

## 2017 Capitol Classroom Program Guidelines

Thank you for participating in Capitol Classroom! Below are guidelines for the 2017 program. For more information and classroom webpages, go to [www.teachwithtvw.org](http://www.teachwithtvw.org)

For questions about the 2017 program, please contact David Johnson, TVW's Director of Education, at [davidj@tvw.org](mailto:davidj@tvw.org)

### **Program Overview:**

In Capitol Classroom each participating classroom is assigned a professional lobbyist who has volunteered to represent a classroom during the legislative session as if they were one of their clients. Working with their lobbyist, each class chooses a bill to either support or oppose.

The heart of the program is a series of video conferences between the lobbyists in TVW's studio in Olympia and the classroom. The sessions are driven by students, who take turns asking the lobbyist questions about their bill, the legislative process in general, or the larger issues at play in Olympia. These connections offer an inside, in-depth look at how legislation moves through the Legislature, and describe to students how they can impact the process. They also offer an opportunity for students to provide input for their lobbyists, so they can lobby on their behalf at the state capital. Between video conferences, students and lobbyists keep in touch via email and discuss other ways to impact the process.

### **Goal:**

The goal of Capitol Classroom is for students to learn how the legislative process “really works,” by experiencing it with a professional lobbyist. The hope is that students will understand how to effectively engage with the process and know how make their voices heard in the future.

### **Dates:**

In December 2016 TVW will put each class in touch with their lobbyist volunteer via email.

Video connections begin in early January 2017.

The 2017 regular legislative session runs 105 days, beginning January 9th and ending on or by April 23rd, 2017.

### **Background Information:**

With Capitol Classroom students in mind, TVW has prepared a series of short civic ed video modules, designed to teach key aspects of the legislative process. These modules are available at Teach With TVW.org, and through the links below. We recommend that each class watch the videos before the program begins, returning to them as the program progresses to reinforce key information.

WA Legislative Branch:

<http://www.teachwithtvw.org/was-legislative-branch/>

How a Bill Becomes a Law in WA:

<http://www.teachwithtw.org/how-a-bill-becomes-a-law-in-wa/>

Participating in the Legislative Process:

<http://www.teachwithtw.org/participating-in-the-legislative-process/>

Legislative Committees:

<http://www.teachwithtw.org/legislative-committees/>

Lobbyists in WA:

<http://www.teachwithtw.org/lobbyists-in-wa/>

For further information, classes can also explore the legislative information links found on this page:

<http://www.teachwithtw.org/legislative-information/>

### **Choosing a Bill:**

Once each class is in touch with their volunteer lobbyist, the process of choosing a bill to support or oppose can begin.

We recommend that each class come up with a list of bill topics they are interested in following and pass that list to their lobbyist volunteer. The lobbyist can hopefully match those topics with bills they might have “legs” during the legislative session (i.e., make it through a significant portion of the process.)

The lobbyist volunteer will often have suggestions for bill topics, which the class may choose to follow.

Before the session starts, classes and lobbyists can check the list of prefiled bills on the bill information page at [leg.wa.gov](http://leg.wa.gov):

<http://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/>

In the end each class will need to also decide their position on the bill—whether they support it or oppose it.

We also highly recommend that each class also choose back up topics and bills, in the likely event that the primary bill stalls in the process.

### **Class Webpage:**

TVW will create a webpage for each class in the program. There they will find links to their bill on [leg.wa.gov](http://leg.wa.gov), all archived video connections with the lobbyist. Classes will be expected to track their bill with [leg.wa.gov](http://leg.wa.gov) and watch bill hearings on [tw.org](http://tw.org). Refer to the link below for instructions on finding legislative video:

<http://www.teachwithtw.org/finding-legislative-video-on-tw/>

**Video Conferencing System:**

Capitol Classroom uses Google Hangouts for video connections. Teachers will need to make sure that Google video is allowed through their school's firewall.

Each class will need a Google account to access Google Hangouts. If your class doesn't have a Google account, TVW can provide one.

**Equipment:**

If needed, TVW can provide classes with a web camera and USB microphone for the video connections. Please let us know as soon as possible if you will need equipment for your classroom.

Participating classes will need to use their classroom computer, projector or smart board, speakers and wired internet connection (no wireless).

Before the regular connections begin TVW will set up a short test with each class to make sure the equipment works and troubleshoot any problems.

**Classroom Equipment Setup:**

Your class webcam should show students in background, with a desk or table close to the front of the webcam, so students can come up and ask questions. Your class microphone needs to be positioned to prevent feedback from classroom speakers.

**Video Connection Content:**

TVW will schedule five 30-minute video conferences between each class and their lobbyist.

These sessions are informal, and driven mostly by student questions. For every session, please have students prepare 2-3 questions each for their lobbyist. Questions can be about the bill, the legislative processes in general, or the issues at play in Olympia. **We request that teachers set up chairs in front of the webcam, so students come, one or two at a time, to ask their questions.**

While the sessions are informal, below is a loose suggested structure for the connections:

- Lobbyist update about the bill and legislative session in general (5 min)
- Discussion of suggested legislative topic (7 min)
- Student questions and lobbyist answers (15 min)
- Suggested action for next connection (3 min)

The suggested legislative topics for each connection are:

Connection 1—Introductions, what is a lobbyist and what do they do, differences between lobbying on the state and federal levels, the PDC, discussion of possible bill topics

Connection 2—How bills are drafted and introduced, what are legislative committees and how they work, the differences between fiscal and policy committees, fiscal notes, cut off schedules

Connection 3—WA Legislature makeup, WA senators and representatives, long and short sessions, the biennium, ways to influence the legislative process

Connection 4—Rules committee, floor debates and voting, Governor's action on legislation

Connection 5—State budget process, special sessions

There may be opportunities for additional guests to join a connection with the lobbyist (i.e. a legislator, policy expert, etc.). We will look for these opportunities and pursue them if they arise.

**Additional Classroom Work:**

Classes will need to do additional work between video sessions, including:

- Following your bill's progress on leg.wa.gov
- Watching any TVW video (hearings, etc.) related to your bill
- Researching bill background and information as needed
- Preparing written testimony for your lobbyist as needed
- Emailing legislators as needed to support or oppose your bill
- Completing other tasks assigned by your lobbyist volunteer

**Teach With TVW Facebook and Twitter Pages:**

Teach With TVW has created Facebook and Twitter pages. We recommend that teachers Like and Follow them for updates and to share information about the program.

[www.facebook.com/TeachWithTVW](http://www.facebook.com/TeachWithTVW)

<https://twitter.com/TeachWithTVW>

**Certificates:**

TVW can create certificates of completion for each participating student. Let us know if you'd like certificates for your class.

**Surveys:**

TVW may ask participating teachers and students to complete a survey about the program. Survey responses help us improve the program each year.

Thank you again, and please let us know if you have any questions about the program. You can send them to [davidj@twv.org](mailto:davidj@twv.org). We look forward to working with you in 2017!