



RICHMOND FORUM
**SPEECH &
DEBATE**
INITIATIVE



MEDIA KIT

2026 NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE TOURNAMENT

6600 Westown Parkway Suite 270 | West Des Moines, IA 50266

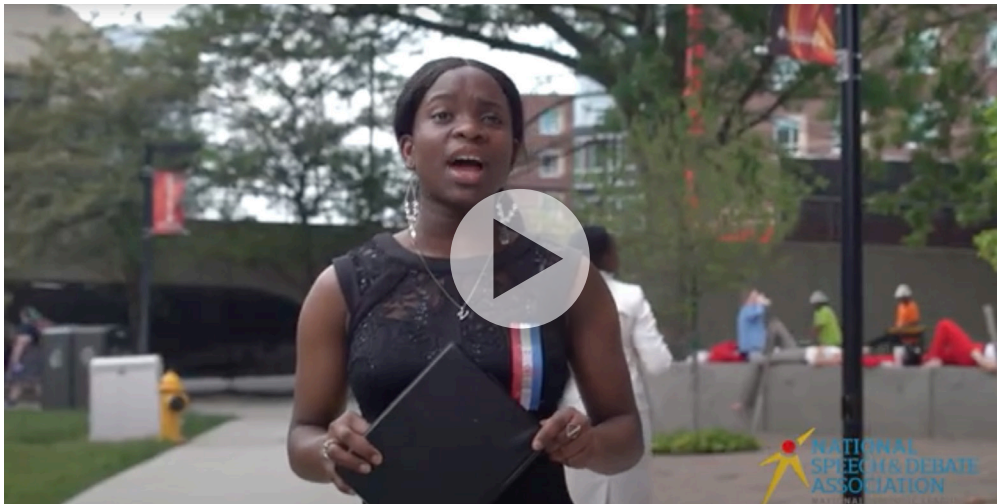
(920) 748-6206 • www.speechanddebate.org/media



WHO WE ARE <https://youtu.be/qMoppXt3wdg>



- ▶ The National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) is the national authority on public speaking and debate.
- ▶ The NSDA is the largest interscholastic speech and debate organization serving middle school and high school students in the United States.
- ▶ The NSDA provides competitive speech and debate activities, high-quality resources, comprehensive training, scholarship opportunities, and advanced recognition to more than 140,000 students and coaches every year.
- ▶ The NSDA creates a platform for youth voices to be heard and celebrated, which culminates with an annual National Tournament, the pinnacle of public speaking.



MISSION

The NSDA connects, supports, and inspires a diverse community committed to empowering students through speech and debate.

VISION

The NSDA envisions a world in which every school provides speech and debate programs to foster each student's communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creative skills.

MEMBERSHIP DATA

www.speechanddebate.org/membership-database

140k

STUDENTS

3.9k

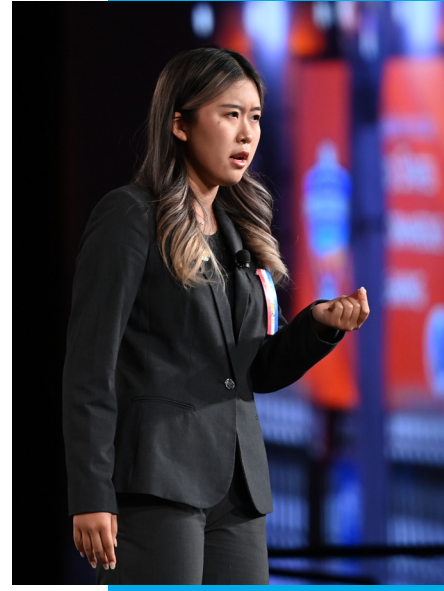
COACHES

2m

ALUMNI

3k

SCHOOLS



NOTABLE ALUMNI

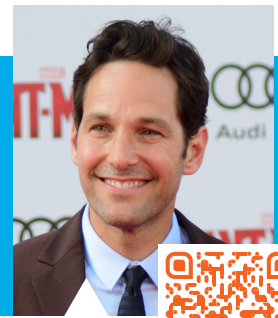
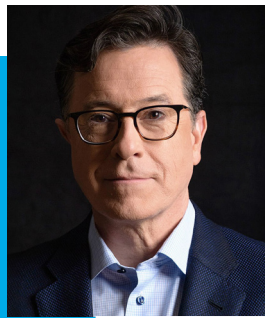
Many NSDA members have risen to the pinnacle of their respective fields, including Supreme Court justices Ketanji Brown Jackson and Sonia Sotomayor, media visionaries Tom Llamas and Stephen Colbert, Academy Award winners Jordan Peele and Brad Pitt, and more.



