
FROM THE DIRECTOR



Florida lost a law studies legend and teacher extraordinaire this summer. Our dear friend and colleague Ed Lange of Fletcher High School in Duval County died leaving a void in our lives that will never be filled. He was such an incredible teacher and gentleman whose lessons went beyond the law to helping students find their purpose and passion in life. He motivated, encouraged and genuinely loved his students. His funeral was standing room only filled with students and former students from throughout the years. We miss you with such intensity and hope to honor your work with a special award named in your honor this year at the Florida High School Mock Trial Competition. Ed was a participant in the very first competition in 1991 and participated last year during the state level competition as well.

I continue to be inspired by Florida teachers. I have worked in the field of civics, government, and law for the past thirty plus years and I have never been more proud of our teachers, our students, and our state. I have met so many extraordinary teachers who are so dedicated to civic and law-related education and to helping our students learn in deep and meaningful ways.

It has been a challenging and exciting time for Florida middle school teachers over the past few years as the seventh grade civics requirement has changed the landscape of social studies in Florida. The Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc. has been there from the beginning. Our staff have been involved in the framing and development of the civics and government standards as well as participating in the civics EOC item review committees. We have trained thousands of teachers and provided quality nonpartisan, law-focused professional development opportunities throughout the state. We have developed and shared innovative materials and resources to strengthen the curriculum.

I have seen teachers utilize data from the civics assessments to guide their instruction and strengthen their practice. The data along with careful integration of information contained within the Civics EOC Item Specification Booklet has helped enhance teacher knowledge and performance. District and school based administrators are also planning and preparing for effective implementation above and beyond the seventh grade classroom. We have seen districts add a higher emphasis on constitutional principles in fifth grade so that students walk into seventh grade with foundational knowledge and exposure to vocabulary that will be emphasized in the middle school civics course. The level one We the People...the Citizen and the Constitution curriculum is the best introduction that I have seen to prepare fifth or sixth grade students for the upcoming seventh grade content. The curriculum integrates a mock congressional hearing as well adding a participatory component to the program.

<http://www.civiced.org/resources/publications/student-texts/upper-elementary-level-1>

Still other districts are realizing the value of adding a middle school Law Studies course during sixth or seventh grade to help reinforce some of the law-focused civics content in the state standards. The Florida DOE Course Code Directory provides a course code number for LAW STUDIES at the middle school level! There is also a Civics and Digital Technologies course as well that you may want to explore. Take a look at page 19 in the MS Course Code Directory.

<http://www.fl DOE.org/.../filep.../7746/urlt/1516CCD-Basic6-8.pdf>

Moving on to high school....I am pleased to see our law-related course offerings continue to thrive as electives. The Florida Department of Education Course Code Directory lists course numbers for districts to offer Law Studies, Comprehensive Law Studies, Legal Systems and Concepts, Court Procedures, Court Procedures Internship, Constitutional Law Honors, International Law, and more. If your district has not offered a law elective in a few years, it is time to take a look (see pages 46 and 47....).

<http://www.fl DOE.org/.../file.../7746/urlt/1516CCD-Basic9-12.pdf>

We offer so many supplemental academic competitions and showcases to strengthen your civics and law programs. Our web site at www.flrea.org provides a wealth of information on our High School Mock Trial Program, High School Moot Court Appellate Brief and Oral Argument Competition, US Senate Youth Scholarship Program, Project Citizen (high school and middle school), Middle School Mock Trial Virtual Competition, and the We The People Mock Congressional Hearings Competition.

Middle school and high school law, civics, and government teachers should seriously consider applying for the Justice Teaching Institute to help strengthen your knowledge of the courts and the Constitution. This program is hosted by the Florida Supreme Court and continues to receive the highest evaluations for qualify professional development. Using a case study approach, teachers explore the state courts and constitutional questions to learn about the administration of justice. All seven justices serve as faculty during the program. FLREA assists with program development and implementation as well as faculty assistance. Take a look at the program and apply today. The application is on our web site (see link below).

http://www.flrea.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=165&Itemid=34

Our civics curriculum wheel is currently under reconstruction as we develop a series of Getting to the Point lessons which integrate one benchmark per lesson. I hope you will register for the wheel to help with your civics course instruction. This summer we evaluated the materials and found that over 50 percent of our teachers utilize the PowerPoints and other materials at least weekly in their classrooms. We continue to work hard to listen and provide you with resources to help you improve instruction. Your teachers can register at www.flrea.org.

You should also explore and register as a teacher for the online iCivics resources including games and lessons. The Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc. serves as state director for the iCivics program in Florida. Florida has the highest user rate of iCivics than any state in

the country. Let us know if you have a need for training to help prepare your teachers to effectively utilize iCivics in the classroom.

Please visit and like our Facebook page to keep up to date on our work.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Florida-Law-Related-Education-Association-Inc/7257210557>

You can also follow us on Twitter @florida LawED.

Best wishes for a successful school year. Please drop us a note when you can to let us know how we have impacted your practice. We appreciate your involvement with these programs and look forward to a continued relationship.

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