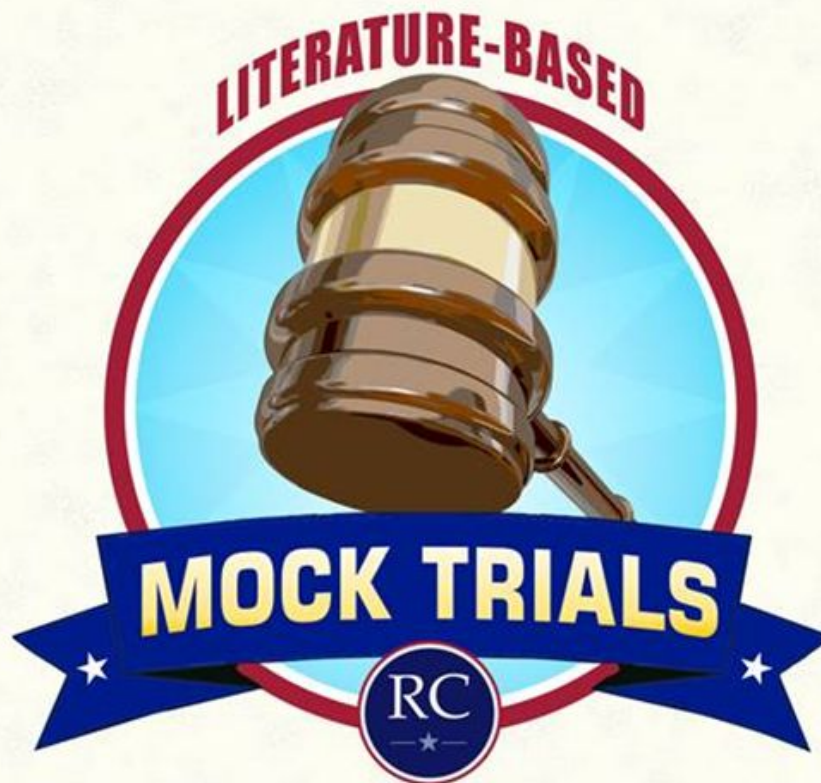


SPRING 2018 REPORT



The Rendell Center

for

Civics & Civic Engagement

Inspiring the Next Generation of Citizens

rendellcenter.org

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Overview:

Spring 2018 was a busy one for the Rendell Center's Literature Based Mock Trial Initiative with 35 classes and over 1100 students participating. Eighteen classes were able to have their culminating event (the trial) at the Federal Courthouse. On average, each class received 5-6 visits from a Rendell Center team allowing the Rendell Center to "civically" connect with students for over 100 classroom visits.

An important component of the initiative is the use of judges and lawyers in the classroom. The Rendell Center was able to draw upon the resources of 15 lawyers, 18 judges and 2 University of Pennsylvania Law students who graciously gave of their time to work with the classrooms. Some lawyers made multiple visits to the classes. As a result of our work with several Archdiocesan Schools and at the suggestion of St. Isadore Elementary School, Quakertown teacher -Mary Finnegan, the Archdiocese Educational Magazine *Ignite* did a wonderful article on the program. The article can be found on page 6 of the *Ignite* Magazine at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hNoyYSLdTNq_uwFFjalbFuVOnz5jo_5Y/view?usp=sharing

Works of literature used for the 2018 Initiative included:

- Fantastic Mr. Fox by Raold Dahl
- Frindle by Andrew Clements
- Iqbal by Francesco D'Adamo
- After Tupac and D Foster by Jacqueline Woodson
- Monster by Dean Myers
- Shiloh by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
- The Gold Cadillac by Mildred D. Taylor
- The Outsider by W.E. Hinton
- To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
- Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt
- The Giver by Lois Lowry
- The Watsons Go to Birmingham by Christopher Paul Curtis
- When You Reach Me by Rebecca Stead
- Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate D. Camillo
- Wonder by R.J. Palacio
- The Face on the Milk Carton by Caroline Cooney
- The Boy in the Striped Pajama by John Boyne
- Hatchet by Gary Paulsen
- Hoot by Carl Hiaasen
- A Separate Peace by John Knowles
- The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain
- The Notorious Benedict Arnold by Steve Sheinkin
- The Lottery by Shirley Jackson
- Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears by Verna Aardema
- Stone Fox by John Reynolds Gardiner
- The Lorax by Dr. Seuss
- Goldiocks and the Three Bears by James Marshall

Pre and Post tests were conducted for content knowledge about the Constitution and the Judicial system. The test can be found in Appendix A. Student scores increased 33% from pre to post test.