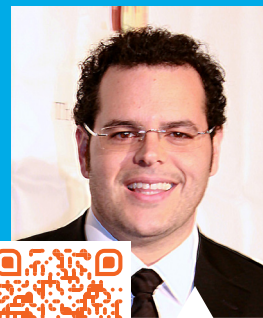
[www.speechanddebate.org/
notable-alumni](http://www.speechanddebate.org/notable-alumni)



The Richmond Forum's program featuring NSDA alum John Lithgow: tinyurl.com/yqyof7ns



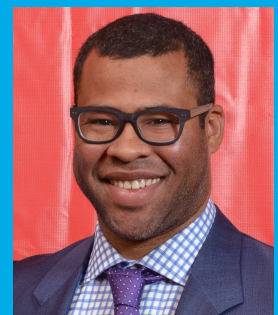
Watch Paul Rudd's final round performance: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExkTjC0SQck



Elizabeth Warren's NSDE Day message: tinyurl.com/bpa9uybp



Josh Gad's final round: tinyurl.com/2ybb4uu4



Ketanji Brown Jackson's final round: tinyurl.com/4zmcdwm5



NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE TOURNAMENT

2026 NATIONAL TOURNAMENT • June 14-19 – Richmond, Virginia



ABOUT THE NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE TOURNAMENT

The National Speech & Debate Tournament marks the capstone of speech and debate activities for more than 140,000 members across the country. The student competitors represent the best and brightest young people across the United States and the globe. The tournament is a moving reminder of how the skills students learn in speech and debate empower them to be changemakers, advocates, and future leaders of our world.



Watch notable final round performances:

tinyurl.com/mrptfyzv



Glimpse the Nationals experience:

vimeo.com/707007789/a8c28db268



2023 TOURNAMENT STATISTICS

6,716 STUDENTS	1,343 SCHOOLS	4,137 JUDGES
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SOCIAL MEDIA @speechanddebate

10.5 MILLION IMPRESSIONS
LAST YEAR

635k ENGAGEMENTS
LAST YEAR



FACEBOOK
35k followers



TWITTER
14k followers



INSTAGRAM
20k followers



LINKEDIN
5k followers

TOURNAMENT HISTORY

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS



<https://tinyurl.com/485r9eut>

FOUR-TIME TOURNAMENT QUALIFIERS



[www.speechanddebate.org/
nationals-history/#awards](http://www.speechanddebate.org/nationals-history/#awards)

PAST HOST SITES



[www.speechanddebate.org/
nationals-history/#hosts](http://www.speechanddebate.org/nationals-history/#hosts)

QUOTES

*“We believe that effective communication skills and knowledge of the issues impacting millions of people around the world are essential for empowering young people to become engaged citizens, skilled professionals, and honorable leaders,” said **J. Scott Wunn, Executive Director of the National Speech & Debate Association**. “Experience the power of students using their words for change this June.”*

*“We are creating a region where civil discourse and powerful voices are cultivated and nurtured. Speech and debate programs give students critical thinking skills and wisdom that come from viewing issues from different sides; and the confidence and communication skills to be effective. Both are critically needed in our culture today.” – **Heather Mullins Crislip, Executive Director, The Richmond Forum***

*“[Speech and debate] was an experience that I can say without hesitation was the one activity that best prepared me for future success in law and in life,” said **Ketanji Brown Jackson, Justice, U.S. Supreme Court**.*

PROGRAM WEBSITE

www.speechanddebate.org/nationals2026

STAFF CONTACT

Alyssa Rivera, Marketing Communication Specialist, NSDA

Maggie McVicar, Director of Communications, The Richmond Forum

DOWNLOAD GRAPHICS

MEDIA PHOTOS: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8je657>

LOGOS: <https://tinyurl.com/4rka35ds>





RICHMOND FORUM
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INITIATIVE

ABOUT THE RICHMOND FORUM

For 38 seasons, The Richmond Forum has presented powerful voices—belonging to some of the most influential leaders and prominent figures in the world—so Richmond can learn, while empowering local voices so Richmond can lead. In 2018—recognizing the absence of speech and debate programs in most of the region’s public schools—The Forum launched an initiative to implement, grow, and support these essential programs. The goal of the Richmond Forum Speech & Debate Initiative is for every public middle and high school to have competitive speech and debate programs by 2025—setting the region up for success leading into the 2026 National Tournament.

WHAT THEY DO

- ▶ Cover tournament entry fees, travel expenses, and meals, which allows all students and teams equitable access to participate in competitive speech and debate programs.
- ▶ Train coaches and judges to facilitate successful, robust speech and debate programs and competitions.
- ▶ Build a level playing field for all students by providing professional clothing, inclusion advocacy, and other resources.
- ▶ Foster a spirit for competition and ample opportunities to practice speech and debate skills by organizing local invitational tournaments.
- ▶ Provide access to National Speech & Debate association membership benefits and sponsoring participation in its honor society.
- ▶ Awarding grants for students to attend speech & debate camps and workshops, so they can further develop critical skills.

DURING THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

18

QUALIFIERS

18 students qualified for the National Speech & Debate Tournament—twice as many as last year.

500

STUDENTS

More than 500 students participated in speech and debate.

45

COACHES

45 coaches on the roster—an increase of 25%.

750

REGISTRATIONS

Sponsored seven local and two national tournaments with more than 750 student registrations.

80

JUDGES

Recruited more than 80 volunteer judges—an increase of 60%.

PROGRAM WEBSITE

www.richmondforum.org

