



District Leaders' Town Hall

September 28, 2026

AGENDA

01

WELCOME

SCOTT WUNN, Executive Director

02

MEMBERSHIP

ANNIE REISENER, Senior Director of
Membership
annie.reisener@speechanddebate.org

03

DISTRICTS

JENNIFER BORMAN, Competition and
Events Coordinator
jennifer.borman@speechanddebate.org

04

RECRUITMENT

ELISHA ROBERTS, Director of School
Recruitment
elisha.roberts@speechanddebate.org

05

COACH SUPPORT SYSTEM

LAUREN MCCOOL, Coach Support Specialist
lauren.mccool@speechanddebate.org
TRAVIS ROTHER, Coach Support Specialist
travis.rother@speechanddebate.org

06

07

08

09



COACH MENTORING PROGRAM

Dr. PAUL PORTER, Director of
Belonging and Inclusion
paul.porter@speechanddebate.org

NEW NSDA RESOURCES

Dr. ATHENA MURRAY, Manager of
Professional Learning Design
athena.murray@speechanddebate.org

TABROOM.COM

CHRIS PALMER, Lead Developer
chris.palmer@speechanddebate.org
RYAN TULLIS, Developer, Tournament Services
ryan.tulis@speechanddebate.org

CLOSING

KARA SMITH, Manager of
Competition and Events
kara.smith@speechanddebate.org

FEEDBACK

[https://forms.gle/1vakTYj6Ez2S
MjVM6](https://forms.gle/1vakTYj6Ez2SMjVM6)

AGENDA (cont)





Welcome



NATIONAL
SPEECH & DEBATE
ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE

Membership

Annie Reisener, Senior Director of
Membership



Your Updated NSDA Account



Air Academy HS

#14035

	Profile	Students	Coaches	Points	Awards	Purchase	Invoices	Subscriptions
Grants	Notes	Tags						

School Info

History Card

Primary Advisor [Renee Motter](#)

School Level **HS**

District [Colorado Grande](#)

School Roster

[Student Roster](#)

[Coach Roster](#)

School Membership

Dues
Paid



[Purchases](#)

School Finances

Balance

\$0

[View Invoices](#)

Awards



Sweeps Points : **697**

Nats Appearances: **33**

[Academic All Americans: 21](#)

[See All](#)

[Learn More](#)

Strength

91

[Learn More](#)

Charter Status



Degrees To Charter Status
80 / 50

School Points

[View Autopoints](#)

[Enter Points](#)

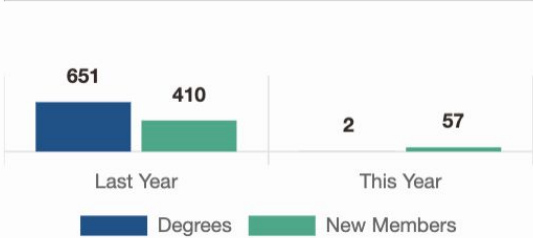
Your District Dashboard



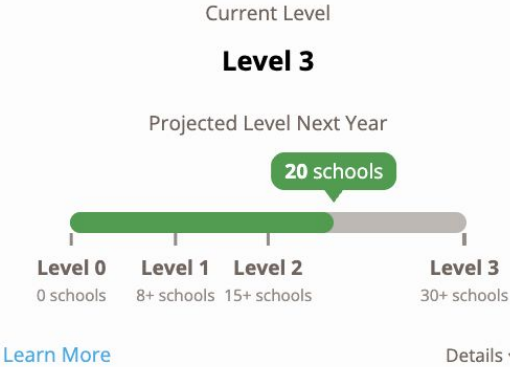
Districts > Colorado Grande

- Profile** Schools Leadership

District Info



District Level



Trophy Winners

Export CSV

Year	School	Points
2026	Pine Creek HS	776
2025	Canon City HS	682
2024	Pueblo West HS	626
2023	Lewis Palmer HS	571
2022	Centennial HS - Pueblo, CO	615
2021	Pine Creek HS	626

REASONS FOR CHANGE

CONFUSING

Different options with different costs, some required and some optional, lots of caveats, difficult systems.

UNPREDICTABLE

Variable costs based on participation make it hard to budget for membership.

MULTIPLE TRANSACTIONS

Difficult administrative work. Requires frequent coordination of purchases for students, coaches, Resources, etc. Each must be justified.

