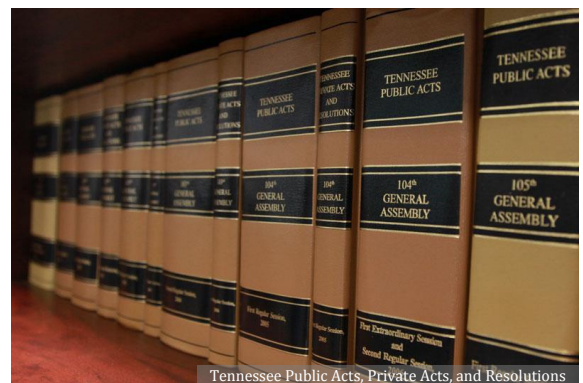
Lesson Activity 2

Students in this activity will explore different state and local government websites to see the legal, fiscal, and operational relationships.

State Government

Legal

- 1) Have students look at the Tennessee Constitution – a copy can be found [here](#).
 - What does the Constitution say about the relationship between state and local government?
 - Some examples to look at:
 - Article II, Section 29
 - Article VII, Section 1
 - Article X, Sections 4 and 5
 - Article XI, Sections 9 and 17
- 2) Have students look at the Tennessee Code regarding education. Go to www.tn.gov and click on **“Government.”** Click on **“Tennessee Code & Revenue Rules”** then click on **“Tennessee Code Annotated.”**
 - Have students look up **T.C.A. 49-1-102.**
 - According to that statute, what is the relationship between state and local government regarding education?
- 3) Ask the students: Can you think of any other examples of areas where state government has legal authority compared to local government? (examples might include the court system, public acts vs. private acts, schools, elections, etc.)



Fiscal

- 1) Have students look up www.comptroller.tn.gov
- 2) Based on the duties of the Comptroller's office, what can you determine about the fiscal relationship between state and local government?

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- 3) Have students look up the state budget. Go to www.tn.gov. In the search bar at the top of the page, search “**budget information**” and go to “**Budget Information.**” Click on “**Current Budget Publications**” and view the most recent budget.
- 4) How much of the state budget is given to cities and counties?

Operational

- 1) Go to the Department of Education’s website (tn.gov/education)
- 2) Find two examples of how the department interacts with local governments, specifically LEAs (local education agency)
- 3) (Feel free to choose another area of government to analyze.)

Local Government

Have students find the official website for your local government. If you can’t find the website, there are resources such as CTAS ([County Technical Assistance Service](#)) or MTAS ([Municipal Technical Advisory Service](#)) to help you find the website depending on where your school is located.

Legal

- 1) Find your city charter or governing documents for your local government.
- 2) How was your city/county established?
- 3) Find some examples of local ordinances that were recently passed by your local legislative body. What do they say about the differing roles of state and local government?

Fiscal

- 1) Find your city/county budget.
- 2) How much of the budget came from the state government? The federal government?

Operational

- 1) Find your local school board.
- 2) What are their duties? How are local schools held accountable to the state?

Extended Assignment:

This assignment could be completed in class or as homework. Give students the scavenger hunt worksheet for both the state and local government websites. Have students answer the questions to help them research how government works on their behalf. The worksheet may need to be adjusted depending on the structure and information available from your local government's website.

Option for extension: Invite state legislators or local elected officials to come speak to the classroom about their role in government.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Interactive Handout: Comparing State and Local Government

Lesson: Relationships between State and Local Governments-Legal, Fiscal, Operational

Structures of State and Local Government

Using the flow chart from the *Tennessee Blue Book* on state government and the flow chart you created for your local government, fill in the chart below comparing the structures between the two.

Similarities	Differences

Using www.tn.gov, fill in examples of the legal, fiscal and operational relationship between state and local government.

LEGAL

What does the Tennessee Constitution say about the relationship between state and local government?

According to T.C.A. 49-1-102, what is the relationship between state and local government regarding education?

Other examples?

FISCAL

Based on the duties of the Comptroller's office, what can you determine about the fiscal relationship between state and local government?

How much of the state budget was given to cities and counties? _____

OPERATIONAL – How does the Dept. of Education work with local governments?

Using your local government's website, explore the fiscal, legal, and operational relationship between state and local government.

LEGAL – Find your city charter or government documents.

How was your city/county established? _____

Give examples of local ordinances that were recently passed by your local legislative body.

What do they say about the differing roles of state and local government?

FISCAL – Find your city/county budget.

How much of the budget came from the state government? _____

How much of the budget came from the federal government? _____

OPERATIONAL – Find your local school board.

What are their duties? How are local schools held accountable to the state?

Writing Exercise

Write a brief narrative comparing and contrasting the state and local government functions legally, fiscally and operationally. Also, include how these differences impact the welfare of its citizens. You may use this worksheet, class discussion and examples from your experience as evidence in your narrative.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Scavenger Hunt

Lesson: Legal, Fiscal, and Operational Relationships between State and Local Government

Instructions: Answer the following questions by researching the websites for state and local governments. Make sure to read each question and answer completely. All answers should be written on a separate sheet of paper.

State Government:

Helpful sites: www.tn.gov , www.capitol.tn.gov , www.sos.tn.gov

1. Who is the current governor?
2. What is his mission for the state of Tennessee?
3. Where is the governor's office? (Give the address)
4. Find a bill that passed in the most recent legislative session of the General Assembly. List the bill number in the House and Senate.
5. Summarize the bill. What is its purpose and how does it affect Tennesseans?
6. Who is your U.S. Representative? Who are your U.S. Senators?
7. Who is your state representative? State senator?
8. What political party do they each belong to?
9. When did the last legislative session begin? When did it end (could be ongoing)?
10. List two examples of departments or state agencies under the executive branch. What do they do?
11. How do those departments impact your life every day?
12. How many departments are there in state government?
13. How many employees work in state government?
14. What was the total state budget last year?
15. Select two items from the state budget. How much did they cost the state? What would happen if these items were cut from the budget?

Local Government

1. Who is the current mayor or county executive?
2. What is his or her mission statement for the city?
3. Where is his or her office located?
4. Find two bills/resolutions/ordinances passed by the local legislative body. Summarize them and how they impact constituents.
5. How many members make up the local legislative body (county commission, metro council, etc.)?
6. Who represents you on the local legislative body? (Who are your commissioners or councilmen?)

7. Find two other elected positions in your local government (sheriff, property assessor, district attorney). What do they do?
8. Name two departments or divisions within your local government. Explain what they do.
9. How do you see those departments/divisions impacting your life every day?
10. What was the total budget for your local government last year?
11. Select two items from the budget. How much did they cost? What would happen if these items were cut from the budget?
12. How many employees work for the local government?