



2024-2025 Annual Civics Outreach Report: Expanding Our Reach

Superior Court of California, County of Butte

History

Governance

The Power Democracy Steering Committee was formed on July 2013 with the purpose of overseeing the Task Force and implementing policies on civic education adopted by the Judicial Council. The Power of Democracy Steering Committee accepted the Task Force’s final report, “Revitalizing K-12 Civic Learning in California: A Blueprint for Action,” released in August 2014. The report summarizes the need for civic engagement in the state and makes specific calls to action for improving civic education based on the Six Proven Practices in Civic Learning: **classroom instruction in government, history, law and economics; service learning projects tied to the curriculum; simulations of democratic processes; extracurricular activities that have a strong civic dimension; student participation in school governance; and discussions of current events and controversial topics.**

In keeping with the “Blueprint for Action” report’s call to action, Butte County was one of six pilot counties selected to create a local Civic Learning Partnership committee to develop and implement a plan for promoting civic learning locally. Formed in February 2015, the California Civic Learning Partnership (CCLP) of Butte County is a non-partisan committee initially led by Judge Kristen A. Lucena of Butte County Superior Court; Tim Taylor, Butte County Superintendent of Schools; and Jack Danielson, Regional Vice President of Horace Mann Companies. The formation of the CCLP of Butte County is a result of the California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning established by California Supreme Court Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson. The purpose of the task force was to make recommendations to promote civic learning in schools with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all California students develop the civic literacy and values necessary to become active participants in the democratic process.

“... PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORK OF THE COURTS RESULTS
IN A BETTER-INFORMED POLITY AND A MORE ROBUST DEMOCRACY.”

Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr. in his 2024 End Report on the Federal Judiciary

Butte County Superior Court’s (BCSC) commitment to the CCLP’s goal of promoting civic literacy and participation is demonstrated through its outreach programs. BCSC partners with local schools each year by providing civic learning models and resources that can be used by instructors. This year’s report highlights the court’s expansion of its outreach services to additional students and educators through programs such as Judges in the Classroom and the High School Leadership Luncheons. The community’s reception to these programs demonstrates the need for civics education and its value for students and the community. This report includes outreach events held by BCSC in partnership with Butte County schools during the August 2024 – May 2025 school year. These events typify the court’s mission of taking a leadership role in the community by supporting the hard work of local schools to provide civics education and instill a sense of civic duty in the next generation of local leaders and innovators.

Programs

BCSC's ongoing program offerings include: mock trials, moot court, career fairs, Judges in the Classroom, and High School Leadership Luncheons. This year the judiciary also provided additional civics curriculum to local high schools which helped them secure the State Seal of Civic Engagement awarded by the California Department of Education.



“THIS YEAR’S REPORT REFLECTS THE CONTINUED COMMITMENT OF OUR COURT TO COLLABORATE WITH EDUCATORS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO ELEVATE OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE CONCEPTS OF THE RULE OF LAW, JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND JURY SERVICE.”

Hon. Michael R. Deems, Presiding Judge

I. High School Mock Trials

Each year, Butte County Superior Court and Butte County Office of Education (BCOE) under the direction of Superintendent Mary Sakuma collaborate to organize and host a mock trial program to local high school students. The mock trial event allows students to learn about the judicial branch and the legal process first-hand by providing a simulation of a real court trial. Student participants play the roles legal professionals such as judges, attorneys, and court staff as well as the part of the accused or witnesses with the goal of providing them with a deeper understanding of due process. This program partners with Teach Democracy (formerly Constitutional Rights Foundation) which creates new mock trial materials every year and holds state competitions in which Butte County Mock Trial winners compete with teams from other counties. Superintendent Sakuma acknowledged the importance of the event saying,

“THE STUDENTS’ LEVEL OF PREPARATION FOR THIS YEAR’S COMPETITION WAS OUTSTANDING. I GIVE CREDIT TO THE ATTORNEY MENTORS WHO GENEROUSLY HELPED PREPARE THEM FOR THIS ONE-OF-A-KIND OPPORTUNITY. I’M ALSO GRATEFUL FOR BCOE STUDENT EVENTS COORDINATOR MARY ELLEN GARRAHY’S UNWAVERING DEDICATION TO THIS PROGRAM. BCOE VALUES OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COURT TO ENHANCE CIVIC LEARNING THROUGHOUT OUR RURAL COMMUNITY AND THE HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION HELPS OUR BUTTE COUNTY STUDENTS UNDERSTAND MORE FULLY THEIR ROLE IN OUR DEMOCRACY.”

Mary Sakuma, Butte County Office of Education Superintendent



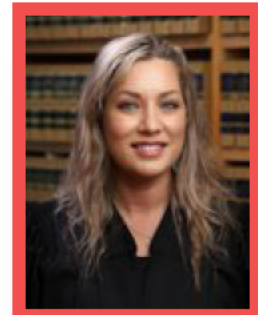
The 2025 Butte County Mock Trial Competition was held on January 22, 2025 at the Butte County Superior Courthouse in Oroville, CA. Student participants from Chico High School and Las Plumas High School showcased the arguments and evidence for their cases which they meticulously prepared in the weeks leading up to the event with assistance from the volunteer coaches: Atty. Kathy Richards, Atty. Jeff Raven, Atty. Brendan Blake, and Executive Director of the Public Defenders' Consortium, Atty. Nicole M. Diamond. Commissioner Leah B. Sears and Judge Jesus A. Rodriguez served as the judicial officers in the mock trials. Students from both schools had the opportunity to impress attendees with their knowledge of the legal system while exercising their public speaking skills. The lively competition ultimately resulted in victory for Chico High School who won for the first time at this year's Mock Trial. Scenes from this year's event are included below.



Chico High School students confer during the 2025 Butte County Mock Trial proceedings.

“THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE INTELLECTUAL CLARITY THAT COMES WITH PRESENTING AND ARGUING A LEGAL ISSUE IN A SIMULATED COURTROOM SETTING. I LOOK FORWARD TO PRESIDING OVER THIS EVENT IN THE FUTURE.”

Hon. Leah B. Sears, Commissioner



Two student participants at the witness stand and Judge Jesus A. Rodriguez.