WAIT-AND-SEE STUDENTS

Schools avoid adding students to wait and see if they'll stick with it or go to districts before making a purchase.



THE FLAT FEE MODEL

\$349 annual membership
includes everything:

- School membership
- Unlimited students
- Unlimited coaches
- All resources, no more
separate Resource Package

PRIOR COST BREAKDOWN

Average: \$412
Median: \$348

High School **AND** Middle
School Membership
Payments

Average: \$443
Median: \$369

High School Membership
Payments

Average: \$204
Median: \$174

Middle School
Membership Payments



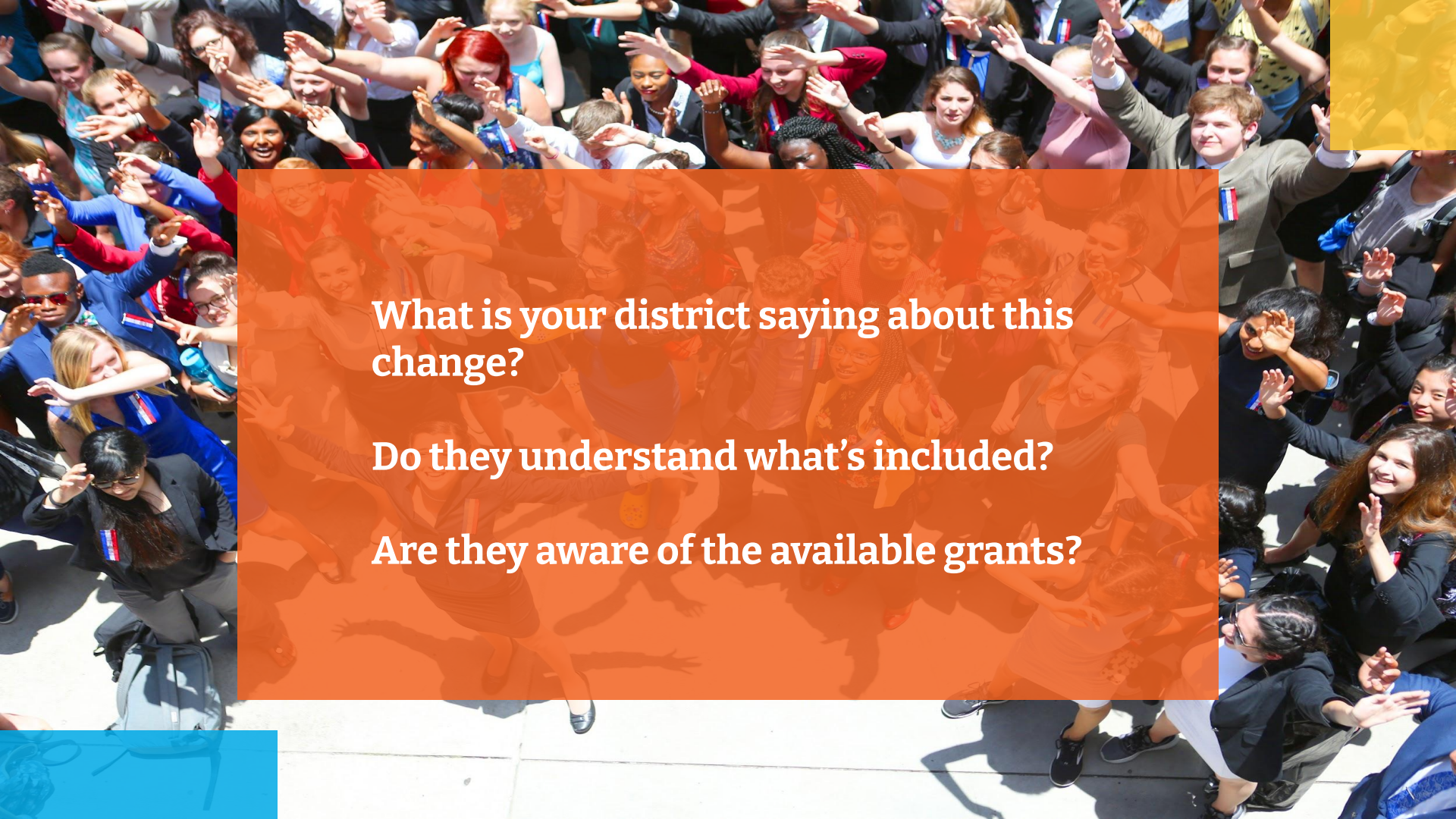
GRANT BUDGET

**\$43,000
Given**

**\$107,000
Remaining**

APPLY AT

speechanddebate.org/membership-support-request



What is your district saying about this change?

