

## Michigan Center for Civic Education Mock Trial Team Guide

Welcome! Thank you for exploring MCCE's Mock Trial program. This document will guide you through the layout, timeline and frequently asked questions regarding Mock Trial, as well as options of how to best start a program. Please let us at MCCE know how we can support you through your Mock Trial experience. Welcome to the Michigan civic and law-related education community!

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## Introduction to Mock Trial

Mock Trial allows students to use simulated courtroom experiences to transform themselves into attorneys, witnesses, artists, journalists and more! Mock Trial is much more than a courtroom activity; it is a hands-on experience that inspires confidence, civic engagement and knowledge, legal appreciation, collaboration skills, and more. Those skills are transferable into a lifetime of success.

Mock Trial provides opportunities to engage whole communities in learning. Together, students gain legal knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the American judicial system and beyond. By using the MCCE Mock Trial rules, case materials and structures, students engage the legal system by enacting complex legal cases as lawyers and witnesses as well as courtroom artists and journalists. Showcases and competitions are available for those who wish to participate beyond the classroom and demonstrate their learning in front of legal experts. Furthermore, volunteers and teachers mobilize students to see the best in themselves as they practice skills for civic life. Moving beyond the courtroom, communities come together to celebrate and advance the accomplishments of the emerging legal advocates!

MCCE is committed to supporting teachers, coaches, and communities. To do so, we offer an annual Mock Trial community clinic, optional local clinics, regional competitions, state competition, and support to the Michigan team which qualifies for the national championship. Currently both showcase and competitive options are available for High School Mock Trial. Middle School Mock Trial showcases will be available in April 2024.

Michigan High School Mock Trial also includes Courtroom Artistry and Courtroom Journalism competitions. Courtroom Artistry and Journalism allows students to utilize the courtroom procedures to practice and exhibit their skills in illustration and reporting. The top placing Artist can represent Michigan at the National High School Mock Trial Championship. There is not currently a Courtroom Journalism program at the National level.

## **How Mock Trial Benefits Students**

More than a courtroom procedure, Mock Trial transforms students into efficacious, confident, and collaborative people. Working through case materials, questioning, and character development, students see themselves as part of a team and community while honing skills that will benefit them in all aspects of life.

According to Street Law, "...a Mock trials provide students with knowledge of the judicial system, legal process, and courtroom procedures. Mock trials help to: develop students' questioning skills, critical thinking skills and oratory skills; demonstrate the roles of various actors in the legal system; and provide the class with exposure to legal resource people, such as judges, attorneys, and law school students." Mock Trial programs promote civil conversations while emphasizing the importance of the rule of law in our democracy. These skills equip students to feel a sense of civic belonging and civic efficacy.





## **Program Annual Timeline**

The Michigan High School Mock Trial season includes showcase and competition options early in the spring. Check out <u>https://www.miciviced.org/programs/mock-trial/</u> for up to date information about this year's season and follow us on Facebook at @miciviced.

#### Generic Michigan Schedule

August	Retreat - 2 day event to orient new coaches, review draft updates to rules and procedures, connect and collaborate with staff and volunteers.
September	Annual dates, clinics and trainings calendar published
October	MCCE releases the case materials and any rules or procedure updates Team registration opens for teams and volunteers <u>www.miciviced.org/programs/mock-trial</u>
December	Community clinic, open to all, offered in-person and virtually.
Early January	Team registration deadline for both HS and MS programs
Late January	Team Rosters are Due Courtroom Artist and Courtroom Journalism Registration is Due
Late February through Mid March	Regional competitions Saturdays in February and March. Teams select one Regional event to attend. Teams who advance out of their regional compete in Lansing for State Finals.
Late March	A State Finals competition is held.
Early May	National competition is held. The team and artist who finish first at State, have the opportunity to represent Michigan at Nationals.

#### National Championship -

The Michigan Center for Civic Education (MCCE) is the official sponsor of High School Mock Trial in Michigan. Therefore, both the Michigan State Championship team and artist qualify to represent our state at the National High School Mock Trial Championship (NHSMTC) - typically held early-mid May in cities rotating across the country.





