



2018 - 2019

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TOOLKIT





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QUESTIONS?

We're here to help! Supporting materials can be found by logging in to www.speechanddebate.org, or contact your National Speech & Debate Association staff liaison for more information.

WHO WE ARE:

The National Speech & Debate Association is the largest interscholastic speech and debate organization serving middle school, high school, and collegiate students in the United States. The Association provides competitive speech and debate activities, high-quality resources, comprehensive training, scholarship opportunities, and advanced recognition to more than 130,000 students and coaches every year. For nearly 90 years, the National Speech & Debate Association has empowered more than 1.4 million members.

MISSION:

The National Speech & Debate Association believes communication skills are essential for empowering youth to become engaged citizens, skilled professionals, and honorable leaders in our global society. We connect, support, and inspire a diverse community of honor society members committed to fostering excellence in young people through competitive speech and debate activities.

Learn more at www.speechanddebate.org



www.facebook.com/speechanddebate



www.twitter.com/speechanddebate



Welcome!

Dear district leader,

Congratulations on being elected a district leader of the National Speech & Debate Association! As a district leader, you play a very important role in shaping the success of speech and debate in your community and across the country. As a local representative of the Association, you have the unique opportunity to connect, support, and inspire local students, coaches, and community members to strengthen your district.

As a district leader in your community, we rely on your passion, skills, and expertise to drive our shared vision to ensure every student has access to speech and debate activities. We know you can't do it alone. We hope this packet of resources will help you see how you can improve your district by motivating your District Committee and other community members to take on leadership responsibilities. We have created tools and resources to help you and your support team run the District Tournament, increase engagement, create and implement new programs, manage financial resources, earn media coverage of speech and debate events, and much more.

Thank you for embracing this vital leadership role within the National Speech & Debate Association. Our office is here to help you in any way possible. Please don't hesitate to contact us at (920) 748-6206 if you need any support. Thank you for giving youth a voice!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Scott Wunn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

J. Scott Wunn
Executive Director

TIPS FOR DISTRICT LEADERS

LEARN FROM SOME OF THE BEST LEADERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY!



“**It's never too early to get started!** Reach out to new members first, and if you have the opportunity, sit down with them and go through the student membership process and entering points. Then, touch base with your returning coaches to make sure they have renewed too.”

– Mary Gormley, Coach



“**As district leaders it is important that we listen to our coaches and students, that we do everything with the thought process of helping build a larger, more fruitful debate community.** District leaders must be patient above all else, with both new and veteran coaches. We need to understand that all of us are giving up precious time and we must be respectful of that time.”

– Luis Dulzaides, Chair – South Florida District



“**The best practice I've discovered is that the majority of my job is to *listen* to what the coaches in my district are telling me. I hear what they are saying, then determine what the best course of action is. I keep track of everything so that I can ensure that every voice is considered when I represent my district.**”

– Justin Seiwell, Coach



“**Engaging with our most vital asset to the Association – our students – I've realized that if students are given opportunities to thrive and encouragement to do so, they will. I encourage veteran coaches and competitors to seek out others who may need mentorship in order to thrive as well. After all, we become our best when we compete against (and work alongside) the best.**”

– Kelsey Johnson, Coach



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Building Community: Give Others a Role

Here are some potential roles you could offer district committee members or other members of your speech and debate community. Sharing the responsibility for district-level work means you can accomplish more, help more people feel like part of something bigger, and bring your district together with common goals.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication in any team or in any community is vital to success. While district chairs often manage communication related to the tournament, finding another person to help with media releases, event promotion, district communications, social media, and advocacy can be a big help! Each district has access to a custom **identity package** including a district logo, press release template, and more.



Anyone seeking advice with district-level communications can contact **Grace Rogers**, Marketing Communications Specialist, at grace.rogers@speechanddebate.org.



PROGRAMS

Because most states, and sometimes even distinct districts within a state, have different approaches to the activity or focus on different events, it can be difficult to generate resources specific to your work at the district-level. An individual who focuses on local programs and resources can help ease the burden on individual coaches (especially new coaches) in your district by collecting and sharing already-developed **resources**, customizing national-level resources to the needs of your community, planning **workshops**, or providing **judge training**.

Anyone seeking advice with district-level programs and resources can contact us at info@speechanddebate.org.



VOLUNTEERS AND FUNDRAISING

Every team needs support in some way or another. If someone in your community can assess the various needs in the district and work to obtain financial or in-kind resources from external sources, you can help teams large or small meet their obligations or do more than they'd otherwise think possible. District-level **fundraising** can help offset workshop expenses, lower district tournament fees, or provide hospitality during events. Even if no actual fundraising takes place, identifying someone with a knack for fundraising who can serve as a go-to person for coaches (especially new ones) who need advice, assistance, and help with fundraising tools and tactics, is useful. Or, you can take the financial aspect of the equation out altogether - put someone in charge of volunteer and/or judge **recruitment**! Getting enough people on board to help out with events and district operations can be time-consuming in itself.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT/ENGAGEMENT

The more people involved in the effort to provide speech and debate to every young person in your community, the better. Identifying people in your district who are willing to work with brand **new schools or coaches**, help start new programs or bring them into your district, or sell the **value of speech and debate** to administrators is very valuable.

Anyone seeking advice with district-level fundraising, volunteers, or membership engagement can contact us at info@speechanddebate.org.



▶ ACCESS YOUR RESOURCES!

Find these go-to resources by visiting www.speechanddebate.org/resources and logging in:

▶ COMPETITION EVENTS GUIDE

An up-to-date guide over-viewing each of the National Speech & Debate Association's events. An excellent resource for new coaches, volunteer judges, and students!

▶ HOW-TO VIDEOS

Access convenient, easy-to-follow education resources, including a JOT registration process walk-through put together by a district chair.

▶ DISTRICT LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

Utilize the National Speech & Debate Association's community of support. Reference this directory to find the contact information for other local leaders.

▶ MANUALS AND TOURNAMENT RESOURCES

Documents with guidelines and procedures for managing a chapter, including point recording and degree regulations. Also, documents outlining tournament operations and the specific procedures for determining the national qualifiers in each district.

Visit www.speechanddebate.org/publications-newsletters to see our most recent communications at a glance!

▶ MONTHLY DISTRICT LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

Find important updates, helpful reminders, webinar invitations, and useful resources in this monthly publication.



Recruiting New Schools

One of the most impactful things you can do for your district is recruit new member schools. This can be a challenging process. By following these steps, we hope to assist you in more efficiently making connections and starting the process of getting recruitment going. This document provides some general suggestions. However, it may be necessary for you to modify based upon various local factors. We are here to help you if you feel there need to be modifications. Do not hesitate to ask your National Speech & Debate Association staff liaison for any assistance you may need.

PREPARATION

To recruit high schools it is important to identify some of the potential schools in your area. To do so, think about where schools may fall into the following categories:

1. *Identify schools that are doing the same competitive speech and debate events your district does, but are not members of the National Speech & Debate Association.*

There are schools that may be doing the same events that your school or other schools in your district do on a regular basis. You may compete against those schools at local competitions. Create a list of schools that do competitive speech and debate but are not members of your district and the Association. When making this list, provide notes on any of the reasons they may not be members (e.g., financial reasons, past negative experience, misperceptions of the Association, etc.).

2. *Identify schools that used to have speech and debate teams but no longer do.*

What schools used to have speech and debate teams in your district? Why did they go away? Make a list of these schools and note the reasoning (if you know).

3. *Identify schools that participate in state activity association festivals or other speech competitions, but not your district tournament.*

Is there a state activities association? Do they offer festivals for their members? If so, it would be great to get a list of schools that participate and then identify those that do the state association speaking activities but are not participating within

your district. Make notes as to what events they do at the state level, if the information is available.

To prepare, it's important to have an idea of what schools may be out there for you to recruit. Additionally, having notes about the various schools would assist you in being able to consider how to support their speech and debate activities through the National Speech & Debate Association.

IMPLEMENTATION

It is good to have lists of schools to recruit. But how do you recruit them? We will provide some general strategies for you to consider when recruiting high schools. However, it is important to note that there is no science behind recruitment. As a local leader, you know better than anyone what is likely to be persuasive to teachers or administrators.

Face-to-face communication is always a plus when it's an option available to you. However, you may have to communicate via phone calls or emails. It is crucial that you identify the optimal way to communicate so that you can get a positive impact without exhausting too much of your own time.

Here are some general tips for recruiting schools:

Find Connections. You should not be recruiting on your own. You should be coordinating the effort, but it's important for you to have the support you need to make the biggest impact! There are a number of people who may be able to help. A retired coach may have insights on what is persuasive to a particular administrator. Your administrator may have a personal relationship with a school you are trying to recruit. You may know a parent on the PTA who could assist. If you can, find a

connection to a school who can help either start a conversation between you and the school or have a proxy who begins the discussion on your district's behalf.

Do Research. If a school had a team before, find out if they qualified students to Nationals. See if they had national champions or finalists. You can get a complete history of a school from the national office. If a school did speech and debate in the past through our organization, their past success could be a motivator for participating now. The current administration of a school may have no idea about the history of speech and debate at their venue.

Promote the Honor Society. The National Speech & Debate Association provides the only Honor Society specific to speech and debate. Teams that do competitive speech and debate but function outside of our organization are missing out on this benefit for their students. Schools without any teams may be compelled to provide that opportunity for their students.

Inform Schools About Resources. The Association has myriad resources to assist schools with not only competitive speech and debate, but also curriculum. Let schools know about the benefits of speech and debate when it comes to your local, state, or national standards (e.g., Common Core). Show the schools the various textbooks, webinars, lesson plans, and more that would be available to them if they were members.

Coach Recognition. If speaking to a prospective coach, inform them of the many types of communication the National Speech & Debate Association uses to promote coach accomplishments. We have a variety of press releases and recognition letters that are sent to administrators. Coaches can be honored in various forms through membership within the Association. This will assist them in getting support among their individual school community.

School Recognition. It can be persuasive to communicate to a school how the organization can help recognize their students, but also, their school for outstanding achievements. Schools can earn various statuses throughout our organization. Press releases can be sent from our organization to local media outlets to help bring positive recognition to the school. Letters about where the school ranks within our national organization helps put the school's program into context for leaders at the school and district level.

Offer Mentorship. Maybe a school wants to do speech and debate but is unaware of how to get started. Be a support system for that school. Let them know you are there to answer any questions they may have. Check in with them regularly to be sure they are progressing appropriately and getting answers to questions they may not think of asking.

Highlight Area Schools. What are schools in the district, nearby district, or rival schools accomplishing? A school could be motivated by awareness of other students who are receiving recognition that their kids are not fortunate enough to have. Schools are competitive and want to be the best. Let them

know how they can begin to provide opportunities to students that others nearby already do.

College Connection. Provide information to the schools about how beneficial speech and debate can be to the college application process. While the Honor Society is one component of this, there are other aspects. Students need to develop long-term commitments to help stand out on the college application. Speech and debate can provide unique leadership experiences for students.

Academic Rigor. Help schools realize that speech and debate is an academically rigorous experience for students, which really enhances their ability to function in the proverbial real world. Inform the school about how speech and debate assists with information processing, writing, public speaking, critical thinking, and creativity.



EVALUATION

You should keep track of who you communicate with at each school, the strategies you use to try and recruit them, and the result of your efforts. If you are turned down, don't take it personally. However, try and identify why you were turned down and keep note of that. If you were successful, do not get too excited (be excited, but temper it!), as there is a lot of work ahead for a school to get started and be retained. Share what worked and did not work with district leaders across the entire National Speech & Debate Association community.

While recruiting, please understand that our organization's vision is to provide access to speech and debate to every student in the United States. We work tirelessly toward that objective, and we would not be able to realize its potential without the amazing work of local leaders like you. Your efforts, even if they do not pan out immediately, will increase awareness of who we are and the amazing work that our coaches do on a daily basis. You will make a positive impact. You will help us meet our vision. It's a long process at times, but it's ultimately very fulfilling.



Mentoring New Schools

Mentoring schools new to speech and debate is a key to expanding our activity. As a means to support programs at various stages of development, this chapter will guide mentors of new programs in establishing action steps from any starting point in the process.

CONNECTING PEOPLE

Essential Personnel

One of the first steps in mentoring a new program is to identify the key people connected to the school who will support its development.

- Programs need an **advisor** as a point of contact for students, coaches, the administration, and the National Speech & Debate Association. Although advisors are not required to be employees of the school, it is very helpful for advisors to have substantial connections to the school, and there should be mechanisms in place to hold the advisor accountable for meeting the basic needs of the program.

- Programs also need to have a **principal** who can provide support and help the advisor navigate the school's policies and procedures. The principal not only signs the membership application but also ensures the advisor and the program meet the school's guidelines and rules for participation in interscholastic activities. The principal may put the advisor in contact with the **athletic/activities director** of the school for this support, as well. In addition, the principal serves as a liaison between the speech/debate program and the administration.
- The school's **business manager** is responsible for payment of Association fees, tournament registration costs, initiating purchase orders, and other financial aspects of the program. The business manager may also be responsible for handling transportation arrangements.
- A **coaching staff** needs to be established. Small programs often have one **advisor/coach** who manages all aspects of the program. Many programs have **volunteer coaches** who provide support in specific categories or who coach specific days of the week. Some of those coaches serve as **judges** at tournaments on specified weekends during the course of the school year.



Next Steps

The mentor needs to find the individuals who will champion speech and debate at the new school. This can be challenging as programs are developed in many different ways. Sometimes students express interest and form a grassroots effort to get a program started. At other schools, parents want to support their children in developing skills in speech and debate and

push for a program to begin. Still others form with an interested administrator or school board member who would like to see growth with interscholastic activities. Often teachers with speech and debate background want to get a new program started.

As programs get their starts in so many different ways, mentors should make a list of those who will fully support speech and debate efforts in the school. Encourage those individuals to talk to other teachers, students, administrators, parents, the activities director, and ask for the names of those who want to be involved as a participant, coach, or volunteer. The mentor will need to help organize and support these collective efforts, encourage everyone involved, and provide advice, as needed, to keep efforts moving forward.

In addition to finding champions of the activity in the new school, it is important to connect the new school with others in the region that compete in speech and debate. The mentor can connect these new students and coaches with area schools that would welcome a visit. New coaches can talk to other coaches and learn from their experiences, sit in on practice sessions, and meet other students who are already enthusiastic about speech and debate. The mentor can ask if the principals of the neighboring schools would be willing to call or email their counterparts in the new school to support speech and debate activities.

If local schools are not available, mentors can arrange chats on video services to link new schools with existing programs. Schools can use Skype, Google Hangouts, or other various means of connecting virtually that bridge challenges confronted by program geography.

PROGRAM SUPPORT AND PROMOTION

Curricular or Co-Curricular

Each state in the country, as well as each school district, has varying curricular connections to speech and debate. Some states mandate that schools offer speech or debate classes, others offer it as a unit in other courses (e.g., English classes), while some offer elective credits, and still others don't provide



any formal instruction in speech and debate at all. The mentor and coach/advisor should discuss the options with the principal, curriculum coordinator, and activities director of the school to determine the best options in both the short- and long-term interests of the program.

Student Participation

The mentor can assist the coach, advisor, and administration in determining the best ways to recruit students within the school. It is important to remember every school is unique in terms of how interested students are identified. Many schools take advantage of morning or afternoon all-school announcements to share how students can get involved. Frequently there is an organizational meeting established after school on a specific day or two where interested students can meet and discuss the various types of speech and debate activities available to them with the coach/advisor. Promotional efforts, including posters distributed around the school, information tables set up during lunch periods, and creative bulletin boards can draw students' attention to speech and debate activities.

A fun way to draw student interest is to ask other speech and debate programs to lend some of their trophies and awards to make a nice display for the school.

Mentors should recommend that the championing teachers in the school, as well as teachers in particular fields of study such as English, social studies, and history, make announcements to





their classes that speech and debate activities are available. In addition, schools with vibrant art, theatre, and music programs may find students who are drawn to those activities will also find an interest in speech and debate. It's always important to remember that students draw other students into the activity; thus, by identifying and encouraging the students who are most passionate about speech and debate, adults can encourage these students to recruit among their own friends and classmates and get them excited about speech and debate.

These are just some of the many ways students can be identified for new speech and debate programs. Programs can start small and grow over time.

Fundraising

One of the roles of the mentor is to help come up with ideas for fundraising. The mentor should work with the Support Director to help schools develop appropriate strategies. Just as with recruitment, every school is different in terms of

how funding works, and all fundraising efforts need to be individualized to meet the needs of the specific program. Some programs are completely dependent upon fundraising, from the costs of buses to lodging to registration fees, while others are at schools that are fully funded through a school budget line. The student participant's financial obligation also varies dramatically from school to school; at some schools students raise their own funds entirely, while other programs ask students to contribute in a minimal way. Some schools coordinate sales of candy, magazines, or other products, while others focus on letter-writing campaigns and donations from area businesses.

Mentors should work with the advisor/coach and the Support Director by asking questions about the school's goals and objectives with regard to tournament experiences and funding needs. Several terrific webinars, located on the National Speech & Debate Association website, are available to promote various fundraising ideas. In addition, mentors can direct coaches to the Give Youth A Voice platform available through the Association to assist them in the fundraising process.