Do they understand what's included?

Are they aware of the available grants?



Please share your
feedback!

<https://forms.gle/1vakTYj6Ez2SMjVM6>

Feedback!



Districts

Jennifer Borman, Competition and
Events Coordinator



THE OLD LEVEL STRUCTURE



NEW MEMBERSHIPS

X **new individual student** memberships as a district in the previous school year.



NEW DEGREES

X or more **new degrees** from schools with paid membership during the previous school year.



CHARTERS

Maintain X or more **charter** chapters with paid membership in the previous school year.

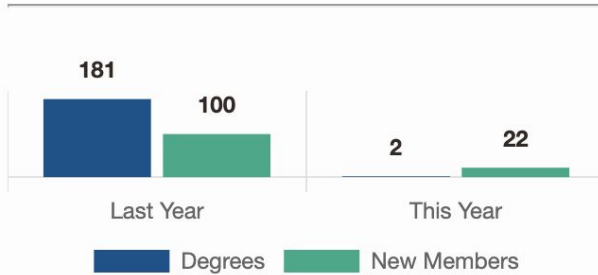


SCHOOLS

Maintain X or more **paid member schools** in the previous school year.

NEW DISTRICT LEVELS

District Info



District Level



Current Level

Level 2

Projected Level Next Year

8 schools

Level 0

0 schools

Level 1

8+ schools

Level 2

15+ schools

Level 3

30+ schools

[Learn More](#)

Details ▾

2025-2026 district levels will be honored for the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school years

NEW DISTRICT TOURNAMENT RULES

National Qualifying Level	Qualifiers to the National Tournament – Entries Required per Event			
	1 Qualifier	2 Qualifiers	3 Qualifiers	4 Qualifiers
Level 1	At least 4 entries	16 entries	30 entries	50 entries
Level 2		4 entries	30 entries	50 entries
Level 3		4 entries	10 entries	50 entries
<i>“Entries” refers to both partner and solo entries in the district tournament.</i>				

1. No more participation limits based on the size of the school, i.e. no school strength
 - All member schools may enter up to 4 entries per event
 - All member schools may enter 2 in the Senate and 10 in the House
2. Students must participate all the way through preliminary rounds to be counted as an entry
3. A district’s **level** is not impacted by the number of paid member schools who choose to participate in the district tournament. A district may earn additional **qualifiers** based on the number of students in each event.

2026-27

COMPETITION RULE CHANGES

Extemp Notecard Pilot

District Committees may choose to pilot the following rule in International Extemp and United States Extemp at their district tournament: Competitors may use the front and back of a 4 x 6" or smaller notecard while speaking. The notecard must be prepared during the preparation period; notes may not be pre-written or reused from round to round.

This pilot will be discontinued after the 2026–2027 district season and will not be used at the National Tournament.

Interp Binder Clarification (POI, PRO, POE)

The student will have the **full text** of their manuscript **in the binder** or folder.

Intentionally **displaying words** in the manuscript is considered using a visual aid and **is not permitted**.

Artistic Plagiarism Clarification

Wholesale impersonation of performances found in NSDA video media is prohibited **regardless of whether the performance was coached by the same individual.**

Interp Reuse Clarification

A student may not use a cutting from a work of literature the student used in National Speech & Debate Association district or national competition, **including the Middle School National Tournament**, in any previous contest year.

Mavericks Clarification

A Policy or Public Forum team with only one debater may not compete. **No mavericks are permitted.**

Recruitment

Elisha Roberts, Director of School
Recruitment



Partnership:

Reach out to me if you are
interested in doing direct
recruitment in your district!

Year 1

Strategies Defined

Parents

Outreach to all 50 states PTO/PTA organizations, Targeted social media ads (81 districts), National Parent Organization Outreach, Presence & Elevation

Students

SLC rural strategy guidance, SLC priority area, State by state challenges, PTO/PTA connection, Media attention, Direct advocacy, Call to action to recent NSDA alums, Social media boost

5-7 schools in an area where no speech and debate exists can compete together in a shortened season to ease barrier to entry

Localized competition

Work alongside districts to provide resources and support

District growth

Updated recruitment materials on our website

JOIN OR RENEW TODAY

School Recruitment and Outreach Materials

Recruitment Materials

Use the resources below in your outreach efforts for your intended audience.

