

McCarter's Women's Initiative Partners with Citizen Schools in Mock Trial Apprenticeship

Attorneys Teach Local Youth about the Law

NEWARK, NJ (November 10, 2009)-Volunteer coaches from McCarter & English's Women's Initiative, a group of women attorneys at the firm whose goal it is build positive relationships with colleagues and clients as well as the communities in which they live and work, welcomed students from the Ivy Hill School to McCarter's Newark office for the start of the third semester of its Mock Trial Apprenticeship in partnership with Citizen Schools. Over the course of the ten week program, students will analyze and master a fact pattern, hone their public speaking ability and learn the skills involved in being an attorney. The program will culminate in a mock trial to be held at the Newark Municipal Courthouse in December, with the students acting as both the attorneys and witnesses for both plaintiffs and defendants.

"We are thrilled at the opportunity to partner with Citizen Schools again to teach students about how the law works - something that is near and dear to all of us here at McCarter," said Stephanie Cohen, a partner in McCarter's Newark office who is also a member of the firm's Women's Initiative Steering Committee. "Exposing the students to this field will hopefully give them insight to what is possible for their future. If they choose to pursue law or not, the skills they gain from the apprenticeship - such as reasoning and analyzing facts - can be applied to a variety of life situations."

Established in 1995, Citizen Schools is a growing national network of after-school education programs for low-income students in the middle grades (6th, 7th and 8th). Programs complement classroom learning by engaging students in hands-on learning projects led by adult volunteers after school and supported by a staff of professional educators. The goal is to help students develop the academic and leadership skills they need to succeed in high school, college, the workplace and civic life.

McCarter has had an alliance with Citizen Schools since 2008 and has worked with more than 30 students through its after-school mock trial apprenticeship. The alliance was born out of Newark Mayor Cory Booker's challenge to the New Jersey legal community to be mentors for inner-city youth. Susan Feeney, a partner in the firm's Newark Office (and slated to be president of the New Jersey State Bar Association in 2011) was instrumental in helping form the alliance. Past attendees of the mock trial include Newark Mayor Cory Booker, former Municipal Court Chief Judge (and current City of Newark Corporation Counsel) Julien X. Neals, Municipal Court Acting Chief Judge Richard Nunes, and Councilman Ron Rice from the West Ward of Newark. In addition, the Corporation Counsel's office has been actively involved in helping coordinate the mock trial at the end of each session.