The Supreme Court of Ohio
Visitor Education Center

Where a Courtroom is Your Classroom

THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

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INTRODUCTION

The Visitor Education Center is a dynamic teaching tool offering students – 4th grade and above – an inside look at Ohio courts. The interactive exhibits portray the workings and history of the judiciary with hands-on materials, bold graphics and engaging videos.

Eye-catching exhibits, such as a 9-foot model cannon, car trunk and detailed mock courtrooms put students in the role of decision makers. It is a center of stories that personalize and define the courts, making sometimes-complex concepts understandable on many levels, crossing age groups and cultures.

MAIN GALLERY

Students will first encounter "**You Decide**," realistic exhibits depicting eight significant Ohio court cases. At each exhibit, visitors review the basic facts of the case and decide how they would rule before comparing their conclusion with the actual opinion.

Scrolling messages across three video screens invite students to step onto "**Balance Your Government**" and be judge, governor or lawmaker. The interactive scale demonstrates the power sharing among the three branches of government and how each branch has the authority to check the other two.

Role-Playing Trial Activities
Students participate in a mock trial activity designed specifically for their grade level. Cases unfold as students assume the role of judge, juror, defendant or attorney. Important lessons, such as basic procedures and the need for fairness in the courtroom, are stressed.

"The entire field trip provided a thought-provoking experience that supported our efforts to teach about the functions of the different branches of government."

Toni Wills
Davis Middle School

Videos
Video topics range from misconceptions about the judiciary created by popular television shows to historic decisions impacting slavery and religion in schools. Students also experience a typical "day in the life" of the Supreme Court.

Pre- and Post-Tour Activities Packet
Students who have an opportunity to prepare for their visit often find the experience more valuable. A packet of suggested activities is available at *www.ohiojudicialcenter.gov/tour_activities.asp.*

ART AND HISTORY

Tours include a visit to the 1st Floor Courtroom with its array of murals depicting significant events in Ohio history, including the transition from territory to statehood.

> **"We appreciate the opportunity to visit this wonderful treasure, a place that seems to always find ways to enrich the curriculum."**
>
> Susan Haushalter
> St. Veronica's School

IDENTITY ON TRIAL

Identity on Trial presents exhibits with stories, explanations and hands-on activities to engage the attention and imagination of visitors to help them understand how scientific evidence and technology are used in the courtroom. It opened in October 2009.

In the new exhibit visitors track the use and impact of scientific advances, including photography, fingerprint analysis, DNA and brain scans. Each exhibit features a court decision that highlights the intersection of technology and law.

INCORPORATING STANDARDS

The exhibits meet dozens of Benchmarks and Grade Level Indicators from the Ohio Department of Education's Social Studies Standards, including:

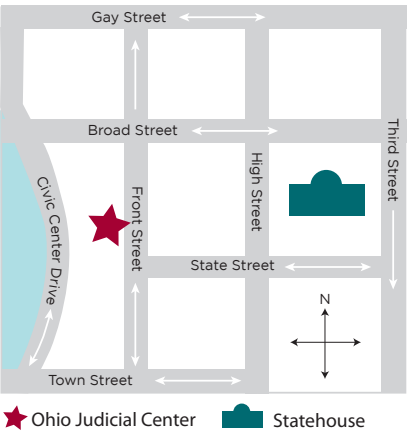
- The functions and limits of each branch of state and federal government
- The role of the judiciary in resolving disputes and defining rights
- The purpose of a Constitution
- Citizens' rights and responsibilities in a democratic society.

HEAD OF THE CLASS

The Visitor Education Center has been honored by state and national organizations. The Ohio Museum Association gave the center its Outstanding Achievement Award for Institutional Excellence. The American Association of State and Local History presented the center with its Award of Merit.

VISITORS

The Visitor Education Center is located on the Ground Floor of the Ohio Judicial Center in downtown Columbus. Visitors are welcome Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Reservations for groups of eight or more are required. Call 614.387.9223 or e-mail courttours@sc.ohio.gov.



"Our students were really interested and talked about the visit for several days after. Hopefully we have inspired a few future statesmen or women."

Susan Beadle
Jefferson County
Christian School

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