

# VOICES OF JUSTICE

## Educator + Student Mini-Guides

Law & Justice Focus | Grades 9-12

Aligned to DC Social Studies Standards (OSSE), C3 Framework, and CCSS Literacy in History/Social Studies

### Projects included:

1. 1) Voices of Justice: Who Gets to Decide?
2. 2) Voices of Justice: Rights at Street Level

Prepared for: Paul Laurence Dunbar High School – Eleanor Holmes Norton Law & Public Policy Academy

In partnership with: HumanitiesDC (Voices of Justice project)

Date: January 05, 2026

## How to Use These Mini-Guides

These mini-guides are designed for a Law & Justice course or law-themed unit embedded within U.S. Government or DC History & Government. Each project includes (1) an educator section with a ready-to-teach mini-sequence and facilitation notes and (2) student pages/handouts that can be printed as a packet. Both guides are built for 4–6 class periods (45–60 minutes each) and can expand into a longer inquiry-based unit.

### Core Learning Outcomes (Both Projects)

- Students connect constitutional rights and the rule of law to lived experiences and institutions in Washington, DC.
- Students analyze legal and policy questions using evidence (panels + sources) and practice civil discourse.
- Students map decision-makers and accountability pathways (courts, agencies, oversight bodies, elected officials).
- Students create a youth-centered legal literacy or civic action product (testimony, rights guide, policy memo, PSA, or workshop plan).

Note on DC Standards: The District’s OSSE Social Studies standards are organized by course and strand. Because Law & Justice is often taught as an elective or embedded course, this guide aligns activities to the most relevant DC Social Studies strands (Civics & Government; rights and responsibilities; law, courts, and due process; civic participation; and contemporary DC issues), along with C3 indicators and CCSS literacy standards for grades 9–12.

## PROJECT 1 MINI-GUIDE

# Voices of Justice: Who Gets to Decide?

Law & Justice Lens: Decision-making is a justice issue. When communities cannot vote for key decision-makers or when laws are delayed/overridden, questions of legitimacy, due process, and equal protection emerge. Students use the exhibit panels to investigate DC's unique legal status, how laws and budgets move, and how residents (including youth) use lawful civic tools—testimony, organizing, journalism, and protest—to seek change.

### Featured Exhibit Panels (1st Period)

- Access to Voice (testimony, barriers, equity)
- Voting and Representation (statehood, representation, District Clause)
- Where Power Sits / How to Influence (venue + jurisdiction triage)
- Home Rule and Congressional Riders (congressional review, override)
- Protest and Press (First Amendment, ethics, safety)

### Standards Alignment (Project 1)

Framework	Standard(s) / Strand	How it shows up in this mini-guide
DC Social Studies (OSSE) – Law & Justice Relevant Strands	Civics & Government; Rights & Responsibilities; Democratic Participation; Contemporary DC governance (Home Rule, federal oversight, representation)	Students analyze DC's legal status, how authority is assigned, and how lawful participation protects and expands rights.
C3 Framework – Inquiry Arc & Civics	D1.1–D1.5; D2.Civ.1–D2.Civ.14; D3.1–D3.4; D4.1–D4.8	Develop questions, evaluate sources, argue with evidence, and take informed action about governance and justice.
CCSS Literacy in History/Social Studies (9–12)	RH.9–10.1–RH.9–10.8; RH.11–12.1–RH.11–12.8; WHST.9–10.1/2/7/8; WHST.11–12.1/2/7/8; SL.9–10.1; SL.11–12.1	Close reading, sourcing, evaluating claims, writing arguments, research, and structured discussion.

### Compelling Question

- When decision-making power is layered or limited, what does justice require—and how can people lawfully influence outcomes?

### Supporting Questions

- How does DC's legal status (Home Rule + federal oversight) shape democratic legitimacy and due process?
- What counts as meaningful representation—voice, vote, or outcomes?
- Which civic tools are most effective and ethical (testimony, organizing, journalism, protest)?
- How do we verify claims about DC laws/policies and avoid misinformation?

- Who has authority for a specific issue—and what is the most lawful, effective path to influence?

#### Key Vocabulary

- Home Rule
- congressional review
- appropriations rider
- disapproval resolution
- representation
- legitimacy
- due process
- equal protection
- time, place, manner
- lateral reading

#### Educator Guide: 5-Day Mini-Sequence (Project 1)

Day	Learning Target	Core Experience	Product/Assessment
Day 1	I can explain DC's governance structure and identify where power sits for a real issue.	Gallery walk of panels + mini-lesson: DC government, Congress's role, and 'who decides' venue triage.	Who-Decides Power Map + 3-2-1 exit ticket.
Day 2	I can analyze Home Rule and representation as justice issues using evidence.	Source set jigsaw: Home Rule overview + District Clause (Art. I, Sec. 8, Cl. 17) + panel evidence.	Evidence log + short claim (CER).
Day 3	I can evaluate participation tools and barriers to access (equity of voice).	Access to Voice + Influence mapping; students rank barriers and propose a legal/ethical fix.	Barrier-to-Bridge planning sheet.
Day 4	I can evaluate the ethics and safety of protest and student press.	Protest/Press ethics lab: verification, consent, safety plan, corrections policy; mini-case discussion.	Ethics checklist + reflection.
Day 5	I can argue a position and propose an informed action connected to a decision-maker.	Socratic seminar or structured academic controversy; students finalize an action product.	Seminar rubric + final action product (one-page).

