



THE DIGITAL DOZEN NEWSLETTER

12 Links on a Hot Topic Every Week of the School Year!
Walter McKenzie, Editor

October 6, 2006

Volume 3 - Issue 5

State Elections

Off-year elections are here once again, and while they don't offer the glitz and glamour of national elections they can offer unique insight into the political landscape.

First off, there's the look at how hot issues are playing themselves out in state elections. Fiscal issues, law and order, education, social concerns, foreign trade and international elections: different states and regions look at these topics through very different perspectives. Comparing how issues are playing out in your home state with other parts of the country is a fabulous exercise in free speech and the role of public opinion in the democratic process.

Then there's the consideration of midterm elections as a barometer of how the federal government is perceived by voters two years before the next presidential contest. If the incumbent has been successful in his administration and is popular among voters, many midterm candidates running under his or her party banner may be swept into office. On the other hand, if the present administration is not deemed popular or successful, the opposition party may enjoy midterm success, potentially causing a shift in power in the house and senate.

Finally there's the state races themselves, where governors and state legislators are elected to serve their citizens. These races are key, because they reflect the national political mood and serve as a precursor to our national elections in 2008. Also, governorships are a popular training ground for future presidential hopefuls. Chief executives at the state level are well-prepared to serve at the federal level. In fact, four of our last five presidents were former governors.

This week's issue of the D12 presents to you more than a dozen high-quality resources that cover the congress and state and local governments, 2006 election data, the process of legislation, the value of citizenship and the right to vote. There are lessons and materials that can help make your classroom come alive for the next month as the election cycle runs its course. Not having elections in your area? Not a problem! There's plenty of action across the nation for you and your students to check out!

Enjoy,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Walter'.



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<http://surfaquarium.com>

A – Best of the Web

TeenGov

<http://www.teengov.org/>



Middle School

High School

This site covers the three branches of the federal government as well as state governments with a particular focus on New York.

C-SPAN Campaign 2006

<http://www.campaignnetwork.org/>



Elementary

Middle School

High School

The unbiased cable service offers a wealth of information on 2006 races across the country, including video clips of ads.

Elections 2006

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/elec2006.html>



Elementary

Middle School

High School

Excellent materials developed by the University of Michigan so students can track state elections across the country.

Congress for Kids

<http://www.congressforkids.net/>



Elementary

Middle School

High School

The Dirksen Congressional Center offers this substantive treatment of the legislative branch for students.

Kids in the House

<http://clerkkids.house.gov/>



Elementary

Middle School

The Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives hosts this engaging site using the Center for Civic Education curriculum standards.



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B – Highly Recommended

State and Local Government on the Net

<http://www.statelocalgov.net/>



Elementary
Middle School
High School

HelloMetro sponsors this is frequently updated directory of links to government sponsored and controlled resources on the Internet.

National Conference of State Legislatures

<http://www.ncsl.org/>



Middle School
High School

This bipartisan organization serves the legislators of all 50 states; here it provides information and resources to the public.

National Governors Association

<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga>



Middle School
High School

Approaching 100 years of service, this organization's online presence is a treasure trove of information about our states' chief executives.

Fair Vote

<http://www.fairvote.org/>



Elementary
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FairVote promotes elections that promote voter turnout, fair representation, inclusive policy and meaningful choices through voter education.

Kids Voting USA

<http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/>



Elementary
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This project is dedicated to helping students to prepare to be educated, engaged voters through rich resources and classroom activities.



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C – Well Designed, But specialized

How Laws are Made

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/6-8/lawmaking/>



Elementary
Middle School
High School

Ben's Guide offers this step-by-step explanation of the legislative process tracking the International Dolphin Conservation Act.

Dumb Laws

<http://www.dumblaws.com/>



Elementary
Middle School
High School

Challenge your students to think about where and why laws are enacted! Be sure to screen these laws for age appropriateness.

Other Sites Worth Your Consideration:

Cast Your Vote!

<http://www.learner.org/exhibits/statistics/>

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

<http://www.publicwork.org/>

Contacting the Congress

<http://www.visi.com/juan/congress/>

Democracy Project

<http://pbskids.org/democracy/>

Kids Next Door

<http://www.hud.gov/kids/>

My Hero Project

<http://myhero.com/myhero/go/about/intro.html>

Polling Report 2006

<http://www.pollingreport.com/2006.htm>

Voices of Youth

<http://www.unicef.org/voy/>



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Summary Sheet:

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National Governors Association	http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga
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