## **Companion Programs**

#### **Courtroom Artistry**

Interested in creating the visual memory for a round? Illustrate the courtroom proceeding! Students interested in the Courtroom Artistry program are invited to the competition dates above. Students may illustrate during a designated regional round or at state finals for consideration for judging. Their illustration must be done using the requirements listed in the guidelines. The state champion will be eligible to attend the national finals as part of Team Michigan.

See the guidelines for Artist participation here, or at https://miciviced.org/programs/mock-trial/.

#### **Courtroom Journalism**

Students interested in reporting and courtroom proceedings may join us in a Courtroom Journalism competition. Student Journalists will report on details during a designated round at Regionals and/or a designated round at State Finals for consideration for judging. Their report must be done using the requirements listed in the guidelines.

See the guidelines for Journalist participation <u>here</u> or at

https://miciviced.org/programs/mock-trial/.

## Starting a Program: How Can I Get A School or Organization Involved?

#### Starting a Team

Welcome. We are glad you value the program, and are interested in offering this opportunity to further your students' education and development. Starting a team involves the following steps.

- Identify your support team local attorney, teacher, school administration, parents, community partners
- Identify how you will recruit students
- Declare your interest to MCCE so we can connect you with training resources, fill in gaps in your support team, answer questions and prepare to add you to the contact rosters.
- Start telling your community about this great opportunity for your students and how they can support.
- Register a team for a Regional Competition. Registration opens early November.
- Check out this folder of tools and resources to share Mock Trial Coaches Folder!

While most MCCE teams are, it is not a requirement that your team be affiliated with a school to participate; teams from community organizations such as 4H, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and homeschooling groups are welcome.

#### **Team Structure Variations**

There are many variations on how to structure your High School Mock Trial Team. MCCE does not require any specific structure to be involved for MCCE events [note: the National High School Mock Trial Championship may have different guidelines]. Below are a variety of configurations seen in Michigan and throughout the country. This is not a fully inclusive list, nor is it meant to recommend a particular structure. This list is simply to demonstrate what variations are seen most often.





- Afterschool Team/Club This model appears to be the most common. In this model, a teacher/school sponsors a team. Typically a Schedule B (contracted) or related arrangement, a teacher/coach oversees their team and functions as a supervisor taking care of logistics.
- **Classroom** There is a wide array of courses with which a High School Mock Trial team may be affiliated. Classes ranging from civics, current events, law, criminal justice, and more can be a place where a teacher draws a team for participation.
- **Community Team** An attorney or other stakeholder in the community, coordinate with a team within a school, district or a community organization.
- Additional Variations This approach may be a hybrid of the two or a model outside the traditional school structure. While some configurations of teams may not be eligible for the national championship MCCE wants to support any group of students arranging to participate as long as the goals are education and not designed to give a competitive advantage.

#### Statement of Professionalism and Advocacy for Funding

Mock Trial coaches are professionals investing in the present and future civic communities. Coaching Mock Trial is extremely time consuming and helps schools meet continuous improvement goals and other curricular and student development goals. Above all, MCCE does recommend that each teacher, coach, and/or other assistant be compensated as the professionals they are and the time commitment it takes to deliver this impactful program. Having a paid stipend for coaching and/or a budget to permit travel to events is highly encouraged. Some schools pay the volunteers a stipend from Schedule B funds, some teams fundraise through events or request funding from other outside sources. The more the school can assist in funding and support, the more the students and coaches can focus on the activity.

**Type of costs to expect:** the following items are possible budget items to include in fundraising and funding goals.

- Transportation for Students and Coaches
  - Practices
  - Events
- Meals and Snacks for After School Practices and Special Events
- Food for practices and events
- Printing
- Office Materials (Including Folders, Binders, Legal Pads, Dividers, Tabs, Post It Notes, Timers, Laminated Materials, Flip Charts, Pens etc.)
- Chaperones (especially for overnight travel)
- Per Diems Regionals, States, Nationals
- Professional Clothing
- Assistant Coaching

MCCE recommends Schools also consider increased compensation for teams that advance beyond regionals. The state competition requires a minimum of two additional weeks of preparations and travel to Lansing. Additionally, a team advancing to nationals participates in an additional month of meetings and travel to the National Competition (location rotating around the country.)





