

Young People and the Law: Thompson Coe, Allstate Staff Counsel and Street Law Bring the Practice of Law to High School Students

March 27, 2015, Houston, TX - Thompson, Coe, Cousins & Irons, L.L.P. partnered with Allstate Staff Counsel (G. Patrick Collins & Associates) and Street Law, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to educating diverse youth about law, democracy and human rights, to administer a week long introduction-to-law program for two sections of AP U.S. Government at John H. Reagan High School in the Houston Independent School District (HISD).



During the week the students participated in interactive classroom workshops facilitated by attorneys and paralegals from both Thompson Coe and G. Patrick Collins. The areas of law covered in the workshops were cyberbullying, social-host liability, and domestic violence, which allowed the students to experience three different aspects of practicing law – a deliberation, an investigation and a mini-trial. The topics chosen were intended not only to be educational, but to address issues teenagers are facing in their daily lives. The workshops provided the students an avenue for engaging in lively debate about these sensitive yet prevalent issues, and to think critically about the role of law in protecting those who may fall victim.

The week concluded with an all-day conference held at the Thompson Coe office, which expanded on the previously presented legal themes, and provided opportunities for the students to network with legal professionals and get a preview of life as an attorney. There was also a brief career fair where non-attorneys presented the importance of their roles in a law firm so the students could learn about and explore different career paths available within a firm.

Overall the Street Law program was beneficial to everyone involved. The students had the opportunity to spend time away from their traditional curriculum to learn about the practice of law, and gain skills and experiences they can apply to improving their futures. The attorneys gained a lot through the experience of teaching young people about the law and giving back to the community. One participating Thompson Coe attorney said of their experience:

“The students were very engaging and actively debated the issues. It was refreshing to experience first-hand how the average person weighs different fact patterns. I look forward to participating in this program in the future.”

