

FLORIDA CIVICS AND DEBATE INITIATIVE HANDBOOK



2025 - 2026 SCHOOL YEAR

WHY CIVICS AND DEBATE?

THE OPENING ARGUMENT

Why Civics and Debate? The proud American tradition of respect – in personal and political interactions – for free and unencumbered speech continues to be a gift left to us by our Founders and remains a uniquely American civic tradition. America is becoming more polarized by the day. People dig into positions without fully examining them and want to be heard but refuse to listen to others. The failure to engage in civil and respectful conversations with those whom we disagree with is unhealthy for our constitutional republic and the democratic values we hold dear.

THE MISSION

The Florida Civics and Debate Initiative (FCDI) seeks to expand and enhance civic knowledge and reinvigorate public debate and civil discourse. The FCDI is committed to developing upright, virtuous and self-governing citizens who recognize and accept the responsibility to preserve and defend the blessings of liberty inherited from previous generations. The FCDI is committed to supporting the development of new debate teams with a focus on underserved areas as well as supporting established teams in their continued success and sustainability.

THE FOUR PRIORITIES OF CIVICS EDUCATION IN FLORIDA

- 1 Students study primary source documents to understand the philosophical underpinnings of the American Republic and the root foundation of American exceptionalism.
- 2 Students compare the success of the United States and the success or failure of other nations' governing philosophies to evaluate their past, present and likely future effects.
- 3 Students have a sense of civic pride and participate regularly in all levels of government.
- 4 Students reflect upon United States civic history, so they understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, including the process of advocating properly with government officials.

BENEFITS OF SPEECH AND DEBATE

Speech and debate helps prepare students to be knowledgeable and engaged citizens. It builds upon the foundational civic knowledge that is established in the classroom and requires students to research and apply knowledge rather than just memorizing information. In competitive debate, students are required to examine and defend both sides of a given issue.

Debate topics will require students to understand the function of government and the role of citizens in a republic, essential for understanding and crafting arguments on often complex issues. Through this understanding, students are encouraged to cultivate innovative approaches to sides of an issue. Immersed in political philosophies, debate students grasp the art of framing arguments to realize the tangible policy consequences of abstract concepts in everyday life.

Debate requires students to reference primary and secondary sources during research and utilize them as evidence in support of their arguments. Students will discover that instruction across all academic disciplines—including civics, U.S. History, English language arts, science, ethics, economics, and even mathematics—can serve as meaningful and relevant resources for speech and debate preparation. Debate fosters critical thinking and communication skills that transcend subject boundaries, allowing students to draw from a wide range of knowledge as they research, argue, and advocate. For example, a debate on the morality of geoengineering may require an understanding of scientific principles, ethical theories, and literary representations of climate futures, in addition to civic structures and responsibilities.

Debate builds a strong civic disposition. Students learn collaboration, compassion and respect. Additionally, according to feedback from FCDI coaches and participants, speech and debate fosters positive student-teacher and student-student relationships.

Speech and debate generates a plethora of benefits for students academically. Participation fosters skills in critical thinking, communication, collaboration and civic engagement. Speech and Debate improves reading test scores, analytical skills, attendance and college admission rates.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF CIVICS AND DEBATE IN THE CLASSROOM

Building Skills for Tomorrow's Leaders

Among the many subjects in education, two stand out as essential: civics and debate. They're not just about memorizing dates or facts; they're about understanding how our society works and learning to speak up for what we believe in. Rooted in ancient philosophical discourses and exemplified through the annals of history, the study of civics and the practice of debate unveil a pathway to understanding societal structures, exercising critical thinking and actively participating in shaping the course of our collective future.

The echoes of Athenian democracy resound through the corridors of history, emphasizing the significance of civic engagement in the fabric of society. From Plato and Aristotle to the American Founders, writers and thinkers have extolled the virtues of an informed citizenry capable of deliberation and decision-making. In the American context, the Founders articulated the imperative of civic education. James Madison, architect of the U.S. Constitution, asserted, "A well-instructed people alone can be permanently a free people." In Federalist No. 10, Madison outlined the dangers of factionalism and advocated for a system that encourages reasoned debate and compromise - a sentiment echoed in contemporary classrooms where students engage in structured arguments and rebuttals.

Civics isn't just about knowing the rules; it's about knowing how to think critically and how to understand different points of view. It's like a puzzle where you must fit together the pieces of history, government and your own values. Debate takes this further, teaching us how to express our ideas clearly and respectfully - even when we disagree. Through the lens of civics and debate, students confront complex ethical dilemmas and grapple with divergent perspectives, honing their capacity for reasoned judgment - a skill indispensable in navigating the complexities of our modern political life.

In today's fast-paced world, where information flies at us from all directions, knowing civics is like having a compass. It helps us navigate through the noise and understand what's really going on. Debate, on the other hand, is like a superpower. It teaches us to speak confidently, listen carefully, and make our voices heard. Whether we're talking about national issues or local ones, these skills help us make a difference. As Justice Sandra Day O'Connor aptly noted, "Knowledge of our system of government is not handed down through the gene pool." In an increasingly interconnected world, where disinformation proliferates and echo chambers amplify partisan rhetoric, the ability to discern fact from fiction and engage in civil discourse emerges as a bulwark against erosion of the principles upon which our country was founded.

So, why study civics and debate? Because they're not just subjects in school - they're tools for life. They help us understand our past, navigate our present and shape our future. As we learn about the world around us and practice speaking up, we're building the skills we need to be leaders, thinkers and active citizens in our communities. Participation in debate equips students with invaluable communication skills, fostering the articulation of ideas with clarity and persuasiveness. Whether advocating for policy reform or scrutinizing the actions of elected officials, the ability to construct clear and convincing arguments and engage in respectful dialogue empowers students to become agents of change within their communities.

Let's embrace these subjects with enthusiasm and curiosity, knowing that they hold the key to unlocking our potential as informed and empowered individuals. As we navigate the complexities of an ever-evolving world, let us heed the wisdom of the past and impart to future generations the tools necessary to safeguard the cherished principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FLORIDA DEBATE INITIATIVE

The Florida Debate Initiative (FDI) is a nonprofit educational organization committed to expanding access to competitive speech and debate in schools across Florida. Its mission is to empower emerging student leaders with essential communication, critical thinking, and leadership skills through high-quality civics, speech, and debate programming.

In alignment with and in support of the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative (FCDI), FDI contributes both financial resources and programmatic support to help advance FCDI's statewide goals of increasing civic literacy, amplifying student voice, and preparing the next generation of active, informed citizens.

As FCDI's educational support organization, FDI focuses on:

- ◆ Educating and training coaches and students
- ◆ Training judges and volunteers
- ◆ Promoting educational competition opportunities
- ◆ Leading training and leadership development experiences
- ◆ Establishing competition standards

To learn more about FDI, visit www.FloridaDebate.org.

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GETTING STARTED



SO YOU WANT TO BUILD A SPEECH AND DEBATE PROGRAM?

Congratulations! As a new speech and debate coach you have embarked on what will undoubtedly be one of the most rewarding activities of your career. Starting a speech and debate team is an exciting adventure and, with the support of FCDI, it does not have to be intimidating. The FCDI is here to make things as easy as possible for you to get a successful program started and growing. Each team is different, but most successful programs follow the same general steps.

All Educators Welcome

You don't have to be a social studies teacher to coach debate. In fact, students benefit greatly when educators from all subject areas bring their unique expertise to the table. Whether you're an English teacher guiding students through persuasive writing, a science teacher helping them build arguments around environmental policy, or a theater teacher strengthening their delivery skills, your content knowledge and pedagogical strengths enrich the debate experience. The interdisciplinary nature of speech and debate thrives when coaches bring diverse academic backgrounds and perspectives.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

The biggest hurdle for speech and debate coaches is the amount of information and the learning curve. However, you don't have to know everything about speech and debate to be successful! Knowledge will come over time, and as you work to that point you can set reasonable goals for yourself and your team.

Our most successful coaches have followed these steps:

CREATING TEAM GOALS

Setting goals for your team is a great way to pace yourself. You can set reasonable goals or push yourself and your team with your goals. You can have personal goals, team goals or both. A fun way to visualize this is to write out team goals on a poster sheet or whiteboard in the classroom with the students so that they can help with those goals throughout the year. We encourage our coaches to have yearly goals to organize what they are hoping to achieve with their team.

CONSIDER COMPETITION EVENTS

There are many competitive speech and debate events that can overwhelm new coaches. If you are new to speech and debate, try picking one or two events to start with and master them. You can begin the year by offering only the selected event(s) to your team. As you become more comfortable, you can add new events to your team. Even seasoned coaches are rarely experts in all events.

CALENDAR PLANNING

Creating a tournament calendar for your team is an important organizational step for the year. Which tournaments do you plan to attend? Consider spreading them out to avoid burnout and ensuring there's enough time between events for students to reflect and prepare. Tournaments don't always operate on a consistent schedule from year to year, so build flexibility into your plan. Keep in mind school holidays, exam weeks, and other major campus events that could conflict with competitions. Be sure to account for registration deadlines and plan ahead for any required fundraising, chaperone coordination, or judging needs.

TRANSPORTATION LOGISTICS

Once your calendar is set, think through how your team will get to each tournament. Common transportation options include:

- ◆ District buses (check local policies and scheduling requirements)
- ◆ Parent volunteers driving personal vehicles (make sure this is allowed under your district's insurance policy)
- Rental vans or cars (some districts have partnerships with rental companies)

Talk with your school's bookkeeper, athletic director, or administrator for insight on what's permitted, what paperwork is required, and whether there are district discounts or preferred vendors. Always allow extra time at the end of the day for student pick-up, especially if traveling far from home.

CONSIDER FINANCES

The cost of fielding a speech and debate team varies depending on team size, the number of tournaments attended, mode of transportation, etc. One goal of the FCDI is to ease financial burdens for coaches, allowing them to focus more fully on their teams. Even so, it's wise to explore additional fundraising strategies. As you do, please keep the following in mind:

◆ SET UP AN ACCOUNT FOR YOUR TEAM

We recommend our teams to have their school set up an account for their speech and debate team similar to the way they would for a sports team. Establish a solid relationship with your school bookkeeper, as they will be a primary point of contact for you as you add and withdraw funds from your team account. Discuss protocol regarding purchasing, approved vendors, timelines and deadlines, and all approval processes.

◆ TEAM FEES

If you are able, you can charge a team fee to your participating students. You could provide them with things like team shirts or a meal at the end of the year as perks.

◆ FUNDRAISING

Know your district/school policies. That may limit what type of fundraisers you can do. Soliciting donations from local businesses can be successful. One potential fundraiser is hosting an FCDI debate tournament. It is labor intensive but can be an effective means of raising funds for your team.

COMMUNICATION AND PARENTS

You are going to be communicating frequently with your team and the parents of your team. It is important to find the easiest mode of communication. Utilize your school's existing learning management system (LMS) (Canvas, Schoology, Google Classroom, Blackboard, etc.). Post information and communicate using the same platform parents and students are already used to using. You will want to foster relationships with your parents, as they will be valuable assets for your team throughout the year. Many larger teams depend on parent volunteers to help plan travel, organize team activities and more.

ESTABLISHING TEAM CULTURE

At its core, speech and debate is an academic pursuit. Through participation, students develop valuable skills that will benefit them for a lifetime. While competition adds an exciting dimension, the true value lies in building confidence, critical thinking, and the foundations of good citizenship. It's important to help students keep this perspective—especially when competitive outcomes may not meet their expectations. Equally important is fostering a team culture built on collaboration and mutual support. Offering and receiving constructive feedback helps everyone improve and builds a sense of shared purpose and resilience that extends far beyond the tournament setting.

CITIZENSHIP

The most essential part of speech and debate is the ability to engage with different viewpoints respectfully. In the debate community, respect is everything. Successful programs highlight the value of personal growth and learning over winning.

- ◆ Prepare your students by teaching decorum (politeness). Remind your students to demonstrate decorum from the moment they arrive at a tournament to the moment they leave.
- ◆ Judges, parents, and coaches are everywhere; and displaying rude, childish, or disrespectful behavior will reflect poorly on the student, the coach, and the entire program.
- ◆ While one can make many comparisons to debate competitions and athletic competitions, not all behaviors are acceptable in both arenas. For example, “trash talking” and arguing with judges’ decisions are unacceptable.
- ◆ To help students process the outcome of a tournament, consider offering a Monday afternoon “debrief” where students can discuss their scores, rankings, decisions, and judge comments in a way that promotes growth for the next competition.

COACH RESPONSIBILITY

Ultimately, team culture starts with you, the coach. You must be a good example of leadership for your students to receive value from this activity. It is essential that you engage with your students with respect to foster growth. This no doubt goes without saying, as many speech and debate coaches are experienced and great teachers!

- ◆ **Deadlines:** Even the best coaches can miss a date here and there, but it is essential that you keep track of all FCDI tournament deadlines. Large speech and debate competitions cannot accommodate changes after published deadlines, and a simple calendar oversight could result in your students being penalized.

- ◆ **Speech Content:** As the coach, you are responsible for the content of your team's speeches. It is essential that parents are aware and approve of their student's speech, and that you approve. Content in your students' speeches reflects on you as a coach, your team and your school.

CELEBRATING

Whether or not your team finds competitive rewards, your team is still successful and deserving of celebration. Participating in speech and debate is not easy, and it's important to celebrate growth throughout the school year.

Suggestions for Celebrating Success

- ◆ Plan small events during the year to celebrate any milestones that your team or a student achieves or plan a big event at the end of the year.
- ◆ Share your team's success with your school and community.
- ◆ Publish tournament results, display pictures on school social media and school newsletters.
- ◆ Reach out to local media outlets with your program's successes / story.
- ◆ Display trophies, medals, and certificates prominently and proudly.

RECRUITING AND RETAINING MEMBERS

RECRUITMENT

Many teams start small and grow larger through a natural process. Students' success and accomplishment in debate competition can become contagious. New students are motivated to join the team as they see debate team students improve their communication skills, become more confident, and enjoy their competition experience and success. Below are some recruitment methods that you can try out to get interested students.

- ◆ Team identity (e.g., t-shirts, buttons, stickers).
- ◆ Adding team information to the school website.
- ◆ Distributing digital and hard copies of recruitment flyers.
- ◆ Participating in club rush or back to school nights.
- ◆ Taking recommendations from other teachers, coaches and counselors.
- ◆ Informal scrimmages.

TEAM RECRUITMENT

No matter how prepared you are, you can't have a team without interested students. Some speech and debate programs start with a group of interested students and others require more effort to build. Even one interested student is a success, and teams will grow during competition when those engaged spread the word about how much fun it is! Below are some recruitment methods that you can try out to get interested students.

Our tournaments are open to all schools not just FCDI affiliated or partnered teams. Please contact the FCDI for more information about initiating a program.

<https://www.FCDI@fldoe.org>

<https://www.civicsanddebate.com>



FCDI STAFF

As a new speech and debate coach, you may have questions. The guide below will help you direct them to the right person.

Contact information for FCDI staff can be found at civicsanddebate.com.

