*U.S. History (11th gr.) New West Charter Instructor: Ms. Hynes*

**Semester 1 Final: Part 1**

**Simulation: The Trial of Captain Preston et al. Following the Boston Massacre**

**Background:** On March 5, 1770, a small force of British soldiers open-fired into a crowd in the street in front of the customs house in downtown Boston, killing five people. The soldiers claimed to have been menaced and physically attacked by a hostile crowd, daring them to fire. Some of the citizenry accused the soldiers of maliciously murdering those who peacefully protested their oppressive presence. The ensuing trial to determine the guilt or innocence of the British soldiers in question for the crime of murder was one symptom of a growing movement toward American independence from Great Britain.

**Role:** Member of the Jury

**Preparation:** Read and make notes on the witness testimony included in your packet and be prepared to discuss your opinions and conclusions during the upcoming simulation.

**During the Simulation:** Listen to the closing arguments of the Crown prosecutor, Robert Treat Paine, and the attorney for the defense, John Adams. Then, you and the rest of the jury will retire to the jury’s chamber to deliberate over the testimony you have heard during the trial. Will you find Captain Preston and his men guilty or not guilty of murder?

**Notes:** You have been charged by the presiding justices to reach a unanimous decision if it is at all possible, whether that decision is guilty or not guilty. If two or more of you ultimately dissent with the majority’s decision, a “hung jury” must be declared. In this situation, the case might have to be tried again, or the charges against the accused may be dismissed. Neither of these alternatives is a desirable outcome. Examine all the evidence carefully before you arrive at a conclusion and do your best to defend it during deliberations with your fellow jurors. But keep your mind open to the arguments of others as well.

Keep in mind also that while you are not a Bostonian, you live in the same county and so have been thoroughly affected and influenced by the growing discontent with the British in Massachusetts over the last few years. You might be a supported of the British, in which case it might be easy for you to believe Captain Preston and his men are innocent. You might also be a supporter of the Sons of Liberty, a patriot considered radical by the ruling British, and therefore willing to believe that the British troops are little more than oppressors. How will you manage these beliefs? Might they play a part in your ultimate decision?