Teacher Survey

1. *In what ways did the Literature-Based Mock Trial Program connect with your classroom curriculum:*

- We used the novel we had just read and created a mock trial from that. Using the novel enabled my children to analyze characterization and make inferences and predictions, which we did almost every day.
- Our mock trial fit perfectly with our fifth grade Social Studies and Literature programs. We study civics, government, and where we, as good citizens, fit into the overall picture of our nation.
- We always have a field trip to the Criminal Justice Center and City Hall and teach the children some basics in the classroom. Participating in this program provided our students with a strong base knowledge and enriched their experience. The people who were at the cjc and city hall said that this year's class asked the most in-depth types of questions than in years past.
- The students are supposed to learn about the American Judicial system in 8th grade so this mock trial fit the curriculum very well.
- We used the mock trial in our ELA program. We read the novel When You Reach Me and put the character Marcus on trial. Students were required to read critically in order to comprehend the story and fully understand the characters in the book. These are skills that are required in our school district and common core curriculum.

2. *In what ways did the Literature-Based Mock Trial Program support the development of student literacy skills:*

- We did multiple close readings of our text, *Shiloh*. We developed the ability to ask direct and leading questions, an important part of our Common Core Standards, and we learned how to develop an argument, arguing for both the pros and cons of an issue. Being able to see both sides of an argument is essential for the development of a critical thinker.
- The children were able to use skills and strategies, which we had been using all year to analyze literary elements. By creating the trial, the children were able to see the importance of these skills and how they are used in the real world. They were using the skills for a purpose and not just in isolation, which makes it more meaningful.
- It taught our student how to think critically about a situation and realize that there is a gray area. It also taught them how the way you word a question may induce a different answer from a person. The students were able to write the dialogue for the trial and were also able to do a very close reading of the text to learn more about the characters' actions and motivations.
- In order to do the mock trial, students needed to be able to read and comprehend text. They needed to be able to make inferences about situations and characters from the novel. They needed to be able to write about the text and use their oral communication skills in order to persuade a jury.

3. *In what ways did the Literature-Based Mock Trial Program help in developing an understanding of our Judicial System (consider vocabulary, language acquisition, skill in deliberation, etc.):*

- The children learned the different components of a trial, the difference between direct and indirect questions and the reasons for those differences, the roles of each participant in a trial, being articulate when speaking, and the actual courtroom process. While presenting the trial, the children displayed a thorough understanding of their roles and the process. When the "jury" went in to deliberate, they thoughtfully analyzed and discussed the facts and then rendered a decision, which all the students debated the rest of the day.
- They learned many important vocabulary words such as prosecution, defense, witness, and hung jury. This helps them understand the most basic current events and engages them in the world around them. Direct/Leading questions, courtroom dress, courtroom behavior, courtroom protocol, respect, and public speaking all worked together seamlessly to provide insight into the workings of our judicial system.

- The students learned the vocabulary specific to a criminal trial and also very important critical thinking skills.
- Students were exposed to the parts of a trial. They learned about the roles people play like the judge, bailiff, prosecution and defense lawyers, and jury members. They were able to learn about direct questioning and leading questions. They were exposed to real lawyers and a judge who spoke to them about what their jobs entail.

4. *In what ways did the Literature-Based Mock Trial Program support the development of higher level thinking skills (i.e. problem solving, strategic thinking) and leadership skills (i.e. group work, organization, presentation skills):*

- The children worked in groups and during the process different children emerged as leader. Those that were more confident with speaking in public took more of an active role in presenting the trial, and those that were more analytical took the lead when deciding on the questions to be asked. Because they had to decide how to defend or convict the defendant, the children had to formulate a logical sequence of questions that would lead to the result that they wanted. They also had to problem-solve what they needed to ask the witnesses from the other side to help their case. The questions they had to write were in depth and had to use all the higher order questioning techniques: application – use a concept in a new situation, analysis – separate concepts into parts; distinguish between facts and inferences, synthesis – combine parts to form new meaning, and evaluation – make judgments about the value of ideas or products.
- All of these components were present. They had to work together and stay focused so they knew when their part was approaching. Public speaking skills and fluency were reinforced as they had to speak loudly enough for the court to hear them. They had to agree on the questions that were to be asked of the witnesses
- The collaborative, communicative, critical thinking, and creative aspects of the project mimicked our college ready and career ready class outcomes.
- The students were required to think very deeply about the characters, their motivations, evidence, proof, types of questions to ask in a trial, and working well with others in a group setting. The students were also able to speak in front of their classmates and a judge in an actual courtroom.
- The students were divided into prosecution and defense teams and had to work together in order to create the questions for the witnesses. They needed to collaborate to make sure their questions achieved their goals.