Logistical Support

The mentor can assist new schools by walking new coaches and administrators through the process of attending tournaments. Reserving and paying for school transportation varies dramatically from district to district. Registration fees can be very complex when factoring in hired judge expenses, differing fees for speech entries compared to debate teams, and drop fees. Mentors can assist by explaining fee structures and relevant tournament norms to appropriate stakeholders within the school.





EVALUATION

Measuring Success

A successful mentor helps establish a program, ideally one that becomes a member school of the National Speech & Debate Association, enrolls students in the Honor Society, and attends tournaments. Beyond these three goals, different programs will have many ways of defining what success entails. One school might enroll five students and go to one tournament per term, while another school might enroll 15 students and attend a tournament at least once per month. The mentor should work with the coach/advisor to design a program that meets educational and competitive goals that enhance the skills of the school's students.

Non-Competitive Activities

While the Association's vision is to create opportunities for all students to participate in competitive speech and debate, it is also important for our schools to support activities that serve their students and the broader community in a variety of ways. Schools can host workshops and training sessions for students who are interested in improving their public speaking abilities in general. Students who are on the team can take their events and debates into community centers, assisted-living facilities, and in front of civic groups to provide entertainment and education. Students can also host public debates on a variety of issues. Service activities benefit the area and promote goodwill between students and the community members they serve. Students are rewarded with Association points for non-competitive speaking and service activities.



► TOP EVENT RESOURCES

The National Speech & Debate Association provides an extensive wealth of resources, opportunities, professional support, and development to our members.

Share these TOP EVENT SPECIFIC RESOURCES with new coaches:

- INTRODUCTORY LESSON PLANS
- COMPETITION EVENTS GUIDE
- JUDGE TRAINING VIDEOS
- SAMPLE BALLOTS WITH COMMENTS
- WEBINARS
- POLICY STARTER FILES
- DEBATE TOPIC ANALYSIS
- CONGRESS DOCKET
- PRACTICE EXTEMP QUESTIONS

Access countless benefits including webinars, instructional videos, textbooks, lesson plans, training, resources, scholarship opportunities, exclusive partnerships and more by logging in and visiting www.speechanddebate.org/resources



Communicating with Your District

This guide contains tips and resources for communicating with members of a National Speech & Debate Association district.

CREATING COMMUNITY

Many members of the speech and debate community will never meet the national office staff, but they know their local leaders well. District leaders serve as the local face of the NSDA and can help to create a sense of community. **It is important for leaders to be accessible, engaging, honest, and approachable.** The following are ways to cultivate a community in your district through communications.

Foster goodwill.

Use district communications to fill needs in the community. This could mean encouraging coaches to pitch in with tabulating each other's tournaments or planning a traveling novice night to draw in different teams. Welcome new faces at tournaments and make members of the district feel at home.

Create a district website or Facebook page to communicate with members of the district.

Use these tools to get feedback, remind coaches of upcoming deadlines, share resources, and more. A Facebook page is a great way to allow coaches to meet, connect, and ask each other questions.

Avoid jargon.

As a community, speech and debate can be jargon-heavy. This can be intimidating, so be aware of the language used in district communications and aim to be understood by all.

Work as a team.

Some coaches have found success in working as a unit to meet goals. When an opportunity arises, suggest collaboration. Examples include:

- Sharing lesson plans

- Planning practice debates
- Reaching out to each other's administrators
- Planning joint fundraising efforts/showcase events

Practice transparency.

Be as honest and forthcoming about district operations as possible and encourage others to do the same. Consider the following:

- Opening the tabulation room can make coaches feel more comfortable throughout the tournament.
- Announce tournament positions in advance and offer all head coaches a job to assist with the tournament. This demonstrates openness to welcoming new faces in tournament operations.
- Provide meeting agendas in advance for coaches to provide input and announce decisions after they're made for those who cannot attend. Focus on keeping members of the district involved and informed.



Establish the district's branding with our Identity Package.

We can provide a custom logo for use on social media, email signatures, and other deliverables. Other available options include letterhead and press release templates specific to your district. To request an Identity Package, email grace.rogers@speechanddebate.org.

HIGHLIGHTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF STUDENTS/COACHES IN THE DISTRICT

District efforts.

Promoting the successes of programs and tournaments in the district can help retain schools and aid in fundraising efforts. Consider the following tools:

- Share the results of local tournaments, success stories, or even feature coach profiles on the district Facebook page.
- Use the district newsletter to encourage coaches to share their upcoming events or successes with local news outlets.
- Keep an eye on Rostrum magazine and congratulate coaches who have recently earned a Diamond Award in your district email.
- Reach out to administrators when schools have hit milestones or show great progress.

Press coverage.

Local media can be a great way to highlight programs in the district. Here are a few options for reaching out to outlets:

- Draft a brief press release following the district tournament that qualifying schools can send out, which may help with fundraising.
- Send an email to local news affiliates in the leadup to big local tournaments, districts, and the National Tournament.
- Notify press of the district's Student of the Year and encourage an interview.

Need help drafting a press release? Contact grace.rogers@speechanddebate.org for an easy to use template!

ANSWERING COMMON CONCERNS

When considering Association membership, prospective schools, teachers, and coaches often ask the same questions. Here are a few suggestions for how to respond. Feel free to build on these from coaching insight and experience!

"My students can't compete with other students."

While competition is certainly part of what we do, the NSDA is more about students competing against themselves to be the best performers they can be. Students can progress and advance through classroom and service speaking. Plus, a number of different opportunities exist beyond the typical speech and debate tournament, including the Student Leadership Committee, earning service points, and other activities. There are many ways to participate and succeed in the Association.

"I can't find anyone to coach the team."

A speech and debate coach does not need have experience with the activity. There may be a great option just down the hall! We've compiled a list of tips for finding a coach for your school either inside or outside the building.

"We already participate in local speech and debate—why join the Association?"

The NSDA offers an honor society framework for speech and debate recognition that no other organization provides. We also provide resources, professional development opportunities, classroom activities, and a network of educators.

"I don't know how to coach speech and debate."

This is a process—it's not something that anyone learns overnight. Each program has its own unique circumstances, and each coach brings their own experiences, interests, and knowledge that will inspire young people. The NSDA has myriad coaching resources as well as a number of friendly mentors. District leadership should be willing to work with new coaches to ensure they learn the field and can navigate it successfully.

ENGAGING SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT

There are as many reasons to coach as there are coaches. Some were part of a speech and debate team in high school; some are recruited to replace a retiring coach; for some, employment is conditional on sponsoring the forensic team; for some, it is a service to their community they perform outside their work in another full time job.

Most teachers and coaches indicate they want resources that fill immediate needs: classroom activities, materials, competition, and networking. Classroom resources, local activities, and networking opportunities are critically important to the health of a district and reach more students and coaches than the district tournament.

Classroom Activities

Studies have shown that classroom participation augments student understanding and improves retention of course material. Teachers new to the activity often assume that the Association is about competition and are surprised to learn that the NSDA enhances classroom instruction across a variety of subjects. Participation also enables educators to share the benefits of speech and debate education, even without the budgetary outlays that travel and competition require.

The Association provides a number of classroom activities, webinars, lesson plans, and online textbooks to help members implement speech and debate in their classrooms. Please share these activities with new teachers. Show them how to incorporate speech and debate into their daily instruction. New coaches are motivated most when they see how all students, not just the top competitors, gain from participation. This is what keeps them engaged in the activity.

Resources

The NSDA provides a number of free, easily accessible resources to its members, many of which are listed below. New resources are added throughout the year and will be publicized to district chairs through email announcements and other communications. District chairs should communicate these resources, which will spread goodwill and foster retention of new and struggling coaches.

The following is a partial list of available resources:

1. **Online judge training.** Our online judge training portal enables coaches to train interested individuals on judging expectations. Handouts and sample ballots are provided to assist in learning how to judge.
2. **Teacher in a Box.** This resource provides lesson plans, webinars, handouts, and other materials designed to introduce novice teachers and coaches to Public Forum Debate. To learn more about Teacher in a Box, visit www.speechanddebate.org/teacher-in-a-box-pf-unit-overview-novice/
3. **Rostrum magazine.** This quarterly publication contains articles exploring trends in forensics, offers coaching insights, describes services, announces new opportunities, and more. Each school receives two copies.
4. **Scholarship opportunities.** Member students are eligible for a number of scholarship awards. Many opportunities also exist throughout the year, such as contests in conjunction with our partner organizations.
5. **Webinars.** Member students and coaches can tune in to webinars on topics including getting ready for the district tournament, topic updates, writing speeches, running practices, and much more. Webinars are listed by event for easy use.

Advocacy. The Association has a large collection of white papers that provide evidence of the benefits of speech and debate education. To browse or download these resources, visit www.speechanddebate.org/resources/ and select the “Advocacy” filter.

Strong districts may also add their own resources, including district websites, district email lists, and district Facebook pages used to distribute important announcements, news items, and district tournament updates.

Competition

Competition motivates and engages students and coaches alike. In addition to district and national tournaments, additional contests provide healthy, educational outlets and may be ideal for new coaches and students. The following is partial list of some of our most popular contests:

1. **District and national competition.** Just qualifying to the world's largest academic competition is an honor, yet it can be an intimidating prospect for new coaches or coaches at small programs. For this reason, district chairs may opt to mention the tournament but not rely on it to attract new teachers.
2. **Mid-week, after-school leagues, and novice tournaments.** A number of district chairs have had tremendous success building their districts by implementing mid-week competition leagues. Mid-week leagues are simple, no-frills contests that create competition opportunities with minimum input and maximum output. Novice one-day or half-day tournaments incubate students who haven't competed before the current year, preparing them for tougher competition later. Varsity students can judge the novice rounds and earn service points for doing so. Solicit help from committee members or other coaches to host these events!
3. **American Legion Oratorical Contest.** The Association has partnered with the American Legion to sponsor its annual oratorical contest. Students earn points just for participating at each level, and there are prizes offered by each Legion post, district, and department (state level). www.speechanddebate.org/findind-the-right-speech-and-debate-coach/



Networking

Networking creates unlimited opportunities for both new and experienced coaches. Due in part to teacher and coach retirement, we see an unprecedented number of coaches who have been asked to coach speech and debate while knowing little about the activity. Supporting these coaches and guiding them toward the appropriate resources is a great way to incorporate them into speech and debate and ensure their longevity. Some coaches have been languishing for years with little support and encouragement. These coaches also need networking. Connect them with a support system of other experienced coaches as soon as possible.

The following suggestions provide a few strategies to help connect and foster a coaching community:

1. **Clinics and workshops.** Hold an NSDA district-sponsored pre-season coaching and/or student clinic, or co-sponsor one held by your local league or association.
2. **Community ties.** Forming connections with people and organizations in the community can benefit everyone in the district. Speak at as many civic and service organizations as possible, and invite students to present too. Highlight the work the Association is doing nationally and locally and start asking for sponsorship and volunteer judges for the district tournament. Consider applying for the funds many local organizations have set aside to support local causes.
1. **District brochure.** Consider creating a brochure to distribute to prospective coaches, as well as the community. Brochures are essential when speaking before civic organizations and conferences, or attracting local business support, because they quickly and attractively tell the story of the Association's benefits in that particular area. Need help getting started? Email grace.rogers@speechanddebate.org.
2. **State and local speech and debate league connections.** Strong ties to state and local forensic associations can help districts thrive and draw in new schools to the district. Consider speaking at their conferences, inviting them to attend district events, and encouraging them to attend tournaments or showcases to forge a connection.

Training

New coaches can struggle with learning how to enter points, register for tournaments, and find resources. The following are reminders and helpful tips to get started training new coaches.

1. **Adding students.** Direct new coaches to our step-by-step tutorial on how to add students who have signed up to their school profile. See the guide here: www.speechanddebate.org/faq/how-do-i-get-students-signed-up/
2. **Registering for tournaments.** Encourage coaches to check out upcoming tournaments on the Tournament Calendar (www.speechanddebate.org/tournament-calendar/) and select upcoming events in their area. Remind first-time users that they will have to create an account and to keep an eye on when registration closes. It may also be helpful to share the manuals for Joy of Tournaments and Tabroom for troubleshooting and to recommend coaches check out available tutorials. As the first tournament approaches, it may be useful to remind coaches to make

sure their entry is complete, that fees have been paid, and judges have been entered.

3. **Entering points.** Remind new coaches after the first tournament of the year to enter the points their students have earned into the system by logging on to their profile page and selecting "Enter Points." Step-by-step instructions can be found on the FAQ page (www.speechanddebate.org/faq/) by selecting "I am a coach with permissions - how do I enter points?" If there is a unique situation, please email info@speechanddebate.org with the subject line "Points Entry" for additional help.
4. **Finding resources.** Coaches may be unaware of how many helpful resources the NSDA offers online. Consider recommending they visit www.speechanddebate.org/resources/ and use the filters to view the various resources available to them for free, as well as the additional resources they can access with a Resource Package.
5. **Professional development.** Coaches frequently wonder if they can receive accreditation as a member of the Association. The NSDA offers several levels of certificates corresponding to experience levels. In order to receive the first level of accreditation, Speech and Debate Educator Endorsement, educators must meet the following criteria:
 - Work full-time in an educational environment (employment verification letter with administrator signature required)
 - Active member of the National Speech & Debate Association
 - Provide 20 hours of speech and/or debate instruction in a curricular, co-curricular, or extracurricular setting (verification of instruction form required)
 - Attend two coaching webinars hosted by the Association (must complete the professional development reflection form to receive credit)

Details on additional professional accreditation can be found here: www.speechanddebate.org/professional-development/

QUESTIONS?

We're here to help! Supporting materials can be found at www.speechanddebate.org, or email us at info@speechanddebate.org for more information.



Conducting a Fall Workshop

An exciting opportunity for building a district community is the hosting of a fall workshop. The workshop is an opportunity to bring the entire district together and support novice speakers and debaters. The most typical district event is a competition, which pits students against one another. The workshop establishes a non-adversarial relationship with the schools in your district. It creates an environment of mutually beneficial support among teams, coaches, and students.

Below is an outline describing how you could organize a Fall Workshop in your district. There are a number of potential variations to what is written here. Districts are encouraged to make their workshop fit the needs of their community!

TARGET AUDIENCE

The audience of the workshop includes students and coaches. Every year, districts introduce new coaches and new students to competitive speech and debate activities. The primary goal of the workshop may be to adequately introduce new people to the world of speech and debate. However, coaches who have an interest in learning about a new event or students transitioning to a new event will be a different audience than brand new students or coaches. Additionally, there are veteran coaches who could learn from others and gain new insights and perspectives. Therefore, when designing the workshop, think about the various audiences you hope to serve.

LOCATION

In order to hold the workshop, the district needs a school to host the event. The host school should be able to provide cafeteria space for lunch (note: ordering food and/or planning for food service is necessary), large spaces for whole-group meetings, and individual classrooms for breakout sessions. It is preferable to have spaces where projection and video streaming are available to presenters.

TIMING OF THE WORKSHOP

Ideally, the workshop should be hosted as early as possible in your season. Since all schools begin by Labor Day, the middle

of September seems like an appropriate time for such an event. The key to scheduling the workshop is to ensure that it's early enough that novices get a solid introduction, but also that it's not too early that coaches cannot organize getting novices to the event. Given the proposed structure, a Saturday is often the best option for scheduling purposes.

REGISTRATION FOR THE WORKSHOP

Once you have the location and dates of the workshop, you are encouraged to use a registration process. The host should know how many people to plan for, both in terms of number of spaces and hospitality. Districts can use a variety of mechanisms for registering for the workshop; however, a simple Google form is recommended. (For more information on Google docs, forms, and more, visit www.google.com/docs/about).

Based upon the structure your district utilizes, you could create even more specific sign-up processes to determine the primary interests of students who are coming to the workshop. Flexibility is important. Given the time of year and the target audience, the workshop should aim to be as supportive and nurturing as possible.

ADVERTISING THE WORKSHOP

Once you have set a date for the workshop, it is important to get the word out to the coaches in your district. Ideally, this would be part of a district calendar that you set, likely the previous school year. However, it's not too late to add an event to your calendar if this is not already planned. The easiest way to coordinate this is to send an email to all of the schools' advisors in your district. If a school advisor has changed, please contact

the school and get the email of the new advisor. Other ways to communicate the event may include flyers, mailings, student and coach newsletters, and social media.

POTENTIAL SCHEDULE FOR THE WORKSHOP

8:30 a.m.	Registration
9:00 a.m.	Welcome/Benefits of Speech & Debate/ Overview to the Honor Society
9:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions, Part 1
11:30 a.m.	Lunch
12:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions, Part 2
2:45 p.m.	Demonstration Speeches/Debates
3:45 p.m.	Questions and Answers
4:30 p.m.	Dismissal

PLANNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The schedule above provides you the opportunity to offer students an introduction to events. The breakout sessions can be structured in many ways:

- During the first breakout session, students would get an in-depth introduction to the event of their choice. The second breakout session would enable students to get an introduction to a second event.
- During the first breakout session, students would get an in-depth introduction to the event of their choice. The second breakout session would be an extension with more in-depth information provided to the students.
- During the first breakout session, students would get an brief introduction to all of the speech and debate events. The second breakout session would then allow for a more detailed introduction to the event of their choice.
- The break out sessions could be further segmented into tiers (e.g., Lincoln-Douglas Debate for brand new coaches and students, LD for returning students/coaches, and LD for advanced students/coaches).