FCDI DIRECTOR

John Duebel, John.Duebel@fldoe.org

The FCDI director can answer questions or address concerns you may have regarding FCDI tournaments, rules, policies and procedures.

FCDI PROGRAM MANAGERS

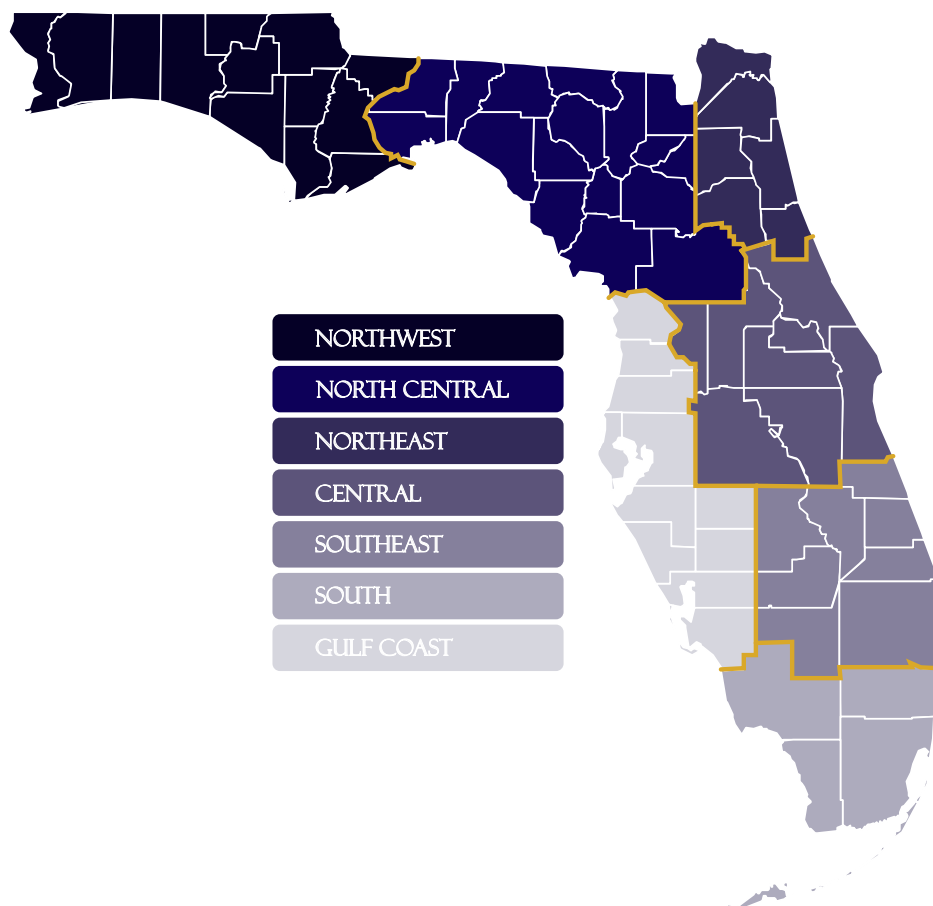
Claude Smith, claudio.smith@fldoe.org

Erica Anderson, erica.anderson@fldoe.org

The FCDI program manager can answer questions you may have about funding, tournament calendars, registration, deadlines, event rules, etc.

FCDI REGIONAL AMBASSADORS

The FCDI partners with experienced teachers and coaches across the state who serve as the FCDI regional ambassadors. These ambassadors can answer questions regarding how to start a debate team, recruiting debaters, and what to expect at a tournament and travel.



FCDI MEMBERSHIP

Every school year, the FCDI opens registration to participate as a partnered school. At the time of registration, schools may apply for need-based funding to support their speech and debate team. For the 2025-2026 school year there will be four levels of financial assistance provided by FCDI (see Fee Structure section for more information).

LEVEL 1	<i>Team membership fee waived</i>
LEVEL 2	<i>Team membership fee waived + \$1,000 team stipend</i>
LEVEL 3	<i>Team membership fee waived + \$2,000 team stipend</i>
LEVEL 4	<i>Team membership fee waived + \$3,000 stipend</i>

**Level 4 funding only applies to first-year debate programs, not existing teams that are new to FCDI.*

Note: Judging quotas (see page 16) are required for all FCDI teams, but penalty fees are waived for first-year FCDI partner programs who provide some judges but fall below the quota. In year two and beyond, judging obligations must be met or penalty fees will be incurred.

Through FCDI's partner organization, the Florida Debate Initiative (FDI), speech and debate coach(es) are eligible to receive a stipend of \$1,500 if their team participates in at least three FCDI tournaments and \$1,750 if they participate in four or more FCDI tournaments. At least one of these tournaments must be an in-person regional qualifier, and the National Civics and Debate Championship (NCDC) does not count as a participation event.

FCDI membership entitles partner schools free access to all FCDI teaching/coaching resources, SpeechWire access for team practice and data tracking and professional learning opportunities. Additionally, tournament fees are waived for all FCDI partnered schools.

FCDI TOURNAMENTS

FCDI TOURNAMENTS

The FCDI hosts speech and debate tournaments across the state that are open to competition for all schools statewide. These tournaments take place in many different locations and are geographically distributed to allow for more schools in more areas to participate. The FCDI tournament calendar for each school year will be posted at civicsanddebate.com/home.

PRIOR TO TOURNAMENTS

Before participating in the FCDI, students, observers, judges and coaches must read and understand the FCDI code of conduct (see page 20-26). To ensure that the value of speech and debate is maximized in our league, the FCDI requires that all attendees conduct themselves in an appropriate manner (see codes of conduct section for details). The FCDI reserves the right to remove anyone from partnership or competition that does not abide by the codes of conduct.

FCDI TOURNAMENT REGISTRATION AND IMPORTANT DEADLINE INFORMATION

The FCDI uses SpeechWire Tournament Services to host and run dozens of tournaments across the state each year. FCDI tournaments can be found on the SpeechWire calendar as well as the FCDI calendar. The following schedule can be expected of all FCDI tournaments:

- ◆ Registration for FCDI regional tournaments will open one month before the tournament date.
- ◆ Registration for the FCDI National Civics and Debate Championship will open at least one month prior to the tournament date.
- ◆ Registration will close seven days before the tournament date.
- ◆ **Registration deadlines will be strictly enforced this year. Teams that do not complete registration by the published deadline will not be permitted to attend the tournament. Changes made after the deadline may incur penalties, except in cases of verified emergency or illness.**
- ◆ Student- authored legislation submission will be due one month prior to the tournament date.
- ◆ Legislation packets will be uploaded at least 10 days before the tournament.
- ◆ Any drops/adds made to the student roster after the close of the registration deadline will result in a \$5.00 fine per drop. Late drops due to emergencies or illness will not result in a fine.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFICATION

State Champion will feed from our 4 regional qualifiers, 1 statewide qualifier, and 4 online tournaments. The number of qualifications are based upon the number of competitors within each division. The top 25% of regional and online qualifiers will advance to the state championship, and the top 50% of the statewide qualifier will advance. Students advance to State Championship in the same event in which they qualified.

Regional and online qualifiers will advance 1 student per 4 entries or portion thereof.

Statewide qualifiers will advance 1 student per 2 entries or portion thereof.

NUMBER OF ENTRIES	NUMBER OF QUALIFICATIONS
1	1
2 - 7	2
8 - 12	3
13 - 16	4
17 - 20	5
21 - 24	6
24+	1 PER 4 ENTRIES

Division collapse will only occur when a division has 1-3 competitors in a division, except legislative, where division collapse will occur if a division has 1-8 competitors.

Varsity students will only receive a qualification if they finish in the top 25% of any division, not the top 25% of varsity students within a division.

In collapsed divisions Novice and Middle School will receive 1 qualification for the top novice and top middle school competitors. If there are 5-8 competitors in legislative, a 2nd qualification will be added.

FCDI JUDGING REQUIREMENTS

Because tournaments rely on volunteer judges, recruiting and training judges is vital. The FCDI requires teams provide judges proportional to the number of students they have registered for a given tournament. The FCDI divides judges into two types: speech and debate. Speech judges can judge all speech events (Legislative Debate is included in speech). Debate judges can judge all debate events. Should the tournament be short judges in a specific type, judges may have to take a ballot in an event type they were not signed up in.

- ◆ For every two debate entries (individuals or teams), or fraction thereof, one debate judge must be registered.
- ◆ For every five speech entries (including Legislative Debate), or fraction thereof, one speech judge must be registered.
- ◆ Teams who do not have the required number of judges will incur a fee of \$10.00 per judge judge short and/or may have their competitors dropped from the tournament.
- ◆ **If a judge misses a round, other than in the case of an emergency, the team they are representing will be charged a \$100.00 missed round fee.**
- ◆ If a coach loses a judge prior to the day of the tournament they are required to notify their regional ambassador promptly and notify the tournament director upon arrival.
- ◆ Failure to meet judge quota within 72 hours of the tournament will result in a \$50 fee.
- ◆ Failure to meet judge quota with 72 hours notice will result in a \$25 fee.

Note: If a team fails to meet their judge quota, the coach will be required to serve as a judge.

FCDI JUDGE EXPECTATIONS

To ensure a successful tournament, we ask that judges be prepared to judge before the start of the tournament. At every FCDI tournament, a team member will present a judge orientation, event overview and answer any final questions judges may have. On-site judge training will always be available to any judge that needs assistance one hour before the tournament begins.

- ◆ **SpeechWire Judge Accounts:** When a judge is registered for a tournament, they will receive an email from SpeechWire Account Services notifying them that their judge account has been created and they will be given a password to use for their judge account. Judges must have access to this judge account and should ensure they can log in to SpeechWire.com prior to the day of the tournament.
- ◆ **FCDI Event Resources:** Judges will be provided with preparation videos and written resources. Judges must browse and familiarize themselves with the provided resources prior to the day of the tournament.

FCDI ON-SITE TOURNAMENT ADMINISTRATION

- ◆ **Tournament Director:** The tournament director is an FCDI staff member who oversees the event, coordinates efforts with the host site (e.g., competition rooms, judges' room, awards set up, WiFi access), troubleshoots and makes decisions as needed.
- ◆ **Tab Director:** The tab director is an FCDI staff member who sets up the tournament and oversees the on-site management of the tournament through SpeechWire. They oversee registration and check-in, schedule the rounds, assign judges, make adjustments, manage tabulation and troubleshoot as needed.
- ◆ **General staff:** General staff members may be FCDI staff, regional team members or volunteers. General staff assist with check-in, question answering, round monitoring and more as needed.
- ◆ **Extemp Prep Monitors:** These staff members monitor all Extemporaneous Speaking and Extemporaneous Debate competitors as they prepare for their round. These staff ensure rules are followed and students stay on schedule.

OTHER TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

Appeals Committee

If there is any issue, complaint or concern, it must be shared with a tournament staff member. This staff member will take the issue to the FCDI Appeals Committee. This committee is comprised of the on-site tournament director, tab director and a general staff member with extensive coaching history. They will hear the issue and decide on any possible action.

Some of the most common appeals are:

- ◆ **Judge Appeal:** If a student believes a judge has mishandled rules, timing, procedures, etc. during a round, they may bring the concern to the appeals committee for review.
- ◆ **Competition Integrity Appeal:** Any observation of rule-breaking or unethical behavior must be brought to the appeals committee.

Tournament Scrimmages

Scrimmages are typically by invite only and are localized with only geographically nearby schools being invited. Scrimmages can offer all events, a subset of events or even just one event. The scrimmage is tailored to the needs/desires of the host school. If you are interested in hosting a scrimmage at your school, please reach out to the FCDI program manager. FCDI scrimmages count as FCDI participation for funding requirements.

On-site Workshop/Trainings

The FCDI can travel to your school and facilitate a training/workshop with the students and coach(es). The workshop/training is tailored to the needs of the students/coach(es). FCDI workshops/trainings count as FCDI participation.

FCDI HOSTING TOOLKIT

FCDI TOURNAMENT HOST SCHOOL OBLIGATIONS

FCDI regional tournaments are primarily hosted by schools across the state. We encourage hosting, especially to our rural districts, as it provides a tournament opportunity without the travel. Host schools will receive a stipend to help offset any expenses.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ◆ **Working Internet:** Most important, students and judges attending the tournament must be able to access reliable internet access for the entire duration of the tournament.
- ◆ **Classroom Space:** The exact number of classrooms needed varies depending on tournament size and region. Please contact the FCDI program manager to discuss tournament plans and site resources.
- ◆ **Student Gathering Space:** A large common area, typically a cafeteria, is needed for students to gather during check-in and in between competition rounds.
- ◆ **Judge Gathering Space:** A medium sized area, typically a media center or library, is needed for judges to gather in-between competition rounds and fill out their ballots.
- ◆ **Food and Drink:**
 - **Judge Lounge:** Food and drink must be provided to judges during tournaments. This is typically snacks, cookies, sandwiches, water and, most important to many judges, coffee.
 - **Student Meals:** Schools do not have to provide meals to students; however, most host schools do sell meals to students and their families. This can be a good way to earn some income from the tournament. If a host school is not providing meals to students, they must notify the FCDI registration coordinator of this in advance. Students are not permitted to leave the tournament site for any reason. If you are hosting, you must arrange some kind of meal to be purchased by students on site. This could include food you purchase and resell, or partnering with local restaurants or food-trucks. If this is a hurdle for your site, please let FCDI and your regional ambassador know and we can help arrange this.
- ◆ **Parking:** Host schools must have adequate parking for the anticipated number of cars and buses.
- ◆ **Volunteers:** No tournament can run successfully without the assistance of volunteers. Host schools must ensure they have a sufficient team of volunteers to assist with pre-tournament set-up, smooth operation during tournament and post-tournament cleanup.
- ◆ **Custodial Staffing:** There is a need for on-site custodial personnel before, during and after the tournament.
- ◆ **Administration Support:** School administrators are valuable assets at any tournament. Prior to the tournament they can ensure there are no conflicts with other school groups utilizing facilities (e.g., arts, band, athletics). During the tournament administrators can ensure site security, proper handling of emergency situations and deal with any site issues (e.g., locked rooms, lighting, backed up toilets.)

CODES OF CONDUCT



COACH AND TEAM MEMBERS

ETHICS AND VALUE

- ◆ **Respect:** Treat all team members, coaches, judges and competitors with respect at all times.
- ◆ **Integrity:** Maintain honesty and integrity in all interactions, including research, argumentation and competition. Avoid plagiarism, fabrication and cheating of any kind.
- ◆ **Sportsmanship:** Embrace fair play, both in victory and defeat.
- ◆ **Professionalism:** Present oneself professionally in appearance, speech and conduct, reflecting positively on the team and the activity as a whole.
- ◆ **Collaboration:** Foster a supportive and collaborative team environment, where members work together to improve skills, share knowledge and enhance each other's performance.

CREATING A TEAM CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

The debate coach and team leaders must work together to establish a strong team culture. The debate community represents a team's character and reputation. Respected programs usually value education and personal growth over competitive success.

Develop a motto or slogan that best represents the team's values, such as "Leadership is Service" or "Commitment to Excellence."