II. Law Day

Law Day, observed on May 1st, is a nation-wide commemoration of the significance of the rule of law in American society. To celebrate national Law Day, Butte County Superior Court offers an annual Law Day Program in which it partners with Butte County Elementary Schools to host a mock trial event appropriate for students in grade five. The Law Day Mock Trial Program makes the complex courtroom process accessible to an elementary school audience by having students perform in a courtroom play with a script written by local high school students. During the court's Law Day celebration, local fifth grade classes visit the North Butte County Courthouse (NCCH) to participate in the mock trial. The courtroom comes alive as students are assigned specific roles such as: judge, defense and prosecuting attorneys, bailiff, court clerk, defendant, witnesses, and jurors. Students with the roles of judge, court staff, and attorneys are paired with a member of court staff or a local attorney who act as a mentor throughout the mock trial and guide them through their role. The high school script writers are also invited to attend the event and watch the mock trial unfold as they help students read their assigned lines. When the mock trial concludes, the mentor Judge holds a question-and-answer session where students can ask questions about the legal system, courtroom practices, and pursuing careers in the legal field. This collaborative program allows both high school and elementary school students to learn about the legal system. In advance of the trip to the courthouse, the judge visits the students at their school as part of the Judges in the Classroom Program (see section VIII below). The following sections provide additional details about this year's Law Day Event which included the Script Writers Program, Elementary School Mock Trial, and Justice Sayings Walking Tour.



Group photo of Judge Kristen A. Lucena with 5th graders at Parkview Elementary.

1. Elementary School Mock Trial

The 2025 Law Day Elementary School Mock Trial was held on May 10th. A total of 53 students from two fifth grade classes participated in the event: Ms. Adrienne Jimmerson's class from Parkview Elementary in Chico, CA and Ms. Kristen Russell's Golden Hills Elementary in Oroville, CA. Ms. Russell's class was an exciting addition to the 2025 Law Day event as it was the first time that an Oroville based elementary school participated the mock trial program. The ability to expand the program's offering beyond Chico schools was a great highlight of this year's event. This year's mentors included Executive Director of the Public Defenders' Consortium Nicole M. Diamond, Butte County District Attorney Michael Ramsey, and Judge Kristen A. Lucena. Students in both classes acted out their roles with the help of their mentors and participated in an insightful question-and-answer session following the mock trial. The students' enthusiasm was captured in the thank you letters sent by Parkview Elementary students following the event. One student wrote:

"I learned so much and got a good idea of what I want to do for a living ... the case was fun to solve so thanks [to] Chico High and P.V. High."

Throughout the mock trial proceedings, the courtroom becomes an extension of the classroom and where students learn of about due process and the importance of civic engagement firsthand. The activity also provides a safe space for students to step outside of their comfort zone as they practice reading and public speaking skills for a supportive audience of mentors, parents, and court staff with the help of their teachers. Such a moment occurred during one of the mock trials when the "defendant" student took the stand to deliver his lines. While he was excited to participate in this lead role, there was also some apprehension as reading aloud is daunting for many young students. Nonetheless, he committed to taking on the role and took the stand with his teacher by his side. The enthusiasm and clarity with which he read his lines was impressive. His confidence as he left the witness stand was evident as was the palpable sense of collective support from classmates and mentors. This exemplifies the empowering effect that reading aloud can have for children. Such risk-taking works best when students are in a supportive environment that fosters trust. The Law Day Mock Trial is a great opportunity for students to practice these confidence building skills and cement a rapport with teachers, peers, and the community which the court strives to serve. The images below show additional scenes from this year's mock trials.



Student "witness" takes the stand during 2025 Law Day Mock Trial proceedings while the student "judge" "presides", and student "clerk" administers the oath. High School Script Writer, Kaylee Morehead, also pictured.



Judge Kristen A. Lucena advises the student “judge” as he presides over the mock trial proceedings.



Group photo of Parkview Elementary School students with D.A. Michael Ramsey, Executive Director of the Public Defenders’ Consortium Nicole Diamond, Judge Kristen A. Lucena, and script writer Kaylee Morehead.



Group photo of Golden Hills Elementary School students with D.A. Michael Ramsey, Executive Director of the Public Defenders’ Consortium Nicole Diamond, Judge Kristen A. Lucena, and script writer Kaylee Morehead.



"Thank you to the court for letting us go on a field trip [to the courthouse] and thank you to Ms. Diamond for teaching me a lot of stuff and telling me what to do and when to do it." – 5 Grade Student "Defense Attorney"

Executive Director of the Public Defenders' Consortium Nicole M. Diamond with student "defense attorney."

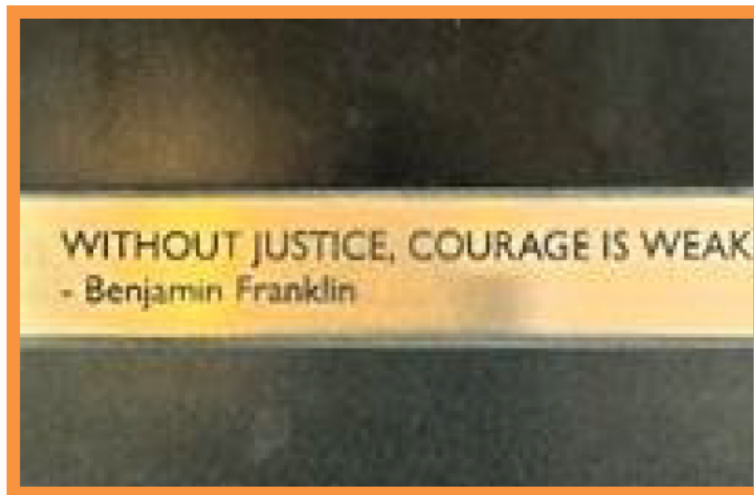


"Thank you for such an amazing time. I learned so much about how a trial works. Special thanks to Mr. Ramsey for helping me with my lines." – 5th Grade Student "Prosecuting Attorney"

Student "prosecuting attorney" and D.A. Michael Ramsey the mock trial proceedings.