#### **Team Composition**

- MCCE Mock Trial teams have official members and sometimes have unofficial members as well. An official team consists of six to twelve students from the same school and one or more adult coaches. There are a total of twelve roles to be played (6 prosecution/plaintiff and 6 defense), depending upon the size of the team, members of a team will have to take on dual roles (playing both P and D).
- In 2023 the most common number of students on a team was 12, one for each role. But many teams do compete with just 6 students. 6 is the minimum number of students needed to compete in a Regional or Showcase event.
- Timekeepers may or may not be an official member of the team. Timekeepers must not be one of the six students active in the trial they are timing.
- Each individual school may enter up to 3 separate, individual team units.
- All teams from the same school must compete at the same regional event.
- For the National High School Mock Trial Championship, the qualifying team is permitted 6-9 team members.

#### **Meetings and Preparation**

- Meeting Locations The majority of teams meet in the school or organization building. Some teams do connect with a local official for use of a courtroom locally for one or more practice per season. Consider scheduling the meetings that meet students where they are, including transportation challenges students may have.
- Meeting Frequency Many teams meet according to the time of year, ranging from twice a month to multiple times a week. MCCE recommends at least one meeting a week between November and March.
- Possible activities and timeline
  - September October Possible team activities and content could include:
    - Recruit students
    - Icebreakers Welcome and Inclusion Activities (Team Building)
    - Theater/Ensemble games and activities
    - Improv and Speaking Activities
    - Discuss adversarial and justice system
    - Compare and contrast civil and criminal procedures (MCCE will alternate each year)
    - Practice with Fun Trials (Think Goldilocks, Big Bad Wolf, etc.)
    - Structure of Schedule and Timeline
    - Questioning, Listening, and Dialogue
    - Recruit Artists and Journalists
  - November Case published
    - Practice overall trial procedures
    - Learn Michigan Mock Trial specific Federal Rules of Evidence
    - Practice Objections
    - Roles, case and determine assigned positions and goals
    - Recruit Artists and Journalists
  - December February practice roles both individually and as a team
    - Finalize theme and theory
    - Finalize rosters for MCCE
    - Trial run throughs of full trials
    - Practice with Artists and Journalists (if)
  - February and March





- Regional Competitions begin as each regional is completed the teams advancing to states will be announced.
- After all regionals are complete, if there are any wild card spots to be awarded there will be announced
- State Finals is the 3rd or 4th saturday in March
- April June
  - Have a celebration meal or gathering!
  - Recruit for next year's team
  - Fundraise for next year if needed

## Support from MCCE

MCCE wants to see you and your community celebrate civic education. We will be by your side to support you however we can.

The Michigan Center for Civic Education is the official sponsor of the High School Mock Trial in Michigan. We can assist administrators and/or teachers in establishing a High School Mock Trial team in their school and in finding legal professionals in their community to act as coaches. Oftentimes, it is a call to the local bar association which results in wonderful partnerships.

After a team is created, MCCE will work with schools on an individual basis, provide resources online, and offer clinics for coaches and students.

#### **Community Clinics**

This is open to everyone - secondary students, potential coaches, teachers, administrators, and other interested persons. The goal of the clinic is to provide fundamentals regarding litigation basics. The clinic utilizes a smaller, more generic case. Lessons learned at the clinic can be applied to any set of courtroom documents. Please see the website for the current clinic date.

#### **Connecting Teams and Coaches**

MCCE is also pleased to work with the State Bar of Michigan. We ask their members if they are interested in volunteering and connect them to schools. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that the volunteer is an appropriate fit. As we receive names of volunteers and interested schools, we will try to facilitate the meeting.

#### **Online Resources and Tutorials**

MCCE is also in the process of updating the website to provide video tutorials (or links to other video tutorials) regarding best practices across the country. Please stay tuned as we continue that process.





2019 State Champions from Kalamazoo Central High School represented Michigan at the 2019 National Mock Trial Championship in Athens, Georgia.





2023 State Champions from Forest Hills Eastern Represented Michigan at the 2023 National Mock Trial Championship in Little Rock, Arkansas.