PLANNING LUNCH

The proposed schedule includes lunch. A few easy options:

- Provide a box lunch at a small cost to schools
- Order pizza for the attendees
- Let students bring their own lunch

Additionally, this lunch is an excellent opportunity to work within the community to see if you can have food provided, through donations, so that there would be no cost to the students attending. The Programs and Support Directors can work together in this endeavor. Even if you cannot get one restaurant, volunteer, caterer, or business to sponsor the entire meal, you may be able to get a variety of sponsors to provide portions of the meal. The hope would be for the event to be provided free of charge; however, if you cannot get sponsors, the host school should only charge what the actual cost is, per

person, to provide a reasonable lunch. The workshop is not designed to be a fundraiser, but a service activity.

Bonus idea during lunch: Show videos of past final rounds of the National Tournament – show as many different events as you can in the time allowed! For sample videos, see the competition events pages at www.speechanddebate.org/competition-events/.

SECURING PRESENTERS

To make the workshop a success, obtaining quality presenters is a must. Coaches are busy, so the earlier you can secure them, the better! Also, consider retired coaches and alumni who may serve as presenters. Engage as many people as possible when considering the workshop experience. When thinking of presenters, consider the following:

- Who is a reliable, dedicated, and plan-oriented coach?
- Who is passionate about specific events in the district?
- Who is experienced coaching specific events in the district?
- Who is able to get high numbers of students to compete in specific events at competitions?

When contacting presenters, make sure that you provide the logistics of the event, an overview of the goals of the workshop, and your objective for their specific session. Each presenter or instructor should strive to introduce students to the activity in a fun and engaging manner. The workshop is an opportunity to hook students into the wonderful world of speech and debate. Presenters should plan in advance and avoid just lecturing at students for two straight hours.

DEMONSTRATION DEBATES AND SPEECHES

Districts can utilize one of the many, many videos of rounds and performances that are available online. However, another option would be to ask varsity students from across the district to do LIVE performances. Live performances increase the community-building aspect of the event. Students who see live performances can ask the presenters direct questions about what they saw, as well as engage with the more experienced presenters at tournaments in the future. When selecting students for performances, be sure to involve as many schools as possible.

EVALUATION

At the conclusion of the workshop, gathering feedback from participants (students and coaches) is valuable. Feedback should focus on the quality of the presentations and instruction provided, with the goal of identifying which presentations were particularly helpful and why. Additionally, overwhelming support for a presentation is a solid indicator that using that presentation in the following years would be wise. Finally, knowing which presenters and instructors did particularly well can help guide the future training of new presenters.



How to Be a Great Volunteer Coach

Volunteers are vital to the success of many speech and debate programs. This guide will give volunteers some guidelines on how to become a great coach.

PREPARATION

Step 1: Meet with the head coach or an administrator.

Speech and debate teams are stable entities if they have the strong presence of a head coach. Whether you are volunteering as an assistant coach or for just a specific period of time, it's essential that you follow the system of the head coach. Head coach turnover can cause a significant hiccup for a speech and debate program.

When you meet with the head coach, you'll want to discuss the rules and scope of your volunteering. However, there are instances when you volunteer as the head coach. In that case, you'll want to try and address some of the questions below with an administrator, but be prepared for the administrator not to have all of the answers.

Essentially, you'll want to discuss the rules and scope of your volunteering. Potential questions you can ask include:

- What are the goals for the team? (e.g., to qualify for state, have at least 30 active members, etc.)
- What rules does the team have? (e.g., all files must be shared, students must compete in both speech and debate, students are required to keep a 3.0 GPA, etc.)
- What rules does the school have for volunteers or coaches? (e.g., background checks, not friending students on Facebook, etc.)
- What events does the team support? Do they have any interest in adding other events this year?

- What responsibilities do you have? (e.g., submitting attendance reports, expense reports, attending weekly practices, judging a full commitment at tournaments, etc.)
- What role in coaching would they like you to fulfill? (e.g., watch practice speeches, find evidence or potential Interp pieces, coach only a small group of students, coach the beginners, be equally available to the whole team, etc.)

Step 2: Watch our training videos.

Create an account at www.speechanddebate.org, the Association's webpage. You'll be able to access various training materials, including our Competition Events Guides that outline high school and middle schools events; sample ballots; and short videos to teach you about various events.

Step 3: Get a calendar of meetings and tournaments.

Be sure to get the full calendar of events for the team and discuss in advance which events you are expected to attend. If you are the head coach, the Association offers a unified calendar, which lists a wide variety of tournament options for the full year, available at www.speechanddebate.org/tournament-calendar/.

Once you sign up for a tournament, please do your best to be there. As a volunteer, it is easy to assume your presence is just an added bonus to the team. By agreeing to be a volunteer coach, the team is counting on you to schedule and make your volunteering a priority to be fair to the other coaches and to the students. If there are tournaments not on the team calendar you would like to attend, you can either speak to the head coach about potentially taking a team or reach out directly to the tournament administrator about judging at the tournament.



IMPLEMENTATION

Step 1: Support the head coach.

Supporting the head coach means following all of the rules and expectations discussed at the first meeting. If you predict any changes, simply alert the coach as soon as possible.

Supporting the head coach doesn't mean always agreeing, but it does mean disagreeing in private. If you have a concern about a rule or an incident, meet privately with the head coach to discuss it. If a student expresses a concern about a rule or an incident, do your best to explain the rationale to them. Do not offer to speak to the coach on his or her behalf or try to take up the argument. Although you may disagree with the rule, and although you definitely should take it to the head coach, offering to be a go-between or acting as if you're against the head coach can undermine his or her role with the students. Ultimately, the head coach is responsible for educating and taking care of all students, complying with all school rules, and working with all parents. It's a tough job to juggle all of that.

Step 2: Be on time.

Remember those loud alarms between classes? Tardy slips? Teachers and schools are trained to have events start like clockwork. Do your best to show up on time and alert the coach if you may be more than a minute or two late.

Be mindful of end times, too. Most students do not drive themselves home from practice or school. They may have parents waiting to give them a ride or they may be taking a bus. Even if they are walking home, they are likely expected home at a certain time. Even a few minutes delay could cause them to miss the bus or could cause someone at home to worry needlessly.

Be careful about offering a student a ride home. You should check on your school's protocol for transporting students. Many schools now require written parent permission for someone associated with the school to drive a student in his or her car. Some schools may have a rule forbidding students from being in your car at all.

Step 3: Be flexible.

As much as teachers and schools run on clockwork, students rarely do! They may be held up getting extra help from a teacher

or have gotten distracted by a friend in the hallway. Be flexible with students. Use frequent tardiness or other incidents as teachable moments. As much as speech and debate teaches students communication skills, it also teaches students how to be effective team players. By being flexible and talking with students about these kinds of incidents, you are playing an invaluable role in teaching the latter skill.

Step 4: Communicate.

Communication skills include not just being able to deliver a strong Interp piece or give a great debate speech. Communication also includes passing along information about pick up and drop off to parents, reporting student incidents to the head coach, and sharing success with the school.

Communication requires knowing what channels your intended audience will use. Be sure to ask the head coach about the communication plan for parents and students. Do you post information on Facebook? Are students group texted through a service like Remind?

Also, please pay attention to the head coach's preferred means of communication. Many teachers are not able to check email often. When they do, they may only have a few minutes and thus be unable to respond to your email quickly. This may mean that email is not an ideal way to communicate a sudden or last-minute change.



EVALUATION

If you are volunteering, you undoubtedly believe in the power of speech and debate. Celebrate successes other than just trophies or wins at competition. Frequently ask yourself if students are improving their communication and critical thinking skills. Are students improving their college and career readiness? If so, you're doing a great job!

Make sure to schedule some time at the end of each semester to check in with the head coach. S/he may have thoughts on successes you can celebrate and ways to maximize your time with the team. These are also great one-on-one opportunities to discuss the goals of the team and anyway you think you can help them meet those goals.



How to Be a Great Volunteer Judge

Judging speech and debate can be fun and easy to do! This guide will help volunteers become great judges. Learn how to make your time impactful and positive for speech and debate students!

PREPARATION

Step 1: Find judging opportunities.

The easiest place to start finding your volunteer opportunities is through the Association's unified tabulation system and tournament calendar, currently found online at www.speechanddebate.org/tournament-calendar/. You can also email info@speechanddebate.org if you have any questions about the process.



Step 2: Watch our training videos.

Create an account at www.speechanddebate.org, the Association's webpage. You'll be able to access various training materials, including our Competition Events Guides that outline high school and middle schools events; sample ballots; and short videos to teach you about various events and how to effectively judge them, visit www.speechanddebate.org/judge-training/ for details.

Once you've signed up for a volunteer opportunity, please be sure to find out if any additional training is required. It's possible you may need to complete a background check. If a tournament has a required training session, please do your best to attend. Often, those trainings are helpful in answering questions about particular rules at a given location. For example, in some areas, students cannot enter the room until you, the judge, are there. In some events, preparation time, forfeit times, or other rules may vary in small but still significant ways. You'll be their favorite volunteer by attending the training and following their procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION

Step 1: Show up on time, but be aware that tournaments may run behind.

Being a great volunteer means showing up at the time asked to ensure you check in, attend training, and are ready for round 1. Although tournaments frequently do not start on time, the delay is usually because schools, judges, and volunteers assume the tournament will run behind and do not check in at their assigned time. Round 1 cannot be created until all of the necessary individuals have been checked in. Please do your part by being on time, but also be understanding that delays are rarely the fault of tournament officials.

Step 2: Be available for ballots.

Be sure to hang out in either the judges' lounge, near the ballot table, or in the designated area when pairings are scheduled to come out. Check thoroughly for your name. If you are not assigned a round, do not fret! Stay near the ballot table,

and when the majority of judges have picked up their ballots, let the ballot table official know that you are nearby and available to take a ballot. Once they know what rooms are missing judges, they will appreciate you having stood by to help start the competition rounds on time.

You may be asked to judge every round or you may have breaks. As a volunteer, your flexibility in this area is key to making the tournament run smoothly. Take something to the tournament that will keep you occupied during any break periods, but don't take something that must get done that day.



Step 3: Provide constructive feedback.

There is no wrong way to judge a round as long as you follow your training, are encouraging and kind, and provide positive and constructive feedback to students. Students are there to learn from you, no matter your background or experience level!

In addition to completing the ballot in a timely manner, you'll want to provide some written feedback to students. Although you may be able to speak to students directly about areas to improve, written feedback helps ensure their coaches also receive your feedback and can work further with them to improve. Please be aware if the tournament would like you to turn in a ballot right away before providing verbal feedback to students. Depending on the tournament and the round, the next round may not be able to be created until the tab room has every ballot turned in.

Also be aware whether the tournament encourages or discourages verbal feedback to students and follow those rules. If the tournament asks you to provide verbal feedback, it is helpful to do so but not mandatory. Just be aware that if the tournament norm is to provide verbal feedback, students or coaches may approach the tab room for that feedback if they didn't receive it during the round.

Step 4: Communicate your departure.

If you need to leave early, please alert the ballot table workers as soon as possible. The sooner they know, the easier it will be for the tournament to adjust.



EVALUATION

If you are volunteering, you undoubtedly believe in the power of speech and debate. By volunteering to judge, you have given several students the opportunity to compete. For many tournaments, judges are the limiting factor. On behalf of those students and that tournament, thank you for providing the opportunity for speech and debate!

► FREE JUDGE TRAINING!

www.speechanddebate.org/judge-training/

Get started by accessing our free judge training videos! Simply click on the event you are interested in judging and you'll find a number of resources to help you prepare any event. You'll find:

- SAMPLE COMMENT SHEETS
- TRAINING VIDEOS
- BASIC EVENT INTRODUCTIONS
- TIPS ON HOW TO EVALUATE A ROUND
- HOW TO FILL OUT A BALLOT
- AND MORE!



How to Involve Alumni

With some careful planning, alumni can become agents of change for your district. Their experience with speech and debate generally means they have the talent and love for the activity needed to make them all-star volunteers and supporters. Creating systems to channel their volunteer efforts will involve them in meaningful activities that will help build the lasting relationships that will guarantee you have their support for years to come. This document will walk you through steps to organize volunteer roles for alumni and simple ways to stay in contact.

PREPARATION

Step 1: Appoint someone to handle generic alumni communication.

At first, the support director most easily conducts this role. As the support director, you're in-tune with the needs of the general district and best positioned to handle alumni carefully. If it is a "generic" communication (e.g., not one to their own coach), it is important for alumni to have a reliable contact with whom to build a relationship.

As you progress in this process and more alumni become involved, you'll want to keep an eye out for an alumni coordinator. Don't forget that an involved alumnus would make an excellent alumni coordinator! You'll want to consider this as an option when you have more than five to ten active alumni who are coordinating their efforts through you and not exclusively with schools.



Step 2: Survey your district for volunteer needs.

Be creative and think of various positions that can add value and allow individuals with a variety of talents and experiences to meaningfully contribute to your district. In order to come up with a robust list, here are a few questions to ask of yourself and others in your district.

- **What tournaments occur in the area that may need volunteers?** What volunteer roles would be helpful at those events? (Think beyond just judging!)
- **Are any schools interested in volunteers to come in and hear practice speeches/performance after school?**
- **Does your district, or members of your district, do any fundraisers that may need volunteers?** Bake sales, car washes, silent auctions, phonathons, etc., all are events that may be more successful by having a little extra help!
- **Does your district committee need administrative help during the year?** Perhaps you've always wanted a strong Facebook presence, but don't have the time. Or perhaps your district would like some of its history documented. Be creative about what may be helpful to delegate to someone.
- **Are there any special events where alumni turnout would make a difference?** Do schools ever present their awards to administrators where an alumni testimonial might help? Are there public performances or public debates where having an audience would make a difference?

IMPLEMENTATION

Step 1: Create an alumni volunteer engagement packet.

After you've collected the answers from the last section, create a list of all of the types of volunteer roles. Include relevant dates for the role and necessary requirements. See the sample packet at the end of this document. Although it is formatted to include areas where experience is not needed, it is still appropriate for alumni. Many alumni feel uncomfortable performing a task that requires speech and debate experience. Whether it is because it's been a long time since they have competed, or because they did not have high levels of success, alumni will feel anxious about their inexperience. By providing options described as "no experience is necessary," alumni are more likely to volunteer in these areas.

Step 2: Say hello to alumni!

This may seem obvious, but the first step to involving alumni is friendly and prompt responses. If they see you at a tournament, go up and say hi and ask them what they enjoyed about speech and debate. If they send an email, respond within 24 hours to introduce yourself. This email can be a form letter, and it can even say that you will be in more communication in a few days, but it is important to respond promptly.

Step 3: Collect and keep track of alumni contact information.

When an alumnus reaches out, you'll want to ask him/her a few questions in order to best guide your communication. A sample email for your first response is below:

Hello <Name>,

Thanks so much for reaching out! The speech and debate community is better for alumni like you who want to stay connected. You mentioned that you may be interested in volunteering. I'm attaching our volunteer engagement packet. After you've looked it over, please email me with answers to the following questions:

- Which high school did you compete for?
- What college did you attend? Did you compete there?
- In what events did you compete?
- If you coached, what events did you coach and where?
- After reading through the volunteer engagement packet, how would you like to be involved?
- Is there anything else we should know?
- Could we have your mailing address to send you our district newsletter?

If you have any questions, please let me know. I apologize if I am a bit slower at email over this coming weekend—I will be traveling with my team to a speech and debate tournament and so will have limited access to email.

I look forward to reconnecting and, again, thank you for reaching out!

<Your Name>

It is helpful to create a spreadsheet to then track all of this information as it comes in. This will help you place and/or guide the alumni to the appropriate opportunities. It will also give you their mailing address, which is crucial for stewarding your relationship with them.

Step 4: Set up training/orientation sessions.

It is almost always helpful to have a thorough job description with time expectations. Your volunteer engagement packet should include as many details as possible to help make sure everyone is on the same page. After someone has signed up for a shift, however, it is important to think about a training or orientation session. These can occur on the day of the event (unless you'll be too busy) or in advance. They can also occur over the phone. If at all possible, face-to-face orientations are preferable; they are more effective at communicating information and also a way to build a personal relationship with the alumnus.





Step 5: Thank volunteers!

Make sure that all volunteers are thanked promptly after the event. A short email that is personalized is a quick and easy way to accomplish this. If you have their mailing address, a written thank you note will make you stand out as someone who really took the time to make a thoughtful gesture. Promptness in the personalization of your thank you will determine their likelihood of volunteering again. If they donated goods or money, the quality of the thank you becomes even more important for stewarding them as a donor. If written notes would take longer than a week, send an email. The industry consensus is that individuals thanked within 48 hours are significantly more likely to volunteer or give again.

A potential short thank you could be:

Dear <Name>,

Thank you so much for volunteering with us as a judge for the Apple Mound Invitational. As you know, quality judging is so important for the speech and debate experience for our competitors. By volunteering to judge you helped us provide that quality experience to more students.

On behalf of all of the students, thank you!

<Your Name>

Note that the thank you includes the word “you” often and ties the volunteer experience back to the overall mission of the organization.

If they canceled at the last minute, reach out to them and send them a thank you for volunteering and let them know you hope they’ll be able to engage in the future. Many factors cause people to be unable to complete volunteer duties. Staying

positive and giving them a graceful way to reengage will not only gain you a volunteer, but will make them significantly more likely to become an excellent volunteer. A sample note for either a cancellation or a no-show could be:

Dear <Name>

Thanks so much for offering to supervise the bake sale yesterday. I understand you wanted to be there very much, but sometimes there are things that just pop up at the last minute. I hope you’ll be able to join us in the future. Your help would be so appreciated—the bake sale helps us raise funds for scholarship students to compete at the upcoming tournaments.

