

TEACHING MATERIALS IN LAW-RELATED EDUCATION

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
Barbara Thompson, Ph.D., State Superintendent

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developed by

The Law-Related Education Project  
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Barbara S. Thompson, Ph.D., State Superintendent

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## INTRODUCTION

The Law-Related Education Project of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Bar Foundation began in January of 1977 with a proposal written by Dr. Michael Hartoonian, Supervisor of Social Studies Education for Wisconsin and submitted to the Wisconsin Council on Criminal Justice. Based upon this proposal, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration funds were allocated to the Department of Public Instruction to initiate this effort in law-related education. The goal of the Project was to develop a model for law-related curriculum development in grades K-12, which was based on the cooperation of community professionals in law-related areas with teachers and school personnel. Ten pilot schools were selected on the basis of previous expressed interest in law-related education, and community teams established to support the work of the teachers involved. Each community team consisted of an attorney; a representative each from law enforcement, juvenile court, and social services; a business person; and student representatives to comprise one-third of the total team.

Community teams met with teachers to exchange ideas on the needs of the students, and to learn about the teachers' interests and plans for curriculum development. During the summer of 1977 a week-long intensive workshop was held to bring pilot teachers together with outstanding educators in the law-related education field, and to provide resources and guidance for development of a concrete plan for implementation in the classroom in the following academic year. Further community team meetings were held to identify community resources which could assist the teacher and to acquaint the team with the development of the course or unit. The courses or units were then tested in the classroom, evaluated, and revised. Throughout the year project staff attempted to provide resources as needed.

The following pilot schools were involved in the first year of the project:

1. Eau Claire: Memorial High School
2. Shawano High School
3. Waukesha High School, South Campus
4. Wauwatosa: West High School
5. Whitefish Bay High School
6. Barron Senior High School
7. Phillips High School
8. Janesville: Edison Junior High School
9. Whitehall Public Schools: Sunset Elementary, Pigeon Falls Elementary
10. Milwaukee Public Schools: Law Satellite Center

## THE COMMUNITY TEAM APPROACH

The importance of cooperation between school and community members cannot be overemphasized. Those in the law-related professions take for granted a vast number of resources of which the teacher is seldom aware. Teachers, on the other hand, are in a position to draw those outside the school walls into the process of formal education in a way which can enrich the experience of all concerned.

### Setting up the Community Team

The team should consist of the following representatives at a minimum.

An attorney  
A law enforcement officer  
A social services representative  
A representative of the juvenile court system  
A businessperson  
Students

In addition, representatives of parents per se or of certain interested civic groups might be appropriate; this depends upon the community.

Because the teacher will be working closely with this group, it is important that he or she be given the initiative in selection of the team members. Suggested procedure is:

1. Identification of possible team members
2. Letter to possible team members from appropriate school administrator, describing the planned curriculum project and the expected responsibilities of the community team.
3. Scheduling of first meeting (probably in the evening)

Once the team has been formed, the teacher should take the initiative for calling meetings, since his or her progress with the curriculum will determine the needs to be met by the team.

### The First Meeting

The apparent awkwardness of bringing together people from diverse professions and interests may act as a deterrent to pursuing the cooperative community-school approach. Yet this has invariably been overcome by focusing on the common concern with young people and the law. The following questions have been found useful to get the first meeting going. They should be presented one at a time and discussed in a kind of brainstorming session, with the teacher either taking notes or jotting things on the board so that discussion can be summarized and conclusions reached by the end of the meeting.

### Discussion questions:

1. What do students need to know about law and the legal system?

Unless the members of the team have given some thought to this, the discussion is likely to falter, and it may help to move on quickly to Question 2.

2. How much do we ourselves know about the legal system?

How many aspects of the system seem shrouded in mystery to the average citizen? How do we know what the laws of our state, country, county, and city are? What determines how those laws are applied? Where do we go to find the answers to these and other questions?

How much can the average citizen expect to understand of the legal system in a country like ours, where the governmental system is supposed to be built on participatory democracy? How much can that citizen afford not to know?