2. Justice Sayings Walking Tour

The Justice Sayings Program encourages local schools to tour the North Butte County Courthouse in Chico. During this tour, students search for a quote of their choosing from the seventy-five historic Justice Sayings located throughout the courthouse. Each quote invites students and court visitors alike to reflect on the significance of justice in our society. The quote from founding father Benjamin Franklin, pictured below, exemplifies this, as it posits the powerful argument that the courage of everyday citizens to advocate for their rights and those of others is weakened when there is no justice system to support such courage.



One of the seventy-five Justice Sayings located throughout the North Butte County Courthouse.

This activity is accompanied by suggested teaching materials that can be easily adapted to complement any instructors' civics curriculum. This year, Parkview Elementary students participated this self-guided tour after their mock trial. Groups of students accompanied by parent chaperones toured the courthouse facilities searching for their chosen quotes and etching them on paper. In her thank you letter, Ms. Adrienne Jimmerson noted,

"The students loved the hands-on experience and learning about the judicial system. Thank you again for this wonderful opportunity."

Such feedback demonstrates that the Justice Sayings Walking tour is a great interactive way to get young students excited to learn about complex government and civics ideas and a perfect activity for instructors to incorporate into their lesson planning after their visit to the court. The following images feature highlights of students enjoying the Justice Sayings Walking Tour during their 2025 Law Day visit.



Parkview Elementary students etching their chosen quotes.



Parkview Elementary students showing off their justice quote etchings.



Group photo of Parkview Elementary School students with their etched justice quotes.

III. California State University, Chico's Community College Legal Information Center

California State University, Chico's (CSUC) Community Legal information Clinic (CLIC) is a legal studies program within the Political Science and Criminal Justice Departments. By working under CLIC's supervising attorneys, the program provides paralegal practicum opportunities for students while also providing legal information to the community for over 50 years. CLIC conducts yearly education visits to BCSC to observe court calendars and participate in a question-and-answer session with a judicial officer. These visits allow program interns to observe how self-represented parties who have received assistance from CLIC utilize the information they have been given in a courtroom setting. Such observations provide an invaluable real-world component to their academic curriculum. The table below shows outlines the observation visits conducted by CLIC during the 2024/2025 school year.

CSUC's Community Legal Information Clinic Observation Visits for 2024/2025 school year

Date	Courthouse	Calendar Type	Judicial Officer
10/3/2024	Butte County Courthouse	Misdemeanor	Judge Phillip H. Heithecker
10/25/2024	North Butte County Courthouse	Unlawful Detainer	Commissioner Emmons
11/1/2024	North Butte County Courthouse	Unlawful Detainer	Commissioner Emmons
11/12/2024	North Butte County Courthouse	RFO	Judge Clare Keithley
2/19/2025	Butte County Courthouse	Misdemeanor	Commissioner Sears
3/26/2025	Butte County Courthouse	Misdemeanor	Commissioner Sears
3/27/2025	North Butte County Courthouse	RFO	Judge Clare Keithley
4/11/2025	North Butte County Courthouse	Small Claims	Commissioner Emmons

By observing calendars related to their current legal studies, CLIC interns had the opportunity to experience being in a court setting as well as individual time with a judicial officer during the question-and-answer session at the end of each observation. Building these connections ensures that the judiciary is supporting the next generation of legal professionals.



“THE CSUC STUDENTS INTERNING AT CLIC RECEIVE AN INVALUABLE EXPERIENCE OBSERVING COURT PROCEEDINGS. NOTHING PREPARES A FUTURE LAWYER FOR LITIGATION BETTER THAN WATCHING PRO PER LITIGANTS NAVIGATE PROCEEDINGS, SOMETIME DEFTLY, ON THEIR OWN.”

Hon. Mark Emmons, Commissioner

IV. California State University, Chico's Moot Court

The CSU, Chico Political Science Department organizes a yearly moot court competition. During this rigorous competition, up to 32 teams of students present their arguments on a hypothetical scenario. Teams have one month to prepare an argument and appellate brief based on the citable authority and the factual scenario assigned. They then compete in a weeklong single elimination tournament where they present their arguments against other participating student teams and are scored on a variety of categories including sufficient legal support, logical progression of argument, and appropriate courtroom manner. The moot court model, based on that used in law schools and undergraduate Moot Court Competition Nationals, affords participants the opportunity to gain courtroom experience. The competition also allows students to connect with local judicial officers who encourage participants to continue the pursuit of careers in the legal field.



"THIS YEAR'S TOPIC ENGAGED THE CSUC POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENTS AND LED TO A VERY COMPETITIVE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND."

Hon. Clare Keithley, Judge

BCSC partners with CSUC's Director of the moot court program Director Maitreya Badami, JD to host a portion of the competition and the court's judicial officers serve as appellate court judges. The final arguments and award ceremony of the 2025 moot court competition were held in the North Butte County Courthouse on May 8. Judge Clare Keithley, Judge Jesus A. Rodriguez, and Judge Kristen A. Lucena participated in this year's event. The images below show scenes from this year's moot court competition.



CSU, Chico students with Judge Jesus A. Rodriguez, Judge Clare Keithley, and Judge Kristen A. Lucena at the 2025 Moot Court competition.



CSU, Chico student at the podium during the 2024 Moot Court competition.



CSU, Chico student presenting his argument during the 2025 Moot Court.

V. McGeorge School of Law's 1L Moot Court Competition

Each year, McGeorge School of Law holds a Moot Court Competitions where students are tested on their written and oral advocacy skills. Participating students represent a case on appeal before an intermediate court or a court of last resort. Students interested in the program undergo a rigorous application process as they are evaluated on their performance in written and oral advocacy courses; the quality of their work on law review; their overall GPA; and in some instances, an audition. The McGeorge School of Law competes in twelve or more appellate competitions per year where students put their skills to the test. This year the final rounds of the 2025 1L Moot Court Competition took place on March 14th in the McGeorge Law School Courtroom. In this competition, first-year law students prepare a brief and deliver a short oral argument. The case is delivered as a “closed universe” where the student is given all relevant authority. The panel for this year’s competition included BCSC Judge Clare Keithley, Justice Ronald B. Robie of the Third District Court of Appeal, and Judge Consuelo Maria Callahan of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. After an impressive competition 1L Moot Court student participants and the judicial officer panel enjoyed a joint ceremony and reception with participants from the Mock Trial Programs.



