

Mock Trial Parent Information Sheet

Mock Trial is a rewarding experience for the students who participate, but requires a very significant time commitment. Mock Trial spans at least eleven (11) weeks during the fall semester, starting in September and running through early November. The culmination of the program is a competition against other participating schools. The competition takes place at night at the downtown courthouse over the course of at least two nights (and possibly more if the team advances).

Students perform the role of attorneys (prosecution and defense), witnesses, and court personnel (clerk and time keeper). While all of the students who participate (regardless of their role) learn valuable lessons regarding the way in which the judicial system operates, it is possible (and indeed likely) that not everyone will be assigned their first choice role.

Beginning in September, the participating students begin meeting twice a week -- on Tuesday and Thursday mornings -- to learn the basics of trial procedure. The team meets from 6:50 - 7:50am at school on Tuesday and Thursday to learn things like:

- fundamental aspects of constitutional law;
- how a trial works and the roles played by attorneys, witnesses, judges, and court personnel;
- the facts and relevant law applicable to the particular case the team will be working on; and
- how to present evidence and persuasive argument.

In addition to the twice weekly morning meetings, the students are assigned weekly homework, which focuses on learning the facts of the case and preparing for the competition against other schools (which takes place in early November). This homework typically requires approximately 3-4 hours per week, with more time required nearer the competition dates in November. The competition takes place in downtown Los Angeles, at the actual Superior Court; it is judged by practicing attorneys and judges.

In addition to the bi-weekly morning sessions at the school, during the weeks leading up to the competition the team also meets on weekends to prepare. These weekend sessions are mandatory, and a schedule will be provided during the first week of the program. Those students who are assigned attorney roles are required to dedicate approximately 3-4 hours per weekend during October. The students who are witnesses have less time commitment, but are still required to attend practices for a few hours on the weekends. During the weekends immediately preceding the competition dates in early November, the entire team participates in a "dress rehearsals," which require several hours of time.

The Mock Trial program is overseen by Ms. Jackson, with participation by volunteer attorney coaches who have been doing this for several years. Prior teams have done very well against other schools, and we look forward to continuing the excellence of Paul Revere at the competition.

Requirements for the Mock Trial team:

1. Current 6th or 7th grade student
2. Students should have no more than two Bs on their final Fall / Spring report cards and no more than two marks of S in work habits / cooperation. A student is ineligible if he/she has received an academic grade of C or below, or a U in work habits / cooperation.
3. Completion of the Mock Trial team Application (due Friday, April 21)

Team Selection:

Team members will be selected based on the content of the application and evaluation of report cards. The team will be selected by the school administration and the Mock Trial attorney coaches. Space on the team is very limited, so unfortunately everyone who applies may not be able to be on the team.

Cost:

There is a \$150 participation fee for selected students.

Questions?

Please address any questions to Mr. Koretz in the attendance office.