I hope all is well. Thanks,

<Your Name>

If something negative occurred, the thank you note is not the time to mention it. If the incident was serious, presumably it was addressed immediately at the time of the event. Otherwise, it may be a reason to steer him/her to other volunteer roles or to provide additional training. For example, if the volunteer awarded low speaker points, the next time s/he signs up to judge, let him/her know that you’re speaking to all of the judges proactively about the community norm to ensure speaker points are distributed accordingly. If students said the volunteer didn’t pay attention as a judge, but the alumnus volunteers to judge again, you could thank him/her and ask them if he or she would be willing to help hand out food since that is your biggest need for the weekend. If you want to have a talk with him/her about the behavior, doing so in any form other than the initial thank you will help ensure the volunteer is in a position to hear it as constructive criticism and not as ungratefulness.



Step 6: Communication

Make sure that any alumni who have reached out receive some level of communication. If your district has a Facebook group, invite them to follow that for updates. If you do a newsletter, include them on the list. Any time your district prepares a press release, have a mailing list and send it to alumni to keep them informed of the successes in the area they are supporting. Keep in mind, communication with alumni might be a great role for an active alumnus volunteer!



EVALUATION

Measuring Success

There are three areas to measure success for the year:

1. Number of alumni who reach out

Individuals ask to volunteer for causes in which they believe and to organizations they think are doing valuable work. The number of alumni who reach out to volunteer is most often a factor of their knowledge of how much of a difference your district is making on the area community. Celebrate each new contact!

2. Number of volunteers

Perhaps the most obvious metric, this metric is one that is often forgotten. Keep track of the number of individuals who volunteered at any event. If you can, estimate the number of hours they volunteered. Keep track of this number, and you can set goals of ways to increase this each school year.

3. Number of communications with alumni

How many thank you notes did you send out? How many newsletters were passed on to alumni? Consistent communication is an important metric to track because it is often the indicator of whether you will have continued engagement.

▶ EARN MORE NATIONAL QUALIFIERS

*A district that maintains any one of the following criteria is **allowed two entries to the National Tournament per speech and debate event**, as long as the event meets the four-entry minimum:*

- ▶ Maintain 16 or more active charter chapters prior to the first district tournament date (*note: districts receive one charter chapter credit for every two active provisional chapters*).
- ▶ Maintain 24 or more active chapters of any type prior to the first district tournament date.
- ▶ Maintain 700 or more district tournament entries in the previous three years.
- ▶ Maintain 900 or more new members and degrees from active schools during the previous school year.
- ▶ Increase total district strength in members and degrees by 15% in the previous school year over the year prior.
- ▶ Enroll 300 new individual memberships as a district, by seven days prior to the first district tournament date.

APPENDIX: SAMPLE VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT PACKET

Thanks for reaching out to volunteer with the Southern East Central District of the National Speech & Debate Association! You can make a major difference in our community. Below are several opportunities to get involved.

► Volunteer Judge

Speech and debate competitions are a great place to volunteer and connect with area teams. For many of our schools, judging is a limiting factor in their ability to send students to compete. By volunteering to judge, you will directly be responsible for more students being able to compete that day.

Experience required: No experience in speech and debate is required, but all judges must participate in a judge training in advance of the competition. Judge trainings are available the morning of the tournament.

Commitment level: We ask volunteers to judge a full day of competition (usually a Friday from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. or Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Please note, our schools also require us to background check all judges. The background check is free and easy, but must be completed at least one week in advance. For information, please contact [\[DISTRICT SUPPORT DIRECTOR EMAIL\]](#).

Dates: Tournaments are held several times in the area. Below are the dates, tentative times, and contact info for the tournament directors who have requested volunteers. Please contact the appropriate tournament director(s) if you are interested in volunteering for a particular tournament.

Date(s)	Times (approx)	Tournament	Location	Tournament Director
Oct. 4	8 a.m. to 3 p.m.	Apple Mound Season Opener	Apple Mound High School	Lisa Apple, Lapple@applemound.org
Nov. 7-8	Friday: 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Bruno Jacob Memorial Tournament	Northside High School	Curtis Caldwell, ccaldwell@northside.org
Dec. 13	9 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Winter Scrimmage	East Central Middle School	Tonia Tournament, Tonia123@gmail.com
Jan. 16-17	TBD	New Year Invitational	Southern University	Michael Wu, coachwu@SouthernU.edu
June 14-19	All Day	National Speech & Debate Association's National Tournament	Dallas, TX	Contact our district chair, chair@chairsemail.org , for info on what teams may need a volunteer judge!

► Volunteer Tournament Staff

Speech and debate competitions are a great place to volunteer and connect with area teams. With hundreds of high school competitors, schools are always looking for individuals to help hand out meals, run concessions, maintain the judges' hospitality lounge, or run judge check-in. By volunteering as tournament staff, you are helping tournaments run on time and smoothly. Your presence will positively impact every participant!

Experience required: No experience in speech and debate is required.

Commitment level: Very flexible; usually two-hour shifts.

Dates: Please see the tournament dates under "Become a Volunteer Judge" for dates and contact info.

► *Volunteer Mentor*

Speech and debate competitors practice after school on a weekly basis. They strive for feedback to improve from individuals like you! Your feedback will not only produce future award winners, but also empowers students to find ways to overcome challenges.

Experience required: Experience in speech and debate is required.

Commitment level: Varies as described below.

School	Times (approx)	Events	Commitment	Contact Info
Apple Mound High School	Tues. and Wed. 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.	Public Forum, Extemp, Congressional Debate	At least one day a week from September through December	Lisa Apple, Lapple@applemound.org
Northside High School	Tues: 10 a.m. to noon; Wed: 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.	Duo Interp, Humorous Interp, Dramatic Interp	Once a month September through February	Curtis Caldwell, ccaldwell@northside.org
East Central Middle School	Monday – Thursday, 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.	All Interp and debate events!	Flexible – just give me a week's notice	Tonia Tournament, Tonia123@gmail.com

► *Fundraising Help*

Volunteering to help in this area would make a dramatic impact for students who cannot otherwise afford to participate in speech and debate. Team fundraisers help to bring down the costs for all participants and scholarship recipients for whom the cost would be prohibitive. Please help us bring speech and debate to more students!

Experience Required: No experience in speech and debate is required.

Commitment Level: Very flexible!

Dates: Below is a tentative list of fundraisers with related contact information.

School	Dates	Events	Need	Contact Info
Apple Mound High School	TBD – 4 Sat. in spring	Car Wash	Adult supervision for students conducting carwash. No car washing expertise needed!	Lisa Apple, Lapple@applemound.org
Northside High School	November – ongoing	Wrapping Paper Sale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More individuals to sell wrapping paper • On Nov 17, we need help tabulating all of the orders and placing the order. • On Dec 1, we need help organizing the wrapping paper for distribution 	Curtis Caldwell, ccaldwell@northside.org
East Central Middle School	Every Thurs. at 4 p.m.	Snack Sale	Every Thursday, the team sells after school snacks. We need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults to help supervise the sale from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. • Adult help pricing goods and setting up the table 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. • We'd also love baked goods or other goods donated to help sell at the event! 	Tonia Tournament, Tonia123@gmail.com
Southern University	Feb. 14, but planning begins in Sept.!	Valentine Silent Auction	The Silent Auction raises funds for our entire district to participate at the National Tournament. We need help planning the event, soliciting items for the silent auction, and staffing on the day of the event.	Michael Wu, coachwu@SouthernU.edu



JOIN THE DEBATE

EARN THOUSANDS FOR YOUR TEAM

APPLY NOW!



Send A National Qualifier in Big Questions!

Big Questions is a debate format supported by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation. The topic is easily accessible, and the NSDA provides a wide variety of resources to help students learn about the topic and develop their cases, which makes it a great entry point for novices. Schools and tournaments may receive grant funds for hosting a Big Questions division at their tournament or in their schools. National Qualifying tournaments are not eligible to receive grant funds but will still receive a qualifier in Big Questions if the minimum requirements are met. Learn more at [NSDABigQuestions.org](https://www.nsdabigquestions.org).

WHAT IS BIG QUESTIONS?

Big Questions debating format involves two opposing sides debating a topic concerning the intersection of science and philosophy. Topics will address deeply held beliefs that often go unexamined. During the regular debate season, students have the option of competing as an individual or with a partner. Students are assigned a side of the topic before each round and present cases, engage in rebuttal and refutation, and participate in a question period. Often, average members of the public are recruited to judge and observe this event.

Order/Time Limits of Speeches

Affirmative Constructive	5 minutes
Negative Constructive	5 minutes
Question Segment	3 minutes
Affirmative Rebuttal	4 minutes
Negative Rebuttal	4 minutes
Question Segment	3 minutes
Affirmative Consolidation	3 minutes
Negative Consolidation	3 minutes
Affirmative Rationale	3 minutes
Negative Rationale	3 minutes

(Each debater gets 3 min of prep time to use at their discretion)

ENCOURAGE SCHOOLS IN YOUR DISTRICT TO HOLD A BIG QUESTIONS TOURNAMENT

A great way to create interest in Big Questions debate in your district is to encourage your member schools to hold events at their regular season tournaments or as a team scrimmage before your district tournament. At a regular season event, schools can earn money by having a minimum of 15 high school or middle school students compete. The amount awarded will depend on the number of students that compete. Learn more about eligibility at [NSDABigQuestions.org](https://www.nsdabigquestions.org).

HOLD A NATIONAL QUALIFIER

Send another student to Nationals by including Big Questions at your district tournament! Your district will need 10 member students to compete to send one qualifier to the National Tournament, and students may triple enter in Big Questions and two other events. Only individual entries are eligible to compete at districts. Holding a Big Questions National Qualifier allows more students the opportunity to compete and gain additional debate experience. **\$20,000 in scholarships** is awarded to the top four students at Nationals.

PREPARATION FOR A DISTRICT TOURNAMENT

Step 1. Add Big Questions to your District Dates Form

If your district would like to offer Big Questions at their district tournament, the district chair should indicate that on their District Dates Form. Big Questions can be offered on a

separate date from your other district events, as long as it is held **before May 1**. If you missed the deadline on the District Dates Form but would still like to offer Big Questions at your district tournament, contact the national office directly.

Step 2. Advertise to schools in your district

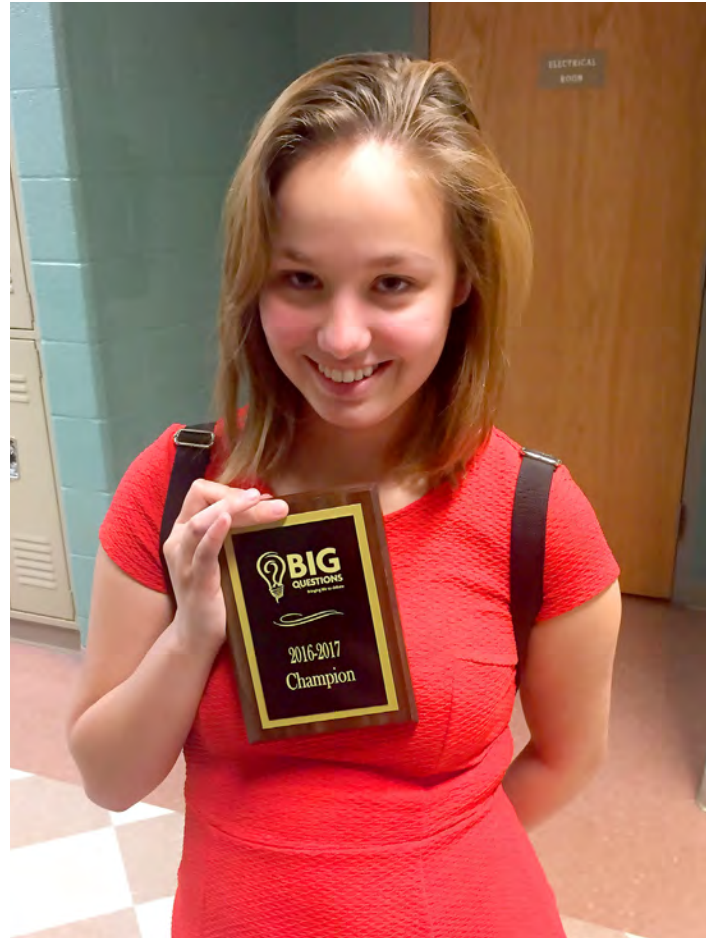
Highlight Big Questions as an additional opportunity for more students to compete to at districts and qualify for Nationals! Directly contact the coaches of programs who will have additional students that would like to compete at districts, or schools that have held Big Questions at their local tournaments. Share the unique benefits of the accessible format to encourage them to join!

Step 3. Share event resources

The NSDA has created a comprehensive set of resources to help students, judges, and coaches prepare for these debates. The resources include a topic analysis, student manual, judge training course, sample cases, and an evidence packet. These can all be found on the resource page at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Make sure to send the resources to schools competing in Big Questions so that their students and judges can be prepared!

Step 4. Make adjustments to tournament logistics

Since your district's tournament already has the infrastructure in place to run debate events, there shouldn't be too much additional work to add Big Questions! Make sure that you have enough rooms and judges available. Share event requirements, which can be found in the Unified High School Manual, with the people in your tab room.



SEND A NATIONAL QUALIFIER IN BIG QUESTIONS!



IMPLEMENTATION

Step 1. Print judge primers and ballots

Print the judge primers and ballots found on the Big Questions website. Make sure each judge has a **judge primer** before the first round starts! The primer explains the topic and potential arguments on both sides, as well as how to use the ballot to determine the round winner. Direct the tab staff to the student manual on the website to review the event requirements.

Step 2. Hold your event!

Share photos and videos of your event on **social media** so everyone can celebrate your student's' success! Make sure to tag us **@speechanddebate**.

Step 3. Have students and judges take the survey before they leave

Before students leave your tournament, ask the competitors and judges to fill out a **brief survey**. Direct them to the Big Questions website where they can fill it out online. The survey is very brief and asks for feedback about the event format so that we can continue to ensure the event is educational and fair!

EVALUATION

How do I know if Big Questions was successful at my district?

1. Number of Regular Season Big Questions Tournaments

One way to tell if Big Questions is popular in your district is by the number of local tournaments that host Big Questions events and the number of entries at those tournaments. Has Big Questions become more popular over the last few years?

2. Student and Coach Response

Attending Nationals is one of the great opportunities offered to NSDA members. Were other schools and students excited for another opportunity to qualify to Nationals? Did students and/or coaches enjoy your event? What kind of feedback did they provide you? Feedback from coaches and students can be a valuable assessment tool.

QUESTIONS?

We're here to help! Supporting materials can be found at NSDABigQuestions.org, or contact info@speechanddebate.org for more information.

The National Speech & Debate
Association Presents



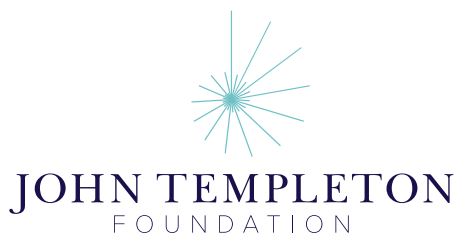
EARN THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS
FOR YOUR CLASSROOM OR TEAM!

APPLY TODAY!

A PROGRAM OF THE



SUPPORTED BY THE



Raise money by hosting a
Big Questions debate tournament!

- ▶ During the 2017-2018 school year, there were **600 events** held.
- ▶ The NSDA awarded more than **\$500,000** to schools that held Big Questions events.
- ▶ **FREE** resources and tournament support provided by the NSDA to make your event successful.
- ▶ An exciting way to attract new students to your team by debating topics about science and philosophy!

CONTACT US TODAY TO LEARN MORE OR APPLY

NSDABigQuestions.org

or email ***lauren.burdt@speechanddebate.org***



Tournament Hosting: Logistics

As you embark on the process of hosting a tournament, there are a number of logistical considerations that you must make. Proper planning will make your life less stressful. Tournament hosts who wait until registration closes to figure out where everything fits are more prone to mistakes and not delivering the optimal tournament experience. You must consider your school's space and what that enables you to do as a tournament host. When starting a tournament, do not take on more than you can reasonably handle. Set smaller goals and then build upon your success! Starting off too big, and not delivering, does not bode well for the future of the tournament.

TAB ROOM LOCATION

The tabulation room (commonly referred to as the “tab room”) is where the tournament runs! The tab room is a place where people set up, schedule, and produce results for the events that the tournament is hosting. Some common examples of locations for tab rooms are media centers, teacher workrooms, or computer labs.

Within the tab room, you will have a pre-determined number of stations to run different portions of your tournament. Therefore, there are a few things you need to consider when picking a tab room:

- How many computers do you need to tab the tournament? Will you be tabbing PF, LD, and/or Policy on one computer, or multiple computers? If you have novice or JV divisions, will you be tabbing them on the same computer or separating them? Will you be tabbing all of speech together or breaking it out into patterns of public speaking and Interp?
- What tab program will you be using—Tabroom? Joy of Tournaments? TRPC? TRIEPC? Are there special software requirements your computer needs to run the program?
- How many printers do you need? Will everything print to one central printer, or will you have each computer be connected to an individual printer?
- Is your printer able to produce a high volume at a fast rate?
- Do you have a copy machine located in or near the tab room for copying ballots, schematics, or results?

- Is there a space where you can set up snacks, drinks, and/or meals for the tab room staff?
- How close is the tab room to the judges' lounge?

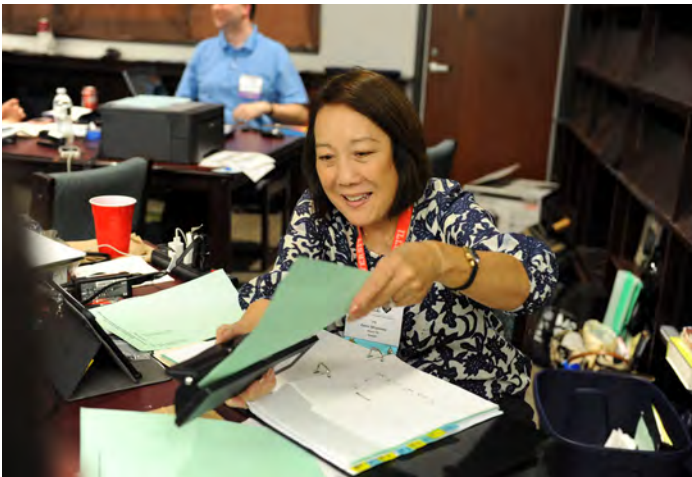
When setting up the stations for tabbing the tournament, it's important to keep these things in mind:

- Give each tab station space. Do not put tab stations on top of one another. If they are too close, they may not have enough room to spread out, or their volume could be distracting to another group.
- Make sure that each station has a box of supplies: pens, markers, scotch tape, painter's tape, scissors, staples, and a stapler.
- Try and ensure there are comfortable chairs for the tab staff to use.
- Provide tab staff with a walkie-talkie (when possible) to communicate with other areas of the tournament.

Once you've determined where your tab room will be, and how you might set it up, it's imperative that you schedule a time with your school's tech department to ensure that your plan will work! Here are things to coordinate with your tech department:

- Downloading the tabulation software onto the computers that are going to be used for tab. Ask about whether or not the computer wipes programs or documents off at some pre-set date or time. Make sure that the program isn't erased until after your tournament (at the earliest).
- Find out if computers automatically shut down at any point in the evening. Find out what to do to prevent that or make sure it doesn't cause a loss of data.

- Test the printing capabilities of each computer and printer in the tab program.
- Make sure you know how to access the Internet for the tab room and tournament (if you want everyone to have access).
- Make a contingency plan in the event of tech issues, especially when the tournament is happening during non-traditional times and a tech person may not be available on campus.
- Ask what it would take to have a tech person on site during the tournament. Consider the pros and cons!



TAB ROOM STAFFING

You want to assemble a tabulation staff that can efficiently run your tournament. As the host of a tournament, you should not plan on tabulating any of the specific events. Instead, your job is to oversee the entire operation of a tournament, which is far more expansive than running a tab program. Since you cannot be everywhere at once, you have to appoint individuals who are not only good at running tournaments, but also people you inherently trust. Here are some tips for selecting your tab staff:

- Put two people on each tab station. This increases transparency and provides a check on potential decisions to make judge assignments that favor one school. The two individuals should not be from the same school.
- Invite coaches from a variety of schools.
- Consider assistant coaches.

There are some other details that you'll want to consider when planning your tab staff:

- Will working in tab create a judge credit for the school with which the tab worker is affiliated?
- If you do a judge credit, would you only do a credit in some events and not others?
- Are you going to pay the tab staff, or is it volunteer based?

- If it's volunteer based (most common), how will you thank the tab staff?
- Will you announce who your tab staff will be prior to the tournament?

You want to create a tab staff that is full of energetic and experienced coaches. However, since two people is ideal, then it would be okay to put a veteran, über-efficient coach at a computer with a young, upcoming coach to learn. Too often, new coaches are not given opportunities and therefore do not learn. Coaches retire or move; your community should be grooming the future veterans.

Suggested tab staff positions are listed below. Depending upon your set-up, these positions may be altered to fit your tournament's needs:

Tab Room Director – oversees the entire tabulation room; helps answer questions; aware of master schedule and checks in with tab stations to ensure they're on pace; ensures the audits are done; makes changes as necessary based upon circumstances of the tournament.

LD Coordinator and Assistant – oversee the pairing of rounds, entering of results, and judge assignments for LD.

PF Coordinator and Assistant – same as LD but for PF.

Policy Coordinator and Assistant – same as LD but for Policy.

Congressional Debate Coordinator and Assistant – same as LD but for Congress.

Individual Events Coordinator and Assistant – same as LD but for IE.

Sweepstakes Coordinator and Assistant – if your tournament offers sweepstakes awards, have separate individuals who calculate the winners. They will take your parameters (rules/formula) and then create an excel spreadsheet to keep track of the information.

Auditors – after every round, have two people check the work of the tab stations. They should check to be sure the wins/losses, rates, ranks, etc., were entered properly into the tabulation software.

Ballot Collectors – have individuals (two or three at a minimum) collect ballots after a judge adjudicates a round. They should check over the entire ballot to ensure that it's filled out properly, is easy to read for the tab station, and appears to be a constructive ballot that will help students.

Extemp Prep Coordinator and Assistant – oversee the Extemp prep/draw process and work to ensure students are preparing within the guidelines of the rules governing the tournament.

Ballot Sorters – oversee the stuffing or posting of ballots for schools to see their judge feedback and results after the tournament.

JUDGES' LOUNGE

The judges' lounge is where all of your judges should check in and then stay until they're assigned to judge rounds. You should reference the Hospitality Guide in the Building Community Toolkit for information on how to properly plan to provide food and beverages for your judges. Aside from hospitality, there are some important items to consider when picking the location of your judges' lounge:

- What is the proximity between the tab room and the judges' lounge?
- Is the space large enough for the anticipated number of judges, adult observers, and coaches?
- Does the space have convenient set-up for the hospitality you plan on providing?
- Is it in a centralized location?
- Is it in a location easy for judges to find when they arrive to the tournament?

BALLOT TABLE

Judges need to be able to return ballots after judging a given round. Most often, the ballot table is either inside of the judges' lounge or outside of the tab room. Make sure that you clearly mark where the ballot table is, which can be done on the tournament website, tournament program, and also with large signs.

Some tournaments handle the assigning of judges' rounds differently. Here are some sample ways to distribute ballots:

1. Before each round, drop off the ballots, by event, on the ballot table. Make an announcement when each event's ballots are ready and judges come up to see if they have a ballot.
2. Before each round, publicly call out the judges who are assigned and hand them their ballot.
3. If you have pre-assigned rounds, you could give judges their assignments when schools register.

BALLOT STUFFING

Tournaments need to determine how they are going to best organize all of the ballots that judges fill out after each round. Therefore, a ballot stuffing area is needed. Some tournaments put this inside of the tab room, while others put it in a room near the tab room, but not within it. Each school should have a folder or bag in which to place their students' ballots and results. For speech ballots, each speaker gets an individual ballot/critique sheet that would get stuffed. For debate, if there are triplicate ballots being used, the same would be true. However, if tournaments do not use triplicate ballots, they would need to photocopy each ballot so that each debate entry receives a copy of the ballot. Some tournaments sort the ballots by round in the folder to make it even more convenient for the coach. Not only that, but there are even some tournaments that organize the ballots by student, by round!

Alternatively, to save on money and paper/toner, some tournaments have taken to scanning debate ballots and placing them online. If your tournament wants to do that, it is important to announce it in advance. Additionally, you should make sure that you carefully sort the ballots into manageable file sizes. For example, put all of LD Round 1 together—but do not put LD, PF, and Policy Round 1 together. Finally, if you do this, make sure it happens promptly after the tournament so people are not waiting an excessive amount of time for the feedback!



POSTINGS

In addition to communicating who is judging which rounds, you must also make sure students know where they are supposed to be during each round. Therefore, tournaments set up centralized areas to post each round's schematics. Common areas for this may include the cafeteria, the auditorium, and the judges' lounge. It is important to ensure that everywhere you post the first set of schematics, post each following set. Additionally, it's a good idea to announce on the tournament website and/or in the tournament program where the posting area(s) will be.

STUDENT CONCESSIONS/MEALS

When considering the location of student concessions and/or meals, you must first determine what the extent of your hospitality for kids will be. If you are going to offer a concession stand without formalized meals, the set-up is much different than the opposite. If you do both, you could find a space that will work for concessions and student meals. Another option would be splitting the meals and concessions into two separate areas.

Considerations for a concession stand set-up:

- Is there adequate room for storage?
- Is there running water?
- Would one or two concessions make the most sense?
- How will you handle orders versus payments?
- Is it centrally located?
- How far is it from postings?

Considerations for a student meal set-up:

- Is there adequate room for storage?

- Is there running water?
- Does the serving area make sense for your menu?
- How will you set up the flow of the servicing of meals?
- How will you handle payments if the price of meals are not included in the tournament fees?
- Is there sufficient seating?
- How far is it from postings?

EXTEMP PREP/DRAW

Tournaments that offer Extemp prep need to ensure there is a room that comfortably holds the students and allows them room to walk around when practicing their speech. If you have multiple divisions of Extemp, you may benefit from a combined Extemp prep room. This makes things consistent, but also decreases the number of staff people you need for running extemp. Common spaces that tournaments may use include a cafeteria, a media center, or a gymnasium. Make sure your spaces for the Extemp prep room, tab room, judges' lounge, etc., are factored into how many available rooms you have for competition.

DISTRICTS CAN GET FREE EXTEMP QUESTIONS FOR THEIR NATIONAL QUALIFYING EVENT!

To request questions, please email
info@speechanddebate.org

COMPETITION ROOMS

One of the biggest puzzles to figuring out the logistics of a tournament is assigning rooms for each event. When you set up your tournament invitation, you should know how many rooms you have available for that day or weekend. Based upon the total number of rooms available, you should then create entry limits for schools and for each event. If Public Forum Debate is extremely popular in your area, and Policy Debate is less popular, allocate more rooms for PF than Policy. If you have not hosted before, consult with a veteran tournament host to help you plan out the preliminary division of room totals.

Here are some notes about the types of rooms you will need, per event:

Lincoln-Douglas Debate is a one-on-one event. Therefore, you need a space that can accommodate two debaters (two desks or one 6' table) and the number of judges you have in each round (one desk per judge or one 6' table).

Public Forum Debate and Policy Debate are two-on-two events. Therefore, you need a space that can accommodate each team (four desks or two 6' tables) and the number of judges you have in each round (one desk per judge or one 6' table).

Congressional Debate is a group debate event. Therefore, you need a space that can accommodate up to 25 debaters



(individual desks or rows of tables and chairs) and the number of judges you have in each round (one desk per judge or one 6' table).

Extemporaneous Speaking is an individual speaking event. Therefore, you need a space where one person can stand and deliver a speech in front of however many judges you assign to the round. Since there's only one person speaking at a time, you can get away with using smaller spaces than other speech events. While it's not ideal, space constraints may cause you to use offices, conference rooms, or other small areas for an Extemp round.

Original Oratory is an individual speaking event. However, the other competitors will observe the round. Therefore, you need a space that one person can stand and deliver a speech with up to eight other competitors, plus the number of judges you assign to the room (one desk per judge or one 6' table). Orators tend to move from point to point, so a space that has an area to accommodate this is preferred.

Dramatic Interpretation is an individual performance event. However, the other performers will observe the round. Therefore, you need a space in which one person can perform a selection for up to eight other competitors, plus the number of judges you assign to the room (one desk per judge or one 6' table). As a general rule, Dramatic Interpers probably move the least with their blocking, so you can get away with slightly smaller classrooms.

Humorous Interpretation is largely the same in terms as Dramatic in terms of room needs. However, as a general rule, Humorous Interpers tend to have more movement in their blocking, so a larger space for performing is ideal.

Duo Interpretation is an event in which two students perform a selection. Again, the other performers will observe the round. The bigger rooms you assign for Interp should be reserved for Duo, as there are two people moving throughout the piece. Like the other Interp events, you will need enough chairs for the competitors and the judges assigned to the room.

Therefore, you need at least 16 chairs for other competitors and a desk per judge or a 6' table.

If your tournament is going to hold elimination rounds, make sure you set aside the bigger rooms for the elimination rounds. Typically, students who did not make it past the preliminary rounds will go and watch the elimination rounds. During elimination rounds, there is a far lesser need for rooms. No conference rooms, offices, or closets (yes, sometimes closets have been used for prelims!) should be used for elimination rounds. Rooms with larger areas and/or a platform for performing should be reserved for Interp events, then Oratory, then Extemp.

When possible, here are some other tips to consider as you assign rooms:

- Zone the rooms so that events are clustered together. This makes it easy for kids and judges to know where to go.
- As you cluster the events, try to include rooms on both the first and second floor. This way, if there are students or judges who require a handicap accessible space, you can more easily accommodate those needs.
- If your tournament allows judges to give debate students oral critiques, try and schedule those events closer to the tab room. If a judge's ballot is missing due to a lengthy oral critique, tab staff can more easily get to that ballot if it's closer.
- Assign the Extemp competition rooms in close proximity to the Extemp prep room.
- If evidence tubs are popular in your area, try to keep Policy rounds and Extemp prep on the first floor.
- When planning elimination round rooms, after considering which rooms will meet the needs of the performers and audience, think about using rooms as close to a centralized area as possible. Start collapsing the tournament into rooms that are closest to the tab and/or postings area.

When preparing for the tournament and the use of rooms, try and do the following:

- Put notes on the doors that no student should enter unless a judge is present!
- Put a note on the teacher's desk that establishes no one, including the judge, is to sit there or take anything from the desk.
- Put information in the tournament program about taking care of the space!
- Keep copies of schematics so that you know which students and judges were in each room. If a problem arises after the tournament, it may help you to investigate the situation.
- Establish a system for knowing how to reset rooms after the tournament. Invariably, things will get moved around

during the course of a tournament in an individual room. Chairs may get scooted, desks may get grouped together, and more. Possibilities include having students diagram each room to show how the room should be reset or having students take pictures of the room and room number for a visual on how to reset the space.

- Additionally, you should make sure the faculty and staff are well aware of the tournament's date(s) and times! Send out reminders to the staff, and include important notes such as:
- Ask them to put away any and all personal or valuable items.
- Encourage them to email you with any specific requests they may have about their room.
- Remind them not to come to school and/or enter their room during the times of the event.
- Provide reassurance about the steps you are taking to ensure that their room is well taken care of during the tournament!

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

When planning the logistics of the tournament, consider what roles students can play. Here are some sample roles that students on your team can fill at a speech or debate tournament:

Tabroom Assistants – provide one student, per tab station, to do whatever the tab room officials need. This could range from photocopying to hunting down a missing ballot to getting them a diet soda!

Ballot Runners – provide a number of students a list of rooms where they are responsible for getting the ballots from judges, between debate flights, and at the end of a round. Students can run the ballots straight to tab so that a tournament can more efficiently tabulate results and stay on schedule. Students will need an orientation on when to go into rooms and what to check on the ballots to be sure they're accurate.

Ballot Stuffers – assign a few detail-oriented, super-focused students to organize and stuff speech/debate ballots. Remind them that ranks/critiques are confidential, and should not be shared with anyone.

Concessions Workers – assign students to help take orders. (Note: Students should not handle money unless there is adult supervision.)

Judges' Lounge Workers – assign kids to help serve food or clean up after judges.

Room Monitors – assign students to sit in rooms to be sure none of the competitors (or judges) take things they shouldn't or leave the room messy.

Posters – assign a student to always be sure that postings go up for each round in each of the designated areas.

GPS – assign students to various parts of the building/campus to help point competitors and judges in the right direction.

Room Clean Up – assign students to put rooms back the way teachers left them at the end of the competition. Additionally, these students should ensure that there are no large pieces of trash or anything written on chalkboards or whiteboards from the tournament. (Note: As mentioned above, it is recommended that these students diagram rooms prior to the start of the tournament so they know exactly how to put the rooms back together. Another option is to have students take pictures of the room—cataloging the room number with the picture—to use as a visual for re-setting rooms at the end of a tournament.)



PARENT VOLUNTEERS

In the Building Community Toolkit, our Hospitality Guide identifies ways to incorporate parent volunteerism for the tournament's hospitality. One primary opportunity for parents to volunteer, outside of hospitality, is serving as a judge for the tournament! Have volunteer judges create an account at www.speechanddebate.org. They will be able to access various training materials, including our Competition Events Guides that outline events; sample ballots; and short videos about various events and how to effectively judge them, visit www.speechanddebate.org/judge-training/ for details.

Parents who are alums of speech and debate may also be able to assist in other areas of the tournament. Get to know your parents and find the right niche for them!

EXPRESSING THANKS

Hosting a tournament is a tremendous amount of work for you and your team. However, it is also a tremendous amount to ask of your school administrators, support staff, and teachers. Do not forget about the custodial staff! They were stocking restrooms, emptying large volumes of trash, and unlocking spaces during the course of the tournament. The work that they do is often thankless, but they are the key to a successful tournament in many respects—and a huge factor in ensuring teachers and administrators are pleased when they return to school following your tournament.

Some faculty members have ownership issues and may feel as if you need their individual permission or approval to use their room. While we would hope all schools would have the

mentality that the room is the school's, and that the tournament is a school event, it is still a good idea to thank people at the conclusion of your tournament. Here are some things you can do to thank the necessary individuals:

- Leave individualized thank you cards on each teacher's desk. Thank them for the use of their room! Another great idea is to include the name of the student who personally inspected their rooms. This gives greater accountability to those who are inspecting the rooms. Another nice touch is putting a piece of chocolate with the card. Finally, if you have the person-power to handwrite the cards, that will be even more meaningful to the teachers.
- Provide a continental breakfast to the faculty and staff the first weekday after hosting the tournament. Announce this in advance and then do a PA announcement that morning as a reminder.
- Provide a dessert spread during lunch for the faculty and staff the first weekday after hosting the tournament. Announce this in advance and then do a PA announcement that morning as a reminder.
- Buy plants for the administrative team and any administrative assistants who were particularly helpful in organizing the tournament. Attach a handwritten card to the plant, as well!

If any teachers lodge a complaint about their room, personally seek them out to show them you care about their concern. If they are upset that pencils were taken, put a box of pencils in their mailbox the next day. If they were upset that their room was not put back properly, send students to assist them. Thank them for bringing the issue to your attention and let them know you will be taking steps to prevent it from happening in the future.

Aside from school personnel, you likely have some parents who were instrumental in the hosting of the tournament, as well. Do not forget to thank them!

EVALUATION

At the conclusion of the tournament, be sure that you spend some quality time reflecting on how things went. You should ask yourself if the rooms used for the judges' lounge, Extemp prep, and tabulation room were big enough. You should also ask if they'd be big enough next year if your tournament experiences growth. You could do a tournament-wide survey, or you could hand select a group of coaches you particularly trust for feedback on the logistics of the tournament. Another great group of people to get feedback from is the students on your team who helped run the event!



Tournament Hosting: Local Awards

A great way to build community locally is by thanking your local champions. By giving awards to those who often perform thankless acts of kindness and support, you will build even more long-term support.

PREPARATION

Picking an awards committee

Before picking awards, you'll want to publicly announce the creation of an awards committee. Although district leadership could serve as the awards committee, including other coaches is a great way to distribute volunteer roles among the entire community.

Awards committee goals

Your awards committee has three major goals.

1. Create a slate of awards and the rubric for each award. Important questions to consider include:

- Are there prerequisites individuals should meet to be eligible for the award? For example, should their school be a member of the district? Should the school actively attend the district tournament? Is there an amount of experience in their profession they should have first?
- Will the committee choose the winners or do you want to do a vote from all of the coaches? If it's chosen by the committee, should members of the schools represented by the members of the committees be ineligible to win the award? If it's done by vote, will you put every nomination up for vote or create a slate first? Should coaches or students vote?
- Appendix A is a sample slate of awards and rubrics. Feel free to modify and/or use in its entirety if it fits your district!

2. Collect nominations.

Collecting nominations includes advertising the awards as well as creating a process to easily collect the nominations. Appendix B is a sample nominating form for the awards that could be create as a Google form. Google forms are free and allow data to be collected with ease.

3. Select award recipients.

Once all of the nominations have been collected, either the awards committee should meet to select the winners or it needs to announce the slate of nominees and collect the vote.

Picking Your Awards

The Association has five pre-set awards. Each district may receive a free version of these awards.

• District Student of the Year

The District Student of the Year Award is given to one student who best embodies the traits of our Code of Honor: humility, integrity, leadership, respect, and service.

• District Alumni Achievement Award

The District Alumni Achievement Award showcases speech and debate alumni from your district who have utilized their speech and debate talents to achieve success for themselves and the speech and debate community.

• District Communicator of the Year

The District Communicator of the Year Award showcases individuals who utilize their speech and debate talents in ways that profoundly impact the lives of others.

- **District Principal of the Year**

The District Principal of the Year Award honors principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality opportunities for students in speech and debate programming as well as demonstrating exemplary contributions to the profession.

- **District Volunteer of the Year**

The District Volunteer of the Year Award showcases an individual who has given extraordinary time and talents to the mission of meaningfully involving more students in speech and debate.

The four trophies for the new awards, which are 4-3/4" square bamboo plaques with an iron stand (shown below), will be available to your district, free of charge. If you would like to create additional awards, you'll be able to order similar trophies at a low cost.



IMPLEMENTATION

Placing the award order:

Award orders are part of the district tournament registration process.

As soon as possible:

Have an Awards Committee meeting. The Awards Committee should meet to confirm the awards and their selection process. The Awards Committee will also want to create a plan to publicize the awards to as many channels as possible.

At least eight weeks prior to the District Tournament:

The Awards Committee should **publicize the awards**. Keep in mind, you need to both publicize the award and how to nominate someone. Be sure to include contact information and a deadline for nominations. Emails may go unread, so consider posting flyers at area tournaments, in classrooms, and sending out information over any social media or other digital channels you have available.

At least five weeks prior to the District Tournament:

The Awards Committee should **meet to select the winners** of the awards chosen by Committee. You'll want to keep the winners relatively quiet until the awards. It'll help make the moment more meaningful!

The Awards Committee should meet to create the slate of candidates for voting. They should prepare an email and a way to collect the votes. Please consider whether you'd like to give each school a vote, each coach a vote, or even each

student a vote. You'll want to include this in the email soliciting the vote. Make sure to give everyone about a week to vote. Generally speaking, most folks will vote right away or the day of the deadline (after a reminder). More than a week and you're just providing time for them to forget to vote.

At least four week prior to the District Tournament:

Tally the votes for your awards and order the appropriate award.

Let the nominators know their nominees won. Ask them if they'd present the award and give a brief (one to two paragraph) explanation why the award winner is deserving of the award. Also ask them if they'd volunteer to greet the volunteer at the door and give them a tour of the tournament for a few minutes.

Call to personally invite the award winners to the awards ceremony. Be sure to follow up with an email including the address, time, and other relevant information. A sample email is included below:

Dear <Name>,

I am so excited to let you know that, on behalf of the West Los Angeles District of the National Speech & Debate Association, we would like to honor you for your contributions to the speech and debate community. You have been named the 2014-15 District Principal of the Year! The Principal of the Year Award honors principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality opportunities for students in speech and debate programming as well as demonstrating exemplary contributions to the profession. Our Awards Committee considered a number of talented candidates, but your nomination quickly rose to the top.

We will be presenting your award, along with your honorary membership to the National Speech & Debate Association, at our South Central District Tournament, when we select our student competitors to represent us at the 2017 National Speech & Debate Tournament in Birmingham, Alabama in June. This year's District Tournament will occur at South Central High School January 7-8. We would like to announce our community awards on Friday at 6:00 p.m. after the second round of competition. We would be honored if you, and any of your invited guests, could join us for the announcement of your award.

Thank you for your support of speech and debate!

<Your Name>

Awards Committee for the West Los Angeles District
National Speech & Debate Association

One week prior to the District Tournament:

Send all of your awards winners a quick email following up with any necessary information such as parking, address, exact time, etc.

Prepare the media invite and press release for the award. Your Communications Director may take charge of this. Ideally,

TOURNAMENT HOSTING: LOCAL AWARDS

you'll have it completed in advance and be able to send out to local media networks to see if you can get some press at your event. Consider local radio, TV, and newspapers, in addition to appropriate school newspapers or other communications. (See Appendix C and D for samples.)

Send an email to all nominators. Send a quick thank you email to all of the nominators. For this kind of email, you could easily blind copy (Bcc) all of the nominators and send just one email. A sample email is below.

Hello,

Thank you for nominating someone for the West Los Angeles District of the National Speech & Debate Association awards. We received so many incredible nominations for all of our awards. We will be announcing the winners at our District Tournament. This year's District Tournament will occur at South Central High School January 7-8. We would like to announce our community awards on Friday at 6:00 p.m. after the second round of competition. We'd love if you could join us for the celebration of the award winners.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your thoughts on your nominee!

<Your Name>

Awards Committee for the West Los Angeles District
National Speech & Debate Association



Send an email to all nominees. Being nominated for one of these awards is an honor. Share the honor with the nominees by sending them an email. It is much better to send an individual email to each nominee so they feel the true honor of the award. It is also helpful to copy and paste the nominating paragraph for the nominator. A sample email is below.

Dear <Name>,

Congratulations! I am excited to tell you that you have been nominated for the District Principal of the Year Award for the 2014-15 school year with the West Los Angeles District of the National Speech & Debate Association. You were nominated because of your incredible contributions to

the speech and debate community and to your profession. I have included the nomination below.

Our Awards Committee was pleasantly surprised to receive so many incredible nominations. Although you were not selected as a recipient this year, we'd love for you to join us for the announcement of the winner and to be recognized as a nominee. We will be announcing the winner at our District Tournament. This year's District Tournament will occur at South Central High School January 7-8. We would like to announce our community awards on Friday at 6:00 p.m. after the second round of competition.

Please let me know if you'll be able to join us. Thank you again for being exceptional!

<Your Name>

Awards Committee for the West Los Angeles District
National Speech & Debate Association

At the District Tournament:

Be sure to greet your award winners. This should be a special moment for the award winners! In order to validate the award, steward the relationship, and gain more support for your district, it is very important that the district leadership reach out to warmly and greet the award winners. Introduce yourself! Show them around the tournament. Make sure that at no moment they are left alone in a judge's lounge waiting for the awards ceremony to begin.

Immediately after the District Tournament:

Send out a press release announcing the award winners.

In addition to local media outlets, be sure to include other appropriate contacts. For example, for the District Principal of the Year, send the press release information to the Superintendent and/or School Board. For the District Volunteer of the Year, consider sending the press release to the marketing department of the employer. All of these channels are ways to make the award an even bigger honor, but also to draw attention to your district. By honoring these individuals and publicizing the awards, you'll be elevating your district in the community and creating a lasting bond with the award recipients.

For all of this to work, you'll want the press release to be in people's email inboxes by Monday morning. There is a sample press release for announcing the award recipients in Appendix D.

Finally, let us know about your award winners by sending the press release to Grace Rogers, Marketing Communications Specialist at the National Speech & Debate Association, at grace.rogers@speechanddebate.org.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE AWARD LIST AND RUBRIC

► *District Student of the Year*

Every year, the National Speech & Debate Association recognizes one student at the National Tournament who best embodies the traits of our Code of Honor: humility, integrity, leadership, respect, and service. Presenting the district-level version of this award at the District Tournament is ideal.

Prerequisites: Nominees must be graduating seniors who exemplify the traits of our Code of Honor.

Nomination Process: Chapter advisors can recommend students for the district-level award by filling out the High School District Student of the Year nomination form. The completed form should go to the District Chair. You can access the form by searching the resources tab on www.speechanddebate.org for 'District Student of the Year.'

Selection Process: Upon receiving the nominations, the district should follow its existing process to select its District Student of the Year or convene the suggested Awards Committee to select a winner.

► *District Alumni Achievement Award*

The District Alumni Achievement Award showcases speech and debate alumni from your district who have utilized their speech and debate talents to achieve success for themselves and the speech and debate community.

Prerequisites: To be considered, individuals must have competed in speech and debate as a high school student. Further, the individual should have roots in the district including, but not limited to, being an alumnus of a district school, being a current resident of the geography served by the district, or otherwise having a strong connection to a district member school.

Nomination Process: Any National Speech & Debate Association member coach or student may submit a nomination by completing the Google form (Appendix B).

Selection Process: Upon receiving the awards nominations, the Awards Committee will meet to select a winner from among the nominations submitted. If a member of the Awards Committee would like to nominate an individual, s/he must complete the nomination process by the deadline.

► *District Communicator of the Year*

The District Communicator of the Year Award showcases individuals who utilize their speech and debate talents in ways that profoundly impact the lives of others.

Prerequisites: Individuals must have made a profound impact on the district and/or community within the previous calendar year.

Nomination Process: Any National Speech & Debate Association member coach or student may submit a nomination by completing the Google form (Appendix B).

Selection Process: Upon receiving the awards nominations, the Awards Committee will meet to select a winner from among the nominations submitted. If a member of the Awards Committee would like to nominate an individual, s/he must complete the nomination process by the deadline.

► *District Principal of the Year*

The District Principal of the Year Award honors principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality opportunities for students in speech and debate programming as well as demonstrating exemplary contributions to the profession.

Prerequisites: To be considered, individuals must be in at least their second year of serving as principal at their current school. The school must be in at least its second year of consecutive membership with the National Speech & Debate Association and with its current district.

Nomination Process: Any National Speech & Debate Association member coach or student may submit a nomination by completing the Google form (Appendix B).

Selection Process: Upon receiving the awards nominations, the Awards Committee will meet to select a winner from among the nominations submitted. If a member of the Awards Committee would like to nominate an individual, s/he must complete the nomination process by the deadline.

► *District Volunteer of the Year*

The District Volunteer of the Year Award showcases an individual who has given extraordinary time and talents to the mission of meaningfully involving more students in speech and debate.

Prerequisites: To be considered, individuals do not need to have competed in speech and debate. Further, individuals must have made a profound impact on the district and/or community within the previous calendar year.

Nomination Process: Any National Speech & Debate Association member coach or student may submit a nomination by completing the Google form (Appendix B).

Selection Process: Upon receiving the awards nominations, the Awards Committee will meet to select a winner from among the nominations submitted. If a member of the Awards Committee would like to nominate an individual, s/he must complete the nomination process by the deadline.

APPENDIX B: AWARD NOMINATIONS – GOOGLE FORM

Below is a screenshot of a basic Google form that can be edited and sent to chapter advisors to collect nominations for the awards.

To Request this Form:

If you would like a copy, please email Deano Pape, Membership Manager, at deano.pape@speechanddebate.org to have the document shared electronically.

Your Contact Information

* Required

Your Name (nominator) *

Your School *

Your Email Address *

Continue »

For which award would you like to nominate someone? *

First Name of Nominee *

Last Name of Nominee *

With what school is your nominee most recently affiliated?

What is the best contact info for your nominee? *

If selected, the nominee will be contacted and invited to attend the awards ceremony.

Please explain why you feel your nominee is deserving of the award. *

This will be the only information that will be used to pick the winner. Please be detailed!

Would you like to nominate another individual for an award? *

« Back Submit

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE MEDIA INVITE ANNOUNCING AWARD WINNERS

(To be sent prior to the awards ceremony)

To Request a Custom Word Template and Logo:

To request a copy of this media invite for your district, please email Grace Rogers, Marketing Communications Specialist, at grace.rogers@speechanddebate.org.

WEST LOS ANGELES DISTRICT (CA)
NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION

Community Members to be Recognized at Awards Ceremony

CITY, State (Month Day, Year) – The **Name** District is recognizing several community members for their dedication to speech and debate at the **Tournament Name** Awards Ceremony on **Date** at **Time** at **Location**.

(Insert a quotation from a coach or district leader explaining how the award winners are making a difference in the speech and debate community.)

What: **Title of Tournament** Awards Ceremony
When: **Date and Time**
Where: **Location**

The following community members will be recognized:

District Alumni Achievement Award – Name and Title
 The District Alumni Achievement Award showcases speech and debate alumni from the **Name** District who have utilized their speech and debate talents to achieve success.

District Communicator of the Year Award – Name and Title
 The District Communicator of the Year Award showcases individuals who utilize their speech and debate talents in ways that profoundly impact the lives of others.

District Principal of the Year Award – Name and School
 The District Principal of the Year Award honors principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality opportunities for students in speech and debate programming as well as demonstrating exemplary contributions to the profession.

District Volunteer of the Year – Name and Title
 The District Volunteer of the Year Award showcases an individual who has given extraordinary time and talents to the mission of meaningfully involving more students in speech and debate.

*** If you are a member of the media and would like to attend the event, please contact **(insert contact information from below)**. ***

About the National Speech & Debate Association
 The **Team Name** is part of the National Speech & Debate Association, the largest interscholastic speech and debate organization serving middle school, high school, and collegiate students in the United States. The Association provides competitive speech and debate activities, high-quality resources, comprehensive training, scholarship opportunities, and advanced recognition to more than 130,000 students and coaches every year. For nearly 90 years, the National Speech & Debate Association has empowered more than 1.5 million members to become engaged citizens, skilled professionals, and honorable leaders in our society. For more information, visit www.speechanddebate.org.

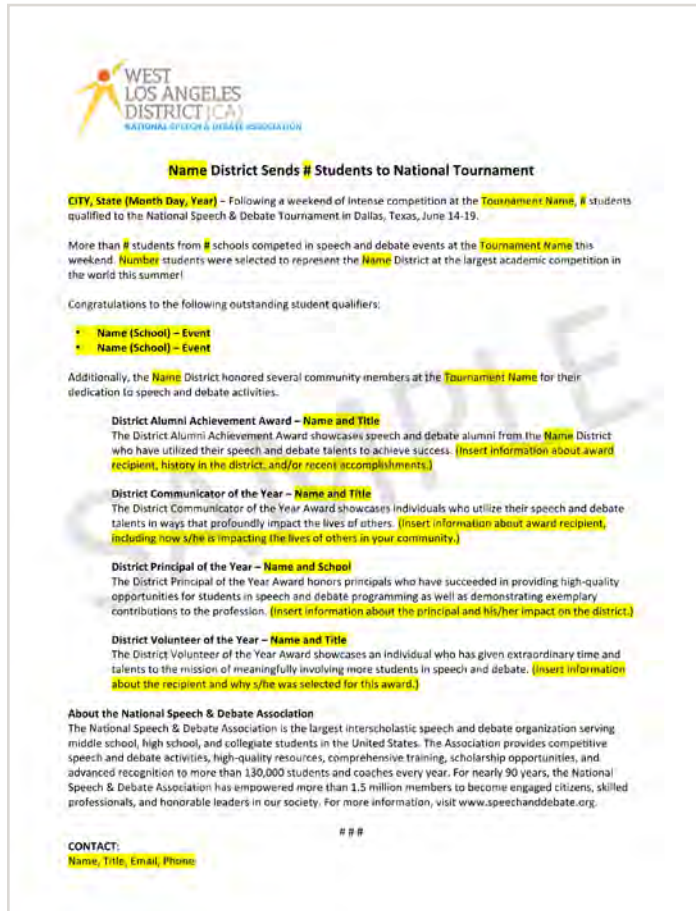
CONTACT
Name, Title, Email, Phone

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING AWARD WINNERS

(To be sent after the awards ceremony)

To Request a Custom Word Template and Logo:

To request a press release template for your district, please email Grace Rogers, Marketing Communications Specialist, at grace.rogers@speechanddebate.org.



