



Connecting with the Constitution: Superior Court Partners with Educators to Explore the Constitution

Santa Clara County Superior Court Celebrates National Constitution Day Connecting with Over 2000 Fifth Graders Across Santa Clara County

In celebration of Constitution Day (September 17th), the Santa Clara County Court Community Outreach Committee matched 30 judicial officers with 55 schools for a virtual lesson on the Constitution. The effort resulted in more than 2,000 fifth graders across Santa Clara County meeting and interacting with a judge. Some visits were conducted by attorneys who graciously answered the Court's call for collaboration after receiving overwhelming requests from the schools.

The Court expanded its reach by offering bilingual presentations, allowing dual immersion classes an opportunity to interact with a judicial officer in Spanish.

Efforts such as these support the duties of being a bench officer. The state's Rules of Court directs judges to "promote a public understanding of and confidence in the administration of justice."

While the Court supports several student outreach programs leading up to the college and graduate level, it is Constitution Day that connects the Court with the greatest number of students. At fifth grade, that connection helps teachers test their student's critical thinking skills and understanding of their democracy.

"Connecting the community with the Court starts at an early age. We know that when students learn about their democracy in an exciting way, they're more inclined to engage in civics in the years to come," shared Judge Julie Alloggiamento, chair of the Court's Community Outreach Committee. "These students are our future. By them learning about the Constitution now, and continuing in the years ahead, we strengthen our democracy."

This year's Constitution Day commemoration produced a presentation shared with the statewide Judges in the Classroom (JIC) program. Because of the overwhelming interest from schools, JIC will offer the presentation year-round to schools that were unable to participate in this event. The JIC program is supported by the state's Chief Justice and open to all public schools, K-12, with the goal to prepare a future informed and responsible citizenry.

"Young students in Santa Clara County had a chance to see and speak to a variety of judges and attorneys from all different backgrounds, races, genders, and ethnicities. Maybe some of the students were inspired to consider going into law. But wherever their future takes them, they will someday be our jurors and contributing members of our community. We're thrilled to have so many educators opening their classrooms, helping us make those connection now," said Judge Julia Alloggiamento.