3. Who are the people in the community who understand the workings of the legal system as part of their profession? How can their knowledge be shared with students and other community members to fulfill the need for law-related education without overburdening them?
4. What is the purpose of law-related education?

Are we merely interested in preventing anti-social behavior, in making students into "law-abiding citizens," or is the goal broader? Are we concerned with respect for law, the ability to bring about healthy change within the system, an awareness of the unavoidable discrepancy between the ideal legal system and the real system, administered by fallible human beings?

### Maintaining Contact

Although the burden of the actual curriculum work naturally rests with the teacher, it is important to maintain contact with the community team members and to keep them posted on progress. Suggested intervals for further meetings are:

1. Upon completion of the course or unit draft.

This is a good time to present the plan to the team and to solicit their help with guest presentations, ideas for resources where there are gaps in the draft, etc.

2. During the trial period in the classroom.

The members could either meet as a team or visit classes individually. Hopefully some of them will be serving as guest presenters as well. They can also be extremely helpful in evaluating student reaction to the material from a somewhat objective standpoint.

3. Upon completion of the trial period.

This meeting should present the results of the student evaluation of the course or unit, the teacher's evaluation, reactions of the team members, and ideas for the next time around.

Follow-up - Evaluation

The third meeting suggested above is a very important part of the cooperative approach and should not be overlooked. There should be a means of both student and teacher evaluation of the effectiveness of the course or unit, and preferably some means of community team evaluation as well. The results of all these should be presented to the team as a group, both as a step in revision of the course or unit if needed and as a way of confirming the assistance rendered in developing the course. The involvement of the community team in assessing the need for law-related education and constructing an appropriate course or unit merits their involvement in the fruits of success as well.

## ESSENTIAL RESOURCES FOR LAW-RELATED EDUCATION

### BOOKS

Gerlach, Ronald and Lynne W. Lamprecht. Teaching About the Law, W.H. Anderson Co. (646 Main St., Cincinnati, OH 45201), 1975. 354pp. \$9.95. (also available in paperback)

Publications of the ABA Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship (1155 E. 60th St., Chicago, IL 60637):

Bibliography of Law-Related Curriculum Materials: Annotated (second edition). 115 pp. \$2.00

Gaming; An Annotated Catalogue of Law-Related Games and Simulations. 31 pp. \$1.00.

Media; An Annotated Catalogue of Law-Related Audio-Visual Materials. 78 pp. \$1.00.

Update on Law-Related Education. Magazine, 3 issues per year, \$5.00.

### COMMUNITY RESOURCES

#### Speakers

1. District Attorney
2. Director of County Social Services
3. Court intake workers
4. Sheriff
5. Attorneys
6. Local bar association (Project Inquiry Chairman)
7. Juvenile Officer
8. State Probation and Parole Officer
9. State Patrol
10. Local Judge
11. Circuit Court Judge
12. Game Warden
13. Local Police
14. Morticians
15. Ministers/Priests (ethics)
16. Other teachers
17. Newspaper crime reporter
18. Assistant principals
19. Past delinquents
20. Car dealers
21. Businessmen

Field Trips

1. Police Department tour
2. Police ride-alongs
3. County jail
4. Courthouse (including possible role-play)
5. State Crime Bureau & Lab
6. State Legislature
7. Correctional Institutions

OTHER RESOURCES

The Law-Related Education Project of the Wisconsin Department of  
Public Instruction :

126 Langdon Street  
Madison, WI 53702  
(608) 266-5344

The Wisconsin Bar Foundation (Project Inquiry):

402 West Wilson  
Madison, WI 53703  
(608) 257-3838

## USING GUEST SPEAKERS FOR LAW-RELATED EDUCATION

The appearance of a guest speaker in the classroom should be an integral part of the class in which it takes place. You should be clear in your own mind on your objectives for the appearance, and you should be sure that the speaker has a sufficient idea of the course context to work with you toward meeting those objectives.

