Twenty sharp and eager high school seniors with good grades are on the right side of the law.

Twenty sharp and eager high school seniors with good grades are on the right side of the law. But, this summer, they are all headed to court to learn the legal process as part of the Seventh Annual Stephanie Tubbs Jones Summer Legal Academy, Monday, June 13, to Friday, June 24, hosted by Case Western Reserve University School of Law.

They will observe and hear from judges, attorneys, witnesses and others in the classroom and in local to federal courts, then fill those roles when the program culminates with a mock trial Thursday, June 23 from 12:45 to 2:45 p.m. at the law school, 11075 East Blvd.

The students were selected to participate in this program after receiving a nomination from their school, completing an application form and essay, gathering references from at least one teacher and a letter from the guidance counselor certifying their 3.0 or higher grade point average.

And, like prospective employees, they had to submit a resume.

During the mock trial, the youth will break into prosecution and defense teams and argue over the guilt or innocence of a woman accused of growing marijuana in her condominium. The Cleveland-area students can use all the legal knowledge learned in the prior days of classes and field trips to courts to make their cases.

According to Case Western Reserve Associate Dean for Student Services Sarah Polly, who is organizing the academy with colleague Professor Jennifer Cupar, the experience provides them with a glimpse into career options in law from judges on the bench to lawyers representing clients in criminal and civil matters.

The program's goal is to contribute to greater diversity in the legal profession, she said.

Polly added that students walk away with more than knowledge of the law.

“They gain a greater confidence.”

She also said a key part of the program is to stress the importance of choosing the right words to convey a point.  In the legal process, the wrong words can change the outcome of the court case.

The program doesn’t end with the classes. Students also have the option of continuing their academy education with an 80-hour summer internship with local law firms and organizations.

Sponsors of the academy are the Case Western Reserve University law school, Cleveland State University’s Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, the Norman S. Minor Bar Association, the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, and the Law School Admission Council.

Local high schools participating in the academy are: Aurora, Beaumont, Bedford, Brush, Cleveland Heights, Collinwood, Elyria, Gilmour, Jane Addams, St. Martin de Porres, Shaker Heights, Shaw and Warrensville Heights.