

Middle School Mock Trial

Program description

The Middle School Mock Trial Program is a hands-on exercise in learning about due process. It is a team activity program that is most often conducted as an extracurricular activity, but can also be incorporated into law, forensics or public speaking classes. Private schools, home school groups and community groups are welcome and encouraged to participate. Students representing attorneys and witnesses for both sides of a fictional case role play that case being tried in court. The students are guided in their case through support of their teacher and attorney coaches. The program teaches the legal process and trial procedure.

Through participation in the mock trial program, students will increase basic skills such as listening, speaking, writing, reading and problem analysis. Each participating school enters a team sponsored by a teacher volunteer that is ideally composed of between six and 16 students, but can have more students filling alternate roles. Teams try each year's fictional case against other teams at regional competitions in the fall of each year with the top teams from each regional competition advancing to the state championship in December.

Materials/assistance

The South Carolina Bar Law Related Education (LRE) Division offers training for new teacher and attorney coaches every summer and early fall in preparation for the fall competition. The trainings are not mandatory for teams to be eligible to compete, but they do assist in preparation for a strong and organized

team. At the training, teachers are provided with an outline of middle school mock trial guidelines, hands-on activities, videos, mock trial classroom instructional materials and a question/answer session with attorney coaches and mock trial teachers.

The LRE Division will assist in locating attorney coaches. Attorney coaches are very important, as they provide a valuable resource for information and assistance to the teacher, and they foster positive relationships between the students and representatives of the legal community.

A new fictional case is made available every year to participating teams. The cases are written or adapted by a team of volunteer attorneys and the LRE staff. The case materials include all mock trial rules, case trial rules, preparation material and the case itself with all necessary evidence, which can include witness affidavits, pictures, maps, reference information, expert opinions or other information.

Effectiveness

By incorporating mock trial in middle schools, students can learn about the basis of our American judicial system and the mechanics of litigation. In addition, students are encouraged to learn and understand the meaning of good citizenship in a democracy. Mock trial is exciting to share in any classroom or club, and it encourages participation, critical thinking, speaking skills and teamwork. The program also serves to increase cooperation, respect and support between the community and the

legal profession. All participants are encouraged to keep in mind that the goal of the mock trial program is not to win for the sake of winning, but to learn and understand the meaning of good citizenship in a democracy through participation in our system of law and justice. All who participate in the mock trial competition are winners in this sense.

Incentives

- Trainings for teacher and attorney coaches are provided every summer and early fall at no cost. On-site trainings can also be scheduled at no charge.
- The South Carolina Bar will pay for a substitute, if necessary, so that a teacher can attend the mock trial training. Light snacks and lunch are also provided at no charge.



Middle School
**MOCK
TRIAL**
South Carolina Bar

Continued on other side

For more information, contact
Law Related Education Division
South Carolina Bar
P.O. Box 608
Columbia, SC 29202
(803) 252-5139 or lre@scbar.org

Middle School Mock Trial continued.



- The LRE Division provides each team with two copies of the case materials, and additional copies are available for purchase. Case materials are also available online at www.scbar.org/lre, and teachers and students can participate in a threaded discussion via the Internet to discuss the current year's case.
- The LRE Division can provide assistance with locating attorney coaches.
- Teacher coaches implementing Mock Trial are encouraged to apply for the LRE Teacher of the Year Award, which comes with a \$1,000 recognition award.
- School resource officers implementing *Middle School Mock Trial* can apply for the LRE Citizen of the Year award, which comes with a \$1,000 recognition award.
- Schools that participate in Mock Trial can apply for LRE School of the Year Award, which offers a \$5,000 award to be spent at the school's discretion.
- Schools having financial difficulty implementing the program can apply for a school grant in the spring of each year up to \$10,000.

Contact

Law Related Education Division
South Carolina Bar
P.O. Box 608
Columbia, SC 29202-0608
(803) 252-5139 or lre@scbar.org

Middle School Mock Trial is made possible with the support of the South Carolina Bar Foundation's IOLTA grant.

