



Board of Directors Fall Meeting, September 25, 2026

Meeting Location: West Des Moines, IA

Call to Order

Call to Order, Welcome, and Record of Approval of Minutes.

Legal and Confidential Matters/Membership Correspondence

If there are any legal or other confidential matters, the Board will move into executive session to address them. Prior to the meeting, members of the community are offered the opportunity to provide feedback on any of the agenda items. This feedback is provided to the Board.

FY26 End of Year Budget Report/FY27 Final Budget Approval

The Chief Financial Officer, Executive Director, and related staff leadership will answer questions related to the FY26 Draft Financial Report. The Internal Affairs Committee will seek acceptance of the FY26 Draft Financial Report. The Chief Financial Officer, Executive Director, and related staff leadership will answer questions related to the proposed FY27 Final Budget. This will include the Chief Advancement Officer and Chief Strategic Growth Officer fielding questions concerning the planned fundraising projections and strategies for FY27. The Internal Affairs Committee will seek approval on the proposed FY27 Final Budget.

FY27 Strategic Plan Discussion

An update on the NSDA's five-year plan and National Speech & Debate Initiative was shared in advance. The Assistant Executive Director/Chief Operations Officer will briefly recap the report, but most of the time allocated will be for Board members to discuss what has been presented in the Board materials.

Artificial Intelligence Working Group Scoping

To build on the information provided in the packet, Board members will begin by identifying ways AI may significantly affect the NSDA, speech and debate, and the people we serve over the next several years. We will then work in small groups to turn those ideas into the most important questions the NSDA needs to answer. As a full Board, we will consider where responsibility for those questions should primarily reside—with the Board and its AI working group, NSDA staff, the CRLC, another existing committee, or as an issue to continue monitoring. We will determine what dependencies exist between questions and which are foundational enough to warrant being part of the working group's scope. Finally, we will identify what we would like the FY27 AI working group to help the Board understand, recommend, or prepare for, as well as the perspectives and expertise that should be represented in the group.

Board FY26 Self-Evaluation/Board Manual Revisions Approval

In September, the Governance Committee reviewed themes from the 2026 Board self-assessment. Discussion focused on areas receiving multiple lower ratings, including agreement on how to fulfill the mission, tracking progress toward goals, communication with members related to public image and advocacy, identifying Board gaps, measuring program impact, and Board member commitment. Specifically:

- Members discussed the need for clearer follow-through on Board actions, including identifying responsibility for action items, reporting progress back to the Board, and creating enough clarity in motions and minutes that future Board members understand the intended action. The committee also discussed setting and reinforcing expectations for Board participation and using the Board handbook as a resource for new members.
- AI was identified as a recurring theme in the assessment. The committee discussed the Board's prior direction to establish a FY27 working group to explore opportunities and threats related to AI. The Governance Committee will consider an appropriate charge and scope for that working group, so its work is focused and aligned with the Board's direction.

As Board members review the self-assessment comments, they should know that context can be provided wherever helpful, particularly for newer Board members, during the meeting. The discussion will focus on what the Board can learn from this feedback and apply going forward, rather than revisiting prior disagreements.

National Tournament 2027 Update

The Executive Director and Chief Programs Officer will field questions/discussion concerning the safety and security protocols implemented at last year's National Tournament and ongoing preliminary plans for the 2027 National Tournament.

Adjourn