#### Getting Involved as a Supporter

**As a Legal Professional -** Tournaments happen thanks to the dedication of our wonderful volunteers. All volunteers are welcome from legal professionals, law students, and interested community members. Here is a sampling of how to get involved!

**Judging and Time Keeping -** We have many volunteer opportunities available, but those perhaps of most interest to legal professionals (and legal students) during High School Mock Trial events are judging and time-keeping during the rounds. We welcome volunteers who are able to make it to only one event per season, as well as those interested in volunteering at multiple, or even all events in a season. Judges provide the scoring of the trials and time keepers help facilitate the accuracy of the score cards, enforce the time limits, and ensure all people are in the correct courtroom at the right time.

**Coaching** - Many teams benefit from legal professionals generously donating their time to coach the students. This is a great opportunity for legal professionals looking to give back to their community in a longer term volunteer opportunity - encouraging and mentoring high school students. We can help place those interested in coaching with a team in their area.

**Hospitality and Logistical Support** - MCCE hopes all its schools and volunteers leave feeling supported, nourished, and celebrated. Volunteers are needed to ensure all people have a smooth and enriching experience. People who help with directions, ensure the coffee is ready for our volunteers, help with the awards, take photographs, and so much more are essential to the program's success.

**As a Community Supporter** - In addition to spreading knowledge of the Mock Trial program, the two biggest needs are:

**Financial support** - MCCE appreciates each and every donor. Financial support means we don't lose our current programs and will hopefully expand until the mission to impact each and every student in Michigan positive experiences in civic community is met. Donations may be mailed to the office at: Michigan Center for Civic Education, 306 Townsend St., Lansing, MI 48933.

**Volunteer support** - Tournaments happen thanks to the dedication of our wonderful volunteers. All volunteers are welcome from legal professionals, law students, and interested community members. Here is a sampling of how to get involved! Please consider signing up to volunteer. Please also consider joining our committees as well to share the love of High School Mock Trial. Sign up will be available at <u>https://miciviced.org/programs/mock-trial/</u>.





## **Frequently Asked Questions - Michigan Mock** Trial

How many teams currently compete in Michigan?	The competitive Mock Trial reaches as many as 700 high school students in Michigan through an average of 50 schools participating in the competitions each year. This number decreased significantly during COVID and slowly increased again. Additionally students can also participate in the MCCE Courtroom Illustration, and
	Courtroom Journalism companion programs. We hope to impact all K-12 students to ensure they are engaged in the civic community.
What if I don't know my team roster in November?	No one really does! The registration process between November and January is a commitment from your school to participate in a specific regional. This allows us to ensure we have adequate facilities and logistics in place (and alert a team if we need to move them to their second choice should we be already at capacity at certain regionals).
	Your team roster is due late January/early February. While your roster is due at that time, we also understand that life happens and there is an occasional switch. As long as MCCE staff is alerted of changes and all participants meet eligibility rules, we will make it work.
How do we know what the case is about? When is the case released?	MCCE adopted a new practice in 2018. The case will be made available to the entire community for free (no registration required). The MCCE Board made this decision to provide a greater service to the community and do what they could to provide a more equitable competitive field. This also allows all people to access the material hopefully providing more material for more access to Mock Trial.
	Beginning November 1, the case will be available as a download. You will input your email and school to receive the free download. If there is ever an issue with the technology, please email us at mocktrial@miciviced.org and we will happily email you a pdf version.
	The rules and guidelines information packet will be separated from the case. This way the rules are available to everyone with year round access.
But I don't want to wait for the new case? What else can I do?	We have you covered! There are numerous cases available for your use on the website. These cases cover a wide range of topics as well as age appropriate ranges.
	Our counterparts in other states also have many cases available online along with our friends at both StreetLaw and the National Constitutional Rights Foundation.
What can I do in elementary schools to incorporate Mock Trials?	MCCE provides resources online to begin early incorporation of Mock Trial. Trials reference stories such as the Big Bad Wolf or Goldilocks to introduce ideas of the legal system and development of character witnesses.
	Currently, MCCE does not have a season or showcase dedicated to elementary schools. We would love to host one and see what you do! If you do incorporate or do Mock Trials at the elementary school level, let us know! We want to celebrate you and your students!