How to Start a Team

Universal

AD/Athletic Director

Middle School

Portrait of a High Quality Speech and Debate Coach

Parent

College/Career Advisor

Student

speechanddebate.org/school-recruitment-outreach/



Which strategy resonates most with you in your context?

Parents? Student state by state challenge? Localized competition?



What's missing?

Are there sub-strategies we should pursue that you want to share?

Questions?

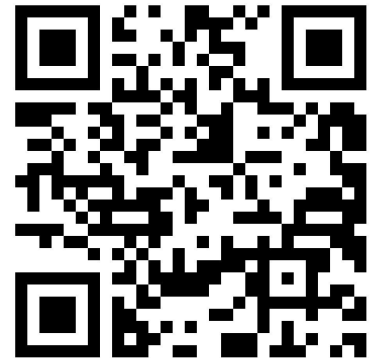




Please share your
feedback!

<https://forms.gle/1vakTYj6Ez2SMjVM6>

Feedback!



Coach Support System

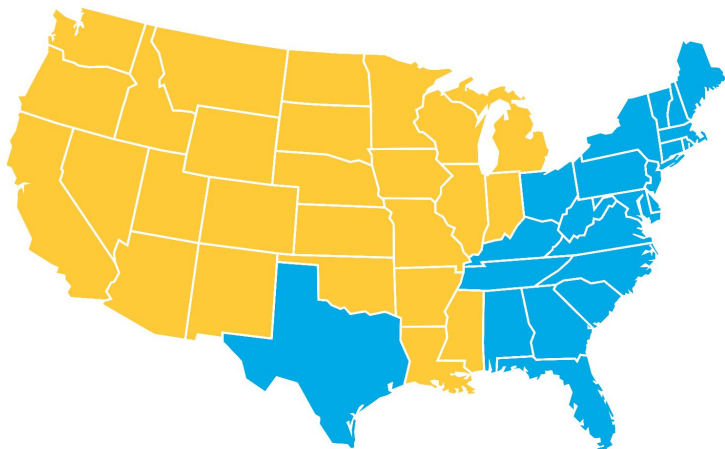
Lauren McCool and Travis Rother,
Coach Support Specialists





Coaching Support System

2026-2027 REGIONS



West/Central Region



TRAVIS ROTHER
Coach Support Specialist

Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and International schools.

East/South Region



LAUREN MCCOOL
Coach Support Specialist

Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

From Overwhelmed to Oriented



Learn their program

Understand their goals, experience, and context.



Connect the right resources

Share what fits their needs.



Clarify what's next

Create a plan and stay connected.

What connections should we know about?

Who in your area...



Welcomes new coaches?



Knows the local circuit?



Is simply great to know?

Not a formal mentor. Just someone who could help a new coach feel connected.



Coach Mentoring Program

Dr. Paul Porter, Director of
Belonging and Inclusion





"A good coach can change a game. A great coach can change a life."

John Wooden

ABOUT MENTORING

Mission

The NSDA Coach Mentorship Program connects new advisors with more experienced ones to create space for honest conversation, shared learning, and steady support. It exists to reduce isolation and help coaching feel more sustainable over time, not to evaluate or direct your work.

How is Mentoring Different from Coach Support?

Mentorship is a **supplement** to the Coach Support System.

Coach Support Specialists: NSDA Staff who help with the basics of coaching and team administration and identify coaches in need of mentorship.

Mentors: Community coaches who build relationships by sharing personal experiences.



WHAT DO MENTORS DO?

Mentors foster belonging and build relationships through regular meetings over a six month period. They may help coaches through more personal or specific issues they have in common, like:

- Making sense of norms
- Navigating coaching while raising young children
- Leading a team with no funding
- Coaching when not a school employee
- Taking over a team as an alum
- Coaching students who have different lived experience from yours



WHAT WE WANT FROM MENTORING

- A strong, six-month commitment to communication and connection
- Coach retention!
- Mentees who feel confident in their ability to continue their role as coach/advisor
- Mentors with enhanced connection/engagement with the coaching community

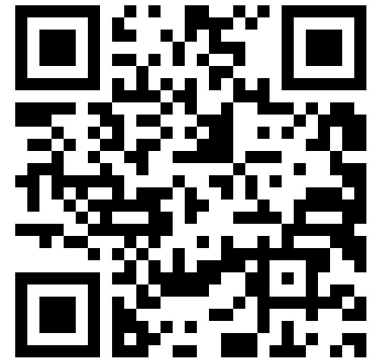




Please share your
feedback!