WEST LOS ANGELES DISTRICT (CA)
NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION

Name District Sends # Students to National Tournament

CITY, State (Month Day, Year) – Following a weekend of intense competition at the **Tournament Name**, # students qualified to the National Speech & Debate Tournament in Dallas, Texas, June 14-19.

More than # students from # schools competed in speech and debate events at the **Tournament Name** this weekend. **Number** students were selected to represent the **Name** District at the largest academic competition in the world this summer!

Congratulations to the following outstanding student qualifiers:

- **Name (School)** – **Event**
- **Name (School)** – **Event**

Additionally, the **Name** District honored several community members at the **Tournament Name** for their dedication to speech and debate activities.

District Alumni Achievement Award – Name and Title
The District Alumni Achievement Award showcases speech and debate alumni from the **Name** District who have utilized their speech and debate talents to achieve success. **(Insert information about award recipient, history in the district, and/or recent accomplishments.)**

District Communicator of the Year – Name and Title
The District Communicator of the Year Award showcases individuals who utilize their speech and debate talents in ways that profoundly impact the lives of others. **(Insert information about award recipient, including how s/he is impacting the lives of others in your community.)**

District Principal of the Year – Name and School
The District Principal of the Year Award honors principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality opportunities for students in speech and debate programming as well as demonstrating exemplary contributions to the profession. **(Insert information about the principal and his/her impact on the district.)**

District Volunteer of the Year – Name and Title
The District Volunteer of the Year Award showcases an individual who has given extraordinary time and talents to the mission of meaningfully involving more students in speech and debate. **(Insert information about the recipient and why s/he was selected for this award.)**

About the National Speech & Debate Association
The National Speech & Debate Association is the largest interscholastic speech and debate organization serving middle school, high school, and collegiate students in the United States. The Association provides competitive speech and debate activities, high-quality resources, comprehensive training, scholarship opportunities, and advanced recognition to more than 130,000 students and coaches every year. For nearly 90 years, the National Speech & Debate Association has empowered more than 1.5 million members to become engaged citizens, skilled professionals, and honorable leaders in our society. For more information, visit www.speechanddebate.org.

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CONTACT:
Name, Title, Email, Phone

▶ ACCESS MORE COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCES

Log in to www.speechanddebate.org to access more helpful communications resources. Check out these two videos:



▶ TIPS AND
TRICKS FOR
WRITING A PRESS
RELEASE



▶ HOW TO
DISTRIBUTE A
PRESS RELEASE

To request a **CUSTOM IDENTITY PACKAGE** including a district logo and press release templates, please contact Grace Rogers at grace.rogers@speechanddebate.org.



Tournament Hosting: Hospitality

Tournaments are an exciting opportunity for schools to not only give back to the community, but also raise funds for their program. An important part of a successful tournament is providing quality hospitality to your guests. Hospitality is something that coaches, judges, and students frequently discuss when they attend a tournament. This guide is designed to help ensure you ask the right questions when planning your hospitality needs. The document will offer potential ideas for answering these questions, but it is up to each tournament host to make decisions about what best meets the school and community needs.

Different regions and districts have various norms that they follow when it comes to tournament hosting. Therefore, it's always important to get to know your local standards. When thinking about the questions and potential answers posed in this document, consider discussing them with a veteran coach in the area who has experience hosting tournaments. Additionally, ask your students what they noticed or remembered from previous tournaments. Finally, think about the tournaments you have attended and highlight the memorable things—both good and bad. Engaging others in this dialogue will assist you in finding the best answers for your tournament.

HOSPITALITY FOR JUDGES' LOUNGE

Happy judges help a tournament run on time, and assist tournament hosts when they get in a pinch and need to ask judges for any favors. Therefore, tournaments should strive to put together a well thought-out hospitality plan for judges. Timothy Sheaff, coach at Dowling Catholic High School, once quipped, "Cheesecake in the judges' lounge is the most important thing at the Paradigm (Dowling Catholic's tournament)." While cheesecake does not need to be your standard, here are some important questions to ask.

What will be available for judges when they first show up for the tournament?

Potential answer: Coffee is as close to an absolute must as will be stipulated in this document. When judges arrive, you should have hot coffee ready. Typically, you are asking judges to get to a school, on a weekend, early in the morning. The goal should be to make the coffee one-hour before registration starts for a tournament. This will ensure that you have coffee ready in

time. Things to think about: creamer, sugar, artificial sweetener(s), and decaf options. Not all judges drink coffee, but a significant majority do. Other potential items to have available are tea, soda, and water. Aside from coffee, it may be a good idea to put out some food. A lot of tournaments do a continental style breakfast for judges: bagels, muffins, donuts, and fruit. Some tournaments do full breakfast buffets. There are a number of variations of providing hospitality to judges in the morning. Consider local norms, your volunteer base, and your goals for hospitality.

Will you be serving any snacks throughout the tournament?

Potential answer: If you put out food, it will not go to waste. This is a general rule to follow. As a host, many would rather have too much than not enough. After running a tournament for a couple years, tournaments begin to get a firm grasp on estimates. Some ideas for snacks during a tournament may include fruit trays, vegetable trays, pretzels, individual-sized candy, Chex Mix, and more.

Will you provide any meals to the judges during the tournament?

Potential answer: Noted above is the possibility of having a breakfast of some sort for judges. If the tournament lasts past the noon hour, it might also be a good idea to offer a lunch to the judges. Additionally, if your tournament goes past the 5 p.m. hour, it may also be a good idea to provide dinner for the judges.

Some ideas for lunch may include:

- Option 1: Sub sandwich, chips, cookie
- Option 2: Two slices of pizza, salad, brownie
- Option 3: Buffet style with assorted wraps, salads, dessert

Some ideas for dinner may include:

- Option 1: Baked ziti, salad, breadstick, dessert
- Option 2: BBQ chicken breasts, mac 'n cheese, dinner roll, dessert
- Option 3: Hamburgers, chips, baked beans, dessert

When planning out meals, make sure that you think of special dietary restrictions of your potential guests. There will almost certainly be someone who is vegetarian, if not multiple individuals. Additionally, there may also be guests who are vegan. Finally, remember that some students have restrictions on what they can eat due to religious reasons or food allergies. Having options that meet various dietary needs is an important consideration.

What beverages will you provide to judges throughout the tournament?

Potential answer: Coffee, soda, and bottled water are the basics. Some tournaments go a bit further and offer tea and lemonade. When it comes to providing soda, there are two options that are commonly used at tournaments:

- Option 1: Provide two liters of soda and then offer ice and cups for individual servings
- Option 2: Provide individual cans that are chilled in a cooler, on ice.

While the tournament host may have particular preferences on brands of soda, it is important to inquire as to whether or not your school has a vendor agreement with a particular provider. Some schools have contracts that prohibit them from offering another brand of soda, while others may have restrictions if the soda is purchased. Make sure you know your school's rules. Activities or Athletic Directors are probably a great starting point for asking that question.

*What do I do if I have leftovers?*

Potential answer: Before the tournament starts, see if there are local places where you could donate leftover food. Some local area donation centers will take things that are unopened, packaged, and not homemade. Others may take homemade food. Find out their standards and plan how you will get it to them after the food is done being served. Additionally, for leftover drinks or snacks, you could save them for team-building activities. Another possibility is sharing with other local tournaments. If you host an invitational, and there is leftover water and soda, your district tournament may benefit from that donation. Another great idea for leftovers is to leave them in the teachers' lounge and send a note to the teachers following the tournament to let them know there are some free goodies for them, compliments of the speech and debate team.

Should I charge a fee for each judge?

Potential answer: Some tournaments charge a fee, per judge, per day of the tournament. The fee may range from \$5 to \$8 potentially. Other tournaments do not charge a fee. This could be because they work with a volunteer base to obtain donations from local vendors or parents, or because they do not feel comfortable charging a hospitality fee and therefore build it into the overall tournament budget. If no tournaments in your area charge this fee, it's probably a good idea to avoid issuing it yourself.

HOSPITALITY FOR STUDENT CONCESSIONS

A great source of income for a tournament is student concessions. Kids love to buy things, if reasonably priced. However, the best advice that can be offered is not to offer too many options. For example, your concessions should offer a few chocolate candy bars, but not ten. You could offer Snickers, Hershey's, M&Ms, Reese's, Almond Joy, Kit Kat, Whatchamacallit, and more. However, the more options you have, the fewer you will sell of each variety. Having only a few options will lead to you selling more of your product and having less leftover. This principle applies to candy, drinks, snacks, and more. Additionally,



think about what other events within your school are taking place after your tournament. If an athletic team is having a tournament and selling concessions, perhaps they can purchase the leftovers from you. The same could be done when you plan your tournament—ask previous event holders if they have items that you would normally purchase from a store.

If your tournament does not provide student meals (details below), then you will want to plan on having more substantive items to sell during the day. Pizza, nachos, subs, and more are all relevant options when looking to get reasonably priced options for sale. If you do provide student meals, there are still opportunities to sell these items. Kids will graze during the tournament. Grilled cheese, pizza, and nachos will sell between meals quite frequently.

Some tournaments make arrangements with food trucks to help meet the demands of serving food to their students. There are two possibilities of making money with this type of arrangement:

Option 1: The tournament gets a percentage of whatever the food truck sells. This is the easiest way to manage this arrangement, but it relies upon complete trust of the vendor. There would be no guaranteed way of tracking the sales to ensure you get the appropriate cut.

Option 2: Get a set price for a meal or item, and then sell tickets to students to present to the vendor to get their meal/item. The ticket cost would be higher than what you have to pay the vendor. At the end of the day, the vendor would present their tickets, which would indicate how much you have to pay. You would also have a record, too, which is a nice way to ensure accuracy and fairness.

HOSPITALITY FOR STUDENT MEALS

If your tournament plans to offer students meals, many of the same principles apply from the judge meal portion of the document to this one. However, while there are many similarities, there are some specific notes about student meals to share:

1. The standard is not typically as high for judge meals and student meals. Normally, a judge meal is of higher quality than the student meal. Judges, normally as adults, have more of a developed palate. Not only that, but judges are often volunteers; thus, you may strive to give them better options. Students on the other hand, elect to be there and are focused on the competition. This does not mean that kids should get awful hospitality. Rather, it highlights that the focus is slightly different.
2. Grab & Go! Limit the number of options available to the students. You want the line to serve students to move as quickly as possible. The quicker students are fed, the more likely your tournament will run on time. For example, if you are giving kids sub sandwiches with chips and cookies, have a station where there are pre-boxed/wrapped combos that kids can grab and go. Do not let them select

which type of sub, which type of cookie, and which type of chip they want. Put together boxes of turkey subs with plain chips and a chocolate chip cookie, as well as boxes of ham subs with plain chips and a chocolate chip cookie, and then vegetarian subs with plain chips and a chocolate chip cookie. Under this scenario, the student has ONE choice to make—not three. It'll make the line move much faster this way.

3. Kids are messy. Try picking food that will decrease the likelihood of stains on tournament apparel. Overly saucy items, loose meat options, greasy options, etc., are foods to try and avoid with student meals.
4. You could offer a meal during one part of the tournament and then offer concessions for the other. For instance, if you offer a two-day tournament, you may want to provide lunch on both days but then sell items for dinner through concessions.

In terms of pricing, there are two primary options:

Option 1: You set a fee, per meal, that you serve to kids and add it to the registration costs. Under this model, you would have an entry fee for competing in addition to the meal fee.

Option 2: You provide the meals without a separate fee. Under this model, you would have an entry fee that covers the competition and any meals that you provide.



HOSPITALITY FOR TAB ROOM/TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS

No tournament runs without the support of great coaches in the tabulation room. Tournaments may opt to give the tab room the same access to food as the judges, while others try and provide a special treat to enhance their experience. However, since the tabulation room is typically staffed by coaches who give up time with their kids, some tournaments opt to provide an enhanced experience for hospitality in the tab room. Here are some ideas for tab room hospitality enhancements:

- Provide homemade meals to the tab room staff. For breakfast, you could do homemade casseroles. For lunch,



you could offer an Indian meal. For dinner, you could offer a Mediterranean meal.

- Provide specialty dessert items for the tab room.
- Provide coupons for free items at food trucks that you may bring to the tournament.
- Have food and snacks served in the tab room so volunteers can grab at their convenience and not worry about lines in the judges' lounge.
- Provide a thank you note with chocolate or a gift card at the conclusion of the tournament for their time, energy, and volunteerism.

YOUR SCHOOL'S VOLUNTEERS

It is very easy to focus solely on the guests of your tournament when planning hospitality. However, it's important to remember that you have a number of student and parent volunteers who are working during the tournament, as well. Don't forget about them when planning hospitality. These volunteers need to be fed and have access to beverages, too. Here are some questions to consider:

- Are you going to give them the same food that you give to competitors and judges?
- Are you going to give student volunteers a discount at concessions?
- Are you going to establish specific times or shifts for volunteers to eat?
- Are you going to have a separate area for volunteers to eat and drink?

VOLUNTEERS FOR HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

Running a tournament is a lot of work. Other than awards, hospitality is probably what competitors, coaches, and judges discuss most after a tournament is over! No single coach should

be responsible for every aspect of the tournament. It is highly recommended that you engage a number of parent volunteers to coordinate hospitality. Here are some ideas for how to organize the parents:

- Create a committee of parents who are responsible for student concessions.
- Create a committee of parents who are responsible for judge meals.
- Create a committee of parents who are responsible for tab room hospitality.
- Create a committee of parents to recruit other parents to volunteer during the tournament.

Each committee should be comprised of two or three parents. The members of the four committees could be known as your "Core Parent Group." Holding a meeting with all members of the Core Parent Group is a great opportunity to get everyone on the same page and provide some overarching goals for the tournament. It's literally never too early to start planning, so meet as early as you can to get organized before your





tournament. This overarching meeting should ideally happen at least two or three months before the tournament. At this meeting, you should try and provide realistic estimates about how many kids, judges, tab room volunteers, and tournament workers from your team will be at the tournament.

Each subcommittee should also have meetings. At these meetings, committee members should determine what the next steps are for planning. Given all of the possibilities, each committee should begin to answer the questions that apply to their aspect of tournament hospitality. This meeting should be shortly after the overarching meeting. This will enable as much time to plan as possible.

Committees should communicate with one another frequently. There may be some overlap in needs. For instance, if you have to buy plates to serve meals for judges and concessions, why not make one purchase as opposed to two? Keeping everyone up-to-date will help decrease duplicate efforts. This can be done via email, conference calls, or face-to-face meetings on a regular basis.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Running hospitality is not confined to just the coaching staff and students. Not only that, but the “Core Parent Group” should

not be the only parental involvement for the tournament. There are a number of people you can solicit for support:

Team Parents. Parents can do a number of things to help, such as work at concessions, work in the judges’ lounge, judge at the tournament, donate water, donate soda, donate baked goods, donate a tab room meal, and/or sponsor a judge meal.

Local Restaurants. Encourage them to donate meals, provide meals at a reduced cost, donate desserts, donate side items, and donate gift cards for tabulation room members.

Local Businesses. Invite them to sponsor a meal, sponsor the awards, sponsor water, sponsor soda, and/or donate gift cards for tab room members.

School Boosters/Parent Association. Reach out to them, beyond just your speech and debate parents, and see how they might be able to help.

Former Team Parents. They are well aware of the benefits of speech and debate. See if they’d be willing to volunteer some time to assist.

Alumni. While they might be best suited to judge, they may also have community connections to assist with financial or in-kind donations.

Retired coaches. They could be great consultants for the operation of the tournament and planning hospitality.

School Faculty and Administration. Invite them! Let them see the amazing work that your team is putting into hosting a tournament. Maybe you have a teacher who loves to bake—great! Maybe you have a Social Studies teacher who’s passionate about a topic that’s being debated—great! You don’t know what you’ll get unless you ask. Don’t hesitate to ask members of the food services staff to see if they are interested in supporting the tournament in some way. Perhaps they can make the desserts, or an individual would be willing to cater at a lesser cost. Again, you don’t know what you’ll get unless you ask.





In addition, there are incentives you can provide to encourage participation from members of the community. Ad space on tournament websites, tournament books, and tournament t-shirts are a nice means of showing your appreciation, as well as generating increased interest in providing support. Parents could be given a coupon to apply toward a team-related expense if they go above and beyond in their volunteerism. Certificates of appreciation or small plaques could be awarded to top supporters of the tournament. Make sure your school newsletter includes any praise you'd like to give to members of the community for their support. As always, do not forget that you can promote that the donation is a tax-deductible contribution. Think creatively and inform your supporters how you will show your appreciation.

