**Invitation to Administrators**

After hosting Coaches’ Caucuses in 2016, 2017, and 2018 and holding meetings with a rural school focus group, the National Speech & Debate Association is working to create resources that support tournaments to better meet the needs of participants and create a more meaningful, inclusive space for attendees. To that end, we have created templates that could be used to invite administrators to observe speech and debate tournaments.

**Why should administrators from under-resourced schools support speech and debate?** The NSDA connects, supports, and inspires a diverse community committed to empowering students through competitive speech and debate. The NSDA values inclusion and believes speech and debate can uniquely support students from Title I backgrounds to become more college and/or career ready after high school. Multiple studies and testimonials prove that speech and debate activities keep students engaged and increase their performance in the classroom. Speech and debate levels the educational playing field. You can bring speech and debate to the schools and students who need it most.

**Who should send an invitation?** Letters to administrators with existing speech and debate programs would best come from the school’s administrator. If that’s not possible, a letter from the coach would be another option to pursue. Letters to administrators without programs could be sent by anyone hosting a tournament in the area where the school is located. If you have a supportive administrator/chair, you could ask that person to co-sign the letter! Reach out to the NSDA to see about having the letter signed co-signed by our office (time-permitting).

**What tournament(s) should be the focus?** Early season tournaments might be more strategic because administrators need lead time to implement new programming the following year. However, it’s never too late, so don’t hesitate to invite them if you’re hosting a tournament later in the year. Inviting administrators to attend a tournament where other Title I schools are participating would be a plus. Inviting these individuals to the district tournament series would be awesome, too.

**When should the invitation be sent?** Administrators have packed schedules, so you should invite them at least three weeks in advance. If you know the date far enough in advance, consider sending a save the date communication.

**What to do if an administrator responds?**

* Thank them for getting back to you, even if they do not have the ability to attend.
* Make sure you clearly communicate to the administrator about where to check in.
* Greet them personally, orient them to the event, and pair them with someone to judge alongside or shadow observe.
* Thank them in person when they leave, and be sure to send a follow-up communication that expresses appreciation and welcomes any follow-up questions.
* Ask students to write or sign a thank you card and mail it to the administrator.
* Notify the NSDA of an administrator’s interest if they do not have a program. We are here to help you!

**Invitation Template #1: Send to administrators without programs**

Dear <Administrator Name>,

On behalf of <Organization>, I wanted to personally invite you to attend <Tournament Name> on <Date>. This event brings together schools from <Area> including <Insert any other Title I schools or district schools>.

Participating in speech and debate through the National Speech & Debate Association makes the following possible for your students:

* Teaches creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking
* Creates a meaningful experience that assists students become college and career ready
* Provides your students to an honor society specifically for speech and debate

I’m here to help you make speech and debate happen for your students. Better yet, there’s an entire community of educators who are willing to help mentor and support a program at <District/School Name>. *(Consider listing out all schools in the area that have programs as a way of enticing them not to miss out.)*

I know your district/school is committed to <Insert Details>. Here is how speech and debate can help your district/school meet that commitment: <Insert Details>. *(Perhaps improve test scores, increase attendance, engage students, etc.)*

I would be honored to have you see speech and debate in action as an observer or even as a judge! We will personally welcome you upon arrival and ensure that someone is available to oversee an enjoyable experience and help answer any questions you may have.

If you are able to attend, please let me know at your earliest convenience. I know how busy your schedule is, and we can work with you to accommodate a limited availability on <Date>. Additionally, if attending our event is not feasible, I’d be happy to share other local tournament dates to see if they may better work with your schedule.

Thank you for your consideration!

Respectfully,

<Your Name>

**Invitation Template #2: Send to administrators with programs**

Dear <Administrator Name>,

As you know, our speech and debate team has experienced <Insert Details> this year. We would not be able to expose students to creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration without the support of you and our entire school community.

On behalf of <Organization>, I wanted to personally invite you to attend <Tournament Name> on <Date>. This event brings together schools from <Area> including <Insert any other Title I schools or district schools>.

The team would be honored to have you see us in action as an observer or even as a judge! We will personally welcome you upon arrival and ensure that someone is available to oversee an enjoyable experience and help answer any questions you may have.

If you are able to attend, please let me know at your earliest convenience. I know how busy your schedule is, and we can work with you to accommodate a limited availability on <Date>. Additionally, if attending our event is not feasible, I’d be happy to share other local tournament dates to see if they may better work with your schedule.

Thank you for your consideration!

Respectfully,

<Your Name>