Justice Ronald B. Robie of the Third District Court of Appeal, Judge Consuelo Maria Callahan of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and Judge Clare Keithley at the 2025 1L Moot Court Competition.

VI. California Judicial Mentorship Program for Small and Rural Counties Event

On October 30, 2024, the Butte County Superior Court, in conjunction with the Tehama County Superior Court, hosted a panel discussion of the California Judicial Mentorship Program, for Small and Rural Counties (SARCJMP). The event was part of the design of the CJMP, which is a partnership between the Governor's Office and the California Judiciary, to expand the pool of qualified judicial applicants from diverse legal backgrounds and diverse communities. The California Judicial Mentorship Program is designed to assist interested applicants to the bench by matching an applicant with a judge who can provide mentorship during the information gathering and application stage of the process. The program aligns with the goals of transparency in the application process while providing encouragement and mentorship.

Tehama Superior Court Judge Todd Bottke and Butte Superior Court Judge Clare Keithley managed the local efforts. Held in the North County Courthouse (NCCH) in Chico, the event filled the largest courtroom, with the need for a second courtroom for overflow seating. The panel discussion was lively and consumed all the available time. Refreshment for the well-attended reception in the courthouse lobby were provided as a donation by the Bar Associations on Butte and Tehama Counties who contributed also to the planning and success of the event.

The panel of distinction was comprised of Judicial Appointment Secretary Luis A. Céspedes, Deputy Judicial Appointment Secretary Adam Hofmann, Third District Court of Appeal Presiding Justice Laurie Earl, Butte Superior Court Judge Virginia L. Gingery, Sutter Superior Court Judge John K. Hinely, and Glenn/Tehama Commissioner Ruby Sandhu Neumann. Attendance for the event reached over 100 people, with a dozen judicial officers from six jurisdictions, including Associate Justice Shama Mesiwala from the Third District Court of Appeal, along with a hundred attorneys from different legal communities.



Deputy Judicial Appointment Secretary Adam Hofmann; Sutter Superior Court Judge John Hinely; Tehama Superior Court Judge C. Todd Bottke; Glenn/Tehama Commissioner Ruby Sandhu Neumann; Butte Superior Court Judge Virginia L. Gingery; Judicial Appointment Secretary Luis Céspedes; Third District Court of Appeal Presiding Justice Laurie Earl; and Butte Superior Court Judge Clare Keithley at the CJMP Panel Discussion.

VII. Career Fairs

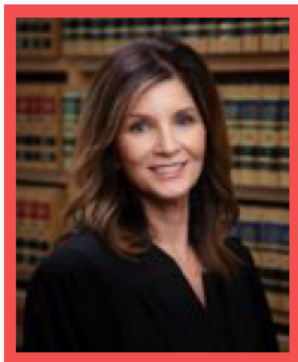
Butte County Superior Court regularly attends career fairs at local K-12 schools and college campuses as part of its effort to build community connections. In 2024-2025 school year, the court attended two career fair events: CSU, Chico Fall 2024 Job Fair on October 23rd and the Chico Unified School District's (CUSD) Career Fair on April 16th. The CSU, Chico 2024 Fall Job Fair was held on the university campus and attended by CSU, Chico alumni and current students from all majors. The event offered attendees the opportunity to connect with local businesses, non-profits, and government entities regarding possible career options. This was the second time that the court was invited to attend the event and BCSC's H.R. staff received a number of resumes from interested attendees for various court positions with one attendee eventually being hired as a clerk following a rigorous recruitment process. The Chico Unified School District's (CUSD) Career Fair was held in Pleasant Valley High School was also a success. This was the event's second year, and it was a wonderful opportunity for BCSC's H.R. staff to share information about career opportunities at the court with local high school and their families. Court staff provided fun activities such as word searches and trivia cards to spark student interest in law related career fields and had a photo booth area where students could pose for photos as a judicial officer. The court's participation in both of these events is significant because in addition to allowing students to explore potential career interests, they are also an opportunity to provide the community with transparency about the work of the court as well as an invitation for attendees to consider how their skill set might allow them to serve the community by becoming a court employee.



H.R. Specialist Jill Paul at the 2025 CUSD Career Fair Career Fair.

VIII. Judges in the Classroom

The Judicial Council's Judges in the Classroom program (JIC) is integral in the judiciary's mission to advance civics education in California. The program pairs Judges with K-12 schools in their county to conduct individual classroom visits for teachers who request to participate. Butte County Superior Court has participated in the JIC program since 2018 with the goal of informing local students about the role of the court in our governmental structure, constitutional due process, and the importance of fairness in the court system. Judicial officers use lesson plans such as "Salem Witch Trials", "No Vehicles Allowed", "The Constitution", and "The First Amendment" specifically designed to teach these complex concepts in a manner that is accessible and engaging for students. Judges are also encouraged to adapt these lessons by incorporating theatre style role-play and interactive games to increase student participation. As part of these visits judicial officers distribute pocket sized copies of the U.S. Constitution to each student thanks to The Bill of Rights Institute who previously provided these materials free of charge. Unfortunately, due to a lack of funding, the Bill of Rights Institute was unable to provide the court with pocket constitutions for the 2024-2025 school year. Thus, in order to continue offering this valuable resource to students, the court had to seek additional funding which it was able to secure in the form of a generous grant award increase from the California Judges Foundation (CJF). Thanks to the CJF, judicial officers were able to distribute 459 pocket sized copies the U.S. Constitution to local elementary school students through the Judges in the classroom program.



"THE LESSON PLAN FOR JUDGES IN THE CLASSROOM NATURALLY LEADS INTO DISCUSSIONS ON IMPORTANT CONCEPTS OF JUSTICE, FAIRNESS, AND ETHICS IN COURT. INEVITABLY, BOTH THE STUDENTS AND I GAIN WISDOM AND INSIGHT FROM THESE DISCUSSIONS."

