

Statewide Elected Officials: Superintendent of Public Instruction

Civics and Government: Middle and High School

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

In this lesson, students will learn about the roles and responsibilities of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. By focusing on how the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) works with the state's public school districts and six state-tribal education compact schools, students will understand how the office funds the public school system for the betterment of all Washingtonians.

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the role and responsibilities of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
2. Explain how education is the paramount duty of the state
3. Discern the importance of local levies for school funding

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Teach with TVW's Statewide Electeds Video: [Superintendent of Public Instruction](#)
- [Student Notebook](#)
- Access to [OSPI websiteExecutive Branch Explained - WA Superintendent of Public Instruction](#)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are the roles and responsibilities of the Superintendent of Public Instruction?
- To what extent does OSPI have control over local schools?
- How are public schools funded?

ACTIVITY

1. **Class Opener (5 minutes):**
 - Individual writing/brainstorming:
 - How do public schools get their funding?

- Who controls the curriculum for public schools?
- How much power does the State government have over local public schools?

2. **Whole Class Discussion (5 minutes):**

- Explain to students that today they will be learning about the Statewide elected office, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and what they do and do not control in the local public school system.
- Give an example of a piece of your curriculum that is mandated by the state vs. a piece of your curriculum that is decided by your local school board.
- Ask students if they agree with this division of power. Why or why not?

3. **Student Activity (15 minutes):**

- Watch video on [Superintendent of Public Instruction](#). While students watch the video, have them fill out column 2. After watching the video, pair students up to fill out column 3.

1. Responsibility	2. Duties (Examples from Video)	3. Why is this Important to Washingtonians?
In charge of public instruction in WA		
Oversees curriculum		
Ensures that the state is following Article 9 of the State Constitution		
Provides funding for schools		

4. **End of Lesson Task (10 minutes):**

- Four Corners Debate
 - 3 minutes: have students brainstorm on this statement.

- **Schools should only use money directly from the state government to fund schools.**

- 1 min: Ask students to circle on their worksheet whether they Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.
- 1 min: Ask students to stand in the corner that corresponds to their opinion.
- 5 min: Have one student from each group share why they chose that corner. Allow students to change their opinion as they hear arguments that sway them.

5. **Further Research Opportunities (optional):**

- Have students visit the [Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Website](#) to answer the question: How does the Superintendent of Public Instruction affect your daily life?
- In a short one page essay, a creative OnePager, or a short presentation, have students use one of the examples below to explain why this role is important in Washington State.
 - [Washington State Report Card](#): Each year OSPI provides information on how all schools in Washington are performing. Use this link to see how your school ranks in comparison to the other schools in the State. Are there aspects of your school that you'd like to see incorporated into the ranking?
 - [AI in schools](#): Artificial Intelligence is a hot button topic these days. What are the guidelines that OSPI is releasing about AI use in schools? How will these guidelines affect the work you do in school?
 - [Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State](#): In 2005 the State Legislature mandated that Tribal History and Culture must be taught in Washington schools. This curriculum should be taught in one of three ways: inquiry based, place based, or integrated. Take a look at the requirements from OSPI and evaluate your Social Studies curriculum. How much tribal history and culture have you been taught? How involved should OSPI be in mandating this curriculum in local schools?
 - [Child Nutrition](#): How does OSPI use its funding to help child nutrition in our state? Why do you think child nutrition is part of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction?