

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

2007 Mock Trial Competition

Rounds to be held February 6, 8, 13, 15 and 20 at Tulare County Superior Court; Finals to be held at El Diamante High School on February 22.

Mock Trial season begins in February with 11 Tulare County high school teams competing.

Schools participating in the 2007 Mock Trial Competition are: Dinuba High School, El Diamante High School (Visalia), Exeter High School, Golden West High School, Granite Hills High School (Porterville), Lindsay High School, Mt. Whitney High School (Visalia), Redwood High School (Visalia), Tulare Western High School, Tulare Union High School, and Orosi High School.

All teams will compete in the first four rounds of the Mock Trial Competition in the Tulare County Superior Court on February 6, February 8, February 13, and February 15, 2007. Trials begin each night at 5:15 p.m. Semi-finals will take place between the top two teams on February 20, at the Courthouse, beginning at 5:15 p.m. El Diamante High School will be the site of the final trial round this year on February 22, at 5:15 p.m. The season wraps up with the Mock Trial Awards Banquet on March 8, for students, parents, teachers and attorneys. Tulare County champions will be eligible to compete in the state finals in Oakland, March 23-25, 2007. The National Mock Trial competition will be held in Dallas, Texas, May 11-13, 2007.

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Mock Trial offers students an opportunity to develop an understanding of the link between our Constitution and the legal system. In addition, students have the opportunity to interact with positive adult role models in the legal community. In trying the hypothetical Mock Trial case, students grapple with particularly thorny legal and social issues.

This year's hypothetical case, *People v. Campbell*, features a pretrial argument on the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech and expression. The defendant is charged with placing a bomb on school grounds, attempting to explode a device with the intent to commit murder, putting an offensive substance in a place of public assemblage, and possessing a video game in violation of the School Violence in Video Games statute.

In preparation to present this case, students must be familiar with California Penal Codes, Jury Instructions and 14 similar cases – some state and some federal. Students will also examine the constitutionality of the placing legal restrictions on the possession of violent video games.

The 10- to 20-member mock trial teams are composed of students who take on the roles of lawyers, witnesses, court clerks and bailiffs. All teams must make their presentations based on identical hypothetical case materials. Each team, coached by local attorneys and school personnel, has the opportunity to present the case for both the prosecution and defense during the course of the competition. Three attorneys score the teams on the basis of their analysis and debate of the constitutional issues, the law, and the facts in the case.

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The Mock Trial Program is sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Foundation, and co-sponsored by the California Department of Education, the State Bar of California, the Young Lawyers' Association and the Daily Journal Corporation. The Tulare County Office of Education coordinates the program locally, with assistance from local attorneys and judges, Lisa Strongin, Public Defenders' Office, and Cynthia Logan, Deputy Court Executive Officer.

Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak commends participating schools and students, "Mock Trial is an extremely rigorous competition. All who have the courage and opportunity to compete should be commended."

For more information, contact Marsha Ingraio at 651-0680.

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