

Court Education Plan for Leon County Area Schools

Mission:

To provide an educational program to Leon County 7th graders that will inspire and spark interest in our state and country's justice system.

Program Objectives:

- Bring court education into local schools.
- Support mission of the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court and the Chief Judge of the 2nd Circuit.
- Create a civic-minded citizenry.
- Provide students with access to legal practitioners.
- Provide students with information about the consequences of illegal behavior.
- Recruit quality students for Teen Court jury duty and subsequently, as Teen Court Attorneys.
- Provide for a "complete package" of supplemental curriculum to ease the burden on teachers.

Summary:

"From Classroom to Courtroom" is a program designed to take court education into local Leon County middle schools. The program takes a "Hear It, See It, Do It" approach. Children will "hear it" through teacher-implemented lessons and guest speakers from the legal community. They will "see it" by visiting actual courtrooms and seeing court proceedings. They will "do it" by participating in a mock trial and also volunteering as jurors for the Leon County Teen Court. This three-tiered approach will offer unique learning possibilities for a variety of learning types.

Curriculum:

"From Classroom to Courtroom" proposes a plan, spanning four days that is supplemental to current civics courses. The program is in a mini-mock trial format. The first day or two of the program will include an age-appropriate lesson on the trial procedure, court personnel, and familiarizing students with

the mock cases. Students will take on roles of attorneys, witnesses, and jurors. This will be teacher-led and will cover two 50 minute class periods. Day Three will involve a guest speaker, a judge, attorney, or court staff from the local community. The guest speaker will discuss courtroom procedure and provide instruction on evidence and objectives. The guest speaker will also assist students as they prepare for their roles in the trial. Day Four may include a court tour fieldtrip and the presentation of the mini-mock trial in an actual courtroom with a judge or court personnel in attendance, subject to availability of court staff and courtrooms. In the event that a fieldtrip is not possible, a guest attorney will preside over the mock trial in the classroom.

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will explain the purpose of trial procedures.
- Students will identify roles and terms used in the trial process, such as parties, defendant, plaintiff, prosecutor, case, evidence, testimony, witness, documents, physical evidence, etc.
- Students will name the parties to a case in a criminal trial.
- Students will identify the major steps in a trial.
- Students will use critical thinking to plan out the opening statements, direct examination, cross examination, and closing arguments of criminal case.
- Students will understand the role of the citizen in the jury process.