The following instructional plan is part of a GaDOE collection of Unit Frameworks, Performance Tasks, examples of Student Work, and Teacher Commentary for the Eighth grade social studies course.

## Eighth Grade Unit 11: “State and Local Government”

### Elaborated Unit Focus

This unit will focus on state and local governance, and its interaction with its citizens. The student will understand that rule of law gives constitutional governments a structure which outlines the rights and responsibilities/limitations of the government to its citizens and citizens to the government. They will analyze the distribution of powers within our government and understand that local governments exist within the framework of our state and federal government.

### Standards/Elements

#### Civics/Government:

**SS8CG2:** The student will analyze the role of the legislative branch in Georgia state government.

a. Explain the qualifications, term, election, and duties of members of the General Assembly.

b. Describe the organization of the General Assembly, with emphasis on leadership and the committee system.

c. Evaluate how the legislative branch fulfills its role as the lawmaking body of the state of Georgia.

**SS8CG3:** The student will analyze the role of the executive branch in Georgia state government.

a. Explain the qualifications, term, election, and duties of the governor and lieutenant governor.

b. Describe the organization of the executive branch, with emphasis on major policy areas of state programs.

**SS8CG4:** The student will analyze the role of the judicial branch in Georgia state government.

a. Explain the structure of the court system in Georgia, to include trial and appellate procedures, and how judges are selected.

b. Explain the difference between criminal law and civil law.

**SS8CG5:** The student will analyze the role of local governments in the state of Georgia.

a. Explain the origins, functions, purposes, and differences of county and city governments in Georgia.

b. Compare and contrast the weak mayor-council, the strong mayor-council, and the council-manager forms of city government.

c. Describe the functions of special-purpose governments.

#### Economics:

**SS8E4:** The student will identify revenue sources and services provided by state and local governments.

a. Trace sources of state revenue such as sales taxes, federal grants, personal income taxes, and property taxes.

b. Explain the distribution of state revenue to provide services.

c. Evaluate how choices are made given the limited revenues of state and local governments.
Enduring Understandings/Essential Questions

Governance: The student will understand that as a society increases in complexity and interacts with other societies, the complexity of the government also increases.

- What are the qualifications, duties, and terms of office for members of the Georgia General Assembly? (CG2a)
- How is the Georgia General Assembly structured? (CG2b)
- How does the legislative branch fulfill its role as the lawmaking body for the state of Georgia? (CG2c)
- What are the differences in functions and purposes of city and county governments in Georgia? (CG5a)
- How are the three major forms of Georgia’s city governments alike and how are they different? (CG5b)
- What are the functions of special purpose governments? (CG5c)

Rule of Law: The student will understand that in a democracy, rule of law influences the behavior of citizens, establishes procedures for making policies, and limits the power of government.

- How do Georgia citizens financially support the state government? (E4a)
- How is state and local revenue distributed to the citizens of Georgia and how are the choices made before distributing these revenues? (E4b,c)

Distribution of Power: The student will understand that distribution of power in government is a product of existing documents and laws combined with contemporary values and beliefs.

- What are the roles or functions of each of the branches and levels of government? (CG2, CG3, CG4)
- What are the qualifications and duties of the legislative branch? (CG2a)
- What is the structure of the legislative branch of government? (CG2b)
- What are the qualifications, duties, and terms of office of the executive branch of Georgia government? (CG3a)
- What is the structure of the executive branch of government? (CG3b)
- What is the structure of the judicial branch of Georgia government? (CG4a)
- What is the difference between a criminal law and a civil law? (CG4b)