#### Discussion Questions (Seminar/Debate)

- Is it just for people to be governed by decision-makers they cannot vote for? Why or why not?

- When Congress overrides or delays DC laws, what values are being protected—and whose rights are affected?
- Which civic tool is most powerful for youth: testimony, media, organizing, or protest? Defend with evidence.
- How do we balance free speech/press with safety and responsibility?
- What would make DC civic participation more equitable (access, awareness, trust, time, technology)?

#### Culminating Options (choose one)

- Mock public testimony (90–180 seconds) + written version to a DC body (Council, SBOE, ANC).
- ‘Who Decides?’ legal literacy infographic explaining authority and next steps for a DC issue.
- Student press brief: a verified news story + corrections policy + sourcing notes.
- Policy memo: identify a rider/override mechanism and propose a lawful advocacy response.

#### Curated Source List (Teacher Reference)

- US Constitution: District Clause (Art. I, Sec. 8, Cl. 17); 1st Amendment; 14th Amendment (equal protection/due process concepts)
- District of Columbia Home Rule Act (1973) – overview/excerpts
- DC Council/SBOE/ANC public testimony and meeting participation guides (process overviews)
- Nonpartisan explainers on DC representation and statehood
- Student journalism ethics resources (verification, corrections, consent)
- Project exhibit panels (Voices of Justice – Who Gets to Decide?)

## Student Pages (Project 1): Who Gets to Decide? (Law & Justice Lens)

### A. Panel Evidence Tracker (Gallery Walk)

Panel	Key Justice Question (in my words)	Evidence (quote/paraphrase)	Authority + Next Step (who decides / how to influence)
Access to Voice			
Voting & Representation			
Where Power Sits			
Home Rule & Riders			
Protest & Press			

### B. Who-Decides Power Map (Justice Version)

Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Who is affected (communities/students): \_\_\_\_\_

Decision-maker(s) with authority: \_\_\_\_\_

What law/policy/process is involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Best participation method (testimony/meeting/media/protest): \_

One barrier to access + one solution: \_\_\_\_\_

### C. Claim-Evidence-Reasoning (CER)

- Prompt: How should decision-making power be structured for justice in DC?

Claim: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasoning (why it matters for justice): \_\_\_\_\_

Counterclaim + response: \_\_\_\_\_

### D. Informed Action Product Planner

My action product (testimony/infographic/press brief/policy memo): \_\_\_\_\_

Audience/decision-maker: \_\_\_\_\_

My specific ask: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence I will use (2 sources): \_\_\_\_\_

How I will ensure accuracy and responsibility: \_\_\_\_\_

Next steps (3): 1) \_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_

## PROJECT 2 MINI-GUIDE

# Voices of Justice: Rights at Street Level

Law & Justice Lens: Rights are real only when systems honor them—on sidewalks, in schools, during questioning, and in court. Students use the panels to examine constitutional protections (4th/5th/6th/8th), DC-specific realities (overlapping jurisdictions, policy timelines under Home Rule), and the role of oversight. Students then design a rights literacy and accountability tool for youth.

### Featured Exhibit Panels (4th Period)

- Fourth Amendment (stops, searches, consent, schools, federal land)
- Fifth and Sixth Amendments (due process, right to counsel; PDS)
- Eighth Amendment (bail, conditions, pretrial detention)
- Policy and Oversight (rules, cameras, Congress, timelines)
- Jurisdiction and Home Rule (local + federal agencies)
- Youth Voice (testimony, peer accountability, classroom voice)
- Youth Participation and Leadership (organizing, peer court, policy impact)

### Standards Alignment (Project 2)

Framework	Standard(s) / Strand	How it shows up in this mini-guide
DC Social Studies (OSSE) – Law & Justice Relevant Strands	Constitutional Rights & Civil Liberties; Criminal Justice & Due Process; Public Policy & Oversight; Civic Participation; Contemporary DC governance (jurisdiction, Home Rule)	Students interpret rights in practice, analyze accountability pathways, and propose reforms through lawful civic participation.
C3 Framework – Inquiry Arc & Civics	D1.1–D1.5; D2.Civ.4–D2.Civ.14; D3.1–D3.4; D4.1–D4.8	Analyze civic institutions, evaluate evidence, deliberate about tradeoffs, communicate conclusions, and take informed action.
CCSS Literacy in History/Social Studies (9–12)	RH.9–10.1, RH.9–10.4, RH.9–10.8; RH.11–12.1, RH.11–12.3, RH.11–12.8; WHST.9–10.1/4/7/8; WHST.11–12.1/4/7/8; SL.9–10.1; SL.11–12.1	Interpret legal text, evaluate claims, argue with evidence, conduct research, and participate in academic discussion.

