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STATE BAR ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES CREATION OF FREE CIVICS EDUCATION WEB SITE

Online Programs Assist Educators in Teaching Students Importance of Civic Participation

The New York State Bar Association today announced the creation of a new Web site designed to help educators instill civic values and participation in young children. A project of the Association's Committee on Law, Youth & Citizenship and of the New York State Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, the Web site presents a preK-12 civics education online resource for New York's teachers, supervisors, and curriculum developers. Information and activities on the Web site are available free of charge.

The New York State Consortium for Civic Learning Web site contains several components to assist teachers with preparing civic education activities, including links to important concepts, content understandings, learning objectives, knowledge goals, learning skills and civic dispositions. The information is broken down by grade level in an easy-to-use, teacher- and student-friendly format and is linked to state and national education standards.

Sample learning activities on the Web site that teachers can use in the classroom include:

For students in grades K-2: Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and explaining what it means to them in their own words;

For students in grades 7-8: Reading the Declaration of Independence and defining the key words and terms (ex. unalienable rights, consent of the governed); and

For students in grade 11: Preparing for a hypothetical courtroom trial involving critical issues that are important and interesting to young people.

The Web site was compiled by the Association's Committee on Law, Youth and Citizenship's consultant Dr. George Gregory, former Supervisor of Educational Programs and Supervisor of Social Studies at the New York State Education Department, with input from many state and national education partners. The project was funded by the New York Consortium for Civic Education, the Carnegie Foundation, and the New York State Bar Association.

“One of the most important goals for any social studies program is to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they will need to participate as active and informed citizens in our constitutional democracy,” said Dr. Gregory. “As educators, we need to begin this process as early as possible so that our children understand the important roles they will play as future leaders in American society. The information, activities, and resources provided through this Web site will assist teachers in preparing their students to assume the challenging responsibilities of citizenship.”

For more information about the various activities and resources offered, visit the Web site at <http://www.nyscms.org>. Additional information regarding the national civics education campaign can be found at <http://www.civicmissionofschools.org> and the Law, Youth and Citizenship site at <http://www.lycny.org>.

The 74,000-member New York State Bar Association is the largest voluntary state bar association in the nation. Founded in 1876, the Association's programs and activities have continuously served the public and improved the justice system for more than 130 years.

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