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**2026 National Administrator of the Year**

*Knott County Board of Education Admin Wins National Award*

**West Des Moines, IA (June 3, 2026)** — The National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) is proud to name Dustin Combs the 2026 NSDA Administrator of the Year! Dustin serves as the Director of Federal Programs for the Knott County Board of Education.

The Administrator of the Year award is presented annually to a school administrator who provides high-quality speech and debate opportunities for students.

“Speech and debate is a critical activity that underpins all educational goals,” said J. Scott Wunn, Executive Director of the National Speech & Debate Association. “The future of education of our young people requires that students with different viewpoints be allowed to debate as freely as possible in a learning environment. Administrative support is instrumental in helping young people best prepare for college, a career, and beyond.”

Studies show that students who participate in speech and debate experience a number of academic benefits including communication skills, reading test scores, analytic thinking, and higher self-esteem. The skills learned through speech and debate will impact students years after graduation.

“For decades, Dustin has remained one of the most consistent and influential advocates for speech in our region,” said Bria Stacy, Speech Coach at Knott County Central High School. “Dustin has worked behind the scenes in ways many will never fully see, writing grants to provide students with competition attire, securing travel funding so teams can access opportunities they otherwise could not, and constantly looking for ways to remove barriers for students.”

The NSDA Administrator of the Year is selected from 112 NSDA districts. Each District Committee can nominate a District Administrator of the Year. From those nominations, a national winner is selected.

Dustin will be recognized at the 2026 National Speech & Debate Tournament in Richmond, Virginia, where more than 7,000 students will compete at the world's largest academic competition June 14-19, 2026. To learn more about the National Tournament, visit [www.speechanddebate.org/nationals](http://www.speechanddebate.org/nationals).

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### **About the National Speech & Debate Association**

The National Speech & Debate Association is the authority on public speaking and debate in the United States. The Association builds the infrastructure for speech and debate competitions around the world by providing topics, educational resources, and training for students and coaches. For more than 100 years, the National Speech & Debate Association has built a platform for youth voices that culminates in the National Tournament, the largest academic competition in the world. The National Tournament brings together thousands of students from across the United States and world with different backgrounds and viewpoints to engage in civil discourse. For more information, visit [www.speechanddebate.org](http://www.speechanddebate.org).