

Welcome

Welcome to “Closest to the People: Teaching Local Government in the Civics Classroom,” a study of local government in Fairfax County, Virginia. Designed for the county’s middle school civics teachers, the project is an initiative of the Fairfax County Government in cooperation with the Fairfax County Public Schools.

“Closest to the People” is intended to supplement any current materials you may already be using to teach local government. It also provides additional resources to which you can turn in an effort to create a more meaningful learning experience for the young citizens and future leaders of our county. The lesson plans and materials enclosed include ideas and resources for teaching a number of the standards from both the Virginia Standards of Learning and the Fairfax County Program of Studies. These materials do not constitute new material which must be taught in your classroom, but rather a new approach to covering those standards which deal with local government.

While traditionally, more time has been spent in the classroom on studying policy and decision making at the federal and state levels, it is the aim of this unit to help teachers provide rich learning experiences for students by exploring the connections that local government has with their daily activities. Fostering a greater sense of community is a secondary goal of this unit in which students will familiarize themselves with numerous contact points, agencies, and service opportunities that will enable them to actively participate in Fairfax County.

How many times has the question, “But what does this have to do with me?” echoed in the middle school classroom? “Closest to the People” will help you vividly answer that question for your students.