5. *Please comment on the organization and administration of the program:*

- I feel the structure of the program; Anne creating the framework and then coming and working with the children to write the trial and the lawyers assisting with the techniques needed is perfect. The icing on the cake was going to the federal courthouse and presenting their work in front of a real judge.
- Everyone was wonderful, helpful and patient with our students. Our second graders were engaged, once we figured out the proper setting to conduct this program. Everyone who participated in our mock trial helped to guide our students at an age appropriate level.
- Beth and her associates flawlessly administered this program, they make it look easy. Hard work, excellent communication, and focused group work provided a rich learning atmosphere.
- I thought the organization and administration of the program was excellent and I look forward to participating in the program again in the upcoming school year.
- In working with the Rendell Center, I have always been impressed with the care and commitment they have shown for the program and for the students we work with in our classrooms. Mrs. Anne Spector is beloved by the students who look forward to seeing her and trying to dazzle her with their abilities

to solve minute mysteries and create direct and leading questions. The guests that are sent by the center are always prompt, helpful, and respectful of the students. They create wonderful relationships with the students who feel valued and respected.

6. *Please comment on the use of lawyers and judges to assist in the process:*

- The lawyers shared their expertise with the children. They helped the children learn how to question different witnesses and the reasons why the questions had to be written in a particular way. They also shared some personal experiences they encountered in the courtroom, which made it more real to the children. The judge allowed the children to see how important it is to have an impartial person when the fate of a defendant is at stake.
- Having real judges and lawyers made it more exciting for our students. They felt special that people took time out of their day to spend time with them. They shared real life experiences which made students able to connect with them more.
- The lawyers and judge were professional, helpful, kind, funny, and delightful to work with; we could not have done it without them!
- The students really liked the presence of a real lawyer in the class and appreciated their input and expertise. I also thought it was great and know the students liked asking questions about the law and criminal trials.
- This year we had a criminal defense lawyer who helped the students to formulate questions. She was amazing. The students were overwhelmed when she showed them how to question a witness. They said it was like watching a TV law show! Also, our judge for the trial was tremendous. She helped to guide the students through the trial and really treated them like experts in the case. Both the lawyer and the judge spent extra time after our sessions to teach them about the jobs that they do and what a person would need to do to be successful in that career. I have several students who want to be lawyers now!

7. *If you went to the Federal Courthouse, please comment on the process:*

- The children experienced going through metal detectors and then up to the courtroom. They had the opportunity to see an actual courtroom, speak with the judge and ask him any questions they had about his education and experiences as a judge. They were also able to experience what it would be like to be a lawyer, bailiff, witness, and jury member. After the trial the children continued to discuss the verdict that was rendered.
- Fantastic. Judge Rendell was patient with our second graders. The only tough part for them was security.

8. *Please share any recommendations for changes to the program:*

- I think a few more sessions would be helpful so the children would have a fuller grasp of the questioning process. This would make writing the trial more meaningful.
- I think just having teachers have a more concrete knowledge of what is planned for the next session would be helpful. The students are curious and always were asking questions about what we were doing and I felt I needed more information. Now that I have been through the process once, I think this may be a little better for me next year.
- It's perfect, hoping to do it again next year.
- I have no recommendations at this time.

- I love this program! I am so grateful every year to work with the Rendell Center and Anne Spector and Beth Specker and all of the lawyers and judges that they have brought to enhance our students' experiences. Also, the materials that the Rendell Center has to accompany the program are outstanding and so helpful.

9. *Please share your favorite memory of the program:*

- The children loved working with Anne and the lawyers. They were fully engaged with them while working on their questions for each witness. They were also fully engaged, knowledgeable, and very creative in determining what to ask each witness when we worked without Anne and the lawyers.
- The children's excitement in seeing goldilocks' story in a new way and realizing that not everything is black and white.
- My favorite memory is of the students dressed as characters from the book or dressed for the courtroom, speaking in southern accents (appropriate for the text, Shiloh).
- The trip to the courthouse where the students met Judge Rendell was my favorite part.
- I think my favorite moment this year was when the lawyer demonstrated how to cross examine a witness. The students were so blown away by her skills, that they worked extra hard on their own cross examination questions. Also, I loved when the jury announced their verdict because the defense team all stood up and cheered! (The prosecution also was able to congratulate them!)



