

# Mock Trial heads to state championship

Team set to compete in Olympia March 20-22



The PTHS varsity Mock Trial team after taking first place at the district competition in Port Orchard. From left in back: Grace Wentzel, Alex Gilbert, Louis Babik, Finn O'Donnell, Orion Pendley River Kisler, Maya Dow and Kincaid Gould. Front: Max Stewart, Lilly Montgomery, Sorinna Johnston and Emilia Nunn. Courtesy photo

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The Port Townsend High School Mock Trial team will visit Olympia at the end of this month to compete at the mock trial state championships after the varsity team placed first in its district competition last week over Seattle Academy of Arts and Science and University Preparatory Academy.

Coach and PTHS teacher Chris Pierson said this is something like the 20th year in a row they have been to the state championships. They have been every year since he became the coach, but have yet to win, placing third twice and fourth once.

Several students were awarded special recognition at the regional competition in Kitsap County for their performances, including outstanding witness to Willow Hoins, Moe Gardener, Sorinna Johnston, Orion Pendle and Max Stewart; best witness to Louis Babik; and best attorney to River Kisley, Lilly Montgomery,

Finn O'Donnell, Emillia Nunn, Maya Dow and Willow Hoins.

Mock Trial helps teach young people “to greet the world as adults, to think on their feet and to present with confidence,” Pierson said.

He said he is grateful for the support the team receives from the school and the Jefferson County legal community.

He said the competition is even more important for the Port Townsend students because they are often less trained and funded than some private Seattle schools against which they compete.

Other schools have actual mock trial classes where they are able to meet and train five days a week instead of merely extracurricular clubs.

“I’m really proud of the students,” Pierson said. “They continue to represent Port Townsend at the highest levels.”

PTHS is one of 64 Washington state schools to prepare this year’s case “Who are you,” an identity theft and robbery case. Each team must mount both a prosecution and a defense and include pretrial, opening statements, direct and cross-examinations of four witnesses per side and closing arguments.