Be organized and efficient. Know and adhere to deadlines to register for tournaments. Know the rules of the events and be sure the students know them. Be aware of the content of the pieces the students are performing as each performance reflects on the team.

Some helpful suggestions:

- ◆ Use Google Forms for student and parent sign-ups and submission of speeches.
- ◆ Create a team contract for students and parents.
- ◆ Organize the team with specific individuals identified as captains, team parents and assistant coaches.
- ◆ Use existing learning management system (LMS) to communicate information with students and parents.
 - Rules
 - Calendar
 - Fundraising
 - Practice Information

DRESS CODE

All participants need to adhere to a professional dress code.

PROFESSIONAL ATTIRE

Although students will not be judged based on appearance, participants are expected to dress in professional attire that reflects the seriousness of the activity. This typically includes business casual or business professional clothing.

NEAT AND TIDY

Clothing should be clean, well-fitted and free of wrinkles or stains. Personal grooming should be attended to, ensuring a polished appearance.

APPROPRIATENESS

Clothing and accessories should be “school appropriate.” Apparel should provide appropriate coverage, avoiding overly revealing attire. Hemlines and necklines should adhere to modesty standards.

COMFORTABLE BUT PROFESSIONAL

While professionalism is key, comfort is also important. Participants should choose attire that allows for ease of movement and comfort during speaking engagements and competitions.

REPRESENTING THE ACTIVITY

Participants should remember that they are representing their school or organization, and their attire should reflect positively on the activity and its values. This also includes messages on laptop covers, water bottles, pins, etc.

ADHERENCE TO GUIDELINES

Participants should adhere to any specific dress code requirements outlined by tournament organizers or governing bodies. Some competitions may have specific guidelines regarding attire that participants must follow.

SCHOOL BRANDED APPAREL

Avoid the use of school name or logo on clothing. This helps ensure judging bias is minimized.

ETHICAL PRACTICES IN RESEARCH AND ARGUMENTATION

When it comes to ethical practices in research and argumentation for speech and debate students, several key principles should be emphasized to ensure that events/rounds are conducted responsibly and ethically. Here are some important considerations:

HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

Students should always strive to present information that is truthful and accurate. They should avoid intentionally misleading or misrepresenting.

CITING SOURCES

Properly citing sources is essential to give credit to the original authors and to allow others to verify the information presented.

GENERAL TIPS

- ◆ **Introduce Your Source:** Mention your source before presenting their information, unlike traditional in-text citations.
- ◆ **Presenting Quotations:** Avoid phrases like “quote, unquote” for direct quotations. Use brief pauses instead to indicate quotations.
- ◆ **Source Information:** Provide sufficient details about each source so your audience can locate it with minimal effort. This includes the author’s name, their credentials, the work’s title and its publication date.
Example: “In the 1979 edition of *The Elements of Style*, noted grammarians and composition experts Strunk and White advise writers to ‘make every word tell.’”
- ◆ **Establishing Credibility:** If your source may be unfamiliar to the audience, give enough context to establish their credibility, often by mentioning their qualifications related to the topic.
Example: “Dr. Derek Bok, President Emeritus of Harvard University and author of *The Politics of Happiness*, argues that American government policies should focus on enhancing citizens’ happiness.”

DIRECT QUOTATIONS

- ◆ **Acknowledgement in Speech:** Refer to direct quotations with phrases like “And I quote...” or “As [source] stated...”
- ◆ **Books:** Mention the title and author. Example: “According to April Jones, author of *Readings on History...*” Periodicals/Magazines: Include the title and date.
Example: “According to Time, March 28, 2005...”
- ◆ **Journals:** Include the journal title, date, and author.
Example: “Morgan Smith writes in the Fall 2005 issue of Science...”

- ◆ **Websites:** For organizational or well-known websites, provide the title. For news or magazine websites, include the title and date.
Example: "The Center for Disease Control website includes information..." or "CNN.com, on March 28, 2005, states..." (Note: CNN is an exception to the general rule about using website addresses.)
- ◆ **Interviews/Lectures/Personal Communication:** Provide the name and credentials of the source.
Example: "Alice Smith, professor of Economics at the University of Southern Mississippi, commented on the growth plan..." or "According to Susan Wallace, a junior Speech Communication major..."
- ◆ **Avoiding Plagiarism:** Debaters should never present someone else's ideas or words as their own without proper attribution. They should understand what constitutes plagiarism and how to paraphrase and cite sources effectively. This includes the use of ChatGPT or other Artificial Intelligence (AI) platforms.
- ◆ **Critical Thinking:** Students should critically evaluate the evidence and arguments presented by both themselves and their opponents. They should be open to considering different perspectives and willing to revise their arguments based on new evidence or counterarguments.
- ◆ **Respectful Discourse:** Debates should be conducted in a respectful manner, even when participants disagree. Personal attacks, insults or derogatory language have no place in a constructive debate. This includes nonverbal communication.
- ◆ **Responsible Use of Data:** Students should handle data responsibly, ensuring that it is accurate, relevant and used in accordance with ethical guidelines.
- ◆ **Balanced Representation:** Students should strive to present a balanced and fair representation of different viewpoints on a given topic. They should avoid cherry-picking evidence or only presenting arguments that support their own position.
- ◆ **Ethical Considerations in Argumentation:** Students should consider the potential consequences of their arguments and the broader ethical implications of the positions they advocate for. They should be mindful of the impact their words may have on others.
- ◆ **Continuous Learning:** Students should continuously educate themselves about ethical issues in research and argumentation and strive to improve their ethical practices over time.

By emphasizing these principles, students can ensure that their research and argumentation are conducted ethically and responsibly, promoting constructive dialogue and meaningful engagement with important issues.

TOURNAMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS

Participating in speech and debate tournaments requires adherence to certain rules and guidelines to ensure fairness, professionalism and effective communication. FCDI/FDI staff may use their discretion to modify the rules as needed to maintain fairness and integrity. Here are some general rules followed in FCDI speech and debate tournaments:

GENERAL RULES

- ◆ No student shall enter a competition room before the judge for that round enters.
- ◆ If a judge is missing from a round, tab staff should be notified immediately.
- ◆ No person shall disrupt a round or distract competitors or judges.
- ◆ No person should enter or exit a competition room while a competitor is speaking.
- ◆ Any student found vandalizing, stealing or trespassing will be disqualified. If multiple members of a team are found vandalizing, stealing or trespassing, the entire team may be disqualified.
- ◆ No person should request a room be cleared. If a student is not comfortable performing or debating, the judge should contact the tab staff to enlist the support of the student's coach to resolve the issue.
- ◆ No student may be double entered (entered or compete in more than one speech event, debate event.)
- ◆ Any judge who has a conflict of interest (e.g., judging a student from your school) should report this to tab staff as soon as it is discovered.
- ◆ Judges should not ask competitors for personal information (grade level, school, etc.).

REGISTRATION

Only coaches may register team members for a tournament. Coaches must register participants for the tournament within the specified deadlines. Participants must register for the tournament within the specified deadlines. We will be using SpeechWire for registration. For "regular" tournaments, all competitors will compete in 2-4 rounds of a prearranged schedule, except Legislation where there are 1-3 rounds. Some tournaments may include advancement rounds (Octo finals, quarterfinals, semifinals and finals). The structure will be advertised in registration materials.

FORFEIT

- ◆ If a competitor/team is missing from a round, the judge should contact the tab staff immediately to investigate.
- ◆ A participant who does not appear at the scheduled time to speak shall be marked last. A debater more than 10 minutes late shall forfeit the round. The Rules Adjudication Panel may waive these penalties for valid reasons.
- ◆ If a student/team competes in the wrong contest section or against the wrong opponent, at no fault of their opponent or the tournament officials, that student/team will automatically receive last place or will receive a loss for that particular round.

SPEECHWIRE.COM ACCOUNT

Every judge and competitor in FCDI tournaments must create a SpeechWire.com account. No student or judge will be able to compete in the tournament without a [SpeechWire.com](https://www.speechwire.com) account with valid contact information (phone/email).

TIME LIMITS

Each event has specific time limits for speeches, rebuttals and cross-examinations. Participants must strictly adhere to these time limits to avoid penalties.

SPEECH AND DEBATE TOPICS

Topics for debates or speech events may be pre-announced or impromptu. Participants should familiarize themselves with potential topics and prepare relevant arguments or speeches.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Judges evaluate participants based on predetermined criteria, which may include clarity, organization, persuasion, evidence, refutation and adherence to time limits. Participants should understand these criteria and tailor their performances accordingly. All scores, ranks and decisions should be submitted by judges within 15 minutes of the conclusion of the round. Comments and "Reasons for Decisions" should be entered by the judge by 11:59pm local time on the day of the event.

Real-World Communication Expectations

FCDI strives to help students develop real-world skills that translate beyond competition. To reflect this goal, tournament rounds should simulate professional, civic, and academic communication settings. Competitors should avoid using phrases such as:

- ◆ "Time will begin when I speak my first word."
- ◆ "The reason I should win is..."

Such statements are not used in professional presentations and are inconsistent with the tone of FCDI events. Instead:

- ◆ Judges are the official timekeepers and should begin timing when the student begins their speech or first verbal content.
- ◆ The outcome of the round should speak for itself. If a competitor feels the need to explicitly state why they should win, it likely indicates that their arguments or delivery were not clear or compelling enough.

Judges are encouraged to deduct points for unnecessary preambles or statements not related to the speech or debate content. Students should begin their speeches with substance, not ceremony, and let the quality of their ideas and performance determine the outcome.

ETIQUETTE AND SPORTSMANSHIP

Participants are expected to demonstrate professionalism, respect and sportsmanship throughout the tournament. This includes respecting opponents, judges and tournament officials, as well as following the rules of fair play.

EVIDENCE AND CITATIONS

In debate events, participants are often required to support their arguments with evidence from credible sources. Proper citation of sources is essential to maintain academic integrity.

DRESS CODE

FCDI tournaments have a dress code requiring participants to dress in professional attire. Please see the dress code section in this handbook for details.

TECHNOLOGY USE

Depending on the event rules, participants may be allowed to use electronic devices such as laptops or tablets for research and/or note-taking during preparation time.

GENERATIVE AI USE

"The use of Generative AI as a tool to assist in research and finding material is not prohibited outside of a tournament. Students should not quote, paraphrase, or obtain whole speeches from Generative AI sources. The original source of any quoted or paraphrased evidence must be available if requested. Generative AI use at a tournament after it has started is strictly prohibited. If a student is found using Generative AI at a tournament site, they will be disqualified.

SCORING AND RANKING

Scores from judges determine the rankings of participants within each event. These scores may be based on a numerical scale or ranking system. Individual judge decisions are final. Final rankings determine awards and advancement to subsequent rounds or tournaments.

Debate, speech, and legislative events all have their own evaluation methods and scoring. Please see rubrics and evaluation criteria for each event.

Placement during tournaments will be assigned using the following criteria.

Speech and Legislative will primarily use the ranks assigned during rounds to determine placement. The first tie-breaker will be speaker points. Tabulation staff will answer any questions about further tie-breakers if needed.

Debate events will primarily use the win-loss record from rounds to determine placement. The first tie-breaker will be speaker points. Tabulation staff will answer any questions about further tie-breakers if needed.

TROPHIES AND AWARDS

Trophies will be awarded the same across the State at every tournament offered by the FCDI. The following table outlines how awards will be distributed. This also correlates with the State Championship qualification method. If a student receives a trophy at a qualifier, then they are qualified for the State Championship.

NUMBER OF COMPETITORS IN A DIVISION	PLACES AWARDED
1	1ST PLACE TROPHY
2 - 7	1ST AND 2ND PLACE TROPHIES
8 - 12	1ST, 2ND, 3RD PLACE TROPHIES
13 - 16	1ST, 2ND, 3RD TROPHIES & 4TH TOKEN AWARD
17 - 20	1ST, 2ND, 3RD TROPHIES & 4TH, 5TH TOKEN AWARD
21 - 24	1ST, 2ND, 3RD TROPHIES & 4TH, 5TH, 6TH TOKEN AWARD
25 - 28	1ST, 2ND, 3RD TROPHIES & 4TH, 5TH, 6TH TOKEN & 7TH CERTIFICATE AWARD
29 - 32	1ST, 2ND, 3RD TROPHIES & 4TH, 5TH, 6TH TOKEN & 7TH, 8TH CERTIFICATE AWARD
33 - 36	1ST, 2ND, 3RD TROPHIES & 4TH, 5TH, 6TH TOKEN & 7TH, 8TH, 9TH CERTIFICATE AWARD
37 - 40	1ST, 2ND, 3RD TROPHIES & 4TH, 5TH, 6TH TOKEN & 7TH, 8TH, 9TH, 10TH CERTIFICATE AWARD
41+	FOR EVERY 4 ENTRIES ABOVE 40, STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE A "STATE QUALIFIED" CERTIFICATE

Division collapse only occurs when there are 1-3 competitors in a division, except legislative, where division collapse occurs at 1-8 competitors.

If divisions are collapsed:

- ◆ Varsity will only receive an award if they finish in the top 25% of all competitors, and that award will be based on their overall placement within the event.
- ◆ If no novice competitors place in the top 25% of the division, a 1st place novice award will still be given. However, if one or more novices do place in the top 25%, awards will be distributed according to the standard placement table.
- ◆ If no middle school competitors place in the top 25% of the division, a 1st place MS award will still be given. However, if one or more MS competitors do place in the top 25%, awards will be distributed according to the standard placement table.
- ◆ In Legislative, the same rules apply, except Novice and Middle add a 2nd place award if there are 5-8 novice or middle school competitors.

| ROLES



ROLE OF COACHES

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Coaches help students develop essential speech and debate skills, including research, argumentation, public speaking and critical thinking. They provide guidance, instruction and feedback to help students improve their performance.

EVENT SELECTION

Coaches assist students in selecting events or categories that align with their interests, strengths and goals. They offer advice on event suitability, strategy development and competition preparation.

TRAINING AND PRACTICE

Coaches organize and facilitate training sessions, workshops and practice rounds to help students hone their skills and prepare for competitions. They provide structured exercises, drills and simulations to simulate tournament conditions and build confidence.

SPEECH AND ARGUMENT DEVELOPMENT

Coaches work closely with students to develop and refine their speeches, arguments and performances. They offer guidance on content selection, organization, delivery techniques and effective storytelling.

RESEARCH SUPPORT

Coaches assist students in conducting research on topics relevant to their events or arguments. They provide resources, recommend sources and offer guidance on effective research methods and citation practices.

FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

Coaches provide constructive feedback and evaluation on students' performances, speeches and arguments. They offer praise for strengths and identify areas for improvement, helping students refine their skills and strategies.

STRATEGY AND PREPARATION

Coaches develop strategic plans and preparation strategies tailored to individual students and events. They help students set goals, prioritize tasks and manage their time effectively to maximize their performance at competitions.

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Coaches provide mentorship, encouragement and emotional support to students throughout their speech and debate journey. They offer guidance on managing stress, overcoming setbacks and staying motivated in the face of challenges.

ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING

Coaches advocate for their students within the speech and debate community, helping them secure opportunities for recognition, advancement and scholarships. They facilitate networking opportunities and connections with other coaches, judges and organizations.

ROLE MODELING

Coaches serve as role models and mentors, exemplifying professionalism, integrity and dedication to the activity. They inspire students to strive for excellence, demonstrate good sportsmanship and uphold the values of speech and debate.

BUILD ALUMNI NETWORK

Coaches maintain communication and relationships with former team members to help build a sense of continuity and community. Team alumni can serve as mentors to current students and assist in fundraising efforts.

A SPEECH AND DEBATE COACH DOES NOT:

- ◆ A speech and debate coach does not need to have a background in debate but must be willing and eager to learn new things.
- ◆ A speech and debate coach does not have to be a civics or English language arts teacher.

A SPEECH AND DEBATE COACH SHOULD:

- ◆ A speech and debate coach should have some foundational knowledge and be able to direct students to seek a deeper knowledge and understanding of issues, resolutions, topics and prompts from a variety of perspectives.
- ◆ The ideal speech and debate coach will guide and encourage students to overcome their fear of public speaking.
- ◆ New coaches can expand their civics knowledge by participating in professional development or study on their own.

ROLE OF STUDENTS

In speech and debate tournaments, students play a pivotal role in shaping the competition, fostering personal growth and contributing to the overall success of the event. Here are some key aspects of the role of students in speech and debate tournaments:

PREPARATION AND PERFORMANCE

Students are responsible for preparing their speeches, arguments or performances leading up to the tournament. This includes conducting research, crafting speeches, refining arguments and rehearsing performances to ensure they are polished and effective.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

During the tournament, students actively participate in various events, rounds or categories based on their interests, skills and expertise. They compete against other students, showcasing their abilities and striving to achieve success.

ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

Students must demonstrate adaptability and flexibility in responding to different topics, formats and opponents throughout the tournament. They may need to adjust their arguments, strategies or delivery based on the specific requirements of each round or event.

SPORTSMANSHIP AND RESPECT

Students are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship and respect towards their fellow competitors, judges, coaches and tournament staff. This includes treating others with courtesy, fairness and professionalism, regardless of the outcome of the competition.

COLLABORATION AND TEAMWORK

In team-based events, students collaborate with their teammates to develop cohesive arguments and support each other throughout the tournament. Effective teamwork is essential for success in these events.

CRITICAL THINKING AND COMMUNICATION

Speech and debate tournaments provide students with opportunities to hone their critical thinking and communication skills. Students analyze complex issues, construct persuasive arguments and articulate their ideas with clarity, precision and conviction.

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Judges are instructed to withhold oral feedback, and instead to provide written critique on the ballot. Students receive feedback from coaches and peers throughout the tournament, which they can use to improve their performances and skills. Constructive feedback helps students identify areas for growth, refine their techniques and enhance their overall performance.

PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Participation in speech and debate tournaments fosters personal growth and development in students. They gain confidence, resilience and self-assurance as they navigate competitive challenges, receive feedback and strive for improvement.

REPRESENTING THEIR SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION

Students represent their school or organization with pride and integrity throughout the tournament. They strive to uphold the values, traditions and reputation of their institution through their conduct, performance and sportsmanship.

ENJOYMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Above all, students should enjoy the experience of participating in speech and debate tournaments. They should embrace the opportunity to learn, grow and connect with peers who share their passion for communication, advocacy and intellectual engagement.

ROLE OF JUDGES

The role of judges in speech and debate competitions is critical to the integrity, fairness and overall success of the event. Here are the key responsibilities and functions of judges:

IMPARTIAL EVALUATION

Judges must objectively evaluate the performance of competitors based on established criteria and standards. They should assess speeches and debates without bias or favoritism, focusing solely on the quality of the arguments, delivery and overall performance.

APPLYING CRITERIA

Judges use predetermined criteria and evaluation rubrics to assess various aspects of competitors' performances. This may include criteria such as content, delivery, organization, style and effectiveness of arguments. Judges apply these criteria consistently and fairly across all competitors.

PROVIDING WRITTEN FEEDBACK

Using the ballot provided, judges offer constructive feedback to competitors following their performances. This feedback may include strengths, areas for improvement and specific suggestions for enhancing future performances. Constructive feedback helps competitors grow and develop their skills in speech and debate. Oral feedback should not be provided.

MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY

Judges must maintain confidentiality regarding their evaluations and deliberations. They should refrain from discussing competitors' performances with others, including other judges, competitors, coaches or spectators to preserve the integrity of the competition.

FOLLOWING TOURNAMENT RULES

Judges adhere to the rules and guidelines established by the tournament organizers, including rules regarding timing, conduct and eligibility. They ensure that competitors follow the rules and that the competition runs smoothly and fairly. Judges who need assistance during or after a round should contact the tabulation staff.

PROFESSIONALISM AND ETHICAL CONDUCT

Judges conduct themselves with professionalism, integrity and ethical conduct throughout the competition. They treat competitors, coaches and fellow judges with respect and fairness, maintaining the highest standards of conduct and behavior.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Judges should feel comfortable judging all categories. To accomplish this, training modules are provided prior to the tournament. "Day of" training is also available to reinforce understanding.

DECISION-MAKING

Judges make informed and impartial decisions regarding the ranking and scoring of competitors based on their evaluations. They consider all relevant factors and criteria before reaching a decision and communicate their decisions clearly and transparently to competitors and tournament officials by thoroughly completing their ballot. Judges are expected to remain focused on students performing throughout the round, i.e. avoid distractions like texting, watching videos, sleeping, etc.

Overall, judges play a crucial role in upholding the integrity, fairness and quality of speech and debate competitions. Their expertise, professionalism and commitment to impartial evaluation contribute to the overall success and credibility of the event.

ROLE OF PARENTS

ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Parents are essential partners in supporting student participation in speech and debate. Their role includes providing encouragement, showing interest in their child's progress, and attending competitions to demonstrate support. Parents may also be asked to serve as judges, chaperones, or assist with hosting tournaments.

Speech and debate is an activity requiring students to exhibit maturity. Unlike most team sports, the coach will not be able to observe the actions of every competitor at all times. If a student requires constant supervision, a parent must attend to provide the necessary supervision.

PROVIDING RESOURCES

Parents may need to provide resources such as financial support for tournament fees, travel expenses and coaching fees. They may also assist in obtaining necessary materials, such as books, research materials or technology for speech preparation.

FACILITATING PRACTICE AND PREPARATION

Parents can help create a conducive environment for practice and preparation at home. This may involve providing time and space for practicing speeches, offering feedback and helping with research or preparation tasks.

COACHING AND MENTORSHIP

Some parents may have experience or expertise in speech and debate and can serve as coaches or mentors to their children. They can offer guidance, advice and strategies for improving performance and navigating the competitive landscape.

RESPECTING AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

While providing support and guidance, parents should also respect their children's autonomy and independence in their speech and debate pursuits. This includes allowing them to make their own decisions, take ownership of their successes and failures and pursue their own goals and aspirations in the activity. Appeal requests should be made by students and/or coaches.

ROLE OF OBSERVERS

Speech and debate is, at its foundation, a public speaking activity, and by definition requires an audience. Observers play a significant role in speech and debate events. Here are some key roles observers typically play:

JUDGES-IN-TRAINING

Observers often include individuals who are training to become judges. By observing debates and speeches, they learn about the evaluation criteria, scoring systems and standards used in competitive speech and debate. This training is essential for developing effective judging skills.

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Observers contribute to the overall atmosphere and engagement of the event by providing an attentive audience for participants. Their presence encourages speakers and debaters to perform at their best and adds to the dynamic energy of the competition.

SUPPORT NETWORK

Observers can serve as a support network for participants by offering encouragement, motivation and solidarity. Knowing that they have an audience that is interested in their performance can boost participants' confidence and morale.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Observers help foster a supportive and connected environment in speech and debate. They create opportunities for networking, collaboration, and meaningful interaction among participants, coaches, judges, and other stakeholders.

FEE STRUCTURE



FEE AND STIPEND STRUCTURE

There is a \$200 per team fee for FCDI membership.

Member schools/teams will have access to all FCDI resources, SpeechWire for classroom and practice use, tournament fees waived for all FCDI events, professional learning opportunities and personalized support.

TOURNAMENT FEES

- ◆ FCDI Tournament fees are included in FCDI member schools.
- ◆ \$5/participant tournament fee for non-member schools.

At the time of registration all teams are encouraged to apply for needs-based financial assistance. Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, there will be three levels of financial assistance provided by FCDI.

LEVEL 1	<i>Team membership fee waived</i>
LEVEL 2	<i>Team membership fee waived + \$1,000 team stipend</i>
LEVEL 3	<i>Team membership fee waived + \$2,000 team stipend</i>
LEVEL 4	<i>Team membership fee waived + \$3,000 stipend</i>

**Level 4 funding only applies to first-year debate programs, not existing teams that are new to FCDI.*

DEBATE OVERVIEW



LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE (LD)

PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE (PF)

EXTEMPORANEOUS DEBATE (EXD)

RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL
DEBATE (RPD)

LEGISLATIVE DEBATE (LEG)

DECLAMATION SPEAKING (DEC)

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING (IMP)

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING
(EXT)

INFORMATIVE SPEAKING (INF)

ORIGINAL ORATORY (OO)

WE THE PEOPLE: CITIZEN
SHOWDOWN (WTP)

WHAT IS DEBATE?

Students who compete in debate events argue both sides of an issue. Academic debate is an intellectual activity and is not about personal advocacy. Students may compete in different debate events as individuals or teams of two.

DEBATE SPEAKER POINT RUBRIC

Overall Scale:

6-15 points: Inappropriate, poor behavior.

Judges must explain all scores below 16 to tournament staff.

16-19 points: Very weak, could not engage in the debate

20-23 points: Needs improvement

24-26 points: Good

27-28 points: Excellent

29-30 points: Outstanding

Speaker Points (1-5)	1	2	3	4	5
Performance	(Poor): Very nervous, unclear speech, frequent pauses, lack of eye contact.	(Below Average): Some nervousness, inconsistent clarity, occasional pauses, limited eye contact.	(Average): Confident delivery, clear speech, minimal pauses, adequate eye contact.	(Above Average): Very confident delivery, articulate speech, few pauses, strong eye contact.	(Excellent): Extremely confident, compelling delivery, fluent speech, no pauses, strong and engaging eye contact.
Organization	(Poor): Very disorganized, unclear structure, difficult to follow.	(Below Average): Somewhat disorganized, weak structure, challenging to follow at times.	(Average): Generally organized, logical structure, mostly easy to follow.	(Above Average): Well-organized, clear structure, easy to follow.	(Excellent): Exceptionally well-organized, flawless structure, effortless to follow.
Evidence	(Poor): Little to no relevant evidence provided, unsupported claims.	(Below Average): Limited relevant evidence, some unsupported claims.	(Average): Adequate relevant evidence, mostly supported claims.	(Above Average): Strong relevant evidence, well-supported claims.	(Excellent): Abundant, highly relevant evidence, all claims well-supported.
Argumentation	(Poor): Weak arguments, significant logical flaws, easily refuted. No rebuttal to opponent's claims.	(Below Average): Some weak arguments, inconsistencies in logic. Limited rebuttal to opponent's claims.	(Average): Generally sound arguments, minor inconsistencies. Some quality rebuttals, but some opponent's claims left unexamined.	(Above Average): Strong arguments, logical coherence. Opponent's claims addressed.	(Excellent): Compelling arguments, flawless logic, very difficult to refute. All opponent's claims addressed, examined and persuasively countered.
Questioning	(Poor): Ineffective questioning, little engagement with opponents.	(Below Average): Limited effectiveness in questioning, minimal engagement.	(Average): Adequate questioning, some engagement with opponents.	(Above Average): Effective questioning, good engagement with opponents.	(Excellent): Highly effective questioning, deep engagement with opponents, adept at exposing weaknesses.
Conduct	(Poor): Very disrespectful, inappropriate behavior.	(Below Average): Somewhat disrespectful, occasional inappropriate behavior.	(Average): Generally respectful, minor instances of inappropriate behavior.	(Above Average): Respectful conduct throughout.	(Excellent): Exemplary conduct, respectful at all times, sets a positive tone.

Each judge would assign a score (1-5) in each of the SIX available categories based on the criteria provided, and these scores would then be used to determine the overall performance of each debater. Total scores are out of 30.

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

Lincoln-Douglas debate (LD) is a one versus one style of debate in which the affirmative supports the implementation of resolution, while the negation opposes and attacks it. The resolution is typically a question of moral value. The objective of each side is to show how the inherent and fundamental principles of their stance support their side of the resolution and outweigh their opponent's. Lincoln-Douglas debates may use the terms below:

1. Value: A universal and widely held principle that the debater advocates to support or oppose the resolution. For example, equality of opportunity.

2. Criterion: This is how the debaters ask you to measure the value they present.

3. Definitions: These may be given by the affirmative to define ambiguous terms in the resolution. However, if the negation disagrees with the provided definition, they may offer their own interpretation.

4. Arguments: Also known as contentions, these are the reasons given by the debater in support of their position.

RULES

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

Participants must follow a conversational pace when speaking in order for their opponent and the judge to assess their statements. "Spreading" (excessively fast speech) is not permitted. Speaking too fast is reason for losing a round.

TIME LIMITS

Each speaker must adhere to the specified time limits for their speeches. Each side has four minutes total of preparation time they can distribute among the two prep time periods assigned to them.

- ◆ **Affirmative Constructive:** 6 minutes
- ◆ **Negative Cross Examination:** 3 minutes = Negative asks Affirmative questions, Affirmative "defends"
- ◆ **Negative preparation:** time up to 4 minutes
- ◆ **Negative Constructive:** 7 minutes
- ◆ **Affirmative Cross Examination:** 3 minutes = Affirmative asks Negative questions, Negative "defends"
- ◆ **Affirmative preparation:** time up to 4 minutes
- ◆ **Affirmative Rebuttal:** 4 minutes
- ◆ **Negative preparation:** time up to 4 minutes
- ◆ **Negative Rebuttal:** 6 minutes
- ◆ **Affirmative preparation:** time up to 4 minutes
- ◆ **Affirmative Rebuttal:** 3 minutes

RULES

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

CONSTRUCTIVE SPEECHES

Each debater delivers a constructive speech, presenting their arguments and supporting evidence or reasoning. This speech sets the foundation for the debate.

CROSS-EXAMINATION

Following each constructive speech, there is a three-minute cross-examination period where their opponent may ask questions to clarify arguments or challenge their opponent's positions.

REBUTTALS

This attack and defend speech should respond to all arguments presented by their opponent by highlighting weaknesses or offering counterarguments. Rebuttal speeches should also defend any of their own vulnerabilities. If necessary, rebuttal speeches may elaborate on points introduced in the constructive, however, NEW arguments should NOT be introduced in the rebuttal.

It's important to note that the AFF side is allotted TWO shorter rebuttal speeches (3 minutes and 4 minutes respectively), and the NEG has only ONE longer rebuttal (6 minutes).