<https://forms.gle/1vakTYj6Ez2SMjVM6>

Feedback!



New NSDA Resource Strategy

Dr. Athena Murray, Manager of
Resource Design



Goals

**Access for All
Members**

Easy to Navigate

**New Coach
Materials**



Access for All Members

RESOURCE TABLE

Sort results by selecting the arrows next to Title, Date, or Access.

	Title	Date	Access
	Public Forum Advanced Evidence Guide - 2026 September/October 	2026-09-21	✓ Members
	Congress Legislation - 2026 October 	2026-09-21	✓ Members
	World Schools Resource - October 2026 	2026-09-21	✓ Members
	Lincoln-Douglas Advanced Evidence Guide - 2026 September/October 	2026-09-21	✓ Members
	Nationals 2026 - MS Storytelling Finals 	2026-09-16	✓ Members

Easy to Navigate

 **NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION**
CONNECT. SUPPORT. INSPIRE.

 [Membership](#)  [Resources](#)  [Competition](#)  [Programs](#)  [About](#)  [Store & Trophy Shop](#)  [Renew](#) [Donate](#) 

Coaches

[Popular Resources](#) | [Team Management](#) | [Competition](#) | [Culture and Recognition](#)

Welcome Coaches!

Explore our variety of materials for coaches, including information about managing your team, running practice, and celebrating success.

[New Coaches Start Here](#)



New Coach Materials

Team Management

Getting Started

- [Intro to Coaching Speech and Debate](#)
- [Coaching Speech and Debate \(NFHS\)](#)
- [Setting and Achieving Your Coaching Goals](#)
- [Choosing Competition Events](#)
- [NSDA Coaches Newsletter](#)
- [Coaches Network](#)
- [Writing a Team Handbook](#)

Budgeting and Fundraising

- [Managing a Team Budget](#)
- [Fundraising](#)
- [Program Grants](#)

Growing Your Team



Intro to Coaching Speech and Debate

Running Practices

Intro to Tournaments

Setting and Achieving Your Coaching Goals

Running the First Practice

Succeeding at Tournaments

Writing a Team Handbook

Promoting Student Health and Well-being

Choosing Competition Events

Managing a Team Budget

Building a Healthy Team Culture

What to Expect Coaching Series

Collaborating with Parents and Families

Writing Letters of Recommendation

...



Choosing Competition Events

Choosing Competition Events

- › Speech and Debate Events
- › Topics
- › Preparation
- › Performance
- › Recommendations for Students
- › Recommendations for Coaches
- › Competition Events Resources

Speech and Debate Events

"Speech and debate" describes many types of events.



The "**speech**" part of "speech and debate" generally refers to a variety of speaking activities where people share information, arguments, and stories with audiences. At the NSDA, speech events are broken down into **public address** events, where speakers generally write their own speeches, and **interpretation** events, where speakers perform excerpts of plays, books, poems, stories, and more.

