

MESA AREA SCHOOL REPRESENTS ARIZONA IN NATIONAL COMPETITION:

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Contact: [Lara Slifko](#) (602)340-7235

MESA AREA SCHOOL REPRESENTS ARIZONA IN NATIONAL COMPETITION Dobson High Students Recognized with Top Honors at “We The People” Competition

[PHOENIX, AZ] – On May 5th, Dobson High School students were nationally recognized with top honors for their superior knowledge of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and placed 17th in the overall “We the People” competition. More than 1,200 high school students from all 50 states and the District of Columbia participated in the highly prestigious “We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution” academic competition. The national competition challenges students’ knowledge of the US Constitution and is an important culminating activity of the “We the People” curriculum, the most extensive civic education program of its kind in the nation. Dobson High School was able to represent the state of Arizona after placing first in a statewide competition sponsored by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education.

Dobson High School students have studied for months preparing for their role as experts in simulated congressional hearings, testifying on the history and present-day application of the US Constitution. “Being able to go to the National Competition has been an incredible experience. It’s been wonderful the past three years to watch groups of students grow in their knowledge of our Constitution and our government and their ability to share and present that knowledge and their passion for it. Nationals is exciting because they get to see first hand some of the history that they have been studying and arguing throughout the course of the year”, said Dobson High School teacher and Coach Shannon Sweat.

Now in its 20th year, the “We the People” competition challenges high school civics and government classes to present and answer constitutional questions before a panel of constitutional scholars, lawyers, and government leaders from across the country. The judges act as congressional committee members and evaluate student responses. The *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution* curriculum, developed by the Center for Civic Education, is distributed in Arizona at no cost to Arizona teachers who attend professional development trainings conducted by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education. The Foundation reaches over 300 teachers annually with free “We the People” professional development opportunities.

Members of the celebrated Dobson High School team are coached by teachers Ms. Shannon Sweat and Mr. Frank Campos and include: Caleb Chou, Tammy Chiang, Erica Franklin, McKee Krumpak, John Kondziolka, Dali Larios, Mark Goldfarb, Kelsey Phillips, Forbes Ross, Jeffrey Steiner, Elise Wilkes, Elizabeth Westbook, and Kim Young.

About Arizona’s “We the People” Program

Over the last twenty years, the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education has

trained several hundred Arizona teachers and distributed thousands of free sets of “*We the People*” textbooks to Arizona classrooms. As a result, thousands of Arizona students have learned about the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights through this innovative, active-learning curriculum.

The Program encourages active learning in and out of the classroom about contemporary constitutional issues, the history of democratic philosophy and the history surrounding the creation of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. “*We the People*” also meets Arizona Academic Standards in Civics and Government and Language Arts. Each “*We the People*” team competing consists of a regularly-rostered class of juniors or seniors who are studying civics and government or history.

About the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education

The Foundation provides technical and financial assistance to legal aid organizations, schools and community groups working toward “access to justice for all Arizonans” through law-related education and free legal services. The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education plays a leading role in preparing Arizona students for civic responsibility. The Foundation reaches more than 100,000 children each year by training teachers, school resource officers and probation officers about our laws, justice system and the foundations of democracy. It is also home of *LawForKids.org*, America’s first Web site dedicated to teaching students about the law.

Helpful Websites:

- Arizona We the People Program: <http://www.azflse.org/WeThePeople>
- Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education: <http://www.azflse.org>
- Center for Civic Education: <http://www.civiced.org>

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