The AFF typically uses the first rebuttal for attack and defend. They use the second rebuttal to summarize the debate for the judge in a cogent and persuasive way, highlighting the reasons why their side has earned the win. The NEG side must combine all elements into their singular 6-minute rebuttal.

CLASH

Debaters are expected to engage directly with their opponent's arguments, providing analysis and evidence to support their own positions while undermining their opponent's.

LOGICAL REASONING

Debaters should use logical reasoning and sound evidence to support their arguments, avoiding fallacies or unsupported assertions.

RESPECTFUL CONDUCT

Debaters must conduct themselves in a respectful and professional manner throughout the debate, avoiding personal attacks or disrespectful language.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Debaters should manage their time effectively, ensuring they allocate sufficient time to each aspect of the debate and avoiding excessive repetition.

FLOWING

Debaters and judge should keep track of their opponent's arguments and their own responses, allowing for organized and effective rebuttals.

RULES

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

RESOLUTION FOCUS

Debaters should stay focused on the resolution throughout the debate, ensuring that all arguments and analyses are directly relevant to the topic at hand. As part of the constructive speech, each debater should

- ◆ clearly identify their side,
- ◆ define/interpret the resolution (every word if necessary)
- ◆ declare and explain the value and criterion and any other argument framework elements

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

EVALUATION

◆ CLARITY

The debaters should give the judge sufficient background information and be clear with their language, so judges are able to understand the issue at hand as well as the student's answer to that issue. This also serves the purpose of demonstrating that the speaker understands the topic.

◆ TOPICALITY

The debaters should give a focused case for or against the resolution. It should contain arguments, analysis and interpretation. All arguments should be related to the topic for that debate.

◆ ACCURACY

A variety of evidence should be used to support the debaters' arguments. If the evidence is from a published source, then it should be properly cited. If the evidence is quoted then the original author's name should be provided.

◆ DELIVERY

The debate should be delivered using the appropriate tone. Hand gestures should also be used to convey additional meaning and emphasis. However, they should not distract from the speech itself. The delivery should enhance the speech without subtracting from its meaning.

◆ CLASH

The debaters should have a clash of ideas. In addition to presenting their case, they must also directly respond to the arguments their opponent made.

◆ STRATEGY

A variety of strategies can be used by competitors but ultimately each should demonstrate why their position is stronger, including the connection to their stated value premise and applicable criterion. The competitors should also attack their opponent's arguments and connection to their value premise and applicable criterion.

PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

Public Forum is a team (2v2) debate event where opponents must affirm or negate a stated resolution. Each side uses standard argumentation appeals and ample evidence to persuade the judge to vote for their side. PF requires each member of the team to play different roles and speak at specific points in the debate. Each member of the team gives two speeches when it's their turn (for a total of 8 speeches in the round).

PF also includes regular "crossfire" which allows individual competitors to question and argue back and forth during their allotted time as well as "grand crossfire" where all four competitors may ask and answer.

SPEECH STRUCTURE

Each debater delivers a series of constructive speeches and rebuttals. The structure of speeches follows this pattern:

First Speaker (Team A), 4 minutes: Constructive speech presenting arguments in favor or against of the resolution and framework for the judge to consider..

First Speaker (Team B), 4 minutes: Constructive speech presenting arguments in favor or against of the resolution and framework for the judge to consider. Time permitting, this speaker may begin rebutting their opponents' arguments.

Crossfire, 3 minutes: A period of direct questioning between the first speakers of opposing teams. Team A asks first.

Second Speaker (Team A), 4 minutes: Rebuttal speech further developing their arguments and rebutting their opponent's arguments.

Second Speaker (Team B), 4 minutes: Rebuttal speech further developing their arguments and rebutting their opponent's arguments.

Crossfire, 3 minutes: A period of direct questioning between the second speakers of opposing teams. Team A asks first.

Summary (First Speaker, Team A), 3 minutes: A speech summarizing the strengths of their arguments and the weaknesses of their opponents' arguments.

Summary (First Speaker, Team B), 3 minutes: A speech summarizing the strengths of their arguments and the weaknesses of their opponents' arguments.

Grand Crossfire, 3 minutes: A period of direct questioning between the teams. All four competitors may ask and answer questions. A member from Team A asks the first question.

Final Focus (2nd Speaker, Team A), 2 minutes: A speech that crystallizes the round's argumentation and makes a final appeal to the judge by clearly outlining the reasons to vote for their side.

Final Focus (2nd Speaker, Team B), 2 minutes: A speech that crystallizes the round's argumentation and makes a final appeal to the judge by clearly outlining the reasons to vote for their side.

Total of three minutes of prep time per team.

RULES

PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

TEAM STRUCTURE

Each team/side is composed of two competitors. On each team, one student must serve as Speaker 1 and the other student as Speaker 2.

RESOLUTION

The debate is centered around a resolution, which is a statement or proposition on a current event or policy issue. The resolution is provided by the tournament organizer, and it is the topic that the debaters will argue for or against. Resolutions remain in place for 30-90 days, so teams have ample opportunity to prepare.

CROSSFIRE

During the crossfire period, debaters have the opportunity to ask each other questions directly.

PREP TIME

Each team is allowed a total of four minutes of preparation time per round. Competitors may request a specific amount—e.g., “I’d like to use two minutes of prep”—or ask for “running prep,” which means they will use an unspecified amount of time, and the clock runs until they indicate they’re ready or they’ve used the four minutes. The judge serves as the official timekeeper for all speeches, crossfires, and prep time, although students are encouraged to track time independently as well. Prep time may not be requested during speeches or crossfire.

PF sides and order are typically determined by a coin-toss just prior to the round. The winner of the coin toss may choose side (AFF or NEG) OR the order (FIRST or SECOND). The loser of the coin toss takes the remaining option. For example, if the team of Avery and Alex wins the coin toss, and they choose “NEG,” their opponents, Brix and Bo then choose whether they are Team A (speaks first) or Team B (speaks second). If Brix and Bo choose to speak second (Team B), then Team A is NEG, speaking first, and Team B is AFF is Team B, speaking second in the chart below.

- ◆ **First Speaker (Team A):** 4 minutes
- ◆ **First Speaker (Team B):** 4 minutes
- ◆ **First Crossfire:** 3 minutes
- ◆ **Second Speaker (Team A):** 4 minutes
- ◆ **Second Speaker (Team B):** 4 minutes
- ◆ **Second Crossfire:** 3 minutes
- ◆ **Summary (First Speaker, Team A):** 2 minutes
- ◆ **Summary (First Speaker, Team B):** 2 minutes
- ◆ **Grand Crossfire:** 3 minutes
- ◆ **Final Focus (2nd Speaker, Team A):** 2 minutes
- ◆ **Final Focus (2nd Speaker, Team B):** 2 minutes

Total of four minutes of prep time per team

FAIRNESS AND SPORTSMANSHIP

Debaters are expected to maintain a respectful and sportsmanlike demeanor throughout the debate. They should avoid personal attacks, offensive language and other forms of misconduct. To help achieve this decorum, students are encouraged to face their judge (and not their opponent) during the round.

EVIDENCE CARDS

With ample preparation, teams should cite evidence orally throughout the debate. Opponents and/or judges may ask for clarification of evidence by asking to see the evidence card.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

EVALUATION

◆ **CLARITY**

The debaters should give the judge sufficient background information and be clear with their language, so judges are able to understand the issue at hand as well as the student's answer to that issue. This also serves the purpose of demonstrating that the speaker understands the topic.

◆ **TOPICALITY**

The debaters should give a focused case for or against the resolution. It should contain arguments, analysis and interpretation. All arguments should be related to the topic for that debate.

◆ **ACCURACY**

A variety of evidence should be used to support the debaters' arguments. If the evidence is from a published source, then it should be properly cited. If the evidence is quoted then the original author's name should be provided.

◆ **DELIVERY**

The debate should be delivered using the appropriate tone. Hand gestures should also be used to convey additional meaning and emphasis; however, they should not distract from the speech itself. The delivery should enhance the speech without subtracting from its meaning.

◆ **CLASH**

The debaters should have a clash of ideas. In addition to presenting their case, they must also directly respond to the arguments their opponent made.

◆ **EVIDENCE**

Because teams have ample opportunity for research, evidence should be cited orally. Although opponents and judges may ask for "proof" by being given access to the debater's evidence card, this practice should be done sparingly and should NOT significantly delay the round.

EXTEMPORANEOUS DEBATE

In Extemporaneous Debate (EXD), students compete in a one-on-one format with limited prep time to prepare for the topic they are to debate. Students present arguments and engage in rebuttals; however, unlike other common debate events, students debate a different topic each round. They are given 30 minutes to prepare for the round. The use of evidence is permitted, but not a focal point due to the limited time available to prepare a case for the round. As with most debate events, students do not “choose their side;” instead they are assigned a side.

RULES

EXTEMPORANEOUS DEBATE

Participants must follow a conversational pace when speaking in order for their opponent and the judge to assess their statements. “Spreading” (excessively fast speech) is not permitted.

FORMAT

Extemporaneous debates follow a structured format with defined speaking roles and time limits.

SPEAKING TIMES

- ◆ **Proposition Constructive:** 2 minutes
- ◆ **Cross-Examination of Proposition:** 1 minutes
- ◆ **Opposition Constructive:** 2 minutes
- ◆ **Cross-Examination of Opposition:** 1 minutes
- ◆ **Mandatory Prep Time:** 1 minute
- ◆ **Proposition Rebuttal:** 2 minutes
- ◆ **Opposition Rebuttal:** 2 minutes
- ◆ **Mandatory Prep Time:** 1 minute
- ◆ **Proposition Rebuttal:** 2 minutes
- ◆ **Opposition Rebuttal:** 2 minutes

TOPIC SELECTION

Participants are given a resolution (topic) related to current events, politics, economics, civics or government.

PREPARATION TIME

Participants are given 30 minutes to prepare their case after receiving the topic. During this preparation time, they can research, gather information and organize their thoughts.

EVIDENCE AND CITATIONS

Participants should support their arguments with relevant evidence, statistics, examples and quotations from credible sources. They should provide citations for their evidence to demonstrate credibility and allow for fact-checking; however, due to limited preparation, evidence is not the primary focus.

RULES

EXTEMPORANEOUS DEBATE

NOTES

Participants are permitted to use notes and/or electronic devices in both preparation and during the round for Extemporaneous Debate.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Judges typically evaluate participants based on factors such as content, organization, delivery, rebuttal skills and overall persuasiveness. They may also consider factors like creativity, depth of analysis and responsiveness to the topic.

FAIRNESS AND SPORTSMANSHIP

Participants should maintain a respectful and sportsmanlike demeanor throughout the debate. They should avoid personal attacks, logical fallacies and other forms of misconduct. Students should directly address/face the judge and not their opponent.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

EXTEMPORANEOUS DEBATE

EVALUATION

◆ CLARITY

The debaters should give the judge sufficient background information and be clear with their language, so the judge is able to understand the issue at hand, as well as the student's response to that issue. This also serves the purpose of demonstrating the speaker understands the topic.

◆ TOPICALITY

The debaters should give a focused case for or against the resolution. It should contain arguments, analysis and interpretation. All arguments should be related to the topic for that debate.

◆ ACCURACY

A variety of evidence should be used to support the debaters' arguments. If the evidence is from a published source, then it should be properly cited orally. If the evidence is quoted, then the original author's name should be provided.

◆ DELIVERY

The debate should be delivered using the appropriate tone. Hand gestures should also be used to convey additional meaning and emphasis; however, they should not distract from the speech itself. The delivery should enhance the speech without subtracting from its meaning.

◆ CLASH

The debaters should have a clash of ideas. In addition to presenting their case, they must also directly respond to the arguments made by their opponent and counter rebuttals made.

RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Debate (RPD) is a unique, one-on-one style debate event designed to blend civic knowledge with persuasive rhetorical delivery. Inspired by President Reagan's legacy of principled leadership, civil discourse, and effective communication, this event emphasizes historical and contemporary relevance, patriotism, and values-based argumentation.

Competitors address pre-announced prompts, craft persuasive arguments, and engage in rebuttal and cross-examination. RPD promotes not only the defense of policy ideas but also the communication of those ideas with poise, clarity, and respect.

RULES

RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

TOPIC SELECTION

Topics for RPD are pre-announced prior to each tournament and may include:

- ◆ Current events
- ◆ U.S. political philosophy
- ◆ Civic institutions and leadership
- ◆ American history and values

Topics are phrased as open-ended questions, policy proposals, or philosophical prompts. Competitors are randomly assigned a side (affirmative/negative) and cannot choose their position.

FORMAT

- ◆ One-on-one debate format
- ◆ Emphasis on civil, values-driven discourse and patriotism
- ◆ Anecdotal evidence is not only allowed, it is encouraged. A pivotal element of Ronald Reagan's style was storytelling and anecdotes.
- ◆ "Spreading" (excessively fast speech) is not allowed

TIME LIMITS

- ◆ **Affirmative Opening Statement:** 5 minutes
- ◆ **Negative Opening Statement:** 5 minutes
- ◆ **Crossfire:** 3 minutes
- ◆ **Affirmative Rebuttal:** 4 minutes
- ◆ **Negative Rebuttal:** 4 minute
- ◆ **Moderator Questioning:** 3 minutes
- ◆ **Affirmative Closing Statement:** 3 minutes
- ◆ **Negative Closing Statement:** 3 minute
- ◆ **Prep Time (per side):** 2 minutes

RULES

RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

SPEECH STRUCTURE

Debaters should structure their speeches to include:

- ◆ **Introduction:** Clear framing of the position and values behind the stance
- ◆ **Main Contentions:** Logically structured arguments supported with historical examples, current events, or foundational civic principles
- ◆ **Rebuttals:** Targeted responses to opponent arguments, addressing both reasoning and evidence
- ◆ **Conclusion:** Restates position and frames key takeaways with clarity and conviction

EVIDENCE AND VALUES

- ◆ Debaters are encouraged to reference:
- ◆ Founding documents (e.g., Constitution, Federalist Papers)
- ◆ Statements from U.S. Presidents or prominent civic leaders
- ◆ Historical events and lessons
- ◆ Contemporary news sources

Citing should be clear and brief, naming source, author/organization, and date when applicable. Appeals to core American values such as liberty, equality, federalism, and civic responsibility are expected.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

EVALUATION

- ◆ **CLARITY AND ORGANIZATION**

Well-structured, logical delivery of ideas.

- ◆ **CIVIC KNOWLEDGE**

Use of accurate, relevant historical or governmental content.

- ◆ **PERSUASIVENESS**

Strength of argument and effectiveness of rhetorical appeals.

- ◆ **DELIVERY**

Poise, voice control, body language, and audience connection.

- ◆ **RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT**

Courteous and professional tone during all rounds.

