

# Civics and Economics

## CE.7 Study Guide

### STANDARD CE.7A

#### -- STATE GOVERNMENT

The structure and powers of the state government.

*The form of government of the Commonwealth of Virginia is established by the Virginia Constitution.*

*Legislative, executive, and judicial powers are separated at the state level of government.*

The Virginia Constitution distributes power among the **legislative, executive, and judicial branches** of the state government.

The legislative branch is the **General Assembly**, a **bicameral legislature**—the **House of Delegates** and the **Virginia Senate**—that meets annually for a fixed number of days.

The executive power is exercised by the **governor**, who is elected for a **four-year term** of office. The governor appoints members of the cabinet, who oversee specific functions of government.

The **lieutenant governor** and the **attorney general** are executive branch officers who are elected for a four-year term of office.

The judicial power is exercised by a court system that consists of four levels of courts:

- **Supreme Court**
- **Court of appeals**
- **Circuit courts**
- **District courts** (including **small claims** courts and **juvenile** and **domestic relations** courts)



### STANDARD CE.7B

#### -- FEDERAL SYSTEM



The relationship of state governments to the national government in the federal system.

*The Constitution of the United States of America establishes the principle of **federalism**, which is the **division of power** between the **states** and the **national government**.*

*The **expansion of the national government's powers** into areas traditionally **reserved to the states** has altered the **relationship of states to the national government**.*

The Constitution of the United States establishes a **federal form of government** in which the **national government** is **supreme**.

The **powers not given** to the national government by the Constitution of the United States **are reserved to the states**.

The Constitution of the United States **denies certain powers** to **both** the national and state governments.

Some powers are **shared** between the national and state government (**concurrent powers**).

**Primary responsibilities of each level of government**

- **National:** Conducts **foreign policy**, regulates **commerce**, and provides for the common **defense**
- **State:** Promotes **public health, safety, education, and welfare**

**Tensions** exist when federal **mandates** require state actions without adequate **funding**.

## STANDARD CE.7C -- STATE LAWMAKING PROCESS



**The state lawmaking process.**

Members of the **Virginia General Assembly** are elected to make **state laws**.

Citizens learn the lawmaking process and influence public policy through direct **participation** and/or **simulation**.

The lawmaking process requires **collaboration** and **compromise**.

### The lawmaking process in the Virginia General Assembly

- **Introducing** a bill in either house
- Working in **committees**
- **Debating** the bill on the **floor**
- **Voting** on the bill
- Sending the bill to the **other house**
- Repeat process in the other house
- Sending the bill to the **governor**



Elected officials in the Virginia General Assembly **write laws** and take action **in response to problems or issues**.

**Individuals** and **interest groups** help shape legislation.

### The primary issues in the legislative process at the state level

- **Education:** To promote an informed and engaged citizenry (i.e., establish minimum standards for local schools)
- **Public health:** To promote and protect the health of its citizens
- **Environment:** To protect **natural resources** (i.e., improve **water quality** in the Chesapeake Bay)
- **State budget:** To approve a **biennial** (two year) budget proposed by the governor
- **Revenue:** To levy and collect **taxes**

## STANDARD CE.7D -- STATE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

**The roles and powers of the state executive branch and regulatory boards.**

*The **executive branch** of the **Virginia** state government **enforces the laws** and plays a key role in the **policymaking** process.*

**Ways the executive branch influences policymaking**

- Proposes **biennial budget**
- Proposes **legislation**
- Approves **veto** or line-item veto bills

The **governor** of Virginia exercises the formal powers granted by the Virginia Constitution.

In carrying out both the formal and informal powers of the office, the **governor** fills **several roles**, including

- **chief of state:** ceremonial head of the state government
- **chief legislator:** proposer of the legislative agenda
- **chief executive:** head of the executive branch of state government
- **party chief:** leader of the political party that controls the executive branch
- **commander-in-chief**
- **chief citizen:** representative of all Virginians

**Cabinet secretaries and departments, agencies, commissions, and regulatory boards**

- administer laws and enforce laws
- create **regulations** to **monitor** aspects of business and the economy
- provide services

# Civics and Economics

## CE.8 Study Guide

### STANDARD CE.8A

#### -- LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The structure and powers of the local government.

*The units of local governments in Virginia are created by the General Assembly.*

*Local governments exercise legislative, executive, and judicial powers.*

#### Structure

The units of local government in Virginia are **counties, towns, and cities.**

##### County

- Elected **board of supervisors**, which exercises **legislative** powers, enacting ordinances (local laws) and adopting an annual budget
- A **manager** may be hired by the elected legislative branch to oversee the operations of the local government
- Elected or appointed **school board**, which oversees the operation of the K–12 public schools in the county

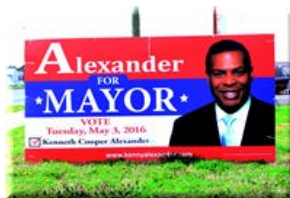


##### Town (incorporated)

- Elected **town council**, which exercises **legislative** powers, enacting ordinances and adopting an annual budget
- A **mayor** is elected by either the voters or the town council members
- A **manager** may be hired by the elected legislative branch to oversee the operations of the local government
- Located within counties, and citizens receive and pay for services from both the town and county

##### Cities

- Elected **city council**, which exercises **legislative** powers, enacting ordinances and adopting an annual budget
- A **mayor** is elected by either the voters or the city council members
- A **manager** may be hired by the elected legislative branch to oversee the operations of the local government
- Elected or appointed **school board**, which oversees the operation of the K–12 public schools in the city



*Virginia local governments exercise defined and limited powers, including the power to*

- **enforce** state and local laws
- promote **public health**
- protect **public safety**
- **educate** children
- protect the **environment**
- regulate **land use**
- levy and collect **taxes.**

In every county and city, **state courts** resolve judicial disputes.

The Virginia Constitution requires that voters in every locality elect a **sheriff**, a **clerk** of the circuit court, a **commissioner** of revenue, and a **treasurer.**

### STANDARD CE.8B

#### -- LOCAL VS. STATE GOVERNMENT

The relationship of local government to the state government

*The authority of local governments in Virginia is derived from the state.*

**All powers of local governments** in Virginia are given to them by the **Constitution of Virginia** and acts of the **General Assembly.**

Not all counties and cities are given the same powers. **Cities have charters** listing their powers.

Counties and cities assist in the local implementation of state laws and programs.

Local government derives its funding from its ability to **raise revenue** in addition to money that the state provides.

### STANDARD CE.8C

#### -- LOCAL LAWMAKING PROCESS

The local lawmaking process

*Counties, cities, and towns adopt and enforce ordinances to provide services for their residents.*

*Citizens learn the lawmaking process and influence public policy through direct participation and/or simulation.*

*The lawmaking process requires collaboration and compromise.*

An elected **board of supervisors** is responsible for passing laws (**ordinances**) in counties.

An **elected council** is the local legislative body in independent **cities** and incorporated **towns.**

Individuals can have the **greatest influence** on the decisions made by **local government officials** by communicating with them about their opinions and preference.

