

Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

2020 Mock Trial Competition begins next week

Preliminary rounds: January 21, 23, 28, 30

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

Semi-finals: February 6, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. Tulare County Courthouse, Visalia

Finals: February 18, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m., TCOE Conference Center, 6200 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia

The public is invited to watch 15 Tulare County high school teams compete in the annual Tulare County Mock Trial Competition beginning next week. The teams represent Dinuba High School, El Diamante High School (Visalia), Exeter Union High School, Granite Hills High School (Porterville), Lindsay High School, Mission Oak High School (Tulare), Mt. Whitney High School (Visalia), Orosi High School, Redwood High School (Visalia), Tulare Union High School, Tulare Western High School, and University Preparatory High School (Visalia). Four preliminary competitions will be held January 21, 23, 28 and 30 at Tulare County Courthouses in both Visalia and Porterville. The semifinal round will be held February 6 at 5:00 p.m. at the Tulare County Courthouse in Visalia. The finals will take place in the Redwood Conference Center, 6200 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia on February 18 at 5:00 p.m.

This year, students are prepared to argue the case of *People v. Matsumoto* at the trial of Bailey Matsumoto, founder of a technology start-up that develops autonomous (self-driving) trucks.

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Bailey is charged with the murder of Taylor Matsumoto, his spouse. The prosecution alleges that after Taylor's son Michael died in a tragic accident using one of Bailey's malfunctioning autonomous scooters, Taylor founded an organization called Parents Against Autonomous Driving (PAAD). Taylor's involvement in PAAD began to financially impact Bailey's autonomous truck company. The prosecution further argues that the couple's relationship rapidly deteriorated. Just days before Taylor was set to testify in Washington, D.C., in support of a bill titled National Moratorium on Autonomous Technologies, Taylor was found dead, face down in the couple's bathtub. The prosecution claims that Bailey murdered Taylor with premeditation in order to prevent her from testifying.

"I would like to thank the advisors and attorney coaches who spend hours preparing Tulare County teams for the competition," said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire. "The knowledge of our legal system and the public speaking and research skills they are helping build will benefit students in any profession they choose."

The winners of the Tulare County Mock Trial competition will advance to the state competition scheduled for March 20-22 in Los Angeles. For more information, visit tcoe.org/MockTrial.

TCOE