Hon. Tamara L. Mosbarger, Judge

This school year, the court also expanded its outreach demographic by visiting local high schools as part of its JIC program. Judge Virginia L. Gingery conducted an individual classroom visit to Paradise High School while Judge Kristen A. Lucena and Judge Jesus A. Rodriguez visited Chico High School, and Pleasant Valley High School as part of each school's respective civic education program. Judges conducted mock jury selection to demystify the procedures of jury duty and taught lesson plans on topics such as the U.S. Constitution, and voter rights. In addition, to this they also swore in the Associate Student Council members for each school.



Judge Kristen A. Lucena and Judge Jesus A. Rodriguez swearing in Chico High School's Associate Student Council.

These visits are significant as they are a continuation of the civic education groundwork laid out in the elementary school JIC visits. As Chico High School Department Social Science Department Chair Kathyleen Bishop expressed,

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you for the insightful and engaging presentations you delivered [...]. Your willingness to share your experiences and perspectives made a lasting impact on our students, inspiring them to think critically and consider the importance of Justice in our community.

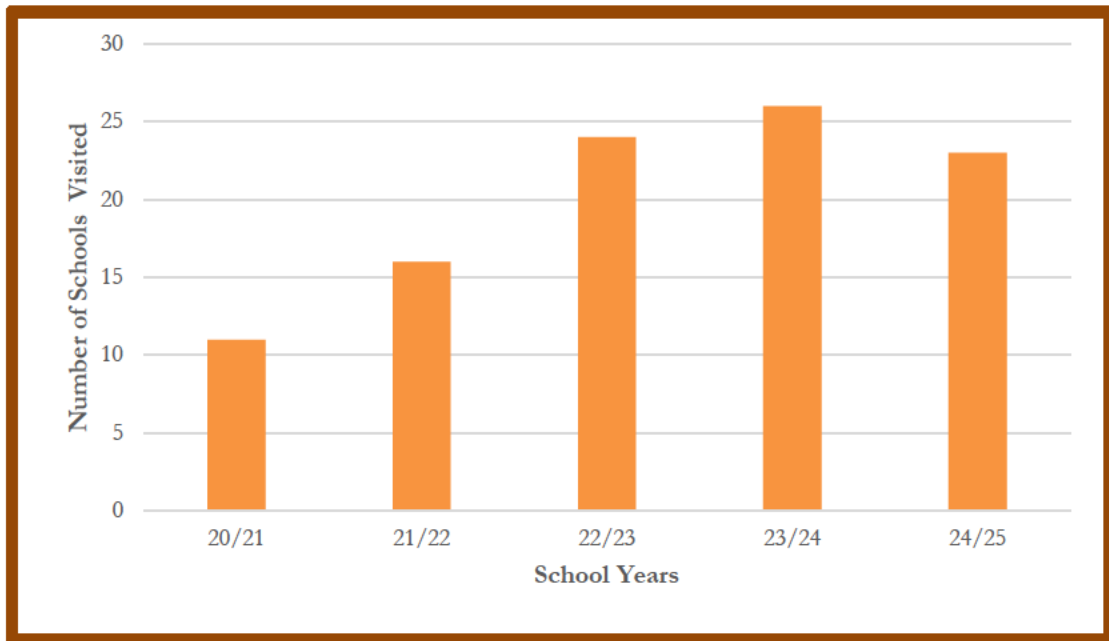
Regardless of the grade level, JIC visits are an indispensable tool in building an informed and civically engaged electorate. The connection that judicial officers build with K-12 students through this program is invaluable in creating a rapport between the judiciary and the community. During the 2024-2025 school year, Butte County Superior Court visited at total of 13 schools across Butte County and conducted a total of 23 classroom visits reaching a total of 1245 students as shown in the table below. This is nearly double the number of students reached from the previous year.

Judges in the Classroom Visits for the 2024-2025 School Year

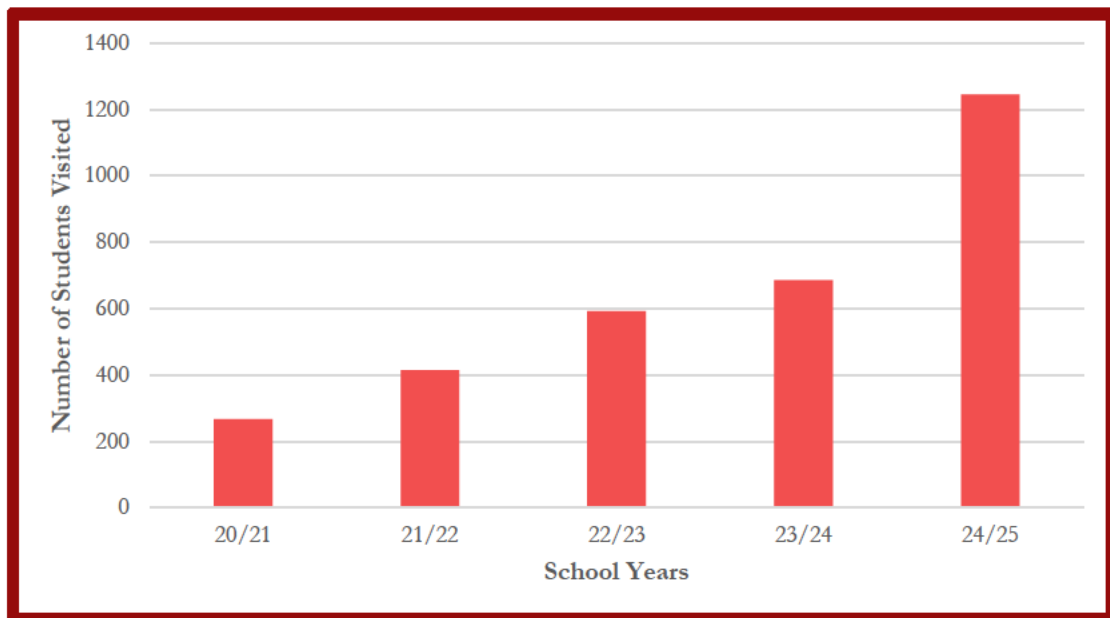
School	Visit Date	Teacher/Subject	Judge Assigned	Grade Level	Number of Students
Elementary Schools					
Golden Hills Elementary	12/4/2024	Kristen Russell	Lucena	5th	28
Hooker Oak Elementary	11/13/2024	Beth Geise	Lucena	4th	27
John McManus Elementary	10/25/2024	Olivia Thayer	Rodriguez	5th	30
Little Chico Creek Elementary	10/11/2024	Seana Velasco	Mosbarger	5th	24
Little Chico Creek Elementary	10/18/2024	Kristen Thomas	Mosbarger	5th	22
Little Chico Creek Elementary	1/24/2025	Beatriz Sehorn	Gingery	5th	22
Marigold Elementary	10/24/2024	Emily McEnaney	Rodriguez	5th	31
Marigold Elementary	10/30/2024	Melissa Carriere	Lucena	2nd	31
Marigold Elementary	10/30/2024	Ashley Palmer	Lucena	5th	32
Paradise Ridge Elementary	10/1/2024	Laura Dalton	Gingery	5th	27
Parkview Elementary	9/17/2024	Mallory Alves	Gingery	2nd	19
Parkview Elementary	4/2/2025	Adrienne Jimmerson	Lucena	5th	26
Richvale Elementary	10/8/2024	Jill Pearson	Rodriguez	4th	39
Sierra Ave Elementary	10/24/2024	Judy Yang	Gingery	5th	21
Sierra View Elementary	10/14/2024	Kristen Drake	Merrifield	5th	22
Sierra View Elementary	10/30/2024	Julie Crum	Gingery	5th	27
Sierra View Elementary	11/5/2024	Whitney Toste	Rodriguez	5th	29
Sierra View Elementary	11/6/2024	Gabe Mullins	Lucena	5th	28
High Schools					
Chico High School	10/21/2024	Government Classes	Lucena/Rodriguez	High School	200
Chico High School	10/22/2024	Government Classes	Lucena/Rodriguez	High School	200
Paradise High School	11/15/2024	Matthew Sutter	Gingery	High School	60
Pleasant Valley High School	9/16/2024	Government Classes	Lucena/ Rodriguez	High School	150
Pleasant Valley High School	9/17/2024	Government classes	Lucena/Rodriguez	High School	150
Total Students					1245

