



CONSTITUTION DAY Planning Timeline

A STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN GUIDE FOR BAR ASSOCIATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL LAWYERS

★ 3-4 MONTHS BEFORE (MAY, JUNE)

- **Identify who will lead this activity and whether a committee should be formed to support it.** Identify what resources might be necessary to conduct the event.
 - **Identify what schools and what individuals can be contacted with a message of support for Constitution Day activities.** The Intermediate School District, school principals, librarian, teachers, or others are good contacts. If you have a child in school, contact the principal or one of your child's teachers and engage in a Constitution Day conversation. If your spouse works in a school, use his/her contacts. If you have Law Day school programs, use your contacts there. If you do not have a contact, look at these sources for ideas:
 - Michigan Education Directory (\$23.50 at www.michiganeducationdirectory.com)
 - Intermediate School District Directory (<http://gomaisa.org/directory.htm>)
 - Your school district website
 - **Contact school representatives and let them know that Constitution Day is on September 17, to commemorate the date in 1787 when the Constitution was signed in Philadelphia.** The 2005 authorizing legislation mandated that every federally funded school teach the Constitution on that day. Also, Michigan statute requires that all schools observe Constitution Day with a "proper and appropriate commemorative exercise." Offer your help, or the help of your bar association, to satisfy that legal obligation. Your message can say "There is not much time left, we need to plan now. We are available to meet with school representatives, including curriculum planners, teachers, and others. Our meeting should occur before this school year ends. We can suggest several activities that are appropriate for Constitution Day." Those activities can include:
 - Classroom visits from lawyers, judges, and law enforcement officials
 - Courtroom visits
 - Mock courtrooms set in your school
- See <http://www.michbar.org/generalinfo/constitutionday.cfm>. Classroom visits can be centered on a jury project, an "anatomy of a criminal case" lesson, "anatomy of a civil case," or mock trial experience. The website has lots of ideas. See *Educating for Everyday Democracy: The Jury Process* materials (<http://www.michbar.org/generalinfo/pdfs/JuryProject.pdf>).
- **Meet with your school contact to discuss possibilities.** Ask teachers if they had any Constitution Day activities last year, how those worked, and what they would like to do.

- **Identify the activity and the date before the this school year ends.** If a courtroom visit is involved, clear the date with the court and work with the school to arrange for bus transportation.
- **Establish a method of communicating with the teacher over the summer if any serious questions arise.** Establish a method of communicating as soon as the school year begins in September.

★ 2 MONTHS BEFORE (JULY)

- **Secure volunteers and materials sufficient to carry out the activity.** Recruit the rest of your volunteers. See website resources for possible reading materials, crossword puzzles, word searches, or mock trial stories to correspond with the activity. Print all materials needed for the activity.
- **Identify all details that must be taken care of.** If a courthouse visit is involved, obtain security information from court and prepare it for the classroom.

★ 1 MONTH BEFORE (AUGUST)

Review activities and resources and supplement as necessary. Finalize the coordination of volunteers. Distribute activities and other materials to volunteers for advance preparation of various presentations. Issue press release and arrange for photo taking.

★ 1 WEEK BEFORE

Make sure final contact with school/teacher has been made and work out all details necessary to carry out the event.

★ CONSTITUTION DAY

Conduct the event!

★ AFTER CONSTITUTION DAY

Convene planners to assess activities. Record information for future use. Account for any budget matters. Send thank-you letters to all volunteers, sponsors, media, and schools. Submit photos and stories to the State Bar for statewide dissemination.