### Compelling Question

- What does justice look like at street level—and how should DC systems balance rights, safety, and accountability?

### Supporting Questions

- What counts as a search, seizure, or detention in real life—and what choices do people have?
- When do people have the right to counsel, and why does procedure matter?
- How do bail and pretrial rules affect fairness and outcomes?
- How do overlapping jurisdictions in DC affect accountability and complaints?
- What oversight tools (policy, cameras, complaints, testimony) best protect rights—and how can youth lead?

#### Key Vocabulary

- reasonable suspicion
- probable cause
- consent
- due process
- right to counsel
- pretrial
- conditions of release
- oversight
- jurisdiction
- complaint process

#### Educator Guide: 5-Day Mini-Sequence (Project 2)

Day	Learning Target	Core Experience	Product/Assessment
Day 1	I can explain 'street-level rights' and apply the 4th Amendment to scenarios.	Panel analysis + scenario sort (legal/illegal/unclear); students practice 'Ask First' script (Am I free to go? / I do not consent).	Scenario evidence log + exit ticket.
Day 2	I can explain due process and right to counsel and why they matter for fairness.	5th/6th panel close reading + mini-lesson on Miranda/Gideon (concepts); students write a CER paragraph.	CER paragraph (rights in practice).
Day 3	I can analyze bail/pretrial as a justice issue and evaluate tradeoffs.	8th panel data talk (pretrial % shifts) + discussion on safety vs presumption of innocence; students craft a balanced claim.	Claim + evidence + tradeoff chart.
Day 4	I can map accountability in DC (jurisdiction + oversight) and identify next steps when rights are violated.	Jurisdiction/Home Rule + Policy/Oversight panels; students build a complaint/oversight flowchart.	Accountability flowchart.
Day 5	I can design a youth-	Students create: rights	Final product + 2-minute

	centered rights literacy or oversight product that is feasible and evidence-based.	wallet card set, mini-training, PSA, or oversight memo; peer feedback and revision.	pitch + reflection.
--	--	---	---------------------

**Discussion Questions (Seminar/Debate)**

- What is the most important right for youth to know in DC—and why?
- Does increased enforcement make communities safer if trust decreases? Explain with evidence.
- How should bail and pretrial decisions balance safety and presumption of innocence?
- Which oversight tool is most effective—cameras, complaints, policy changes, or public testimony?
- How should DC handle accountability when multiple agencies share space?

**Culminating Options (choose one)**

- Create a youth-friendly ‘Know Your Rights’ mini-guide (plain language + scenario tips).
- Write an oversight memo to a DC official: problem, evidence, recommendation, implementation steps.
- Design a 60–90 second PSA script + storyboard on one right and one action step.
- Plan a student-led workshop (agenda + role-play scenarios + exit ticket).

**Curated Source List (Teacher Reference)**

- US Constitution: 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th Amendments
- Select Supreme Court concepts (as classroom context): Terry v. Ohio; Miranda v. Arizona; Gideon v. Wainwright; Mapp v. Ohio
- DC Public Defender Service (PDS) – how to get legal help (concept overview for students)
- DC policy/oversight documents as relevant (e.g., school discipline regulations, body-worn camera policies, complaint portals)
- Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) reports (as referenced in the panels)
- Project exhibit panels (Voices of Justice – Rights at Street Level)

## Student Pages (Project 2): Rights at Street Level (Law & Justice Lens)

### A. Rights-in-Action Tracker

Panel/Right	What it means (plain language)	What to say/do (script or step)	Evidence from panel
4th Amendment			
5th/6th Amendments			
8th Amendment			
Policy & Oversight			
Jurisdiction & Home Rule			
Youth Voice			
Youth Leadership			

### B. Scenario Analysis (Claim–Evidence–Reasoning)

- Choose one scenario: street stop, school check, questioning, or pretrial/bail conversation.

Scenario: \_\_\_\_\_

Claim (were rights protected?): \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence (panel + right): \_\_\_\_\_

Reasoning (why evidence supports claim): \_\_\_\_\_

What should happen next (accountability/oversight step): \_\_\_\_\_

### C. Accountability Flowchart (DC)

Agency involved (MPD / federal / school / other): \_\_\_\_\_

Oversight path (who reviews complaints): \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence to document (what, where, who, when): \_\_\_\_\_

My action step (complaint/testimony/meeting/media): \_\_\_\_\_

One barrier + one support I can use: \_\_\_\_\_

### D. Youth Product Planner

My product (rights card / PSA / workshop / memo): \_\_\_\_\_

Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

One right + one action step I will teach: \_\_\_\_\_

Evidence I will include (2): \_\_\_\_\_

How I'll keep it accurate and youth-friendly: \_\_\_\_\_

How we'll measure impact: \_\_\_\_\_