What can I do in middle schools to incorporate Mock Trials?	If you are interested in starting a Mock Trial team at your middle school, please contact Mock Trial Coordinator at <u>mocktrial@miciviced.org</u> . Middle school teams are all invited to attend the state finals to view a High School Mock Trial round and to showcase their work against other schools! We hope to involve high school students as judges in the middle school trials.
What are the associated costs for Mock Trial participation?	<ul> <li>MCCE collects registration fees - one fee per team participating at the regional showcase and competition. The fees cover courtroom use, volunteer refreshments, volunteer materials, website enhancements, certificates, and related usage fees MCCE incurs.</li> <li>2023 costs are \$275 per team. To be fully registered, a team must be paid in full. There is also typically a small per person cost for clinic attendance.</li> <li>To attend the national championship as the legal team, artist, or journalist, MCCE will help with registration costs. Travel and related expenses are the responsibilities of the team and individuals who qualify.</li> </ul>
How can I participate in Courtroom Artistry?	Interested in creating the visual memory for a round? Illustrate the courtroom proceeding! Students interested in the Courtroom Artistry program are invited to the competition dates above. Their illustration must be done using the requirements listed in the guidelines. Students may illustrate during a designated regional round or at state finals for judging. Students may be affiliated with a school (with a Mock Trial team) or compete independently with approval from school administrators at State Finals per the guidelines. The State Champion will be eligible to attend and compete in the National High School Mock Trial Championship as part of Team Michigan. See the full guidelines for Artist participation <u>here</u> . Registration will be available online at miciviced.org starting on November 1st.
How can I participate in Courtroom Journalism?	Students interested in reporting and courtroom proceedings may join us in a Courtroom Journalism competition. Student Journalists will report on details during a designated round at Regionals and/or a designated round at State Finals. Their report must be done using the requirements listed in the guidelines. Students may be affiliated with a school (with a Mock Trial team) or compete independently with approval from school administrators at State Finals per the guidelines. (Answer continued on the next page.) See the full guidelines for Journalist participation <u>here</u> . Registration will be available online at miciviced.org starting on November 1st.
What can we expect at a Regional?*	Regionals are single day events on a given Saturday. Registration will open by 8 a.m. There will be 2 trial rounds in the morning and one after lunch. Lunch is currently 'on your own.' There are designated areas in the courthouses for people to eat. The results will be announced in the late afternoon, around 4:30 p.m. with dismissal usually





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	around 5:00 p.m. MCCE strives for each team to have at least one round as the prosecution/plaintiff and one round as the defense in the morning (unless extenuating circumstances prohibit). In the afternoon, a team could be either one. Typically this is decided randomly in the tabulation room. In the event of an odd number of teams, a team will have a bye which will impact the number of prosecution/plaintiff and defense rounds.
	In 2019, MCCE began assigning teams to their trials by number in a random draw. The draw occurs in the morning at registration. This draw will determine the sides and the opposing teams. If a school has more than one team, there is a chance their teams compete against each other.
	Judges know teams by their codes only.
What is a typical Regional schedule?	Tournament Day ItineraryThe schedule will alter slightly depending on number of teams, site specific issues, and other considerations. Please see your pre-tournament memo for a specific agenda.A typical schedule might look like:7:30 - 8:15 a.m.7:30 - 8:15 a.m.Team Registration and Team Number Draw8:30 - 10:30 a.m.10:45 - 12:45 p.m.Second Round12:45 - 2:00 p.m.Lunch (on your own)2:00 - 4:00 p.m.Announcement of Community Awards, Reflections, and Advancing Teams
	5:00 p.m. Dismissal
Is lunch provided at competitions?	Food is not currently provided for teams. Please bring lunches with you or arrange to have food delivered to your team during the lunch break. Morning refreshments and lunch will be provided for volunteers during in-person events.
Can I watch other teams compete?	This depends. If you are affiliated with a school, you may watch only the rounds in which your school participates. So family, friends, and other supporters of a team are allowed only in courtrooms where their team is located. There is a rule against scouting other teams. This applies to all regionals.
	If you wish to observe the competition for the purpose of exploring Mock Trial and are unaffiliated with a competing team, you are welcome to watch with notice and approval from MCCE. You will be given a special name tag which permits you entry into the courtrooms. To request this status, please contact Ellen Zwarensteyn at 248.321.4842.
	Please see the rules document for photo and video information. The rules document will be available at <u>www.miciviced.org/programs/mock-trial</u> .
I've heard of both Mock Trial and Moot Court. What is the difference?	Mock Trial and Moot Court are different types of trials - both within the legal system. Mock Trial is a practice in trial advocacy. This means students will review courtroom documents and perform the roles of attorneys and witnesses using the simulated 'primary documents' of a court case. These may include witness statements, example exhibits, police statements, and more. Students develop both a plaintiff/prosecution as well as a defense strategy. In Michigan Mock Trial, there are typically three witnesses per side and three attorneys.
	Moot Court is a practice in appellate advocacy. This is a case being argued on appeal. There is usually one person per side and they discuss the merits and/or process of the decision based on facts of a decided case from a lower level court.





