

11. ACADEMICS SPREAD

As part of the jury, eighth graders Jonathan Forbes, Maya Martinez, Alexander Christou and Robert Yam listen intently to prosecution lawyer as Lewis Hughes makes his closing statements.

Lewis Hughes and Cameron Bennett question a witness. "I liked being an attorney because I got to ask all the questions," Bennett said.



Photo by Adrian Peña



Photo by Adrian Peña

Eighth grader Elexis Kalar questions a witness in front of the judge (Johnny Galan). She said she liked questioning people and being part of the whole process. "My favorite part of the mock trial was eating pizza afterwards," she said.



Photo by Adrian Peña

May it please the court?

Mock trial students conduct trials in Travis County courthouses

Students say that mock trial was hectic, confusing and frustrating when they had to demonstrate what they knew in a courtroom.

Fulmore hosts the Magnet School for Humanities and Law. Law teacher Johnny Galan said he taught Mock Trial to prepare students for work in the law field.

During the first six weeks, students had to take multiple tests based on the curriculum. Students with the 8-10 highest scores were put in A team and were able to argue cases in the Travis County courthouses. B team members tried their cases inside the classroom.

Galan asked teachers (and sometimes parents) to accompany him and participate in either the jury or as witnesses when he judged the students during a trial. He also asked students and teachers to come to trials at the Travis County courthouses.

"I expect the student attorneys to be able to provide their juries with their version and the facts of the case," Galan said.

But as eighth grader Martha Walls said, the main purpose of the trials was to learn how the law functions.

Students chose from 15 cases which were held in binders. Af-

ter they chose a case, they kept the binder for their case. Once they had a case Galan stepped back.

"The amount of help Mr. Galan gave was limited," seventh grader Dylan Torres said.

Galan held these trials in two different courthouses. They tried one case in a smaller Travis County Courtroom on Post Road, near school. They tried the main case in the Travis County Courthouse at the Blackwell Thurman Justice Center in downtown Austin.

•Ashwara Pillai



Photo by Adrian Peña



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Law teacher Johnny Galan swears in the jury. He has been holding mock trials in the local Travis County Courthouses for many years. "The mock trial field trips we take are the most exciting part of the class."

Eighth graders Ella Castro and Mia Orrick consult on their case at the mock trial event. The trial held at the Travis County Courthouse downtown is the last trial of the semester.