*NOTE: The balanced assessment plan included in this unit is presented as a series of suggested activities. It is not expected that the teacher complete all assessments for a successful unit.*
### Balanced Assessment Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Assessment</th>
<th>Standard/Element</th>
<th>Type of Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a class, select an issue being considered as a bill in the Georgia General Assembly. If you cannot find one, together develop an issue that might benefit from a bill regulating it. The entire class should be considering the same issue. Then, working within small groups, decide how the issue might be affected by the powers and practices of the three branches of our state government. Participate in a class discussion on the matter. Where your groups ideas similar to or different from other groups? If there were any differences, could each group support their reasoning? Conclude with a discussion on how the legislative branch fulfills its role as the lawmaking body for the state of Georgia. Write a capsule summary of this activity as your ticket out the door.</td>
<td>CG2 a,b,c, CG3 a,b CG4a</td>
<td>Dialogue, Constructed response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the vertical Venn Diagram, “City vs. County” (Appendix 1) compare city and county governments. Complete the activity by completing the following: “If I were to run for a position in either the city or county governments, I would prefer to serve in the __________ government because _______________________________________________________.</td>
<td>CG5a</td>
<td>Constructed response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a hierarchy chart, compare the three types of city government. (Appendix 3) Participate in a class discussion on the three types. Find out what type your city has.</td>
<td>CG5b</td>
<td>Constructed response, dialogue, informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After studying the services provided by different levels of government, consider the following: “If the state, cities, and counties must provide specific services to its citizens, then why might a city need to make a special purpose government?” Write a paragraph citing several different needs that could be fulfilled by a special purpose government. Be prepared to take part in a class discussion.</td>
<td>CG5, a,b,c</td>
<td>Constructed response, dialogue, informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete the chart, Criminal or Civil? B (Appendix 2) Then explain the difference between the two types of cases.</td>
<td>CG4b</td>
<td>Constructed response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show the structure of the Georgia court system. Begin at the top, with the Georgia Supreme Court, and progress downward to the lowest court. ( Appendix 4) List each court and describe what each does. Give an example of a case that would be presented in each court.</td>
<td>CG4a</td>
<td>Constructed response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Complete a multiple choice, true/false, matching, short answer, discussion test presented by your teacher.

Brainstorm government services you have benefited from during the past month. Label each service as local, federal, or state, and tell where the money for this service came from.

**Performance Task**

**Governance:** The student will understand that as a society increases in complexity and interacts with other societies, the complexity of the government also increases. (CG5b)

Your city has decided to investigate the possibility of changing its form of government. You are a concerned citizen and you want what is best for your town, but you know little about the various forms of city government. Being a good citizen, you decided to investigate the three major forms of city government (the mayor-council—both strong and weak mayors, and the council-manager) because you know that these are the three types being considered, and you want to know enough to speak at the open meeting scheduled to give citizens the chance to state their views on the possible change.

You will study the three forms and prepare a chart showing the similarities and differences between the three forms. While comparing and contrasting the three types, you should consider the number of positions or offices within each type, what type would work best in large cities and/or small towns, and the possible cost of running such a government. You must determine the best way to visually show this information and then prepare your visual presentation.

During your study, you learn which form your town already has. This enables you to synthesize the information and make a decision concerning the type of local government you think will be best for your city. You must write a speech stating your opinion and giving facts to support your decision. You may even decide that your city now has the best type of government for your location. If so, be prepared to defend keeping that type of government. When supporting your decision, you need to also address why you decided against the other two forms.

You are going to the open discussion meeting armed with your chart, your well-informed opinion, and a speech in support of your opinion.

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Map and Globe Skills: 1,3,4,5,8,11,12,14,15,16

Information Processing Skills: 1,3,4,5,8,11,12,14,15,16
*Note concerning rubrics:* Each performance task is accompanied by two rubrics. The first is designed to address content and understanding of the standards in terms of the enduring understandings. The second rubric focuses on the product of the performance task. This is where students are scored on items involving grammar, punctuation, spelling, creativity, presentation, etc. It is NOT intended that each rubric counts for 50% of the assessment. It is expected that the content rubric carry more emphasis when grading.