- ◆ **REBUTTAL AND CLASH**

Effectiveness in responding to and undermining their opposition's points

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

- ◆ Judges must not penalize based on ideological alignment but focus on argumentation and delivery.
- ◆ Oral feedback is not allowed during or after the round.
- ◆ Judges must submit ballots and written feedback via SpeechWire.
- ◆ Competitors are expected to reflect the decorum of a presidential setting—respectful, articulate, and principled.
- ◆ Judges should evaluate the strength of argumentation, not personal belief agreement.
- ◆ Any judge who has a conflict of interest must notify tournament staff immediately.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Category	1 – Poor	2 – Below Average	3 – Average	4 – Above Average	5 – Excellent
Performance in the style of Ronald Reagan	Debate lacked any identifiable Reagan qualities (e.g., humor, optimism, patriotism).	Few Reagan-like elements; tone or style inconsistent.	Demonstrated some Reagan qualities; attempted relatable tone.	Often reflected Reagan's optimism, clarity, and presence.	Fully embodied Reagan's style—optimistic, charismatic, patriotic, and clear.
Organization and Clarity	Argument was disorganized, confusing, and lacked logical structure. Speech was impossible to follow.	Some structure, but difficult to follow or poorly connected ideas. Only people with technical knowledge could understand, or debaters utilized a style or speed of speaking that was unreasonable.	Organization was acceptable, though clarity or delivery could be improved.	Mostly clear and logically organized; minor lapses. Most listeners could follow and understand the debater's speech.	Exceptionally well-organized and easy to follow; clear flow and transitions. Anyone could follow and understand this debater.
Persuasiveness	Arguments were unclear or unconvincing; failed to engage the audience.	Limited persuasion; lacked emotional appeal or strong logic.	Somewhat persuasive; moments of clarity and effective delivery.	Generally persuasive; strong points made with clarity.	Highly compelling; clearly and confidently convinced the audience.
Argumentation	Did not respond to opposing views or presented off-topic arguments.	Weak rebuttals; missed key points from opponent.	Addressed opponent but with minimal impact.	Effectively challenged key arguments from the opponent.	Thorough, direct, and strategic engagement with the opponent's arguments.
Knowledge of Topic and Civic Knowledge	Lacked basic understanding; responses to questions were evasive, incorrect, or off-topic.	Limited knowledge; struggled to respond to opponent or moderator questions accurately.	Demonstrated general understanding; answered most questions with partial accuracy.	Well-informed; responded effectively to most moderator and opponent questions.	Demonstrated expert knowledge; answered all moderator and opponent questions thoroughly, clearly, and accurately using evidence and civics principles.
Vision, Leadership, and Conduct	Lacked professionalism or respect; no clear vision or leadership traits.	Displayed limited leadership; demeanor detracted from credibility.	Demonstrated some vision; demeanor was generally respectful.	Communicated clear ideas and leadership with professionalism.	Exemplified presidential conduct; projected vision, integrity, and strong leadership presence.

LEGISLATIVE DEBATE

In Legislative Debate (LEG), students roleplay as federal or state legislators charged with the task of fulfilling the law-making responsibilities of the legislative branch. In alternating months, students will take on the role of the U.S. Congress and the state legislature.

FCDI Qualifier #1 = National
FCDI Qualifier #2 = State
FCDI Statewide Qualifier = National
FCDI Qualifier #3 = State
FCDI Qualifier #4 = National
FCDI State Championship = State
National Civics and Debate Championship (NCDC) = National

The most important thing for a judge to understand about Legislative Debate is that it is much more procedural than any other form of debate. As such, it is up to the students to manage the procedure and enforce the rules of order. Judges serve only to score the round and settle any major rule disputes.

CREATING LEGISLATION

Bills and resolutions will be created by FCDI for FCDI #1 and FCDI #2 each year, and student-created bills will be used for the remaining tournaments. Students and schools submitting bills or resolutions must submit the proposed legislation no later than 28 days prior to the tournament. All student-created bills or resolutions must align to Florida's state academic standards or current proposed federal or state legislation. The best legislation is debatable and has two clear sides. In the spirit of fostering civil discourse and camaraderie, FCDI reserves the right to reject legislation deemed detrimental to those goals.

RULES

LEGISLATIVE DEBATE

A LEGISLATIVE SESSION CONSISTS OF:

- ◆ A recommended minimum of 90 minutes and maximum of 120 minutes.
- ◆ Election of a presiding officer: Students may nominate themselves or another competitor as presiding officer for the chamber.
- ◆ Nominated students for a presiding officer must be selected by a majority vote of the student chamber. If there is not a majority, the candidate with the fewest votes is removed from the running and voting occurs again until a candidate receives a majority.
- ◆ The presiding officer selection process is capped at a maximum of 15 minutes.
- ◆ Presiding officers will receive a gavel at the start of the round.

RULES

LEGISLATIVE DEBATE

AUTHORSHIP

The presiding officer must recognize the author of the legislation. If the author is not present in the chamber, the presiding officer will call for a sponsor.

BILL AND RESOLUTION SUBMISSION

Participants may submit bills and resolutions for consideration in the legislative debate no later than 28 days prior to the tournament. Submissions must adhere to the specified format and be relevant to current issues.

LEGISLATIVE PACKET

A packet of bills and resolutions is created by the tournament organizer, approved by FCDI and provided to participants at least 10 days prior to the tournament. The packet may include a mix of student-created and pre-selected legislation.

DOCKET SELECTION

A docket of bills and resolutions is determined by the chamber.

SPEAKER ORDER

The presiding officer (PO) must recognize speakers based on precedence and recency. If multiple competitors seek recognition, the PO should prioritize the one who has spoken the fewest times (precedence). If they have spoken an equal number of times, the PO should then recognize the competitor who spoke least recently (recency).

SPEECH TIMING

Each speaker is allotted up to three minutes to deliver their speech. Gavel signals indicate when there is one minute, 30 seconds and zero seconds remaining. Speeches are given a 10-second grace period. The presiding officer should halt the speech after 3:10.

- ◆ Legislation authorship/sponsor speeches and the first negative speech are followed by a two-minute cross-examination period.
- ◆ Alternating affirmative/negative speeches followed by up to one minute questioning period per chamber member.
 - No more than two minutes of total questions per speech.

SPEECH STRUCTURE

Speakers should adhere to a structured format for their speeches, including an introduction, main points or arguments and a conclusion. Speeches should be well-organized and coherent, with clear transitions between ideas.

DECORUM AND CONDUCT

Participants must conduct themselves in a respectful and professional manner throughout the debate. Personal attacks, disruptive behavior or disrespectful language are not tolerated.

RULES

LEGISLATIVE DEBATE

QUESTIONING PERIODS

Following each speech, there is a designated period for questioning by other participants, known as the questioning period. Speakers may yield their remaining time for questions, allowing for additional discussion and clarification. ALL NOVICE rounds and rounds with more than 14 members in the chamber must utilize indirect questioning.

- ◆ **Direct Questioning:** Direct questioning is a form of questioning where one member of the chamber at a time is given the opportunity to ask an unlimited number of questions in a given time period in a back-and-forth exchange, similar to a conversation or interview. Direct questioning is only possible if a motion is passed to suspend the rules. If voted upon by a varsity chamber and the chamber has fewer than 14 students, it may be used for deeper back and forth questioning.
- ◆ **Indirect Questioning:** Indirect questioning is used when multiple legislators take turns asking a single question each, without follow-ups in a given time period. The speaker answers one question at a time, and the floor then moves to the next legislator. Indirect questioning is the default type of questioning for our legislative debates."

DEBATE ETIQUETTE

Speakers should address the chair or presiding officer when delivering speeches to the full chamber. All remarks should follow parliamentary procedure and adhere to established rules of order. Interruptions, side conversations, and out-of-turn remarks are discouraged and should be avoided.

EVIDENCE AND ARGUMENTATION

Speakers should support their arguments with relevant evidence, statistics and examples. Debaters are encouraged to research and prepare well-supported arguments to strengthen their positions.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Judges evaluate participants based on criteria such as content, delivery, organization, responsiveness to questions and overall effectiveness in advocating for their positions. Scores are assigned based on the quality of performance relative to these criteria. Students should seek to advance the debate with new ideas, not just repeating what previous speakers have said.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Legislative debate participants may use electronic devices and internet but are not permitted to message anyone inside or outside the chamber. Students may have non-electronic visual aids.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

LEGISLATIVE DEBATE

EVALUATION

- ◆ If a student asks a question, they should not be scored for that question; however, the judge should take note that the student may be setting the stage for a future speech. Handling and asking of questions should be considered when ranking students overall in the chamber.
- ◆ Each time that a student is recognized to make a speech, you should fill out a speaker ballot for that student.
- ◆ Judges should keep track of all student participation in the chamber in order to accurately rank students. This includes speeches, questions and motions.
- ◆ Students are ranked at the end of the session holistically based upon quality and quantity of speeches given, motions made that advanced chamber business, professionalism, presence, and quality of questions and responses.
- ◆ While not a strict judging criteria, students should have clash. They should rebut each other's points instead of just speaking without including other's points.

Scoring: 1-6 = (Nothing below a 3 for Novice). If you think a student deserves <3, please speak directly to your coach. See rubric.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

LEGISLATIVE DEBATE

LEGISLATIVE DEBATE RUBRIC

	2, 2.5	3, 3.5	4, 4.5	5, 5.5	6
	Developing	Low level of mastery	Fair level of mastery	Good level of mastery	Excellent level of mastery
Vocal Performance of content: Rate, volume, intonation, emphasis, enunciation, pronunciation	Speaker's rate/volume/enunciation interfered with audience understanding.	Speaker's vocal performance interfered with understanding over ½ of the total speaking time.	Speaker's vocal performance at times or less interfered with understanding.	Speaker's vocal performance bolstered understanding and interest. Confident in speaking.	Speaker's vocal performance expertly supported the message. Delivery was clear, compelling and professional.
Physical Performance: Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, purposeful movement	Speaker's physical performance interfered with understanding. Speaker provided minimal eye contact and lacked appropriate expressiveness.	Speaker's physical performance occasionally interfered with understanding. Speaker lacked consistent eye contact, gestures/movement.	Speaker's physical performance showed no major errors but lacked proficiency throughout. Some attempt at purposeful movement.	Speaker's physical performance added to the overall understanding of the topic. Gestures and purposeful movement aided understanding.	Eye contact, facial expressiveness, gestures, and movement all demonstrated confidence and skill.
Speech Organization: Structure was clear and easy to follow. Intro, main points, and conclusion clearly established.	Lacked basic structure: introduction, body, transitions and conclusion. Hard to follow along.	Introduction, body and conclusion were attempted; some organizational elements were missing.	Introduction with hook and preview used. Clearer transitions between main points and use of review would be helpful.	Organizational elements were clear. Intro included hook and preview. Basic transitions used. Conclusion summarized nicely.	Speech was expertly organized with clear transitions. Conclusion provided a perfect sense of closure.
Speech Content and Analysis: Support for main ideas include a variety of supporting structures (e.g., data, expert opinions, etc.).	Support for main points needs development. Sources not cited clearly or correctly. Topic analysis too broad or incomplete.	Some support provided for each main point. More and varied support as well as outside sources needed. Topic analysis limited.	One or more points was supported, but varying types of support and/or a greater variety of quality sources would add interest and credibility. Topic analysis ok.	Each point was supported with ample and varying types of evidence. Sources clearly cited. Topic analysis was adequate but not novel.	All points well-supported and prior speakers referenced. Abundant, quality evidence cited. Topic analysis was highly creative.
Overall: Contribution to the advancement of the debate/and to the success of the chamber.	No speeches given. No questions asked. Decorum issues (distracted, disengaged, etc.).	The speech(es) given were redundant or off topic. Questions asked did not elucidate.	The speeches given included some new and helpful information for the chamber to consider. Questions were somewhat helpful in clarifying.	The speeches given advanced the discussion by bringing up important considerations. Questions were pointed and relevant.	The speeches given were extremely helpful in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Pointed questions were relevant and critical.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

LEGISLATIVE DEBATE

PRESIDING OFFICER (P.O.)

- ◆ Among the first things done in a legislative session is the election of a Presiding Officer. This person will be scored differently than the other competitors. The Presiding Officer will recognize students to speak and question the current speakers, as well as recognize any of the various motions passed.
- ◆ Judges should allow both the student legislative debaters in the chamber and the Presiding Officer to correct breaches of rules or parliamentary procedure. If students fail to do so, judges may step in to point out breach of procedure. The judge will also be called upon to score the Presiding Officer; when doing so, they are to be scored separately from the other students. Instead the judge should evaluate them based on the following criteria.
 - Did the P.O. recognize speakers in a fair and consistent manner?
 - Did the P.O. utilize Parliamentary Procedure correctly, and in a manner that allowed the chamber to run smoothly?
 - Did the P.O. maintain control of the chamber, without resorting to tyrannical or autocratic means?
 - Did the P.O. conduct themselves with decorum and dignity?
 - As the P.O. does not actually give a traditional “speech,” a common strategy is to award a speech score for every hour of presiding.
 - The P.O. should be ranked among competitors.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

LEGISLATIVE DEBATE

Points	2 Weak-Mediocre	3-4 Good	5-6 Excellent-Superior
Parliamentary Procedure	The P.O.'s knowledge of parliamentary procedure is lacking, and he/she shows negligible effort to correct errors and/or consult written rules. Minimizes opportunities for others to debate by failing to adhere to time specified in a recess motion.	The P.O. demonstrates competency in procedure, but makes mistakes in determining the results of motions and votes, etc.	The P.O. has command of parliamentary procedure (motions) and uses this to run a fair and efficient chamber, seldom consulting written rules and ruling immediately on whether motions pass or fail. Keeps chamber running smoothly.
Recognition	Frequent errors are made in speaker recognition. Students in the chamber rise to a point of order to correct erroneous speaker recognition made by the P.O. The P.O. is slow in recognizing speakers and questioners. There are fewer than 10 speeches per hour in the chamber.	Presiding preferences are not clearly explained. Speaker recognition is somewhat inconsistent or biased. The P.O. is successful in achieving 10 speeches per hour in the chamber.	The P.O. is consistent in recognition distributing speeches throughout the room based on precedence. The P.O. recognizes speakers and questions in a timely manner to maximize participation. Achieving 12 or more speeches per hour is a sign of excellence.
Control	The environment in the chamber does not foster participation. Allows students to abuse parliamentary procedure in place of debating legislation. Encourages frequent recesses.	Guides the chamber to remain focused on debating legislation. At times, students on the chamber floor appear to be more in control of the chamber than the P.O. during the session. Sometimes is unsure of how to rule on motions or business.	The P.O. is respected and trusted by his/her peers. Establishes a businesslike environment that fosters maximum participation in the chamber. Rules on motions and business without interjecting himself/herself into the issue.
Demeanor	The P.O. uses their position for their own personal advantage as opposed to operating in the best interest of the chamber as a whole.	Overall, the P.O. creates a professional atmosphere although there are times where the atmosphere is less than totally professional.	The P.O. fosters a respectful, professional and collegial atmosphere. Addresses all members respectfully.
Communication	Communication between the P.O. and chamber is confusing or counterproductive. Communication from the P.O. (excessive or lack of) prevents maximum participation from members of the chamber.	The P.O. occasionally takes excessive time when explaining rulings or doesn't explain rulings clearly.	The P.O. dynamically displays a command and relates well to the chamber through his/her vocal and physical presence. Word choice is economical and eloquent. Rulings are concisely explained.

