

United States District Court Southern District of California

As the trial courts of the federal government, district courts have jurisdiction to hear nearly all categories of civil and criminal cases. There are 94 federal judicial districts grouped into 12 regional circuits. The Southern District of California, created in 1966, is part of the 9th Circuit and has jurisdiction over San Diego and Imperial Counties. The entire western boundary of the Southern District lies on the Pacific Ocean. The entire southern boundary of the District borders the Republic of Mexico. There are international ports of entry at San Ysidro, Otay Mesa, Tecate, Calexico, and Andrade. The San Ysidro port of entry is the world's busiest land crossing where over 14 million vehicles and 40 million people legally enter the U.S. each year.

San Diego is the 9th largest city in the United States with a population of over 1.3 million people. San Diego County has a population of more than 3 million; Imperial County has a population of 160,000. As a major urban center, the Southern District of California experiences the full range of criminal activities present in any metropolitan area. Because of its proximity to an international border, the District continues to be a major corridor for both illegal immigration and illicit drug trafficking activities. It is not surprising that the Southern District ranks fourth in the nation in federal felony filings.



Community Outreach Programs Committee
Edward J. Schwartz Courthouse
940 Front Street
San Diego, CA 92101

Contact: Kathleen_Walford@casd.uscourts.gov



Judges in the Classroom



Since 1993, federal judges have traveled to local elementary, middle and high schools to give presentations on the federal judicial system, federal jurisdiction and the law, and to oversee mock trials. Classes have also come to the court for these presentations. The judges who participate in this program strive to help and encourage students to embrace the concepts of justice and responsibility, to clarify for them the responsibilities of the individual within a free society, to familiarize the students with career opportunities within the legal system, and to convey the message that students who work hard in school will achieve success. The judicial participants believe that if they can provide a positive influence, even in a small way, that leads to the success of students in our schools, they will have the satisfaction of knowing that our entire community will reap benefits in the future and their efforts will have been worthwhile.



Presented by the
Community Outreach Programs Committee
of the U.S. District Court
for the Southern District of California
In partnership with San Diego City and County Schools

"He who opens a school door closes a prison." —Victor Hugo

The judges of the United States District Court for the Southern District of California have developed the following presentations, which are designed to explain various aspects of the judicial system to students of all ages. However, the court also will attempt to accommodate requests for customized programs. We can coordinate courthouse tours, observation of court proceedings, mock trials presided over by a federal judge, Question & Answer presentations, and federal jobs panels. Please contact our Community Outreach Liaison, Kathleen Walford, at 619-557-7824 or e-mail her at Kathleen_Walford@casd.uscourts.gov to discuss the particular needs of your group.

Primary Grades K-3	Elementary Grades 4-6	Jr. High/Middle School Grades 6-8	High School Grades 9-12	College/ Life-Long Learning
3 Little Pigs Mock Trial	Possession of Fireworks Mock Trial	Possession of Marijuana Mock Trial	Texting While Driving Mock Trial	Observation of Live Court/Federal Jobs Panel
Cinderella Mock Trial	The Judicial System in Action	The Judicial System in Action	The Judicial System in Action	Our Judicial System: The Third Branch of Government
	Our Judicial System: The Third Branch of Government	Our Judicial System: The Third Branch of Government	Our Judicial System: The Third Branch of Government	Anatomy of a Criminal Case
			The Law: Rights, Responsibilities and Life Lessons	
			Observation of Live Court/Federal Jobs Panel	

Mock Trials = The court provides age appropriate mock trials to be presented by students in a class. Children from the class will assume the parts of trial participants and serve as the jury. A judge will be present throughout the trial to assist the students and provide additional information about the judicial system. The purpose of this mock trial is to familiarize students with the justice legal process.

The Judicial System in Action = A judge presents a mock trial utilizing an interactive video in which all of the actors are middle-school aged. During the videotaped presentation, the judge will explain important components of a trial and at the conclusion, the students will act as jurors and decide the guilt or innocence of two middle-school students accused of possession of marijuana with the intent to sell.

Our Judicial System: The Third Branch of Government = A judge explains the nature and structure of the federal and state court systems, the reason for the dual system and emphasizes how the U.S. District Court differs from superior and municipal courts. The types of cases handled by each system are discussed. The roles and responsibilities of the various participants in civil and criminal trials are discussed, as well as civic responsibility and the importance of serving as jurors. Job opportunities in the judiciary are also discussed. Students are invited to tour the courthouse and watch proceedings. In addition, the judge can explain how the basic principles of judging may be applied to everyday issues and challenges encountered by students.

The Law: Rights, Responsibilities and Life Lessons = A judge explains the rights and responsibilities which the law confers upon individuals in the United States, and how the law is used through the federal court system to enforce those rights and responsibilities. The judge will discuss the ways in which law-abiding individuals contribute to society, how to avoid potential pitfalls, and life-long consequences of violating the law.

Anatomy of a Criminal Case = The judge discusses the life cycle of a criminal case. Both reactive and proactive cases and the varying paths that each may take are addressed. Students will learn the process from the arrest through filing of the complaint. A discussion is held on how an investigation in general may be conducted (e.g. use of search warrants, Grand Jury subpoenas, pen registers, confidential informants, etc) and how it often results in a secret indictment prior to arrest. Then the process of initial appearance, bail/detention hearings, motion hearings through to completion of the case whether it be by guilty plea (with or without a plea agreement) or trial. If a guilty verdict is rendered, the audience learns the proce-

Observation of Live Court/Federal Jobs Panels = students are invited in to watch a shortened calendar after which the various participants from the courtroom explain the details of their jobs and the education and training required to get those jobs. Members of various federal law enforcement agencies and the jail may also be included in the panel to give students a global overview of the system.

Bankruptcy Proceedings = If you would like to get information on the programs offered by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, please contact Sue Brown at Sue_L_Brown@casb.uscourts.gov.