While the number of schools and individual classroom visits is consistent with those of the previous school years, the number of individual students reached increased significantly as a result of this year's visits to Chico, Pleasant Valley, and Paradise High Schools as shown in the charts below. The sustained interest in the JIC program is reflected in the participation number over the years. As the numbers of repeated visits to classrooms indicates, JIC visits become a recurring fixture in classroom curriculum once the program is introduced to instructors. BCSC is eager to continue partnering with local educators and to expand its visits to new schools and student demographics. Photos of this school year's JIC visits and instructions on how to request a visit from a judicial officer can be found below.

Number of Schools Visited by School Year



Number of Students Visited by School Year





Group photo of Judge Virginia L. Gingery with 5th graders at Sierra View Elementary.

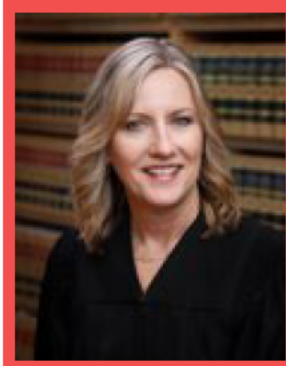


Group photo of Judge Kristen A. Lucena with Ms. Carriere's 5th grade class at Merigold Elementary.

How to Request a Visit from a Judicial Officer

- 1) Review the available lesson plans and submit a request here:
<https://www.powerofdemocracy.org/judges-in-the-classroom>
- 2) Coordinate the visit: An Administrative Services Specialist will contact you once a volunteer has confirmed availability. Teachers will have the opportunity to discuss in advance the learning needs of the classroom.

Scan Me



“THE JUDGES IN THE CLASSROOM PROGRAM HELPS STUDENTS APPRECIATE THE CRITICAL ROLE OUR COURTS, LAWYERS AND THE RULE OF LAW PLAY IN ENSURING FAIRNESS IN OUR SYSTEM OF JUSTICE.” *Hon. Kimberly Merrifield, Judge*



Judge Jesus A. Rodriguez leads the “Salem Witch Trials” lesson for Ms. Thayer’s 5th grade class at John McManus Elementary.

IX. California State Seal of Civic Engagement

The California State Seal of Civic Engagement recognizes students who participate in at least one informed civic engagement project addressing real world problems and demonstrate an understanding of the U.S. and California Constitutions while exhibiting civic knowledge and engagement. The JIC visits to Chico High School and Pleasant Valley High School conducted by Judge Kristen A. Lucena and Judge Jesus A. Rodriguez helped students at both schools secure the State Seal of Civic Engagement as the lessons on the U.S. Constitution, jury service, and voting rights were integrated within their respective civic curriculum allowing them to meet the criteria for the award. Chico Unified School District (CUSD) held a Recognition Ceremony for both schools on May 12, 2025 at Pleasant Valley High School in Chico, CA. The ceremony celebrated the 104 students from Pleasant Valley High School and 99 students from Chico High School who earned the 2025 Civic Seal.

Group photo of California State Seal of Civic Engagement student recipients donning their award medals.



The event also acknowledged the hard work of community partners and educators such as Chico High's SSCE Coordinator Kathyleen Bishop and Pleasant Valley High's SSCE Coordinator Beth Burton who supported students in earning the award. Speakers at the event included Chico Council Member Addison Winslow, Chico Unified School Board 2025 President Tom Lando, and Judge Kristen A. Lucena. The ceremony succeeded, despite an unexpected rainstorm, in bringing the community together to highlight local students' achievement as it was attended by over 150 students and their families. Scenes from the CUSD California State Seal of Civic Engagement Recognition Ceremony are included below.



Judge Kristen A. Lucena addresses attendees at the 2025 CUSD California State Seal of Civic Engagement Recognition Ceremony.