Your final responsibility for a legislative chamber will be to note how each student performs in regard to questioning, participation in parliamentary disputes, interaction with other students and general decorum.

NOTES ABOUT SCORING LEGISLATIVE DEBATE

- ◆ Score each competitor's speech for and against the legislation/resolution using the 1-6 scoring range found on the drop down ballot for that competitor. You will also find a space for comments that help explain your 1-6 scoring choice.
- ◆ At the conclusion of the round, use every competitor's speech scores primarily, and their overall performance secondarily to rank every competitor in the room. If there are 12 competitors in the room, each will be assigned a rank—no ties for rank.

WHAT IS SPEECH?

Speech events are a wonderful platform for students to express their ideas but without the back-and-forth clash of debate. While each speech event has its own rules and goals, all require a student to deliver an oral presentation without the use of electronic visual aids in front of an audience. Speech events fall into two categories: prepared and limited-preparation.

- ◆ **Prepared events:** original oratory, informative speaking, and declamation
- ◆ **Limited preparation events:** impromptu speaking and extemporaneous speaking

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

All speeches must be aligned to Florida's state academic standards

www.cpalms.org/public/search/Standard

- ◆ Civics and Government or U.S. History standards are preferred, but not required.
- ◆ All speech content must have parental/guardian permission submitted to the team coach.
- ◆ Permission slips must be submitted to FCDI upon request.
- ◆ Prepared speeches must be uploaded to SpeechWire by the registration deadline.

SPEECH EVENT SCORING

Judges use a standardized rubric to determine each competitor's score out of 100 (60-100 is standard). In each round, a single speech judge evaluates 3 to 7 competitors in a single event. The judge's ballot includes space to record both the score and the rank for each speaker. Speakers may not tie on points or rank, and rank must follow speaker point order.

10-59 POINTS	<i>Inappropriate, poor behavior</i> <small>Judges are required to provide written justification for any score below 60.</small>
60-69 POINTS	<i>Needs Improvement</i>
70-79 POINTS	<i>Good</i>
80-89 POINTS	<i>Very Good</i>
90-94 POINTS	<i>Excellent</i>
95-100 POINTS	<i>Outstanding</i>

Event-specific rules and rubrics are included in the subsequent sections.

DECLAMATION SPEAKING

NOVICE AND MIDDLE ONLY

In Declamation Speaking (DEC) one speaker performs a memorized speech that was written, published and performed by another person or character. This memorized speech (no notes or cues) may be about any topic and performed originally by any person or character. The content of the speech should be appropriate for the venue. Although speeches need not be civics-related, this is encouraged. Speakers may edit the original text of the speech to fit the time requirement or make it appropriate for the venue; however, no words may be added/changed. Even small changes (e.g., cannot to can't) should be avoided.

RULES

DECLAMATION SPEECH

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

All Declamation Speeches must be aligned to Florida's state academic standards.

- ◆ Civics and Government or U.S. History standards are preferred, but not required.
www.cpalms.org/public/search/Standard
- ◆ All Declamation content must have parental/guardian permission submitted to the team coach.
- ◆ Copy of speech must be uploaded to SpeechWire by registration deadline. This requirement will be enforced this year.

PROHIBITED CONTENT

Profanity, sexual content, glorification of violence or drug use is strictly prohibited. Violations of this rule will result in a point deduction and may result in disqualification from the tournament.

Judges should inform the tournament director about inappropriate content and NOT discuss directly with the student.

TIME LIMITS

Each speaker must adhere to specified time limits for their speeches.

- ◆ 10-minute time maximum
- ◆ 30-second grace period allowed.
- ◆ There is NO TIME MINIMUM; however, students will not receive the full number of points, and they cannot be ranked first, if their speech falls under five minutes.
- ◆ Speakers who exceed 10:30 minutes are still scored and ranked, they just cannot be ranked first.

NOTES

Speeches should be memorized. Competitors who choose to use an aid (script, cue cards, etc.) may still compete, however, those who do are not eligible for first place due to the emphasis on memorization.

RULES

DECLAMATION SPEECH

SELECTION OF MATERIAL

Material used for Declamation speeches must be from a published speech that has been previously delivered by another speaker or character. The piece should be engaging, impactful, relevant to the audience and include relevant social, historical or cultural context.

AUTHOR CITATION

Competitors must clearly state the author of the text they're performing. An introduction that includes this information along with other context (historic, cultural, etc.) is considered standard for Declamation.

VISUAL AIDS

No props, costumes, furniture/sets or visual aids are allowed.

VOCAL DELIVERY

Utilize vocal techniques such as projection, articulation, pacing and intonation to convey the emotions and nuances of the declamation piece effectively. Pay attention to vocal dynamics to engage the audience and emphasize key points.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

DECLAMATION SPEECH

MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

The speaker should develop the ability to convey the message in a realistic style. The speaker must be able to use their speaking style, gestures, movement, inflection and emphasis to hold the listener's attention.

SPEECH STRUCTURE

Most students begin their Declamation by presenting 15-30 seconds of the original speech, followed by an introduction that provides context, and then transition back into the script. Regardless of where the introduction is placed, the final performance should feel complete, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. While students are permitted to cut content from the original text, they may not alter or add words. Many Declamation pieces conclude with a powerful call to action, so careful editing is essential to preserve the integrity and impact of the original speech.

DELIVERY STYLE

No particular style should be demanded, rather the contestant should be free to select and develop their own personal style and be judged on the degree of perfection attained and the effectiveness of influencing listeners. The event is an interpretation, not an impersonation. The speaker should be judged in light of the purpose of the speech and how well their personal style was used to highlight that purpose and message.

EDITS

The speech can be an edited version of the original oration; however, all words spoken must be from the original. Competitors may not add or change words used by the original orator.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

DECLAMATION SPEECH

TIME

While there is NO MINIMUM, speeches should be at least five and up to 10 minutes (with 30 seconds of grace). Speakers who exceed 10:30 minutes, or are under 5 minutes, are still scored and ranked, they just cannot be ranked first.

SCORING

The top score is 100 and should be reserved for a flawless performance. Adherence to the rubric will result in scores between 60-100, with scores under 70 reserved for “developing” performances. Judges should keep in mind this is a middle and novice event and are required to provide written justification for any score below 60.

**Although this is a memorized event, if a speaker is still becoming familiar with their piece and wishes to compete with the use of notes or cues, they may do so. However, this speaker should not be ranked first.*

CONTENT

____ Intro includes background on oration and any relevant context

____ Topic appropriateness

____ Cogent and easy to follow organizationally (intro, body, conclusion)

____ Editing maintains or enhances message of speech

DELIVERY

____ Rate ____ Volume ____ Emphasis and timing ____ Physical expression

____ Enunciation ____ Energy/emotion ____ Purposeful movement

____ Pronunciation ____ Eye contact

Judges will BOTH RANK and SCORE each contestant. There should be only “high point” wins. Meaning, if one speaker earned a 98 and another speaker a 96, the person with the higher score must be ranked higher. There may be NO TIES in RANK, but it’s ok to have tied scores out of 100.

**Reminder–We never make judgments based on a speaker’s ideology, background or appearance. If a speaker says something that makes you uncomfortable, it’s important to be specific and tactfully explain why you’re uncomfortable. Ultimately, it’s the speaker’s editing and speaking skills that should be evaluated.*

Do NOT share any oral feedback or decision with the speakers while at the competition.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

DECLAMATION SPEECH

DECLAMATION RUBRIC

Speaker Points	1-14	15-16	17-19	20-23	24-25
	Developing	Low level of mastery	Fair level of mastery	Good level of mastery	Excellent level of mastery
Vocal Performance of content: Rate, volume, intonation, emphasis, enunciation	Speaker's vocal performance interfered with basic interpretation. Emphasis, intonation, rate and volume choices detracted from the message.	Speaker's vocal performance occasionally interfered with understanding. Speaker seemed to understand the message but occasionally made errors in interpretation.	Speaker's vocal performance showed no major errors but lacked proficiency throughout.	Speaker's vocal performance only included a few errors, but overall vocal choices demonstrated understanding and quality interpretation of the text.	Speaker's vocal performance expertly supported interpretation of the message. There was command of voice control (volume, rate, etc.) to show dynamic interpretation is outstanding.
Physical Performance: Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, purposeful movement	Speaker's physical performance interfered with interpretation. Speaker lacked familiarity with text, was unable to make eye contact and/or lacked appropriate expressiveness. Movement distracted from performance.	Speaker's physical performance occasionally interfered with presentation. Speaker showed familiarity with text, but lacked consistent eye contact and/or meaningful gestures/movement.	Speaker's physical performance showed no major errors but lacked proficiency throughout.	Speaker's physical performance only included a few errors, but overall choices demonstrated understanding and interpretation. Eye contact, facial expressions, and purposeful movement added to the performance.	Speaker's physical performance expertly supported interpretation of the message. Eye contact, facial expressiveness, gestures and movement all demonstrated understanding and authentic interpretation of text.
Speaker's Content Development Choices: introduction, editing choices for clarity, time, message	Speaker failed introduction or background to the text. Speaker's content was inappropriate for competition. Speaker's editing choices made understanding challenging.	Speaker context/ introduction, but it may not have been adequate to facilitate understanding. Editing choices interfered with message. Speech over time limit or under 3 minutes.	Speaker adequate introduction and/or context for piece. Editing enhanced understanding. Choice of text was appropriate for competition. Length ok.	Speaker's provided quality contextual background. Editing choices enhanced understanding and supported interpretation. Length ok.	Speaker's demonstrated understanding of the speech's context and value to the audience. Editing was seamless and enhanced interpretation. Length ok.
Overall Interpretation: Message is clearly communicated, speaker understands message, words pronounced properly	Speaker's overall performance suggested a lack of understanding or familiarity with the piece. Many pronunciation errors.	Speaker's overall performance demonstrated some familiarity and understanding of the piece. Some pronunciation errors.	Speaker's overall performance demonstrated understanding of the piece with only a few errors in pronunciation.	Speaker's overall performance demonstrated thorough understanding of piece with only 1-2 errors in pronunciation.	Speaker's overall performance demonstrated strong command of the piece with thoughtful and authentic interpretation.

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

In Impromptu Speaking (IMP) a speaker draws three prompts from the collection of prompts placed face down on a desk by the judge. Within a few seconds, the speaker selects one of the three and begins prepping using a notecard provided by the tournament. The two prompts not selected are returned to the desk face down. A seven-minute countdown begins for the competitor to prepare and speak. The competitor may write anything they wish. Only the prompt slip and the notecard may be brought to the "stage." Phones or other electronics may not be used for preparation or as a reference / cue card, however, students may use a device to time themselves.

The speech should connect with the prompt. The competitor may interpret the prompt any way they wish. Speeches should be easy to follow. The speakers can even "take a side" regardless of the prompt's structure. The emphasis is on creative and clear interpretation of the prompt. Speaking performance is important. Evidence is NOT a strong focus as the speaker may not research. Although speeches need not be civics-related, this is encouraged.

**Topics for middle school and novice will be catered to those levels.*

RULES

IMPROMPTU SPEAKING

PROHIBITED CONTENT

Profanity, sexual content, glorification of violence or drug use is strictly prohibited. Violations of this rule will result in a point deduction and may result in disqualification from the tournament.

Judges should inform the tournament director about inappropriate content and NOT discuss directly with student.

PREPARATION TIME

- ◆ Judge(s) in each IMP room will be provided with an envelope with printed prompts for the round.
- ◆ The speaking order is listed on your Speechwire ballot. The name on the top goes first, and so on.
- ◆ All members of the round should enter the room simultaneously.
- ◆ The speaker will draw three prompts, read them silently, choose one and read it aloud. Then, return the other two face down.
- ◆ The official timer begins now. Students have seven minutes and 30 seconds grace to prepare AND deliver a speech about the prompt. While there is no minimum prep time or speaking time, competitors who can limit themselves to two-minutes of preparation and deliver a five minute speech are seen as successful. Prep plus delivery of speech cannot exceed 7:30.
- ◆ Students can write notes to prepare but can only bring a 3" X 5" notecard up to speak. All preparation should be completed without the use of electronics or outside notes / paper. All judges will be issued enough notecards that each competitor will have one provided when it's their turn.

RULES

IMPROMPTU SPEECH

TIME REQUIREMENTS

- ◆ Participants are given seven minutes total to prepare and present their speech.
- ◆ Each participant may receive a 30-second grace period if they go longer than seven minutes.
- ◆ Students that prep and speak for longer than 7:30 minutes will not be ranked first.
- ◆ Students who do not speak for at least two minutes will not be ranked first.

NOTES

Using a script or notes is allowed during preparation; however, students may only use a notecard throughout their speech.

CONTENT ORIGINALITY

While speakers have limited time to prepare, their speeches need to contain original content created on the spot. Speakers should avoid memorized or rehearsed material.

RELEVANCE

Competitors should keep their speech focused and relevant to the prompt provided, avoiding tangents or introducing unrelated topics that detract from the central theme.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Speakers may be evaluated based on criteria such as organization, clarity, relevance, creativity and overall effectiveness in responding to the impromptu prompt.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

IMPROMPTU SPEECH

IMPORTANT EVENT LOGISTICS NOTATION

The judge should either be given a packet of prompts, or the packet will be in the room. The competitors may not enter the room without the judge entering first. The judge should welcome ALL contestants into the room, take attendance, and then begin the round with the order of speakers on their ballot. If a student is missing, let tab staff know, then move onto the next student. Hopefully, the missing student will arrive soon after. All speakers should remain in the room for the entire round.

ORGANIZATION

Does the student have a clear structure to their speech? Are transitions used to move effectively between each part of the speech? Does the development of the speech make sense?

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

IMPROMPTU SPEECH

ANALYSIS

Does the student directly address the prompt? Does the student develop justifications for their ideas and establish significance to the points that make a clear connection to the prompt? Do student examples make sense and support their message and the prompt?

VOCAL DELIVERY

The speaker should be articulate and fluent. The speaker should make use of various vocal elements including contrast, pitch, volume, rate, pausing, phrasing, stress and tone. The speaker should stress or emphasize certain words to enhance their meaning and delivery. The speaker should present with confidence.

PHYSICAL DELIVERY

The speaker should vary facial expressions to accentuate the natural flow of thoughts and emotions. The speaker's eyes should be thoughtful but compassionate, while making eye contact with the audience. The speaker should have a controlled stance with no distracting movements. Walking should be used to show transitions and gestures should be natural, visible, and effectively used. They should not, however, distract from the rest of the performance. There should be a balance between the content and the delivery of it.

LENGTH

Impromptu competitors only have a short time to prepare, and the less time used prepping and more time speaking indicates a better speech. The content and delivery of the speech must be considered first, but the length of the speech is a helpful sign of a high-quality speech. During "prep" time, judges should orally alert the speaker at 30-second intervals.

