

## About the Presenter

Wayne Bentley, a government teacher in the Grand Rapids public schools system, has spent more than a decade researching the lack of representation of minorities on Kent County juries and working with community coalitions to correct the problem. Bentley has also worked with students through award-winning mock trial, "We the People," debate, and academic teams, and has received many awards for his work. Bentley holds bachelor's degrees in mathematics and group social studies and a master's degree in educational leadership from Grand Valley State University.

Educating for Everyday Democracy: The Jury Process

Presented by

State Bar of Michigan Public Outreach Committee

Berrien County Bar Association

Michigan Center for Civic Education

Michigan high school educator Wayne Bentley

To obtain more information about this exciting new curriculum, please contact

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Educating  
for Everyday  
Democracy



THE JURY PROCESS

# E d u c a t i n g   f o r   E v e r y d a y   D e m o c r a c y



**T**his new curriculum is designed to educate high school students about the Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution and the critical importance of the jury process in our system of justice. The curriculum is a suitable classroom activity any time during the school year, but is particularly appropriate for Constitution Day observances.

Developed by the Michigan Center for Civic Education, award-winning educator Wayne Bentley, and the State Bar of Michigan, the curriculum explains how jury service and diverse jury pools help guarantee due process, equal protection of the laws, individual rights, and justice in a democracy. The curriculum can be adapted for a variety of situations—a 90-minute classroom lesson, an assembly program, or an in-depth, day-long presentation.

Using Michigan Merit Exam (MME) competencies, lawyers and judges will join Wayne Bentley and participating teachers in various activities. The resources include:

***This is Our Town, Too*** – This easy-to-read story forms the basis for in-class discussion about juries and the benefits and burdens placed on individuals and society to ensure fairness and equity for all. Students learn about our courts, *voir dire*, challenges to individual jurors, and the meaning of equal protection as they consider the complexities



of fairness in a diverse society.

***Homeless Joe*** – The story of a homeless man who changes places with a judge focuses on the characters as they experience another side of life and change in the process. The content is appropriate for students in grades 9-12.

***It's Not Fair if You're Not There*** – This video is designed to stimulate classroom discussion and encourage wider participation in the jury process. It teaches the importance of diverse perspectives in determining fair outcomes in jury trials.

## **Michigan Merit Exam Benchmarks:**

- Identify benefits and challenges of diversity in American life (III, 2, HS, 1) using hypothetical situations in stories of *This is Our Town, Too* and *Homeless Joe*, and discussions in the *It Isn't Fair if You're Not There* video.
- Evaluate effectiveness of civil and criminal courts in the United States (III, 3, HS, 1)
- Explain why people may agree on democratic values in theory but disagree when they are applied to specific situations (III, 3 HS, 2)
- Engage each other in conversations that deeply examine public policy issues and help make reasoned and informed decisions (VI, 2, HS, 1)
- [Others as necessary to match the edited resources.]

In-service presentations for teachers can be scheduled beginning in May 2007.

