PROJECT PEACE

9:30 a.m.  Registration

10:00 a.m.  Opening Session: Looking at Conflict in the Schools and Beyond

This opening session introduces the audience to the nature of conflict in our schools and sets what happens in our schools into the larger context of the juvenile and criminal justice system. The importance of lawyers and educators working together to improve access to justice and knowledge of the rule of law will be discussed.

10:30 a.m.  Introduction to Project PEACE: From Discipline to Mediation and Beyond

Project PEACE, a partnership of the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General, the Pennsylvania Bar Association and the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation, is a peer mediation, anti-bullying and youth court training program that enhances in Pennsylvania schools and communities the skills of non-violent conflict resolution and active civic engagement that are necessary for productive citizenship. This public-private partnership introduces dispute resolution techniques first to elementary school students throughout the Commonwealth while promoting Olweus bullying prevention education in the schools. Youth courts, where students serve as jurors, judges and attorneys, handling real-life cases involving their peers, are then introduced as students move into middle school.

12 noon   Lunch/Keynote Speaker  Montgomery County DA Risa Ferman
12:45 p.m.  Bullying and Project PEACE

Bullying can threaten students’ physical and emotional safety at school and can negatively impact their ability to learn. The best way to address bullying is to stop it before it starts. There are a number of things school staff can do to make schools safer and prevent bullying. The model that will be shared here treats bullying as a human rights violation and shows how the social studies educator can address bullying with the individual student, in the classroom, across the school and in the community beyond.

1:45 p.m.  Project PEACE: Youth Court

Youth court, teen court, and peer court are interchangeable terms for an alternative disciplinary system for youth, either in school or community settings, who have committed an act that violates the norms of a school or the community. Youth courts train teenagers to serve as jurors, judges and attorneys, handling real-life cases involving their peers. The goal of youth court is to use positive peer pressure to ensure that young people who have committed minor offenses pay back the school or larger community and receive the help they need to avoid further involvement in the school discipline or juvenile justice system. Youth courts hear a range of low-level offenses; many handle cases that would otherwise wind up in Family Court or with school suspensions. This session will showcase the development of a middle school youth court model but will be valuable to educators and attorneys working with students of any age.

2:55 p.m.  Gala Closing/Evaluations/End