

Leadership

Board of Directors Spring Minutes

Minneapolis, MN
May 1-2, 2026

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/ RECORD OF APPROVED MINUTES

The NSDA Board of Directors held its spring meeting May 1-2, in Minneapolis, MN. Members in attendance were Byron Arthur, Jamelle Brown, Sara Gibson, David Huston, Adam Jacobi, Erez Kalir, Anoop Mishra, Renee Motter, Esther Oyetunji, Jay Rye, Joshua Swartzel, Wendy Orthman, Holly Williams.

President Arthur called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

MISSION MOMENT, ICE BREAKER, AND PRESIDENTIAL CHARGE

This moment is designed to set the tone for the meeting and purposefully remind all present of our mission, vision, values, and goals as we deliberate and conduct business on behalf of our current and future membership.

LEGAL/CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

Each Board meeting includes time allotted for relevant updates on any pending legal matters or other business that requires discussion in executive session.

REVIEW MEMBERSHIP CORRESPONDENCE

Letters submitted to the Board were included in the meeting materials to inform the Board of ideas, requests, and concerns that have been submitted for consideration.

FY26 STRATEGIC PLAN (SP) UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

Assistant Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer Amy Seidelman recapped staffing adjustments, hires, and work allocations from SP Year 1 (2025-2026) and plans for the same in Year 2 (2026-2027). This set the stage for the afternoon's strategic plan and financial updates as well as other meeting priorities.

CYBERSECURITY PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Board member Josh Swartzel, Assistant Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer Amy Seidelman, and Director of Technology Aaron Hardy teamed up on a presentation and discussion about the current state of NSDA cybersecurity and gave the Board and staff executive team some things to think about as the organization charts a course for both an acceptable, affordable, and manageable level of cyber risk.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Board President Byron Arthur and Executive Director Scott Wunn invited Stefan Bauchard to give a presentation and facilitate a discussion on artificial intelligence (AI) and its current and future impact on speech and debate, education systems, and the future workplace. This session took a look at the current state and impact of AI and the unique position of speech and debate activities/education and the national organization. The Board agreed to establish a working group in FY27 that will further explore the opportunities and threats surrounding AI for the NSDA and speech and debate activities as a whole.

FY26 STRATEGIC PLAN (SP) UPDATE AND DISCUSSION (CONTINUED)

Assistant Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer Amy Seidelman facilitated an update, Q&A, and discussion on the current five-year Strategic Plan, the current state of progress in several areas, and a vision into FY27 and what should be expected.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

Moved by Kalir, seconded by Brown:

“Approve the Q2 Financial Report.”

Passed: 13-0 (Arthur, Brown, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Oyetunji, Rye, Swartzel, Williams)

Chief Financial Officer Laura Stein presented the current fiscal position for FY26 and, along with Executive Director Scott Wunn, offered current insights on the FY27 Budget.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Board member Adam Jacobi, with an assist from Director of Belonging and Inclusion Dr. Paul Porter, facilitated a discussion among the Board about the current positioning of the NSDA in the area of Belonging and Inclusion.

RECESS

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Mishra:

“Recess for the evening.”

Passed: 13-0 (Arthur, Brown, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Oyetunji, Rye, Swartzel, Williams)

The meeting recessed at 4:57 p.m. on Friday.

RECONVENE/CALL TO ORDER

President Arthur called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday.

LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS

President Byron Arthur and Vice President David Huston are ending their terms as of July 31, 2026. Jay W. Rye III of Alabama was elected President, and Jamelle M. Brown of Missouri was elected Vice President. They will serve two-year terms in these roles.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

As the Board sits at an interesting intersection between the inclusion of new voices and professional experiences and the loss of longstanding legacy-building contributors on the Board, the Board spent time deliberating and discussing certain aspects of NSDA Board priorities—from who should serve and what important experience, knowledge, networks, and skills they should have to what the Board's priority, purpose, and objectives should be beyond the legal responsibilities it has.

FUTURE BOARD MEMBER SELECTIONS AND ALUMNUS TERM EXTENSION

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Swartzel:

“Enter into executive session.”

Passed: 13-0 (Arthur, Brown, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Oyetunji, Rye, Swartzel, Williams)

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Swartzel:

“Exit executive session.”

Passed: 13-0 (Arthur, Brown, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Oyetunji, Rye, Swartzel, Williams)

Governance chairs Renee Motter and Jay Rye, with an assist from nomination committee chairs Jamelle Brown and Holly Williams, presented the recommendations for Board appointments. Individuals appointed to these seats will begin their terms on August 1, 2026, and will replace the seats vacated by outgoing Board members Renee Motter, Adam Jacobi, David Huston, Sara Gibson, Anoop Mishra, and Holly Williams. During the 2026-2027 fiscal year, 15 members will be seated on the Board (six active coaches and nine appointed non-active coaches). The Board voted to appoint the following individuals as coach representatives to the Board of Directors for three-year terms: Megan Howell-Haymaker (AZ), Aaron Timmons (TX), and Rachel Wilczewski (HI). The Board voted to appoint the following individuals as non-coach representatives to the Board of Directors for three-year terms: David Coale (TX), Mark Ehrhardt (LA), and Michael Ledford (DC). The Board voted to appoint Steven Schappaugh (IA) as the Administrative Representative for a three-year term. The Board voted to offer Holly Williams (AZ) a one-year term extension and to offer a second one-year alumni term to Esther Oyetunji (FL).

EQUITY PAUSE


To be consistent and intentional about incorporating the [NSDA Equity Lens](#), a moment was added at the end of the meeting to consider questions from this lens that may be relevant to the conversation.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Mishra:

“Adjourn.”

Passed: 13-0 (Arthur, Brown, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Oyetunji, Rye, Swartzel, Williams)

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m. on Saturday. 

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? IDEAS?

We want to hear from you! Send your feedback to board@speechanddebate.org.

