

## LESSON PLAN

### Public Policy: A Crash Course in Real Time

#### Overview

In this lesson, students review what public policy is and then apply the GRADE policy analysis tool to a state-level policy issued in Ohio early in the COVID-19 pandemic. In place of a traditional reading of a case study, students do a mini video case study by viewing short clips from Gov. Mike DeWine's (R-OH) daily press briefing from March 15. After they have gone through the steps of analyzing and evaluating the policy with GRADE, students discuss their views on similar policies and whether the federal government should mandate all states to issue a stay-at-home order.

This distance-learning lesson is adapted from two lessons in Constitutional Rights Foundation's Civic Action Project (CAP) curriculum: [Lesson 2: Introducing Public Policy](#) and [Lesson 4: Introducing Policy Analysis](#). These full lesson plans are available to teachers with their [free registration](#) for CAP.

#### Objectives

Students will:

- Define public policy and consider examples of it at different levels of government during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Analyze and evaluate Ohio's March 15 order to close bars and restaurants except for takeout.

#### Materials

- Google Slides presentation -- [Public Policy: A Crash Course in Real Time](#) (video clips included)
- Student handout -- [GRADE Policy Analysis Tool](#)
- Additional resource -- [video of April 6, 2020 national live webinar](#) on this lesson (for assignment of asynchronous "lesson")

#### Procedure

*Note to teachers: all steps of this lesson plan are laid out in the Google Slides presentation and implemented in the recorded webinar. What follows here is a quick, step-by-step guide; under each heading are the suggested talking points, almost all of which also appear verbatim in the Notes section of the slide listed.*

## I. Review definition of public policy -- what it is, and what it isn't (Slide 2)

- Here we're talking about govt in its many parts and at different levels, so things like: legislatures AND executives (governors, mayors) AND bureaucracies (agencies that develop and enforce regulations; e.g. could include state depts of health, education, etc.)
- For example, almost every state government has adopted the public policy of banning texting while driving. This public policy addresses the problem of people causing car accidents because they're distracted.
- Policies are not the same thing as goals. "People should eat healthy" is a goal, not a policy. Policies are the means of achieving goals. Many states have passed laws requiring restaurants to publish the calorie count of items on their menus; these are policies.
- When public policies go into effect, they can deeply affect people's lives. The current COVID-19 pandemic is highlighting this to all of us on a daily basis. Due to the implementation of public policies, people can gain or lose significant things, such as jobs, services, and equal treatment.
- In this quick crash course on policy making and analysis today, we're going to take a closer look at some recent policy decisions in the state of Ohio to see a very clear illustration of how this is happening in real time.

## II. Examples of policies issued during the current pandemic (Slide 3)

- First, let's look at just a few examples of some policies that have been adopted at the local, state, and federal levels & by private companies try to respond to and confront the COVID-19 pandemic.
- What policies have been created in your community in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

## III. Policy making is happening at "warp speed" (Slide 4)

- Under normal circumstances, policy makers -- mayors, city councils, boards of supervisors, governors, members of Congress, and even the president -- *usually* have TIME to hash out ideas, solutions, and decisions. And this is really important because of what we said before about how policies can have a huge impact on people's lives.
- But these days, leaders and decision makers across the country are having to make really major decisions more like this.

## IV. Importance of policy analysis (Slide 5)

- Because even in -- or especially in -- a crisis, it is still really important for people to be able to be informed about, assess, and weigh in on policy.
- And we're going to analyze policy using something called GRADE, an analysis tool developed by CRF as part of its [Civic Action Project curriculum](#).

## V. Introducing GRADE Policy Analysis Tool (Slide 6)

- This is how we're going to analyze the policy we'll be looking at today. We'll be filling this out together once we see the clips that are our "case study."
- Review each item on the handout with students to orient them to the analysis task.

## VI. The policy in question (Slide 7)

- Read policy together with students from the quote on the slide to clarify the policy they'll be analyzing today, reiterating that it's a state-level policy (as opposed to local or federal).

## VII. Complete the first three boxes of the GRADE handout (Slide 8)

- Tell students you will be completing the rest once you hear the video "case study."

## VIII. Set up for pen-and-paper note taking in case students don't have Google Doc or online capability (Slide 9)

- Let students know about this alternative for note-taking and completing the GRADE handout.

## IX. Two video clips (a.k.a. Video "case study," Slides 10-11)

- Show students two excerpts from Governor Mike DeWine's daily press briefing from March 15, 2020. You can find links to the full recording [here](#) or [here](#).
- Clip 1: remarks from the governor, including about the suffering he knows his policy will cause (6:48-8:56).
- Clip 2: remarks from Director of Ohio Department of Health, Dr. Amy Acton and Lt. Governor Jon Husted, including numerous details about upcoming policy decisions, stakeholders who were consulted as the policy was developed, and policies that will be put into effect to mitigate the consequences of the restaurant closures (24:04-28:22).

## X. Complete policy analysis using GRADE (Slide 12)

- Walk students through the steps of GRADE, either using the handout, or a shared Google Doc, or whatever method/platform is feasible for you and for them.

## XI. Wrap-up/synthesis questions (Slide 13)

- Discuss the analysis with students, and use the suggested questions (below) to help them connect to their own community, as well as to bigger questions about federalism.
- How did Dr. Acton's remarks help to clarify any aspects of this policy?

- What did Lt. Gov. Husted announce to address problems that would be created by the policy of ordering bars and restaurants to close except for takeout? [answer: more policy changes!!]
- How does the Ohio policy from 3/15 compare to what's been done in your state?
- Are there policies in your state/community that you agree with? Are there ones that you disagree with?
- Are there other policies that you think should be implemented in your state/community?
- Should all states have a stay-at-home order? Should the federal government order it for all states? Why or why not?

## XII. Give students the last word (Slide 14)

- If you don't already have one, you can set up a free account at [PollEverywhere.com](https://www.PollEverywhere.com) that will let your students respond to a question by text message (or online). There are lots of great options there for interactive questions and polls.