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San Bernardino and the Inland Empire

Charter school makes it to Mock Trial finals

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30th Annual County Mock Trial Finals

Where: Foothill Law and Justice Center, 8303 Haven Ave., Rancho Cucamonga

When: 9 a.m. Saturday

Admission: Free

Information: 909-386-2630

APPLE VALLEY - The Mock Trial Team for the Academy of Academic Excellence, a charter school in Apple Valley, has made it to the championship round of the 30th annual San Bernardino County Mock Trials Competition.

This will be the school's first time at bat for the championship in its four-year history.

AAE will take on Redlands High School at the annual competition set for Saturday.

RHS has been in the final round of the competition 15 times, taking home 10 county titles - a record for the competition.

Colleen Williams, a mock trial advisor for AAE, founded the program with several staff members who are no longer with the school.

Comprised of 16 students - including a sketch artist - the team meets once a week with each grade level represented, said Williams.

"We went into (the competition) this year trying to do our very best and we're excited about the fact that it has taken us this far" she said. "And now that we are this far, of course, we'd like to see a win at the finals."

About 325 students representing 27 high schools from throughout the county are taking part in the annual program which began Nov. 1.

Round Two was held Nov. 8, followed by Round Three in Nov. 15 and Round Four on Nov. 29.

The semifinals were held Tuesday and Wednesday.

When the final two teams were announced, Williams said the team was in shock.

"But with the quality of our students, I will say that I wasn't too surprised," she said.

AAE senior Phoenix Solis, 18, said that making the championship round was bittersweet.

He has been with the program since its start.

"Since I've been doing this, we've never been to the semifinals. This year, we beat what our best was and we're hoping to go to the state finals," he said.

The championship round will take place at 9 a.m. at the Foothill Law and Justice Center, 8303 Haven Ave., Rancho Cucamonga.

The competition is open to the public.

Both schools will play the roles of the defense and prosecution.

Justice Art McKinster will preside over the final with District Attorney Mike Ramos and Chief Deputy Public Defender Phyllis Morris scoring the event.

The winner of the final round will go on to the state finals on March 23 through 25 in Sacramento.

Reach Kristina [via email](#), or call her at 909-793-3221.

Read more: http://www.sbsun.com/ci_19501252?IADID=Search-www.sbsun.com-www.sbsun.com#ixzz1g3ISmug4

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