“... ONE OF THE MOST FREQUENT (AND DREADED) QUESTIONS I RECEIVE AS A JUDGE IS, ‘HOW DO I GET OUT OF JURY DUTY?’ WE OFTEN CHARACTERIZE THE JURY TRIAL AS THE GENIUS OF THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF JUSTICE. STUDIES SHOW THAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE SERVED ON JURIES HAVE MUCH HIGHER LEVEL OF TRUST IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM. THAT’S WHY JUDGE RODRIGUEZ AND I VISITED WITH YOU OVER THE COURSE OF FOUR DAYS DEMYSTIFYING THE JURY SELECTION PROCESS SO THAT YOU WILL BE COMFORTABLE COMING TO THE COURTHOUSE TO PARTICIPATE AS JURORS.” *Hon. Kristen A. Lucena, Judge in her remarks to the 2025 CUSD California State Seal of Civic Engagement Recognition Ceremony*



Students and parents enjoying the 2025 CUSD California State Seal of Civic Engagement Recognition Ceremony despite the deluge.

X. American Board of Trial Advocates' Civility Matters Presentation

The American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) created the Civility Matters program in an effort to elevate the standards of “integrity, honor, and courtesy in the legal profession” in accordance with the ABOTA constitution. The Civility Matters program features lessons and experience from ABOTA members that promote the values necessary to maintain high standards for the legal profession. ABOTA chapters throughout the United States promote this uniformity in high standards by hosting Civility matters programs at law schools and other bar association events.

On April 10, 2025 the Sacramento Valley ABOTA Chapter held a Civility Matters presentation at the Cal Northern School of Law. The event was also available via Zoom in order to make the information accessible to a wider audience of legal professionals. The speaker panel included Judge Tamara L. Mosbarger of Butte County Superior Court; Atty. Adam Sorrells of the Law Offices of Adam Sorrells; Mia Winter, Manager of Risk and Compliance at Enloe Health, and Atty. Michael T. Shepherd Owner of the Shepherd Law Group. These prominent speakers shared their wealth of knowledge regarding courtesy and integrity in the courtroom and related legal professions.



The flyer is for the "Civility Matters @ Cal Northern School of Law" event. At the top, it features the American Board of Trial Advocates Sacramento Valley Chapter logo. The main title "Civility Matters @ Cal Northern School of Law" is in a large, bold font. Below the title, the date and time "April 10, 2025 @ 5:30 PM" and the format "In Person and Zoom" are listed. To the right of the text is a photograph of a statue of Lady Justice. Below this, the section "Meet our Speakers" introduces four panelists with their headshots and names: The Honorable Judge Mosbarger, Adam Sorrells, Mia Winter, and Michael T. Shepherd. Each name is followed by their title and affiliation. At the bottom, there are two sections: "Attend by Zoom" which includes a QR code and the meeting ID (263 356 5654) and passcode (CivilPanel), and "Attend in Person" which provides the address of the Cal Northern School of Law in Chico, CA.

American Board of Trial Advocates
SACRAMENTO VALLEY CHAPTER

**Civility Matters
@ Cal Northern
School of Law**

**April 10, 2025 @
5:30 PM
In Person and Zoom**

Meet our Speakers

**The Honorable
Judge Mosbarger**
Panelist
Superior
Court of
Butte County

Adam Sorrells
Panelist
Plaintiff Attorney
Law Offices of
Adam Sorrells

**Mia
Winter**
Panelist
Manager of Risk &
Compliance,
Enloe Health

**Michael T.
Shepherd**
Facilitator
Owner,
Shepherd Law
Group

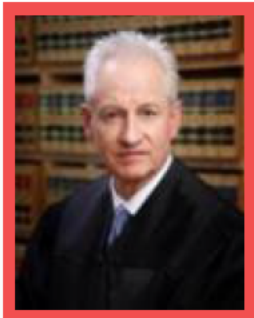
Attend by Zoom
Scan to attend via zoom!
Meeting ID: 263 356 5654
Passcode: CivilPanel

Attend in Person
Cal Northern School of Law
1395 Ridgewood Dr STE 100,
Chico, CA 95973

Flier for the 2025 Civility Matters Presentation at Cal Northern School of Law with featured panelists pictured: Judge Tamara L. Mosbarger of Butte County Superior Court; Atty. Adam Sorrells of the Law Offices of Adam Sorrells; Mia Winter, Manager of Risk and Compliance at Enloe Health, and Atty. Michael T. Shepherd Owner of the Shepherd Law Group.

XI. High School Leadership Luncheons

Butte County Superior Court's Leadership Luncheon Program, initiated by Judge Michael P. Candela, seeks to inspire Butte County high school students to pursue careers in law, government, and become community leaders. BCSC partners with local high school each year to invite exceptional senior students to attend a leadership luncheon event hosted by a BCSC Judicial Officer. Participating students are treated to lunch provided by a generous grant from the California Judges' Foundation and have the invaluable opportunity to discuss possible career interests with judges and other prominent community leaders.



“THE MENTORS ATTENDING THE CHS LUNCHEON ADDED A RICHNESS TO THE DISCUSSION WITH THE STUDENTS THAT CAN ONLY COME FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS DEEPLY ROOTED IN SEEING STUDENTS THRIVE.” *Hon. Phillip H. Heitbecker, Judge*

One of BCSC's goals was to increase funding in order to expand the program to an additional school, and this was achieved during the 2024-2025 school year during which BCSC held seven luncheons and had a total of nine high schools participate. These schools included: Biggs High School, Gridley High School, Oroville High school, Las Plumas High School, Pleasant Valley High School, Chico High School, Paradise High School and Durham High School as well as Fair View High School which was a new addition to this year's leadership luncheons.



“THE PARADISE H.S. STUDENTS, WITH THEIR VARIED INTERESTS AND GOALS, BENEFITED FROM COMMUNITY LEADERS SHARING THEIR ACCADEMIC AND LIFE TIPS FOR SUCCESS. THE NEW SETTING FOR THE LUNCHEON ALSO CREATED AN ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE TO SHARING INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES. *Hon. Virginia L. Gingery, Judge*

This year, judges also partnered with 24 mentors including the Butte County District Attorney, a member of the Butte County Board of Supervisors, the Mayor of Chico, the Mayor of Paradise, the Paradise Chief of Police, the Chico Chief of Police, and members of the Butte County Bar Association. The attendance of these prominent local professionals demonstrates the community's investment in the program as well as its support for local students who will serve as the next generation of community leaders. The table below outlines this year's leadership luncheon events and the accompanying photos feature attendees with judges and mentors.