KEEPING RECORDS

One of the most important pieces of advice (beyond coffee) is keeping accurate records. Tournaments that keep detailed accounts of what occurs from year to year will decrease waste, increase efficiency, and as a result, increase profits. Take an inventory of everything you buy before the tournament and note what your leftovers are. Make sure that you have an accurate count of students, volunteers, judges, and coaches. Having this information will give you ideas for ratios when planning in the future. Make note of things that sold especially

well and things that did not sell. In terms of starting a system of record keeping, you could ask neighboring tournaments if they can share any records they have. This could be your starting point.

EVALUATION

Hosting a tournament is a lot of work. Planning hospitality is one of the main components of hosting a tournament. Therefore, it's important that you seriously consider how things went and what could be done to improve hospitality in the future. Two important aspects of evaluating hospitality include:

1. During the course of the tournament, try and find one to two times to meet with the Core Parent Group. Have someone record the thoughts, observations, and feelings in the moment. Keep this document as something to refer back to when planning in the future.
2. After the tournament, do a final reflection with the Core Parent Group. Go over the inventory, make the appropriate notes, and set up some goals and basic timeline for planning the following year.

Additionally, you may choose to survey the participants of the tournament. Google forms, Survey Monkey, and other tools exist for free and are great ways to get information and perspectives on how the hospitality was viewed by your guests. You can easily communicate that to the coaches—email them after the tournament with the link. For students, if your tournament has a Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media point of contact, you may put the survey out there. Ask questions about the quality of the food, the amount of the food, the concessions, the schedule, and more. Ask what matters to you and find out what you need to better plan for the future.





Questions Frequently Asked to District Chairs

As a district chair you are the leader of your community of speech and debate. As such, coaches will likely come to you with questions they have about how things work in the district. Below is a list of questions that you may get asked from members of your district and some background information and advice for how to answer the question.

What are the dates of our district tournament?

Each district committee may determine the dates of their tournament. The chair should submit dates by Nov. 1 so that they are posted and available for all schools in the district to see. If your district has not set a date for the year, convene a meeting with your district as soon as possible.

Can you change the date or location of the district tournament once it's set?

This is up to the district committee, ultimately. This is very rare and we urge caution in changing dates. It can take a long time for a school to make changes in transportation, for example, and major school events, such as testing, may make it nearly impossible for a school to change dates once they have been set.

May I change districts?

Districts are determined first by geography and then by size (number of schools in the district). Although the school may request a change of district form by emailing info@speechanddebate.org, remind the coach that the district committees of both the entering and departing district must approve of the transfer. In addition, a school may not change districts multiple times.

Why don't you hold the entire district tournament on one date / location?

Some districts host the speech and LD/PF/Policy portions on the same date, but many districts find it more manageable to host them on different weekends. The rules require Congress not be held in conflict with any other district contest. Some states, for example, have a debate season and a speech season that are at different times of the year.

What is my team's strength?

Strength is determined by the number of individual members listed on the roster (students must have at least 25 merit points to be an individual member) and the total degrees students hold beyond merit. Thus, a student with a degree of merit provides one point of strength for the team, whereas a student with a degree of excellence contributes three points of strength. In addition, the top three coaches' degrees count toward the team's strength. *NOTE: In order to count toward strength, a student must have an account and be linked to their school. This is shown with a star next to the student's name. Students without a star will not be counted toward a school's strength.*

How many events may I take to the district tournament?

Each school may enter a number of events as determined by the school's strength. Show the coach the grid in the High School Unified Manual with the numbers needed for entry. Congressional Debate has its own strength table to determine entries in House and Senate. *NOTE: Remind the coach that a team (duo, policy, PF) counts as one event.*

If a student is double entered, do I get to choose which event they take to nationals?

All students must sign a Single Entry Letter of Intent that indicates event preferences. Be sure to remind coaches that if a student enters in a team event (duo, PF, policy) that if qualified in that event, they must attend nationals in that event unless both students preferred their single event, AND both qualified in their other event. This is very important for new coaches in particular to understand—*partners may not leave their teammates behind*. Another important reminder—*students may not be partners in one event (e.g. Duo) and then be partners in another event with a different student (e.g. PF)*.

Should I attend the district tournament even if I do not think my students will qualify to Nationals?

There are varying reasons to attend the district qualifying tournament. First and foremost, there are countless stories of students qualifying when their coach didn't expect it. We compete because it's not a given who will win and lose. Second, as a member of the district your participation can assist by increasing entries. When districts have more entries they can earn more qualifying spots to Nationals. Your support could cause more kids to go to Nationals. As your team develops, you could be in a position in the future to want more qualifiers for your competitive interests. Additionally, students who are younger can benefit from competing at the district tournament so that they understand its unique features when they're older and feel more competitive. It is also an opportunity for the member students of that district to represent their schools with pride. In addition, districts offer a cumulative sweepstakes trophy with district points that add up over time.

I found out my student who qualified to Nationals cannot attend, what do I do?

If your student qualifies and is unable to attend the tournament, it is important for the coach to drop that student from the event immediately so that other students from the district may be permitted to advance. To begin the process, the coach should email info@speechanddebate.org.

How much does it cost to enter the district tournament?

This varies across districts. Provide the coach with the costs per event entry, in addition to the number of judges they are required to bring in order to cover the size of their entry. If this has not been set, meet with your committee to determine the fee structure for this season and notify the membership.

How is the district determining its World Schools entries?

Districts are permitted to send two teams to the National Tournament in World Schools Debate. A team consists of 3-5 students, so this is an opportunity for the district to get 10 students the Nationals experience. Ultimately, the district may make the decision about how they field their teams. The one rule that a district must follow is that students who are on the team must have competed at the district tournament. One approach that works well for a number of districts is to provide opportunities to compete in WSD for those schools that didn't qualify students in another event. In addition, we recommend a system of selection that is based upon alternates from the district, by seniority, and by total degrees. For more information about what potential criteria you could use to field your team, email info@speechanddebate.org. Make the decision with your district committee and then announce it to your district. The earlier you can make that decision, the better.

How are decisions made about who works as a tabulation staff person at districts?

The district committee should meet to determine which coaches are fulfilling roles at the district tournament (e.g. tabulating events, auditing events, ballot collection, Extemp prep, etc). The NSDA encourages open tab rooms so that even coaches who are not official tab staff can have access to see what's transpiring. Transparency with the district tournament is important. We also encourage involving as many people as possible in the running of the tournament. District chairs should oversee everything, as opposed to doing a specific role. If a coach asks this question and they don't have a role, explain to them how they can be aware of what's transpiring. If a coach has asked this and you haven't set a plan for determining roles, add it to a committee meeting agenda.

Is our district piloting the congressional debate evidence rules?

An ad hoc committee of congressional debate coaches developed a set of evidence rules and procedures for resolving evidence disputes in congressional debate. The board has passed these rules as a pilot, which means that districts may opt in to use these rules. The more districts that use them the better for the national office to effectively vet the pilot. If your district has not made a decision one way or the other, convene your district committee to discuss. You must provide 60-day notice to all members of your district about the use of the pilot so they can plan accordingly. If you have questions about the pilot, email deano.pape@speechanddebate.org

Why is X happening?

Any number of questions can be asked of a district chair. Do not stress if you don't know the answer. Feel free to reach out to the national office staff to determine how to answer the question. If you don't know the appropriate person to ask, email info@speechanddebate.org



**JOY OF TOURNAMENTS
GUIDES AND MANUALS**

Need help using JOT for your district tournament?
Find helpful guides at www.speechanddebate.org

- Joy of Tournaments Quick-Step Guide
- Before the District Tournament Process
- During the District Tournament Process
- After the District Tournament Process
- District Tournament Entry and Results Recording Instructions
- Congressional Debate Manual



Guiding Novices Through Their First District Tournament

Tournaments are the best method for getting new students hooked on speech and debate. The thrill of competition wins over students. Interacting with others who are passionate about similar things is also extremely persuasive. However, before students get to their first tournament, it's important to orient them to the tournament experience.

It is easy to forget what it was like to attend a tournament for the first time. As we gain experience, we can take things for granted about the tournament experience, despite our best efforts to the contrary. This guide is designed to help coaches orient novices for their first tournament experience. Novices are not going to be fully ready for everything that they experience. However, if we can minimize the number of possible stressors for our newest speech and debate students, we will increase the likelihood of their long-term commitment to this transformative activity.



ATTIRE

It is important to clearly establish what is expected of new students and their dress/appearance when they go to their first tournament. Most often, teams require students to dress up for tournaments. However, the standards for dressing up can be different from school to school. Not only that, but novices may have different standards than varsity members. What is the

minimum requirement and what is the desired requirement? Establish these norms so kids do not feel like they do not fit in when they arrive at the tournament.

SCHEDULE

A speech and debate tournament is unlike anything commonly associated with the public's perception of a competition. Where a basketball game is a 1.5 hour competition, a speech and debate tournament is typically more than 9 hours long (and that's just for a one-day tournament). Common questions students and parents need to have answered before the tournament:

- When and where should students arrive for a tournament? Are they meeting you at the competition site or at their school to be transported to the tournament?
- If the tournament flights rounds, how does that work?
- When is lunch? Do they need to bring money?
- When is the awards ceremony scheduled? Does your team require students to stay for awards? Is there an expectation of staying dressed up for awards?
- If parents pick up their children from the tournament or back at your school, what is the estimated time when they should plan on picking up their student? What process is in place for updating parents if things get behind?
- Are students permitted to watch their teammates during an off round?

UNDERSTANDING A SCHEMATIC

It is unlikely that novices have seen anything that resembles a schematic for a speech and debate round before their first tournament. Before they go to their tournament, make sure they know what a schematic/posting is and how to read it! Will the schematic list a code, a code/name combination, a school code with initials, or something different altogether? Are events flighted? If so, make sure they understand what a flight is, how flighting works, and what that means for where they are supposed to be at specific times.



MATERIALS NEEDED AND RULES OF THE TOURNAMENT

Students need to come to tournaments with various materials, depending upon their event. The number of things they need to bring is dependent upon the policies of the tournament they are attending. As a coach, be sure you're aware of what rules the tournament follows, and what that means you and your students are responsible for having at tournaments. Additionally, even if there are not specific rules governing the tournament, you may have team policies/best practices to which your students should adhere. Here are some questions you can ask to best prepare your students for the tournament:

- What rules are in place to govern evidence used in a debate round? What might that mean for a debater coming to that tournament?
- Do Original Oratory students need to bring their speech manuscript with them? Are they required to highlight directly quoted words and/or provide a works cited page in MLA or APA format? Are they required to sign the document? Is the coach required to sign the document? Depending upon the rules that are in place, some, all, none, or more than these things may be required.
- Do Interp students need to bring their manuscript with them? Do they need to bring their original source with them? Do they need to highlight "transitions" or include page numbers? Depending upon the rules that are in place, some, all, none, or more than these things may be required.
- Are laptops allowed? If so, what are the rules concerning Internet connectivity?

Regardless of event, students should bring pens and the tools necessary for taking notes. These notes could be specific comments made to them by judges or their own reflections on round-to-round. Debaters may keep these notes on individual flows from round to round, while speech kids may keep a journal.

BEHAVIOR

Competing in a round for the first time can be an intimidating and nerve-wracking event. Even a school's best-behaved students can let their emotions get the best of them. Before the tournament, make sure students understand the expectations for how they behave in and after a round. Additionally, try and simulate these expectations before the tournament during practice rounds.

- General expectations for behavior at a tournament may include, but are not limited to:
- Never talk negatively about other schools, coaches, competitors, or judges.
- Never be discouraging toward your teammates; uplift them or celebrate with them.
- Win and lose with dignity.
- When observing other speech competitors, be an engaged audience member—no stone faces, texting, or looking around the room! Don't hesitate to laugh at your competition if they are funny. Even if your opponents do not respect you the way you deserve to be respected, you must respect them.
- When debating, engage your opponents with respect—do not raise your voice, do not roll your eyes, do not make demonstrative gestures when they are speaking, etc.
- Between rounds, focus on things that you could improve from the previous round.
- Do not chew gum when speaking.
- During Extemp prep, stay quiet and do not give the impression you are speaking to another student in prep.
- Remember that all of your actions are a reflection of not only yourself, but your coach, teammates, and school!





JUDGE INTERACTIONS

Teams and tournaments have various rules about students interacting with judges. Some tournaments allow judges to provide commentary to students after a round, while others forbid it. Some schools have expectations that competitors never ask the judge any questions about the round, while others encourage it. Some judges will approach kids after rounds and provide them with comments, while some competitors may feel like approaching a judge in the cafeteria to ask them questions. Make sure that students are aware of any guidelines or norms for your team and for the tournament they are attending! Additionally, it's wise to remind kids of the following in relation to their judges:

- Show the judge the utmost respect at all times.
- Do not say negative things about a judge at any time.
- Work to understand where the judge is coming from and take notes regarding the experience so that in the future, you can better perform for that particular judge.
- If judges provide any feedback, always thank them for their thoughts and time.
- When a round ends, it is okay to thank the judge before walking out.

PROPER MINDSET

Students need to enter the tournament with a proper mindset. A student attending the tournament because they are focused on winning the tournament or on beating a teammate is not operating with a healthy mindset. Leading up to the tournament, remind students why tournaments are a great experience. Focus on the educational and personal growth aspect. Do not over-hype winning. Here are some potential ways to frame tournaments for novices (and for that matter, even your most successful kids!):

- If you can answer these three questions at the end of a tournament, it was a success:
 - » What did I do well?
 - » What could I improve upon?
 - » What steps will I take before my next tournament to improve upon those areas of growth?
- As a novice, the expectation is not to win any rounds, let alone a trophy! If that happens, great—but it's no indication of future success. Placing last at a tournament is also not an indication of future failure.
- Focusing on the minute details of a round can hinder your ability to see the “bigger picture.”
- You will encounter things you do not understand at a speech or debate tournament—that is okay! Ask questions of people you trust to gain a better understanding. Most importantly, trust your instincts! Do not let uncertainty or a lack of knowledge prevent you from performing.
- You will mess up an argument or a line in a speech or interpretation. That's okay—mistakes happen. Push through those mistakes and focus on how to fix it after the round, not during it!
- Give every round your best effort. With that mentality, you will experience improvements in skill and result over time. Effort is the key!



- Admire great performances/debates from your competitors. Make notes of things that you enjoyed throughout the course of a tournament.
- Remember that 50% of debaters lose their first round, and 50% of speech kids are ranked in the bottom half of their first round. On top of that, 99.99% of kids lose their last round ever. Don't get discouraged!

MOCK TOURNAMENT

Before your novices attend their first tournament, find an afternoon after school or an open Saturday and run a mock tournament. Have the students dress up, report to a centralized location, assign them codes, and then post schematics for them to read and use to get to rounds. Have actual rounds with actual judges and ballots. You can run an abbreviated tournament—as opposed to four or five rounds, offer two or three rounds. The point is to have kids get a sample of how things will operate before the tournament happens. This will help them get oriented and make them feel more comfortable when they show up to a different school's cafeteria to get their codes and schedules.



VARSITY MENTORSHIP

For the first tournament a novice attends, try assigning him or her to a varsity student on the team. The varsity student would be responsible for meeting the novice outside at the drop-off point of the tournament, and then escorting him or her into the building. The varsity student would make sure the novice checked in with the coach, got his or her code, and knew where postings would be. Then, when postings came out, the varsity student would help the novice figure out where to go and walk him or her to the competition room. The varsity member would be responsible for the novice throughout the course of the tournament.

POST TOURNAMENT

After a tournament, you should take time to help students digest what happened and process what the next steps are for the following tournament. An astute student once said, “I learned what I do not know!” This statement was extremely profound and indicated that they got a great deal out of that experience. If students can come back with a list of things they did not know, coaches can begin helping them figure those things out.

As a coach, take your students through a ballot analysis. Have them read each ballot and identify themes or comments they particularly feel are spot-on. One useful strategy for ballot analysis involves you or another coach reading the ballots before the kids do and making the same notes you'll ask the student to make. Then, after the students complete the exercise, you can go through and compare notes with them.

Additionally, as a coach, be sure to reinforce the healthy mentality. One way to do this is to ask each student to share one thing s/he did well at the tournament with the full team. Start small and build from there!

EVALUATION

There are a number of ways to evaluate how prepared students felt for their first tournament. You can informally check in with them from round to round and make notes about gaps if you sense a pattern developing. You can ask varsity mentors to talk with novice students and report back any observations they feel are pertinent. Additionally, you can have a reflection form for students to fill out after their first tournament. This could be part of their class grade, if they're in your class, or just something you do on the team. The form can cover what went well, what didn't go well, and things that surprised them about the tournament experience. As a coach, you can look at your novices' responses and consider what patterns exist. If there are patterns, be sure to make notes and alter your novice orientation for future novices on the team.



QUESTIONS?

We're here to help! Supporting materials can be found at www.speechanddebate.org, or contact your National Speech & Debate Association staff liaison for more information.

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• CEO, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice
• Advocate and Spokesperson



APRIL HOLMES — U.S. PARALYMPIC ATHLETE
• Three-Time Medalist and World Record Holder
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