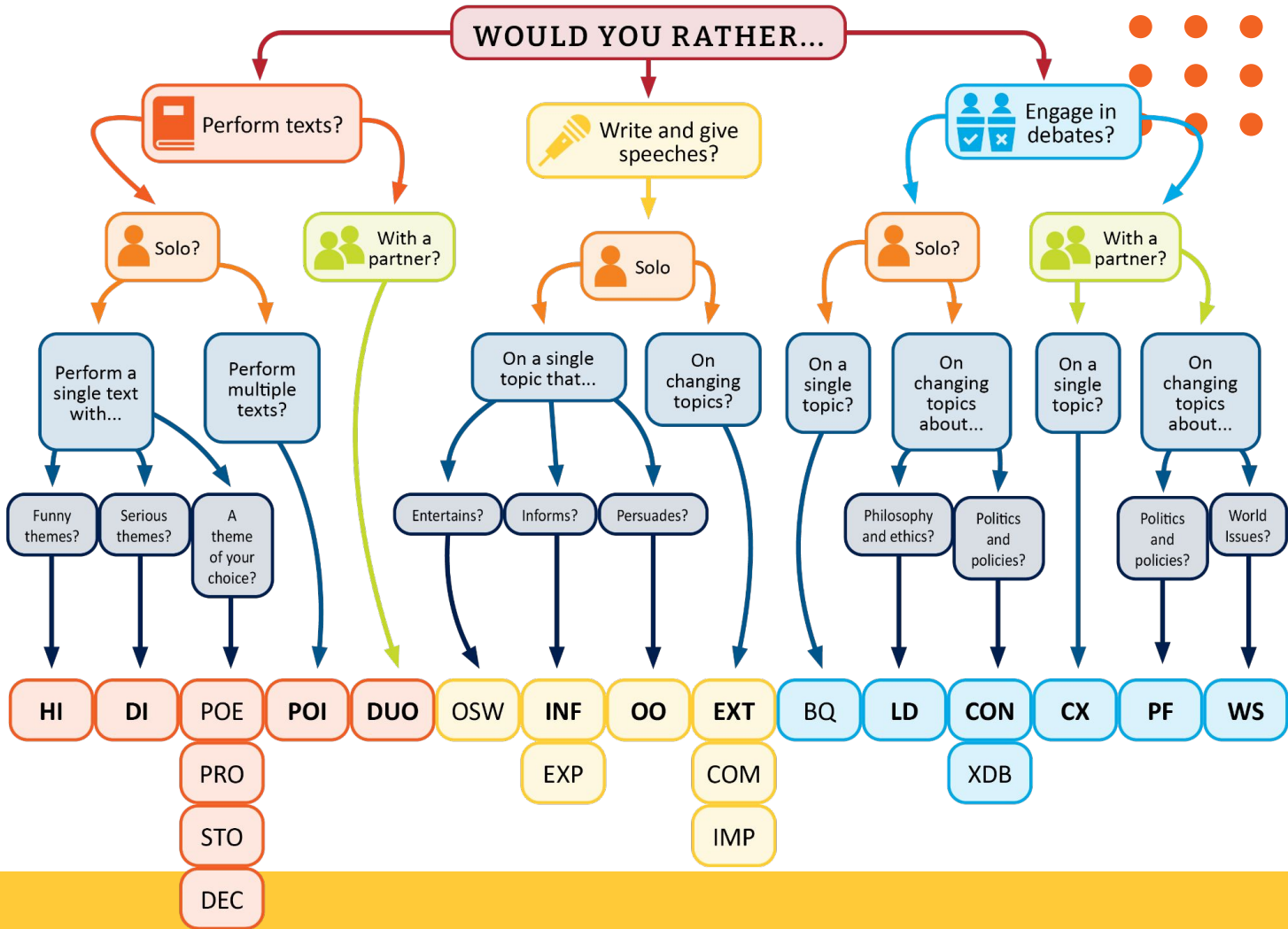


"**Debate**" generally refers to a variety of activities where people exchange opposing arguments on a common topic. They use arguments to test the suitability of a concept, policy, philosophy, or value. It is more structured than a conversation or discussion and uses rules and procedures to ensure that each "side" of the topic gets roughly equal time and consideration.

The NSDA offers 24 unique speech and debate events! In high school, events are generally split into two categories: **main events** and **supplemental events**. **Main events** are the primary competition categories at NSDA Districts and NSDA Nationals. If a high school competitor doesn't qualify for elimination rounds at NSDA Nationals in their main event, they can then compete in **supplemental events** (also called **supps**). The middle school competition is not split into main and supplemental events.

You should prioritize NSDA main events to compete at NSDA Districts and NSDA Nationals.

Choosing Competition Events



Recommendations for Coaches

In this section, three experienced coaches provide their recommendations to new coaches and teams in each event category: public address, interpretation, and debate. They will compare and contrast events in terms of onboarding, sustainability, competing, budgeting, and recruiting judges. You can also browse our What to Expect Coaching series, where coaches will introduce you to the experience and benefits of coaching their favorite events.

These are simply recommendations—as the coach, you get to decide!

Choosing Public Address Events

Choosing Interpretation Events

Choosing Debate Events

What to Expect Coaching

Browse our What to Expect Coaching series to learn more about coaching NSDA events.

What to Expect Coaching:

Speech

Public Address

[Declamation](#)

[Extemporaneous Speaking](#)

[Informative Speaking](#)

[Original Oratory](#)

Feedback

What resources would help
you support new coaches
in your district?



Tabroom.com

Chris Palmer, Lead Developer
Ryan Tullis, Developer, Tournament
Services

Version 3 and 4 both!