Rendell Center for Civics and Civic Engagement							
2017-2018 Literature Based Mock Trials							
School	Grade #	Students	Classrooms	Class Visits	Book	Federal Court House	Judge
EM Stanton	4th	50	2	10	Gold Cadillac	classroom	Lazarus
	6th	35	1	5		classroom	Fleisher
	3rd	30	1	6	Fantastic Mr. Fox	classroom	Rendell clerks
Masterman							
Brunner	5th	34	1	8	When you Reach Me	Federal Courthouse	Krause
Fox Jones	6th	32	1	5	Goldilocks	Federal Courthouse	Grady- Cosgrove
McGeary	6th	31	1	5	Hoot	classroom	Kaufman
Greenberg	8	28	1	5	A Separate Peace	Federal Courthouse	Rendell
St. Bernedette of Lourdes	5	35	1	5	Shiloh	Federal Courthouse	Rendell
Andrew Jackson	5th	52	2	10	Boy in the Striped PJ	Federal Courthouse	
St. Isidore	8th	25	1	5	Outsiders	classroom	Rendell
Holy Rosary	7th	21	1	5	Call of the Wild	Federal Courthouse	Ruff
Longstreth	8	34	1	7	Tom Sawyer	Federal Courthouse	Shanna Miles
Olney	8	30	1	6	Boy in the Striped PJ	Federal Courthouse	Strawbridge
Copper Beech	5th	30	1	6	Shilo	Classroom	Fleisher
Ifhan Elem	4th	105	3	1	Goldilocks	Federal Courthouse	Baylson
Ifhan Elem							Keamey
Ifhan Elem							Reuter
Perlman Jewish Day School	2nd	40	2	6	Goldilocks	Federal Courthouse	Rendell
Perlman Jewish Day School	4th	41	2	6	Fantastic Mr. Fox		
Elizabeth Haddon School	4th	90	3	3	Winn Dixie	Federal Courthouse	Krause
						Federal Courthouse	lloret
						Federal Courthouse	Baylson
						Federal Courthouse	Pratter
Cynwyd Elem	5	21	1	6	Hoot	Federal Courthouse	Paul Cohen
Adaire	5	27	1	5	The Lorax	Classroom	Rendell
High Schools							
Renaissance Academy	12	40	1	1	Appellate Argument	Federal Courthouse	Rendell
Masterman	12	120	3	1	Appellate Argument	Federal Courthouse	Restropo
Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush	12	150	3	1	Appellate Argument	Federal Courthouse	Rendell
Total		1101	35	118			



Appendix A

Literature-based Mock Trial Pre-Survey

Part I. Below are a series of questions about our Judicial System. Read each question below and circle the response that you think best answers the question.

1. Our government has how many branches?
 - a. 4
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 1

2. The President of the United States is part of this branch.
 - a. The Legislative Branch
 - b. The Leadership Branch
 - c. The Judicial Branch
 - d. The Executive Branch

3. The branch of our government that interprets the law is called:
 - a. The Legislative Branch
 - b. The Judicial Branch
 - c. The Leadership Branch
 - d. The Executive Branch

4. The following is not a requirement for serving on a jury:
 - a. A person must be a U.S. citizen
 - b. A person must be 18 years of age or older
 - c. A person must know how to read

- d. A person must not have been convicted of a crime
5. A person is chosen for jury duty by the following method:
- a. People identified as community leaders
 - b. People who have served on a jury before
 - c. People who have registered to vote and whose names are randomly selected
 - d. People who volunteer to serve on a jury
6. Questions that a lawyer asks of his own witness are called:
- a. Direct Questions
 - b. Indirect Questions
 - c. Clear Questions
 - d. Leading Questions
7. Who determines if a person is guilty or not guilty?
- a. The Judge
 - b. The Bailiff
 - c. The Jury
 - d. The Prosecuting Attorney
8. In a criminal trial, how many of the 12-person jurors have to agree on whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty?
- a. 7 out of 12
 - b. all 12
 - c. 8 out of 12
 - d. 10 out of 12
9. The person who calls the Court to order and swears in the witnesses is:
- a. Judge
 - b. Plaintiff

c. Sheriff

d. Bailiff

10. The person who starts a lawsuit in a civil case:

a. Defense Attorney

b. Defendant

c. Plaintiff

d. Bailiff

11. The lawyer who represents the State in a criminal trial is:

a. Prosecuting Attorney

b. County Sheriff

c. Defense attorney

d. Bailiff

12. A person who tells the jury what he/she knows about the case

a. Witness

b. Police officer

c. Judge

d. Attorney

13. Directions: Below is a list of questions. Read each question carefully and decide if you think it is a direct question or a leading question. Circle your answer.

a. Can you tell the Jury what the weather was like on the day in question? **Direct** **Leading**

b. Isn't it true that it was raining heavily on the day of the incident? **Direct** **Leading**

d. You are only 5 feet tall, right? **Direct** **Leading**

e. Please describe for the Jury what you were doing right outside of the scene of the crime?

Direct Leading

f. Describe your relationship with the Defendant.

Direct Leading