Introduction to Law and the American Legal System

Introduction to Law and the American Legal System is a one-credit course that provides students with an opportunity to develop an understanding of the principles and practices of the American legal system. Students learn fundamental aspects of career opportunities, history and development of law, sources of law in society, civil law, criminal law and procedure, ethics and the justice system, reasoning skills, trial procedures, and communication and research skills.

Content standards for this course are not intended to serve as the entire curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to expand the curriculum beyond these minimum required content standards to accommodate specific community interests and utilize local resources. This course encourages critical thinking, use of the scientific method, integration of technology, development of student leadership skills, and application of knowledge and skills related to practical questions and problems.

Career and technical student organizations are integral, cocurricular components of each career and technical education course. These organizations serve as a means to enhance classroom instruction while helping students develop leadership abilities, expand workplace-readiness skills, and broaden opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Career Opportunities

Students will:

1. Explain career opportunities within the American legal system.

History and Development of Law

2. Trace the history and development of the American legal system.

Sources of Law in Society

3. Describe fundamental sources of law in American society.
   - Comparing common law with statutory law

Civil Law

4. Explain how principles of tort law affect human behavior.
   - Analyzing factual scenarios for presence of actionable torts
   - Identifying elements of negligence regarding civil law

5. Describe the development of the United States Constitution.
   - Explaining fundamental constitutional rights
   - Explaining contemporary issues involving constitutional law

6. Explain principles of family law in Alabama, including requirements for marriage and grounds for divorce.

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7. Identify fundamental concepts of commercial law.

8. Describe statutes related to consumers.
   - Explaining state and federal statutes regarding consumer rights
     Example: fair debt collections law
   - Explaining basic bankruptcy laws

9. Differentiate among principles of probate law, including types of property and ownership rights and responsibilities.

10. Describe the structure of the civil court system.
    - Comparing federal, state, and local court systems
    - Describing jurisdiction and function of district, circuit, and appellate courts

11. Identify contractual elements, obligations, and consequences of breach of contract.

12. Explain basic rules of evidence in the justice system.
    - Describing types of evidence presented in court proceedings
    - Defending admissibility of evidence in the legal process

**Criminal Law and Procedure**

13. Describe basic principles and procedures of criminal law.

**Ethics and the Justice System**


**Reasoning Skills**

15. Formulate legal arguments for various areas of law.

**Trial Procedures**

16. Prioritize stages of trial and court proceedings.

17. Create a case presentation for a mock trial.

**Communication and Research Skills**

18. Demonstrate written communication and public speaking skills necessary for a career in a legal field.
    - Researching legal issues for a mock trial