

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:

2014 Mock Trial Competition Begins January 28

Preliminary rounds: January 28 & 30, and February 4 & 6

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m., Tulare County Courthouse, Visalia

Semi-finals: February 13, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. Tulare County Courthouse, Visalia

Finals: February 20, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m., El Diamante High School Theater, Visalia

The public is invited to watch 14 Tulare County high school teams compete in the annual Tulare County Mock Trial Competition beginning January 28. The Mock Trial teams are comprised of 10 to 20 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, presents the case for both the prosecution and defense twice during the course of the competition. “The Mock Trial Competition is as exciting to watch as any courtroom drama,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “Our students do an incredible amount of preparation to understand the case law affecting their trial before taking on the roles of attorneys, witnesses and clerks. They do a masterful job of conducting themselves in court.”

All teams will present their cases before actual judges and attorneys, with three attorneys scoring each trial. The first four rounds and the semi-final round will take place in the Tulare County Superior Court (third floor). Open to the public, the **trial dates are: January 28 & 30, and February 4 & 6** (preliminary rounds); and **February 13** (semi-final round). Trials begin each night at 5:00 p.m. **The finals will take**

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place at El Diamante Theater (5100 W. Whitendale Ave., Visalia) on February 20 at 5:00 p.m.

Members of the public, parents, students and teachers are welcome to attend any of the trials.

The teams competing in the 2014 Tulare County Mock Trial Competition represent Dinuba High School, El Diamante High School (Visalia), Exeter High School, Golden West High School (Visalia), Lindsay High School, Mission Oak High School (Tulare), Mt. Whitney High School (Visalia), Orosi High School, two teams from Redwood High School (Visalia), Tulare Union High School, Tulare Western High School, University Preparatory High School (Visalia), and Woodlake High School.

For 2014, Mock Trial participants throughout California will be preparing the fictitious case of *People v. Concha*. The case involves the trial of Rae Concha, a senior at Rosewood High School. Concha faces two felony counts: Count One is second degree murder for the death of fellow student Jason Johnson, and Count Two is possession for sale of a controlled substance (amphetamine in the form of prescription Adderall).

The prosecution alleges Rae Concha sold Adderall to other students on campus, and in particular that Concha sold Adderall out of the back of Concha's SUV on the morning of March 27, 2013 to Jason Johnson in the school parking lot with full knowledge that Jason suffered from a congenital heart defect and that Adderall would be dangerous to Johnson.

The defense argues Rae Concha had a legal prescription for Adderall for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The defense also argues that the backpack alleged to contain the bottles of Adderall and the baggies did not belong to Concha, but rather to another fellow student, Alex Weaver.

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The pretrial issue in *People v. Concha* centers on the Fourth Amendment protection against unlawful search and seizure. The issue in this case is whether or not a vehicle search conducted by undercover police officer Robin Doherty was within the plain view exception to the warrant requirement. If so, testimony about items seen by Officer Doherty during an ongoing narcotics investigation would be admissible in the case-in-chief.

The Tulare County Office of Education would like to thank the many legal community volunteers who donate their time and expertise to make this competition possible. “Mock Trial is an extremely valuable competition,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “We applaud the teachers and attorney-coaches for investing many hours in preparing their students for this event – giving them a glimpse into the workings of our judicial system.”

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.

The champions from the final round of the Tulare County Mock Trial Competition will be eligible to compete in the annual state finals in San Jose, March 21-23.

For more information, contact Gina Mechigian at the Tulare County Office of Education at (559) 651-3031.

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