Dear Teacher Coach:

We are pleased to announce the opening of the 2022 Statewide Mock Trial Competition, now in its 39th year!

To register your team, please complete the School Registration Form and return it with your $125 registration fee NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 5, 2021. You are permitted to register two teams from your school, or three teams with the express written permission of your District Coordinator (email will suffice). The registration fee of $125 is per team, not per school. Checks should be made payable to the Pennsylvania Bar Association (as indicated on the registration form). Please be advised that the format for this year’s competition has not yet been determined. Please see the enclosed notice on the reverse side from the Mock Trial Executive Committee for more details.

Once you complete the registration materials, you may confirm your team’s registration on the mock trial website (www.pabar.org → ‘For the Public’ → ‘Mock Trial Competition’) under Participating Schools. The list will be updated on a daily basis. Additionally, all case materials and rules will be made available to participants on the mock trial website. They will not be mailed separately. For your convenience, a complete competition schedule is attached.

As a reminder, background checks are required of everyone working closely with children. The Pennsylvania General Assembly amended the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL). The most recent changes were through Act 153 of 2014. Although there are sweeping changes made to the CPSL, this only focuses on criminal background checks and child abuse clearances (collectively "clearances").

As it relates to clearances, Act 153 requires all prospective employees, current employees, independent contractors and volunteers to get and renew criminal background checks and child abuse clearances on a three-year cycle. Anyone who has clearances older than three years, or someone who has never gone through the clearance process, must obtain clearances. Find out how your school is implementing the new laws, as each school implements its own policy as it understands the law. It is our understanding that schools will be requiring their volunteers who assist the mock trial teams (lawyers, law students, alums) to get the required background clearances. Please get the clearances completed so that you, your volunteers, and your team will be ready when the mock trial program begins.

We look forward to working with you and your students! The Mock Trial Committee is confident that you will find this year’s competition an invaluable learning experience!! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Maria Engles, PBA YLD Coordinator at maria.engles@pabar.org.
Dear Coaches and Administrators,

We have heard from many of you in the last few weeks, asking about how the competition will work this year, when it will be held, and what our plans will be for managing the pandemic. Like you, we had hoped to be able to answer these questions in August this year, and like so many of you, we had hoped that these answers would be a simple, straightforward return to in-person normalcy.

Suffice it to say that we, like you, have been disappointed in that respect. As we write in early September, the Delta variant of the COVID-19 pandemic is still working its way through the country, and we are seeing transmission in schools and widespread disruption of court operations, including in Pennsylvania.

Please understand that we are faced with a tremendous logistical challenge every year, and this year that challenge is likely to be even more acute. We want to bring Pennsylvania mock trial back to Pennsylvania courthouses, but right now, many of those courthouses are not even fully operational for criminal trials, much less extracurricular activities. Few of them know what their operations can be for competitions like ours, and fewer still can predict with any confidence how things will look in January. We cannot plan to have mock trial in person without assurances that there will be a venue willing to have us, and those who could make that decision know little more than we do about what the next six months will bring for the Commonwealth and the nation.

We know that you want to know if our competition will be hybrid or in-person, or both. We know that you want to know if every district will have the same programmatic approach as every other district. And we know that you want to know what Regionals and States will be this year. So do we. But despite our best efforts, we don't yet, and we can't be confident when those answers will become clear, reliable, actionable. Many competitions around the country have already decided to go virtual for a second year, but right now, we are holding out hope. Whether we can preserve mock trial in-person or not remains to be seen, and we will let you know as soon as we do, after consulting with our district and regional coordinators and with our sponsor.

We know that everyone has already been patient, and we feel the same urgent need to return to normalcy as you and your students do. For now, though, we cannot be sure what mock trial will look like this year, only that our commitment to making it happen for every student who wants to participate and can participate is unwavering.

Thank you for your continued understanding as we do everything we can to make this the best experience, competitively and educationally, that it can be.

- MTEC