



# Administrative Office of the Courts

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## Supreme Judicial Court to Hold Court at Gorham, Old Town, Houlton High Schools October 8-10

October 4, 2019, Portland, Maine. Later this month the Supreme Judicial Court will hold court and hear nine cases at three Maine high schools.

On Tuesday, October 8, beginning at 9:00 a.m., the Court will hear three cases at Gorham High School, at the invitation of **Representatives Maureen Terry and Andrew McLean and Senator Linda Sanborn**. A second case will be heard at 9:50 a.m. and the third case at 10:40 a.m. The Court will also attend a luncheon, served by the Food Nutrition Program, and joined by social studies students and faculty members.

The Court will hear three appeals at Old Town High School on Wednesday, October 9, at the invitation of **Senator James Dill and Representative Michelle Dunphy**. The first oral argument will start at 9:00 a.m., with the second at 9:50 a.m. and the third at 10:40 a.m.

The third set of arguments will take place on Thursday, October 10, at Houlton High School at the invitation of **Senator Mike Carpenter**. Students from Hodgdon High School and Southern Aroostook High School will also be in attendance. The cases are scheduled for 9:00 a.m., 9:50 a.m., and 10:40 a.m.

Chief Justice Leigh I. Saufley said, "The collaboration between the Legislative and Judicial Branches, aimed at providing Maine students an opportunity to see the effect of the Legislature's work through the enforcement of the law and to observe the State's Supreme Judicial Court in action, has been a resounding success."

Every year since 2005, the Supreme Judicial Court has held high school oral arguments. The Court has now visited over 40 Maine high schools and heard over 100 appellate cases before Maine high school students and faculty.

All of the trips are arranged at the invitation of local legislators. In recent years, the Court has traveled from Fort Kent to South Berwick, Rumford to Machias. In 2018, the Court sat at Westbrook High School and Wells High School, and in the spring of 2019, the Court sat at the newly-constructed Sanford High School.

The Chief emphasized that these annual arguments in the high schools allow the students and members of the communities to observe appellate arguments in real time: “The practice of appellate law is rarely seen on television or in movies. Holding real oral arguments in Maine high schools supplements the education that Maine students receive regarding the administration of justice in their own State, allowing them to observe the interaction between attorneys and the Court as cases are argued and legal principles are developed. We hope that the experience helps students and adults alike understand the distinction between the actual delivery of justice and the often far-removed-from-reality depiction of the courts in television and movie entertainment.”

The Chief also expressed her gratitude to the teachers and administrators of the high schools. “Transforming high school space into a courtroom takes great effort on the part of the faculty and school staff. We also appreciate how well the teachers prepare the students for the legal challenges at issue.”

In each school, the gymnasium, cafeteria, or auditorium is turned into an actual courtroom for the morning so that the students can observe the appellate process. When the cases are decided, the schools receive a link to the decisions to provide to the students.

Students receive copies of the briefs in advance of the oral arguments, and after the arguments, the lawyers stay to answer questions from interested students.

Ultimately, the Chief Justice says, “The high point for the Court is the chance to meet and talk with Maine students and their teachers. We learn as much about our great State traveling and meeting with the students, teachers, and educators as the students and the public learn about the operation of justice in Maine.”

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The press is welcome to attend. The case schedule and briefs have been posted on the Court’s website [here](#).

Live audio streaming of these cases, and all other Supreme Judicial Court oral arguments, is available [here](#).

If interviews or photographs of the Court are desired while the Court is at the schools, or to schedule an interview at the school, please contact Julia Finn before the date of the arguments, here: [julia.finn@courts.maine.gov](mailto:julia.finn@courts.maine.gov). Photographs and video of students are subject to the rules of the high school, and the press is requested to contact school officials directly.