Tabroom 3.0

The old workhorse you all know and hopefully love, at least a little.

But it's a server side application, using dated technology, and costs a lot to maintain.



AN HOMAGE TO FRED BROOKS

SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

NEW FEATURES

Even under a rewrite, the needs of the organization and its activities change and grow.

DEBUGGING

Whenever you add new features, you have to debug things a lot. When you don't add new features... you still have to debug.

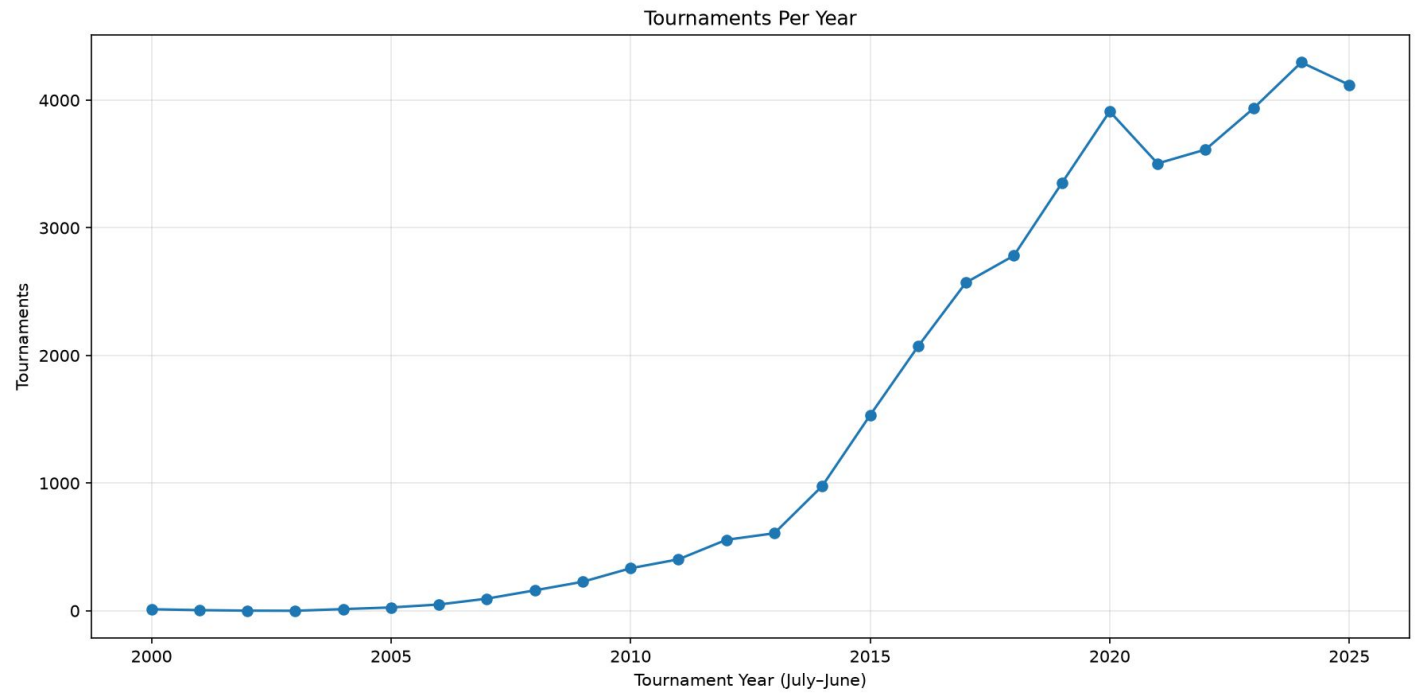
REWRITING INTO JS

Recasting all the existing software into a new stack



MEET RYAN

USAGE



THE COMING BENEFITS

TABROOM 4.0 BETA

Public pages now live!
More student & judge features coming this fall!

PERFORMANCE

The new platform sends only information it needs over the internet, not whole pages. The result is faster, snappier performance without constant page refreshes.



AUTOMATED TESTING

A battery of pre-written tests can catch regressions and other flaws before they affect you.

A FRESH LOOK

Tabroom tends to get attention most where we personally see it most. The user/judge pages were overdue for a refresh.



HOW DO WE MAKE THE TRANSITION PAINLESS?



and remember, help us
help you!
help@tabroom.com

THANKS!

Please share your
feedback with us!

<https://forms.gle/1vakTYj6Ez2SMjVM6>

