

Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education: The Link Between Education and the Law

By Peggy V. Cotogno

Since its inception in 1992, the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education (LCLCE) has served as the link between the education and legal professions to promote and infuse quality law-related education programs and practices in Louisiana's classrooms.

The LCLCE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity and is funded in part by the Louisiana Bar Foundation's Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA), the Louisiana State Bar Association and donations from individual members of the Louisiana legal community. The LCLCE is governed by a 15-member board of directors composed of community leaders, educators and legal professionals.

LCLCE Programs

► The Lawyers in the Classroom/Judges in the Classroom programs offer legal professionals an opportunity to volunteer their services to enhance civics and law-related education in Louisiana's classrooms. The LCLCE partners with the Louisiana State Bar Association and the Louisiana District Judges Association to bring lawyers, judges and educators together to deliver exciting, interactive, law-related presentations. These professionals share their practical and real-world experiences with students. Since January 2012, more than 5,700 students statewide have benefited from this program.

► Order in the Court is a professional development workshop for educators, traditionally held at the Louisiana Supreme Court building and taught by a distinguished faculty of Louisiana state and federal judges, administrative law judges and/or hearing officers. The program provides participants a better understanding of the various courts

in the judicial system and further insight into the structure of government.

► The annual Summer Institute is a curriculum-intensive professional development workshop open to elementary, middle and high school educators from across the state. The program provides housing, meals and program materials at no cost to educators. Thirty educators participated in the four-day Summer Institute in 2011.

► Citizens, Not Spectators. The goal of the program is to increase the voting rate among young Americans by providing engaging voter education to students. The curriculum focuses on hands-on, active learning and is made possible through a cooperative effort by the Center for Civic Education, the Arsalyn Program of Ludwick Family Foundation and the LCLCE. In fall 2011, 10 schools statewide participated in the program, benefiting more than 2,600 students.

► We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution. This award-winning civics curriculum was developed by the Center for Civic Education. The culminating activity is simulated congressional hearings argued by teams comprised of the entire class. This civics program is used by educators in every state in the country. This year, the LCLCE was honored to have "We the People" state competition winner Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies represent Louisiana at the national finals in Washington, D.C. The Louisiana State Bar Association assisted the stu-

dents in raising funds needed to cover travel expenses to attend the national competition.

► Law Signature Schools. In this program, the LCLCE works with public and private high schools interested in a dedicated track of study for students who want to pursue a career in law. The LCLCE helps the schools design and implement a pre-law curriculum, identifies lawyer and judge volunteers willing to serve as ongoing resources for the school, and seeks financial assistance for the school to build a moot court classroom. Schools that successfully implement a dedicated pre-law track of study are certified by LCLCE as a Law Signature School, a designation the schools may use to promote themselves and recruit students. Currently, Louisiana has five LCLCE-certified Law Signature Schools.

The LCLCE has been granted a permanent seat on the state's Commission on Civic Education and received the 2011 Sandra Day O'Connor Award for the Advancement of Civics Education from the National Center for State Courts.

For more information on LCLCE programs and activities, visit www.lalce.org.

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