

Taking Cases Through the Courts

The Florida High School Mock Trial and Moot Court Competitions



Each year, hundreds of students throughout the State of Florida participate in the Florida High School Mock Trial competition, offered in Florida by The Florida Law Related Education Association, Inc. Through this experiential program, students assume the role of attorneys and witnesses in a fictional civil or criminal case, presenting the case in its entirety before judges and attorneys in courtrooms around the state.

Taking the case to the next level, an issue on appeal from the mock trial case is addressed through the Florida High School Moot Court Competition. This substantive program examines issues brought up on appeal from the Mock Trial case, calling on students to write in-depth case briefs and present oral argument before panels of appellate judges in all five of Florida's District Courts of Appeal. These programs emphasize critical thinking and legal reasoning, while cultivating passion for the practice of law and understanding of the legal system by tracing a case through the courts.

About the Florida High School Mock Trial Program

Each year, FLREA works to identify contemporary and relevant issues in the courts on which to base the mock trial case materials. Past cases have included instances of cyberbullying, wrongful death, hazing, reckless driving, and other issues teenagers face in society. With the assistance of The Florida Bar Law Related Education Committee, the case is published for the mock trial teams at the beginning of the school year and teams work tenaciously to establish themes, synthesize argument, and develop colorful characters to serve as witnesses. Over 100 teams of six to eight students register annually in the State of Florida, supported by faculty sponsors and/or attorney coaches from the community.



Circuit competitions are hosted beginning in late January running through mid-February, with the State Finals competition taking place in Orlando in mid-March. Circuit competitions are supported by outstanding volunteers throughout the State of Florida by sections of local bar associations including Law Related Education sections and the Young Lawyers sections, among others. Without the support of the local bar associations, the implementation of the Florida High School Mock Trial Competition would be a daunting task.

One team per Florida judicial circuit advances to the State Finals competition, vying for the opportunity to represent Florida at the National High School Mock Trial competition. During four rounds of competition over three days, volunteer attorneys and judges score the students, identifying the top 2 teams to compete in the championship round. The Florida High School Mock Trial competition presents the opportunity for students to interact with members of the legal community and the judiciary, to present compelling and well-reasoned arguments, and to think critically when challenged. Students participating in this program have gone on to pursue careers in the legal field, with some returning to their schools to serve as mock trial coaches. FLREA also hosts a virtual middle school mock trial competition.



About the Florida High school Moot Court Program



The Florida High School Moot Court program was initiated under the leadership of FLREA Executive Director Annette Boyd Pitts and Florida Supreme Court Justice Barbara Pariente. This high-level academic program was designed to teach students about the appellate process and the role of the courts in interpreting and applying the law. Working in teams of two, high school students enter the challenging process of writing a case brief addressing the issues on appeal from the Florida High School Mock Trial Case. Once submitted and evaluated by panels of attorneys, teams

are selected to present oral argument in local competitions, presenting before panels of judges from each of Florida's five District Courts of Appeal. With the tremendous support from the judiciary, students engage in legal discussions with the judges while applying the Florida and U.S. Constitutions, citing case law, and offering legal reasoning to support their position.



The top teams from throughout the state are invited to Tallahassee to present oral argument before the First District Court of Appeal, where judges are faced with the challenging task of identifying two teams, one petitioner and one respondent, to present oral argument before the Justices of Florida Supreme Court. The Florida High School Moot Court Competition is unparalleled in its academic rigor, providing young men and women in high school the opportunity to present a legal case before, in most years, all seven Justices of the Florida Supreme Court. Students presenting oral argument through the Florida High School Moot Court competition consistently demonstrate outstanding professionalism, legal reasoning skills, and exceptional content knowledge of the law, constitutional provisions, and court cases. For additional information, contact Annette Pitts at staff@flrea.org.