



## SCHOOL FAQ SHEET

### **What is Project LEAD?**

Project LEAD is a proven law-related education program established by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office in partnership with the Constitutional Rights Foundation. Students learn about the criminal justice system and the importance of making good decisions. The goal is to teach children that the choices they make today can affect their lives forever. Since the program's inception in 1993, Project LEAD has touched the lives of tens of thousands of students in public schools throughout Los Angeles County. The program also has been replicated in several other states and foreign countries.

### **How are schools and classrooms selected to participate in the program?**

Project LEAD is designed for fifth-grade classes at public schools in Los Angeles County. The program is volunteer-based and although we try to accommodate as many schools as possible, we do not always have enough volunteers to accommodate all schools or classes. Contact us for more information about how your school may get involved.

### **Why fifth grade?**

Fifth-graders are in a critical period of youth development. Project LEAD gives these students the motivation and essential skills they need to meet the many new challenges they will face in middle school. Each lesson has been developed specifically for fifth-grade reading and comprehension levels.

### **May classes be combined to reach more students?**

No, classes may not be combined for this program. Project LEAD works best when a facilitator or team of facilitators is assigned to one class only. An important aspect of the program is for facilitators to build relationships with the students in the class with their weekly visits.

### **What is the duration of the program?**

Facilitators generally teach one hour a week for approximately 20 weeks. Facilitators work with the teacher to coordinate the day and time that works best for their schedules. The program generally runs from late September to mid-May.

### **Who are the facilitators?**

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office encourages its prosecutors, investigators, field deputies, paralegals, hearing officers and law clerks to volunteer to teach Project LEAD. Attorneys from other prosecutorial agencies also participate. Some classes are taught by individual facilitators; others are taught by a team.

### **How are Project LEAD facilitators selected for each school?**

Project LEAD facilitators are usually assigned to schools based on their work location. Facilitators are professionals who work in the criminal justice system and volunteer their time to teach the curriculum. Often, more than one facilitator is assigned to a classroom. The team approach ensures continuity; if one facilitator is unavailable to teach, the other facilitators will be there to step in.



Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office  
Public Affairs Division  
Phone: (213) 257-2960 ~ Fax: (213) 633-1958  
Email: [LEAD@da.lacounty.gov](mailto:LEAD@da.lacounty.gov)  
Website: <https://projectlead.lacounty.gov>

### **What does the curriculum cover?**

The Project LEAD curriculum focuses on the legal and social consequences of juvenile crimes, such as truancy, illicit drug use, shoplifting and graffiti. The program also teaches students techniques for resolving conflict and resisting peer pressure. The program concludes with students performing a scripted mock trial, putting into practice what they have learned about the criminal justice system. Access to the detailed lesson plans is granted only to facilitators; however, an overview of lessons and other teacher materials are available on the Project LEAD website, by clicking on Additional Teacher Materials.

### **Is the program effective?**

A two-year study of Project LEAD indicated that the program gave students the skills and experience to evaluate challenging situations and make more appropriate decisions than comparison students who did not have Project LEAD instruction. The Project LEAD students showed increased tolerance and understanding of the consequences of their decisions and actions. Read the program evaluation report on the Project LEAD website.

### **What are the responsibilities of the teacher?**

Teachers should work with the facilitators to set a specific day and time of the week for the weekly visits. Teachers also should exchange contact information, including email addresses and cell phone numbers, with assigned facilitators at the beginning of the school year. Teachers must remain in the classroom at all times during all Project LEAD lessons. It is the teacher's responsibility to maintain order in the classroom so that the facilitators can focus on teaching the Project LEAD lessons.

### **What if a teacher wants a specific facilitator to return to class next year?**

The teacher should check with the facilitator before the end of the school year and ensure that the principal submits a new school agreement for each academic year. Facilitator requests will be accommodated whenever possible. As a reminder, Project LEAD relies on volunteers to teach the curriculum. At times, due to assignment changes, some facilitators may not be able to return to the same school or volunteer the next year.

### **Why doesn't a facilitator return phone calls immediately?**

Attorneys and law enforcement officers have many day-to-day responsibilities. An attorney's schedule is often decided by the court and may vary each day. Judges may order attorneys and investigators to be present at a moment's notice. Investigators may be called out to a crime scene and be unable to fulfill their other commitments, no matter how important they are. Court proceedings, especially trials, often take longer than expected, which may force facilitators to reschedule other appointments. You should not view a facilitator's commitment to your students as being diminished if he or she is sometimes unable to be in class.

### **What if I have a problem with a Project LEAD facilitator or the program?**

Immediately contact the Project LEAD Coordinators in the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Public Affairs Division at 213-257-2960 or [LEAD@da.lacounty.gov](mailto:LEAD@da.lacounty.gov).