	MCCE currently offers Mock Trial. Our friends at the Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center offer a summer program for students to delve into Moot Court.
Are there rules for process and procedure and etiquette guidelines?	Yes. The rules for Mock Trial outline a range of rules and guidelines. Michigan tends to follow the rules outlined by the National High School Mock Trial Championship group so there is consistency between teams participating in Michigan and at the National Championship. This means the rules typically follow the federal rules of evidence. Additional rules and procedures are available at <u>www.miciviced.org/programs/mock-trial</u> .
How are the competition rounds scored?	MCCE champions participation at all levels, be it competing or showcasing. If your school chooses to compete, there are several judging forms available. Those can be viewed at <u>www.miciviced.org/programs/mock-trial</u> .





# Frequently Asked Questions - National Championship

Who is the NHSMTC, and what is the Championship?	The Michigan Center for Civic Education (MCCE) is the official partner with the National High School Mock Trial Championship organization. The National High School Mock Trial Championship is the group that governs national championship hosting. Their goal is to promote understanding and appreciation of the American judicial system through academic competitions. States pay both membership and registration fees to be a part of the organization, making the state eligible to send one team to compete at the National Championship. The competition now includes Courtroom Artistry and Courtroom Journalism.
How does a Michigan team qualify for the National Championship?	The top finishing team at the State Finals which meets the NHSMTC criteria qualifies to represent Michigan at the National Championship. While this will typically be the State Champion, MCCE recognizes that there may be a team (perhaps sponsored by a community organization rather than a school) that may win in Michigan, but be ineligible to compete in the National Championship under NHSMTC rules. For the full list of National Championship rules, please visit <u>http://www.nationalmocktrial.org</u> .
Where is the National Championship located?	The National Championship does not have one fixed location. Instead it rotates around the country. The groups that run Mock Trial in their state are eligible to bid for the opportunity to host the National Championship in their state. If their bid is approved, that group is responsible for funding, planning, and running that National Championship. The benefit to hosting is to celebrate the legal community in that state, to showcase the state to the whole country, and the chance to bring a second team to the National Championship if there is an odd number of participating teams.
Will Michigan ever host a National Championship?	Yes! MCCE and the State Bar of Michigan hosted The National Championship for the first time in 2022!
How many teams attend the National Championship?	Between 48 and 52 teams are expected each year. The National High School Mock Trial Championship organization outlines the procedure at <u>http://www.nationalmocktrial.org</u> .
How many people attend the National Championship each year?	<ul> <li>Over 1,200 people from across the country - as well as some from other territories and countries - are expected to attend the event:</li> <li>Over 600 students are expected to compete.</li> <li>Over 500 teachers, coaches, and team supporters are expected to</li> </ul>





	be in attendance. Over 200 esteemed volunteers, plus the National High School Mock Trial Championship Board of Directors, will also be present.
Where do I find information about the National Championship?	Each year when the details become available we will post the date, location and other information about the National Championship on <u>https://miciviced.org/programs/mock-trial/</u>