

JUDGE CASTANO PRESENTS “JUDICIALLY SPEAKING” PROGRAM AT UW LAB SCHOOL

In late November, Judge Matt Castano, Circuit Court Judge for Crook and Weston Counties, presented an outreach program titled “Judicially Speaking” to 20 seventh and eighth grade students at the UW Lab School in Laramie. Judge Castano commented that it “was a total kick in the pants! It was really fun.”

The program was designed in 2009 by Colorado trial judges David Prince, Theresa Cisneros, and David Shakes, who subsequently received the 2015 “Sandra Day O’Connor Award for the Advancement of Civil Education” for their creation. Judge Prince believes “we’ve come up with a better mousetrap for the way to help explain to the community what judges really do, and make them less vulnerable to the classic headline about the tyrants in black robes ruining people’s lives.”

With the help of various judges and educators, these three judges developed this low overhead, interactive program that is fun for the students and fun for the presenters. The program is designed to get judges into the classroom to provide meaningful education that helps students understand the rule of law generally, but more importantly, the role of the judge within the rule of law. The students first act as legislators to develop a law, and then they change roles and apply the law they just created to real-life cases.

Judge Castano strongly encourages judges to find a school in which to present this program. He found it to be very rewarding for the students, the teacher, and himself.

The presentations are designed for high school classes but can be easily modified for other age groups. They are appropriate for civics, law, social studies, mock trial, and related classes. Judge Castano and the judges in Colorado would be happy to answer questions about the program.

The website can be viewed at <https://judiciallyspeaking.net> .