



# Wyoming Department of Education

Dr. Jim McBride, Superintendent of Public Instruction

2020 Grand Avenue, Suite 500

Laramie, WY 82070

Phone 307-777-5296

Fax 307-777-6719

Website [www.k12.wy.us](http://www.k12.wy.us)

---

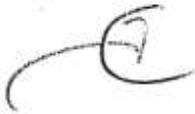
## MEMORANDUM NO. 2009-103

**TO:** School District Superintendents  
Curriculum Coordinators

**FROM:** Tom Collins, Social Studies Content Specialist  
Standards and Assessment Unit

**DATE:** July 31, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Our Courts Civic Education Project



---

### INFORMATION TO SHARE

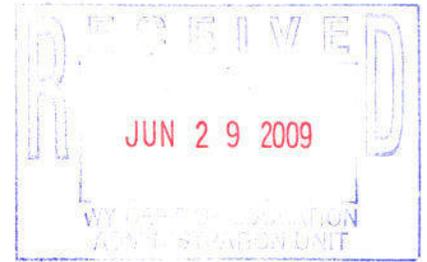
The Wyoming Department of Education would like to inform school districts of Our Courts, a civic education project designed for middle school students. The program offers relevant, engaging, and innovative approaches to civics education. Please see the attached letter from The Honorable Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (Ret.) for details and project contact information.

Please contact Mr. Tom Collins, Social Studies Content Specialist at (307) 777-3493, [tcoll@educ.state.wy.us](mailto:tcoll@educ.state.wy.us), for any questions you may have regarding Our Courts civic education project.

TC:al

Enclosure

Supreme Court of the United States  
Washington, D. C. 20543



CHAMBERS OF  
JUSTICE SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR (RET.)

June 25, 2009

The Honorable David Freudenthal  
Governor of Wyoming  
State Capitol, 200 West 24th Street  
Cheyenne, WY 82002-0010

Dear Governor Freudenthal:

I write to tell you about the Our Courts civics education project, which I started to help reinvigorate civics learning inside and outside the classroom. Ourcourts.org provides free web-based civics resources designed for middle school students, including lesson plans, interactive modules, and online games. We would welcome the opportunity to enlist your help to integrate our innovative approach into Wyoming's classrooms. Unfortunately, civics is being pushed out of the classroom. Where it is taught, civics is often described as one of students' least favorite subjects. We need renewed commitment and innovative approaches to civics education to prepare students for active citizenship. Our Courts engages students through problems that they want to solve because the content is relevant and the delivery is intriguing. Over the summer, we will add to the website two online games for classroom use. In these games, students will grapple with difficult questions about how the law applies to issues that are important to them.

I hope you will help us to spread the word about Our Courts to administrators and teachers across Wyoming. I also welcome your feedback about how Our Courts can better serve the educational needs of Wyomingites. We would like to partner with Wyoming in tailoring our program, training teachers, and bringing Our Courts into the classroom. You, your staff, and other administrators in your state can reach the Executive Director of Our Courts, Abby Taylor at (202) 662-9880 or at [abt25@law.georgetown.edu](mailto:abt25@law.georgetown.edu).

Sincerely,

Sandra Day O'Connor

cc: Dr. Jim McBride, Wyoming Superintendent of Public Instruction