### Content Rubric for Performance Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Criteria</th>
<th>Standard Not Met</th>
<th>Meets Standard</th>
<th>Exceeds Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyzes the three types of city government.</td>
<td>Does not clearly explain the three types of city government.</td>
<td>Explains the basic structure of each type of government and offers logical support for which type would work best in a large city and in a small city.</td>
<td>In addition to meets standard, uses real, researched examples for the support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesizes knowledge of the three types of city governments by proposing the type that would work best in the local community.</td>
<td>Makes no direct connection between facts and examples from the unit and the local community.</td>
<td>Using several facts from the unit and local community, defends the use of one particular form of government in the local community.</td>
<td>Uses numerous facts and examples from the unit to defend the use of one particular form of government in the local community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Product Rubric for Performance Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Criteria</th>
<th>1 Below Expectation</th>
<th>2 Needs Improvement</th>
<th>3 Meets Expectation</th>
<th>4 Exceeds Expectation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students produce a product that is attractive.</td>
<td>Use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc., but these often distract from the presentation of content.</td>
<td>Makes use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc., but occasionally these detract from the presentation of content.</td>
<td>Makes good use of font, color, graphics, effects etc. to enhance the presentation.</td>
<td>Makes excellent use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students produce a product that is organized.</td>
<td>There was no clear or logical organizational structure, just lots of facts.</td>
<td>Content is logically organized for the most part.</td>
<td>Uses headings or bulleted lists to organize, but the overall organization of topics appears flawed.</td>
<td>Content is well organized using headings or bulleted lists to group related material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students produce a product that exhibits proper mechanics.</td>
<td>More than 4 errors are spelling or grammar.</td>
<td>Four misspellings and/or grammatical errors.</td>
<td>Three or fewer misspellings and/or grammatical errors.</td>
<td>No misspellings or grammatical errors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources for Unit

- www.legis.state.ga.us  Home page for the Georgia General Assembly.
- www.gavoyager.com  Fall of 2000, “The Georgia Supreme Court”
- www.ltgov.georgia.gov  Website for the lieutenant governor.
- www.gasupreme.us  Home page for the Georgia supreme court.
- www.georgia.gov  Provides online access to Georgia’s government.
- www.georgiacourts.org/courts/  Home page for Georgia’s judicial branch of government.
- www.gov.state.ga.us  Links to both state and federal government departments.

This unit was created by Faye Smith and Evie Stephens. The unit was approved by the Social Studies Advisory Council and the Georgia DOE Social Studies staff. This document was last updated on 11/16/09 by Shaun Owen (sowen@doe.k12.ga.us).
Appendix 1

**City vs. County**

**Directions:** Complete the following Venn Diagram. This will allow you to graphically see how city and county governments are alike and different. Then complete the state below the diagram.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Only characteristics of City Governments</th>
<th>Characteristics of both City and County governments</th>
<th>Only characteristics of County Governments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If I were to run for a position in either the city or county governments, I would prefer to serve in the __________________________ government because*
Appendix 2

Criminal or Civil

Directions: Indicate whether each of the following situations would be a criminal case or a civil case. Tell why you think that is the case.

1. Arson: Criminal or civil? Why: ________________________________

2. Divorce: Criminal or civil? Why: ________________________________

3. Mr. Jones’ tree falls on Mr. White’s house. Small property damage: Criminal or civil? Why: ________________________________

4. Kidnapping: Criminal or civil? Why: ________________________________

5. Failure to pay income tax: Criminal or civil? Why: ________________________________

6. Noisy dog: Criminal or civil? Why: ________________________________

7. Car theft: Criminal or civil? Why: ________________________________

8. Drug dealing: Criminal or civil? Why: ________________________________

9. Violation of a business contract: Criminal or civil? Why: ________________________________

10. Murder: Criminal or civil? Why: ________________________________

Now, in your own words, explain the difference between a criminal and a civil case:
Appendix 3

Three Types of City Government
Hierarchy Chart

**Directions:** Compare the three types of city governments by completing the chart. Be prepared to use the information to participate in a class discussion or any other activity your teacher asks of you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of City Government</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong Mayor-Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak Mayor-Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Georgia Department of Education
Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools
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### Appendix 4

**Georgia’s Court System:**

#### Appellate Courts:

**Supreme Court:**

#### Trial Courts:

**Superior Courts:**

- State [blank]
- [J blank]
- [P blank]
- [M blank]

**Municipal “City” Courts**