Leadership Luncheon Events for the 2024-2025 School Year

School	Date	Judge	Mentors
Gridley/Biggs High Schools	4/4/2025	Rodriguez	Commissioner Sears, BCSC Commissioner Emmons Mr. Kevin Wilkerson, Head Coach Hamilton High School
Oroville/Las Plumas High Schools	4/11/2025	Merrifield	Mr. Michael Ramsey, District Attorney Ms. Nicole Diamond, Executive Director of Public Defender Consortium Commissioner Sears, BCSC
Pleasant Valley High Schools	4/11/2025	Lucena	Chief Aldridge, Chico Police Department Mr. Kurt Worley Executive Director of Wildlife Heritage Foundation Ms. Kasey Renolds, Mayor of Chico Mr. Brian Collins, Attorney Brandon Williams, Public Defender
Durham High School	4/16/2025	Mosbarger	Mr. Steven Heithecker Business Owner (Heithecker Financial) Mr. David Murgia Mr. Jamie McElhinney, Police Officer Chico Police Dept. Ms. Lisa Almaguer, Public Information Officer Butte County Public Health
Chico High School	4/30/2025	Heithecker	Commissioner Emmons, BCSC Mr. Darren Chadderdon, Owner Rawbar Restaurant Mr. Mike Wolcott, Editor Chico Enterprise Record Mr. Matt York, Publisher/Business Owner (Video Maker) Ms. Erin Osborn CPA Parkside CPA and Consultants
Paradise High School	4/30/2025	Gingery	Chief Eric Reinbold, Chief of Police Town of Paradise Mr. Richard Gingery Jr., Vice President of the Board of Trustees Paradise Unified School District Mr. Steve Crowder, Mayor Town of Paradise Mr. Doug Teeter, Board of Supervisors Butte County
Fair View High School	5/23/2025	Rodriguez	--



“INTERACTING WITH THE STUDENTS AT FAIR VIEW HIGH SCHOOL IN OUR INAUGURAL HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP LUNCHEON WAS A HIGHLIGHT FOR ME THIS YEAR. IT GIVES ME GREAT HOPE, AS I EMBRACE MY ROLE AS PRESIDING JUDGE OF THE JUVENILE DIVISION, TO SEE FIRSTHAND STUDENTS ACHIEVING THEIR ACADEMIC AND LIFE GOALS UNDER CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES. I WANT THEM TO KNOW THEIR COMMUNITY IS CELEBRATING WITH THEM . *Hon. Jesus A. Rodriguez, Assisting Presiding Judge*



Group photo of Paradise High School students with Judge Virginia L. Gingery. Mentors not pictured included: Chief Eric Reinbold, Chief of Police Town of Paradise; Mr. Richard Gingery Jr., Vice President of the Board of Trustees Paradise Unified School District; Mr. Steve Crowder, Mayor Town of Paradise; and Mr. Doug Teeter, Board of Supervisors Butte County.



Group photo of Durham High School students with Judge Tamara L. Mosbarger, and mentors: Ms. Lisa Almaguer, Public Information Officer for Butte County Public Health; Officer Jaime McElhinney, Chico Police Department; Mr. David Murgia, retired Principal of Neal Dow Elementary; and Mr. Steven Heithecker, CFP, Owner of Heithecker Financial.



Group photo of Fairview High School students with Judge Jesus A. Rodriguez.



Group photo of Pleasant Valley High School students with Judge Kristen A. Lucena, and mentors: Ms. Kasey Reynolds, Mayor of Chico; Mr. Kurt Worley, Executive Director of Wildlife Heritage Foundation; Chief Billy Aldridge of the Chico City Police Department; Public Defender Brandon Williams, and Attorney Brian Collins.

Future Goals

I. Expand Leadership Luncheon Program to Prospect High School

In keeping with this year's expansion of the Leadership Luncheon Program, BCSC would like to extend an invitation Prospect High School students to attend a luncheon event in the upcoming school year. While the court has made efforts to include a number of local high schools across Butte County in its Leadership Luncheon events, it has yet to partner in Prospect High School in Oroville. Given the positive impact that this event can have on young participants, the court is excited to connect with a new group of students who could benefit greatly from the opportunity to meet judicial officers and local leaders. The court plans to reach out to Prospect High School this year to coordinate a Leadership Luncheon event and looks forward to connecting with students and faculty in the hopes of expanding student interest in leadership opportunities.

II. Promote the Leadership Luncheon Program via the Chico Enterprise-Record

Promoting the Leadership Luncheon program is key in order to foster participation of community mentors and recognize outstanding student leaders. One way to promote the program is to showcase the leadership luncheon events through local news publications such as the Chico Enterprise-Record (E.R.). The Chico E.R.'s "Snapshots" section regularly publishes photos of events held by local organizations.

III. Promote the Judges in the Classroom and Justice Saying Walking Tour Programs

The court's Judges in the Classroom and Justice Saying Walking Tour programs can both be incorporated into instructors' existing or future government and civics curriculum while also allowing students to connect with the court. This opportunity to learn about complex topics in an accessible manner directly from judicial officers is a unique way to make government and civics concepts come alive for students thus sparking their interest at a young age. However, there may be K-12 instructors who are unaware of these programs and the flexibility with which they can be integrated into their classroom. This is why the court plans to promote these programs by reaching out to schools and by disseminating copies of our Annual Civics Outreach report to K-12 teachers and administrators in a timely manner allowing them to incorporate such activities in their upcoming curriculum. In addition to this the court can create e-flyers with program information and provide them via email to local teachers and school administrators.

Acknowledgements

The Butte County Superior Court would like to thank everyone involved in making the events listed in this report possible. A special thanks to the Butte County Office of Education, the Judicial Council of California, California State University of Chico, the judicial officers of the Butte County Superior Court, the Administrative Services Division of the Butte County Superior Court, participating teachers, students, mentors, justice partners and the Butte County Bar Association.