You should be aware that your guest speakers may be no more at home in the classroom than you would be if thrust into their professional situations, and it is part of your job to help them help you. The following procedure is intended to guide you in arranging for and preparing the guest in such a way as to maximize the benefits for the speaker and your class.

1. Decide on objectives of the guest appearance.
2. Telephone the speaker 4-6 weeks in advance, giving a general idea of the topic you want covered and information as to grade level and the course in which the presentation will take place.
3. Confirm by letter, with the following information:
  - course or unit in which presentation takes place
  - specific topic of presentation
  - objective of presentation within the course/unit
  - length of presentation
  - number of students
  - grade/ability level
  - confirmation of date, time, place, how to get there
4. Telephone contact 1-2 weeks in advance to let speaker know any changes in progress of the class. Find out about any equipment needs and arrange for duplication of handouts if desired. Notify speaker that you will be sending on questions which the class has developed if this is appropriate to your classroom approach. Specify the role which you will be playing during the presentation (such as writing new words on the board, helping to elicit questions from the students, etc.) and be sure you and the speaker are both clear on how you will work as a team. You should also make sure the speaker knows what to expect from your class in the way of participation: are they reticent or rambunctious? If you would like to tape the presentation, mention this now also.
5. Prepare the class the week prior to the presentation by:
  - developing questions for the speaker
  - introducing needed legal terms
  - presenting them with problem situations which will lead to questions for the speaker

6. Send or deliver the class questions 2-3 days before the presentation if possible.
7. Confirm by telephone the day before:
  - meeting place and time
  - where to park
  - exact directions for getting to the classroom or wherever you plan to meet
  - equipment needs and/or handouts
8. Have an alternative plan in case of the unexpected. This is sometimes a problem with attorneys and law enforcement people, and you should be ready for that sudden call into court or out on an emergency.
9. During the presentation, you may want your students to be taking careful notes, and it might be a good idea to suggest a format, including the speaker's name and profession. Let them know also that they will have to do an evaluation of the speaker's presentation afterwards. The purpose is both to help the students focus on the presentation and to give you an idea of its effectiveness, for your future reference. You might want to develop a short form for this.
10. The class period following the presentation, have the students do their evaluations.
11. Be sure to thank your speaker in writing shortly after the presentation. If you feel it is appropriate, you might also ask your students to let him or her know they appreciated the presentation.

In agreement with a grant from the Wisconsin Council on Criminal Justice, Pilot School Units have been published and can be ordered from the Publications Office of the Department of Public Instruction, 126 Langdon St., Madison, WI 53702.

<u>JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
Janesville Edison Junior High School Dean Einerson James Gallup John Goelzer Keith Mueller	<u>Juvenile Delinquency</u>	The special problems that minors face in regard to the law is the focus of this unit. Designed as part of a multidisciplinary 9th grade social studies curriculum.
Edward Schroeder Robert Williams	<u>Crime and Justice</u>	In this unit students examine and experience the problems of the criminal justice system. Extensive use is made of simulations and resource people. Designed as part of a multidisciplinary 9th grade social studies curriculum.
<u>HIGH SCHOOL</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
Eau Claire Memorial High School William O'Gara	<u>Criminal Justice</u>	An upper-level social studies elective which developed from a contemporary issues course. It is built upon extensive participation of law enforcement and other law-related professionals in the classroom.
Milwaukee: Law Satellite Center Paula Reiton	<u>The American Legal System: A Field Study Approach</u>	A curriculum guide designed to aid communities in the development of a law satellite center program for secondary school students.
Phillips High School Barney Slowey	<u>Freedoms--Your Rights and Responsibilities</u>	This unit looks at the rights and responsibilities of Americans as guaranteed under the Bill of Rights. Special emphasis is put on case studies, simulations and other methods that make the teaching of law come alive.
Waukesha High School, South Campus Nancy Vojtik John Zola Bryan Frame II	<u>Crime and the Law</u>	A social studies elective offered at the 12th grade level. Designed to enable students to develop concepts and attitudes concerning the Criminal Justice System. The focus of the course is a study of criminal law which is accomplished through examination of State and Constitutional Law.

**END**