



## Innovative Course Application 2007-2008

### Instructions:

1. Complete this application with care, remembering that if the course earns state approval, this application will be made available on the internet and may be accessed and referenced by the public.
2. Obtain the approval of your local board of trustees prior to submitting your application.
3. Submit your application via email as an attachment. Use "Innovative Course Application" as your subject line, and address the email to [curriculum@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:curriculum@tea.state.tx.us). **Submit your 2007-2008 application no later than February 27, 2007.** Expect a receipt confirmation within 5 business days.

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**Name of applying district or organization:** Coppell Independent School District

**Complete mailing address:** CISD, 200 S. Denton Tap Road, Coppell, TX 75019

**Contact person:** Todd Kettler, Director of Advanced Academics

**Contact person's email address:** tkettler@coppellisd.com

**Contact person's phone number, area code first:** 214-496-7004

**County District Number (if applicant is a Texas school district):** 057922

**Superintendent (if applicant is a Texas school district):** Jeff Turner

**Date of local board of trustees' approval of this innovative course application:** February 26, 2007



**Name of innovative course(s):**

- Mock Trial I
- Mock Trial II
- Mock Trial III
- Mock Trial IV

**Number of credits that may be earned:** 1 Credit Per Course

**Brief description of the course (150 words or less):**

Mock Trial introduces students to the basic principles underlying our system of justice in criminal and civil proceedings through practical application. Students participate in the presentation of cases as counsel or witnesses. This course emphasizes critical analysis, evidentiary and parole development (testimony), strategy, listening skills, theatrical interpretation, oral argument, and extemporaneous speaking. Teams may participate in the Texas High School Mock Trial Competition.

**Essential Knowledge and Skills of the course:**

1. Trial Process and Procedure. The student will understand the process and procedures of a jury trial for criminal and civil cases. The student is expected to:
  - a. Explain the similarities and differences between criminal and civil trials;
  - b. Identify the roles of attorneys for the plaintiff, defendant, prosecution, and defense;
  - c. Use legal terminology appropriately;
  - d. Practice appropriate courtroom etiquette before, during, and after trials;
  - e. Evaluate the effectiveness of mock trial strategies of other mock trial teams;
  - f. Understand the concept of evidence and evaluate the quality and uses of various forms of evidence;
  - g. Understand the role of witnesses during civil and criminal trials;
  - h. Apply the skills of direct examination of a witness;
  - i. Apply the skills of cross examination of a witness; and



- j. Utilize objections during a mock trial to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate rules and procedures of the mock trial process.
2. Trial Preparation and Strategy. The student will prepare for mock trials including developing and using appropriate trial strategies. The student is expected to:
  - a. Evaluate the facts of a case with an understanding of the legal issues present;
  - b. Demonstrate skills in recording and organizing information;
  - c. Develop opening statements for a mock trial;
  - d. Develop closing statements for a mock trial;
  - e. Organize a set of questions for witnesses based on a coherent strategy;
  - f. Analyze the strategy of the opposing counsel; and
  - g. Anticipate counter-arguments based upon the strategies implemented by opposing counsel.
3. Public Speaking: The student will develop skills of public speaking for a courtroom audience. The student is expected to:
  - a. Apply knowledge and understanding of rhetoric to analyze and evaluate other speakers in a trial setting;
  - b. Use rhetorical and stylistic devices to achieve clarity, force, and persuasive effects;
  - c. Use informal, standard, and technical language appropriately;
  - d. Employ previews, transitions, summaries, signposts, and other appropriate rhetorical strategies to enhance clarity;
  - e. Choose and develop appropriate devices for questioning witnesses and presenting evidence in a courtroom; and
  - f. Rehearse and employ a variety of delivery strategies.
4. Critical Thinking: The student will develop a variety of critical thinking skills while engaging in the mock trial process. The student is expected to:
  - a. Develop problem solving strategies in the context of a criminal or civil trial;
  - b. Analyze legal issues and facts of a case in order to advocate for either party in a criminal or civil trial;
  - c. Question witnesses in the context of a criminal or civil trial;



- d. Define legal concepts and apply them in preparation and execution of a mock trial; and
  - e. Debate points of law and interpretation of facts.
5. Career Education. The student will explore the role of trial lawyers and understand how an individual would pursue a career in law. The student is expected to:
- a. Participate in the analysis of case materials and development of trial strategies;
  - b. Articulate the skills necessary to practice law as a trial attorney; and
  - c. Understand the educational requirements for various careers in the legal field;

**Description of the specific student needs this course is designed to meet:**

Coppell ISD develops career pathways for students in order to provide meaningful learning experiences. The Mock Trial Courses are part of our Services Technology/Legal Services cluster of courses. Career education programs and courses such as the Mock Trial courses allow students to make informed decisions about post-secondary education.

The Mock Trial courses allow student to practice applying skills of communication and critical thinking to authentic tasks. These courses will provide students with elective options that are engaging and rigorous while introducing them to a career field.

The Texas High School Mock Trial Competition sponsored through the Dallas Bar Association was designed as a tool for students to learn about the legal system of the United States. Participation in the Mock Trial classes in Coppell ISD will provide students the opportunity to not only develop skills of thinking and communicating, but also provide them with authentic learning environments in which to learn about the legal system of the United States.

**Major resources and materials to be used in the course:**

Fundamentals of Trial Techniques  
Thomas Mauet, 1980, Little, Brown, and Company

Blacks Law Dictionary (8th edition)  
Bryan Garner, Editor, 2004, Thomson West

**Required activities and sample optional activities to be used:**

**Required Activities**

- Students will study the format and rules of mock trial as established by the Texas High School Mock Trial Competition.



- Students will read from the designated text to develop an understanding of the aspects of trial law.
- Students will define and use content specific vocabulary regarding the practice of trial law.
- Students will watch video's of trials to learn effective practices of mock trial.
- Students will work with local attorneys to improve their understanding of the trial process and the knowledge and skills required to practice law.
- Students will analyze the annual case presented for the Texas High School Mock Trial Competition and develop strategies to represent either party to the case.
- Students will analyze previous cases presented for the Texas High School Mock Trial Competition as a way to prepare for the current year's competition.
- Students will participate as attorneys and/or witnesses for mock trials.
- Students will practice skills of effective oral communication in the mock trial class.
- Students will organize information and take notes.
- Students will research careers in the legal profession including required and recommended educational pathways.
- Students will complete a research project on a law related issue.

#### Optional Activities

- Students may participate in the regional competition for the Texas High School Mock Trial Competition as part of the Coppell High School Mock Trial Team.
- Students may participate in field trips to various courtrooms in Dallas County to perform mock trials in authentic settings.
- Students may interview or job shadow local attorneys to increase their understanding of the nature of a career in the legal field.
- Students may conduct an extended research project on a law related issue and present it under the guidelines of the Coppell ISD Independent Research Project as a potential advanced measure for the Distinguished Achievement Graduation Program.

#### **Methods for evaluating student outcomes:**

Students will be evaluated according to their level of competency on the student expectations presented in the essential knowledge and skills of the mock trial courses. Performance tasks such as speaking and writing will be assessed with rubrics articulating



the progression of competency in each knowledge and skill area. Evaluation of student outcomes will be ongoing and reported according to the grade reporting guidelines of the Coppell ISD grading policies.

**Required qualifications of teachers:**

Valid Texas Teacher Certification for grades 6-12 or 8-12 in one or more of following areas: English Language Arts, speech, or social studies (including government, history, or geography).

**Additional information (optional):**