

Court Information Release



United States District Court
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604

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Contact: Julie Hodek, Public Information Officer
United States District Court for
the Northern District of Illinois
219 S. Dearborn St., #2514A
Chicago, IL 60604
312-435-5693

Court welcomes Chicago Legal Prep high schoolers participating in William J. Hibbler Schoolhouse to Courthouse Program

Chicago, Ill. – Today the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois welcomed high school students from Legal Prep Charter Academy in Chicago’s Austin Neighborhood as part of the Sixth Annual William J. Hibbler Schoolhouse to Courthouse Program.

The high school juniors observed a mock sentencing hearing before Magistrate Judge M. David Weisman. Then Chief Judge Rubén Castillo, Judge Gary Feinerman, Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer and Judge Andrea Wood each addressed the students in the James Benton Parsons Ceremonial Courtroom. The district judges offered reflections on their own backgrounds, shared information on court history and the justice system, and answered students’ questions on topics ranging from jury duty to overcoming obstacles in life. The judges also joined students at a luncheon keynoted by retired Magistrate Judge Arlander Keys.

Chief Judge Castillo welcomed the group and spoke about growing up on Chicago’s West Side in a family and neighborhood where he knew no judges or attorneys. “If there’s anything I want you take away from your visit to the courthouse today, it is that judges are regular people,” said Judge Castillo.

Judge Castillo shared with the students that while he was attending college at Loyola University Chicago, he worked nights at bond court at the State Circuit Court of Cook County at 26th and California on Chicago’s Southwest Side. Until that experience, he had never met a judge, but through that job he met many judges, giving him the confidence that perhaps one day he could become an attorney and a judge. Judge Castillo urged the students to have confidence in themselves. “Don’t let others define what you can and cannot do in life,” he offered.

Legal Prep is a Chicago Public School, founded in 2012, that uses a law-themed curriculum to prepare students for colleges and universities. The William J. Hibbler Schoolhouse to Courthouse Program is sponsored by the Federal Bar Association, Chicago Chapter, and aims to reach out to children who would otherwise not have the opportunity to learn firsthand about lawyers, the law, and the courts.

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