TIME

The speakers have a TOTAL of seven minutes for prep AND speaking plus 30 seconds of grace. The amount of time spent prepping is deducted from 7:30 for time to speak. While there is NO MINIMUM, quality speeches should generally be at least three minutes to 7:30 minutes. For example, if speakers spend two minutes prepping, they have five minutes and 30 seconds remaining to speak. If speakers spend 30 seconds prepping, they have seven minutes to speak. Speakers who exceed 7:30 minutes may not earn the rank of 1st in a round. Please let the speaker know how much time has passed while prepping (oral time signals) and provide non-verbal signals for how much time has elapsed while they're speaking. The speaker may have a timer, but the judge is considered the official timekeeper.

SCORING

The top score is 100 and should be reserved for a flawless performance. Adherence to the rubric will result in scores between 60-100, with scores under 70 reserved for "developing" performances. Judges are required to provide written justification for any score below 60.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

IMPROMPTU SPEECH

Judges will BOTH RANK and SCORE competitors. There should be only “high point” wins. If one speaker earned a 98 and another speaker a 96, the competitor with the higher score must be ranked higher. There may be NO TIES in RANK, but it’s okay to have tied scores out of 100. As a card is permitted with this version of impromptu speaking, use of the card may play into scoring, but there is NO penalty for its use. The card should not be used as a prop.

CONTENT

___ Ideas relatable ___ Ideas original/Creative ___ Pathos/Entertainment

___ Cogent and easy to follow organizationally (intro, body, conclusion)

___ Points are explained, supported and sourced ___ Signposting /transitions used

DELIVERY

___ Rate ___ Volume ___ Emphasis and timing ___ Physical expression

___ Word choice enhances message ___ Enunciation ___ Energy/emotion

___ Purposeful movement ___ Pronunciation ___ Eye contact

**Reminder–We never make judgments based on a speaker’s ideology, background or appearance. Use the checklist to help you stay as “unbiased” as possible. If a speaker says something that makes you uncomfortable, it’s important to be specific in your ballot comments and tactfully explain why you’re uncomfortable.*

Do NOT share any oral feedback or decision with the speakers whilst at the competition.

Speaker Points	1-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	18-20
	Developing	Low level of mastery	Fair level of mastery	Good level of mastery	Excellent level of mastery
Vocal Performance of Content: Rate, volume, intonation, emphasis	Speaker’s rate/ volume/ enunciation interfered with audience understanding. Speaker’s emphasis/ intonation	Speaker’s vocal performance interfered with understanding over ½ of the total speaking time.	Speaker’s vocal performance at times (or less) detracted from the delivery of the	Speaker’s vocal performance helped bolster the audience’s understanding and interest. No distracting vocal issues. Confident in	Speaker’s vocal performance expertly supported the message. Delivery was clear, compelling and professional

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

IMPROMPTU SPEECH

	conflicted with the message.		message.	speaking.	throughout.
Physical Performance: Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, purposeful movement	Speaker's physicality interfered with performance. Speaker's eye contact (or lack of), gestures and/or movement distracted from the performance.	Speaker's physicality occasionally interfered with overall performance. Some issues with gestures, eye contact, facial expressions or movement were distracting.	Speaker's physical performance showed no major errors but lacked proficiency throughout.	Speaker's physical performance only included a few errors and overall enhanced the performance. Good use of eye contact, gestures, facial expressions and purposeful movement were observed.	Speaker's physical performance expertly demonstrated public speaking skill. Excellent use of eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and movement demonstrated confidence.
Speech organization was clear, easy to follow and connected logically to prompt. Intro, main points and conclusion were clearly established. Thematic transitions were provided.	Lacked organization—ideas were difficult to follow. Lacked preview of points and/or review. Few transitions or unclear transitions from point to point. The speech only loosely connected to the prompt.	Organization was at times unclear. Transitions were inconsistent. Some repetition or oversight of ideas. A weak link to the prompt was provided.	Overall organization was easy to follow. Transitions used. Some repetition or oversight of ideas. Speech connected to the prompt.	Organization was easy to follow. Intro included a hook and reference to prompt. Points were previewed. Main points clear, and transitions were used. Conclusion provided a sense of closure. Connection to the prompt was adequate.	Organization was perfect. Intro included hook, reference to prompt, preview of points and then thematic transitions from point to point. Conclusion referenced hook and provided closure. Approach to prompt was creative.
Speech Content Choices: clarity, creativity, support and	Main ideas were not linked to prompt. Main ideas lacked development.	Main ideas were loosely linked to the prompt and to one another.	Main ideas addressed prompt in a basic way. Some support for	Interesting approach to prompt. Main ideas were well-supported. Examples were	Highly creative approach to prompt. Each main point was closely linked to the prompt and

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

IMPROMPTU SPEECH

appropriateness	Content was inappropriate.	Main ideas needed development. Some repetition or oversight made detracted from the speech.	each point was provided. Content was appropriate.	clear and helped audience understand.	to each other. Support was well-developed and interesting.
Use of time and overall performance and decorum as speaker and audience member (e.g., active listening and applauding)	Student spoke for less than 60 seconds and/or student's behavior (as audience member or speaker) was unsportsmanlike.	Student spoke for less than 90 seconds. Overall performance indicated lack of confidence and/or understanding.	Student spoke for less than two minutes. Overall performance indicated a lack of confidence and/or understanding.	Student spoke for at least three minutes and demonstrated confidence, understanding and relatability.	Student used less than two minutes of prep, spoke for at least four minutes and demonstrated confidence and professionalism.

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

Extemporaneous Speaking is a limited preparation event in which students deliver a well-organized and well-researched speech in response to a current event or civics-related question. Competitors draw their topic and have 30 minutes to research, organize, and rehearse their speech before delivering it in front of a judge.

This event challenges students to think critically, analyze issues, synthesize information, and present it clearly and persuasively within a limited time.

RULES

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

TOPIC SELECTION

- ◆ Topics will be phrased as questions related to current events, U.S. government, civic institutions, or global affairs.
- ◆ Competitors will draw three topics and choose one to speak on.
- ◆ Each student will receive 30 minutes of preparation time after drawing a topic.

PREPARATION TIME

- ◆ Students are allowed 30 minutes to prepare their speech.
- ◆ Preparation is supervised by FCDI staff or extemp prep monitors.
- ◆ Students may use printed materials, books or internet-enabled electronic devices unless otherwise restricted by the tournament director.

USE OF NOTES

- ◆ One 3"x5" notecard is allowed for the speech.
- ◆ No full scripts are permitted. The speech should be extemporaneously delivered, not read.

SPEAKING TIME

- ◆ **Maximum time limit:** 7 minutes.
- ◆ 30-second grace period allowed.
- ◆ Students may keep their own time.
- ◆ No minimum time requirement, but speeches under 4 minutes may not be ranked 1st.
- ◆ Time signals will be provided by the judge or a designated timekeeper if requested by the student.

RULES

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

SPEECH STRUCTURE

A well-organized extemporaneous speech typically includes:

- ◆ **Introduction:** Grabs attention, clearly states the topic/question, and outlines the speaker's main points
- ◆ **Body:** Organized into 2–3 main points with supporting analysis, evidence, and transitions
- ◆ **Conclusion:** Summarizes key arguments and provides a clear closing thought or call to action

EVIDENCE AND SOURCES

- ◆ Students should support their claims with evidence from credible sources.
- ◆ Proper oral citation is expected (author/source, date, and relevance).
- ◆ Plagiarism or fabrication of sources is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

EVALUATION

- ◆ **ANALYSIS AND CONTENT**
Depth of understanding, logical reasoning and relevance to the question.
- ◆ **ORGANIZATION**
Clear structure, transitions and progression of ideas.
- ◆ **EVIDENCE**
Quality and integration of credible, cited sources.
- ◆ **DELIVERY**
Vocal projection, eye contact, pacing and gestures.
- ◆ **EXTEMPORANEOUS STYLE**
Degree to which the speech is delivered naturally and conversationally (not read).
- ◆ **ANSWERING THE QUESTION**
Focused response that directly addresses the topic drawn

Judges should avoid providing oral feedback during or after the round but must submit written comments and scores through SpeechWire by the end of the day.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING

Category	1 - Poor	2 - Below Average	3 - Average	4 - Above Average	5 - Excellent	Total
Organization	Very disorganized, unclear structure, difficult to follow.	Somewhat disorganized, weak structure, challenging to follow at times.	Generally organized, logical structure, mostly easy to follow.	Well-organized, clear structure, easy to follow	Exceptionally well-organized, flawless structure, effortless to follow.	
Evidence	Little to no relevant evidence provided, unsupported claims.	Limited relevant evidence, some unsupported claims.	Adequate relevant evidence, mostly supported claims.	Strong relevant evidence, well-supported claims.	Abundant, highly relevant evidence, all claims well-supported	
Conduct	Very disrespectful, inappropriate behavior.	Somewhat disrespectful, occasionally inappropriate behavior.	Generally respectful, minor instances of inappropriate behavior.	Respectful conduct throughout.	Exemplary conduct, respectful at all times, sets a positive tone.	
Vocal Performance of content, rate, volume, intonation, emphasis	Speaker's rate, volume/ enunciation interfered with audience understanding. Speaker's emphasis/ intonation conflicted with the message.	Speaker's vocal performance interfered with understanding over 1/2 of the total speaking time.	Speaker's vocal performance at times distracted from the delivery of the message.	Speaker's vocal performance helped bolster the audience's understanding and interest. No distracting vocal issues. Confident in speaking.	Speaker's vocal performance expertly supported the message. Delivery was clear, compelling, and professional throughout.	
Physical performance: Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, purposeful movement	Speaker's physicality interfered with performance. Speaker's eye contact (or lack of), gestures and/or movement distracted from the performance.	Speaker's physicality occasionally interfered with overall performance. Some issues with gestures, eye contact, facial expressions or movement were distracting.	Speaker's physical performance showed no major errors but lacked proficiency throughout.	Speaker's physical performance only included a few errors and overall enhanced the performance. Good use of eye contact, gestures, facial expressions and purposeful movement were observed.	Speaker's physical performance expertly demonstrated public speaking skill. Excellent use of eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and movement demonstrated confidence.	
Time Management	Went significantly over/under time or showed poor awareness of timing.	Poor pacing; rushed ending or major timing issue.	Slightly rushed or too slow in sections.	Slightly under/over time; mostly uses time well.	Speech uses time effectively and finishes strong.	

INFORMATIVE SPEAKING

In Informative Speaking (INF) one speaker performs an original, memorized speech (no notes or cues) about any topic. The speech's goal is to inform the audience about how something works or about a particular topic in greater depth than the average person might know. Speakers are encouraged to utilize hand-made (non-electronic) visual aids to aid in instruction and engender goodwill with the audience. Although speeches need not be civics-related, this is encouraged.

RULES

INFORMATIVE SPEAKING

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

- ◆ All Informative Speaking speeches must be aligned to Florida's state academic standards.
 - Civics and Government or U.S. History standards are preferred, but not required.
www.cpalms.org/public/search/Standard
- ◆ All Informative Speaking content must have parental/guardian permission submitted to the team coach.
- ◆ Copy of speech must be uploaded to SpeechWire by registration deadline. This requirement will be enforced this year.
- ◆ Topics must be new from year to year. You cannot use a topic that you have previously used in any prior years events.

PROHIBITED CONTENT

Profanity, sexual content, glorification of violence or drug use is strictly prohibited. Violations of this rule will result in a point deduction and may result in disqualification from the tournament.

Judges should inform the tournament director about inappropriate content and NOT discuss directly with student.

TIME LIMITS

Each speaker must adhere to specified time limits for their speeches.

- ◆ 10-minute time maximum o 30-second grace period allowed.
- ◆ There is NO TIME MINIMUM; however, students will not receive the full number of points if their speech falls under five minutes.
- ◆ Speakers who exceed 10:30 minutes are still scored and ranked, just not 1st.

NOTES

Speeches should be memorized. Using a script or notes is allowed; however, students who use cues or notes cannot be ranked 1st, 2nd or 3rd.

VISUAL AID

If the student uses a visual aid in their piece, it should be well thought out and tied directly to their speech. There must be no electronic components of the visual aid.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

INFORMATIVE SPEAKING

TOPIC

The topic should be interesting and informative. Judges are prohibited from penalizing students for expressing views which the Judge disagrees with.

STRUCTURE

The introduction should capture the audience's attention, establish the purpose of the speech, and present a clear informative thesis. The body must be logically organized to promote clarity and comprehension. The conclusion should reinforce key points and may reference elements from the introduction to provide a sense of closure.

DEVELOPMENT

The speaker is responsible for clearly articulating and supporting their main points. Evidence should be relevant, credible, and drawn from a variety of reliable sources. Common types of evidence include paraphrased content, direct quotations, examples, and statistics.

LANGUAGE

Language should be precise, appropriate, and engaging. Rhetorical devices and figures of speech should be used effectively and purposefully to enhance meaning.

VOCAL DELIVERY

The speaker should demonstrate clear articulation and fluent delivery. Vocal variety—including changes in pitch, volume, rate, pausing, and stress—should be used to maintain interest and emphasize key ideas. The speaker's tone should be confident and appropriate to the content, helping to establish a connection with the audience.

PHYSICAL DELIVERY

Facial expressions should align with the tone and content of the speech. Consistent eye contact should be maintained to engage the audience. Posture should be poised and movements purposeful. Gestures should be visible and supportive of the message without becoming distracting.

VISUAL AID

Visual aids may come in the form of posters, charts, props / objects—any non-electronic item that aids with understanding and engagement. Items should be safe for school and not passed around the room. Creativity, readability, and effectiveness in teaching are key. There is no minimum or maximum number of aids, but the competitor must be able to manipulate the visual aids by themselves during the speech.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

INFORMATIVE SPEAKING

NOTES

The speech should be memorized. Speakers who utilize notes, script or cues should not be ranked first.

TIME

While there is NO MINIMUM, performances should be at least five minutes to 10:30 minutes. Speakers who exceed 10:30 minutes are still scored and ranked, just not 1st.

SCORING

The top score is 100 and should be reserved for a flawless performance. Adherence to the rubric will result in scores between 60-100, with scores under 70 reserved for “developing” performances. Judges are required to provide written justification for any score below 60.

**Although this is a memorized event, if a speaker is still becoming familiar with their piece and wishes to compete with the use of notes or cues, they may do so; however, this speaker should not be ranked first.*

CONTENT

____ Topic is unique ____ Topic has universality ____ Topic is appropriate

____ Approach is creative

____ Cogent and easy to follow organizationally (intro, body, conclusion)

____ Signposting/transitions

____ Word choice enhances message Points are explained, supported and sourced

DELIVERY

____ Enunciation ____ Energy/emotion ____ Pronunciation ____ Eye contact

____ Rate ____ Volume ____ Emphasis and timing ____ Physical expression

____ Purposeful movement

**Reminder–We never make judgments based on a speaker’s ideology, background, or appearance. If a speaker says something that makes you uncomfortable, it’s important to be specific and tactfully explain why you’re uncomfortable. Ultimately, it’s the speaker’s writing and speaking skills that should be evaluated.*

Do NOT share any oral feedback or decision with the speakers while at the competition.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

INFORMATIVE SPEAKING

INFORMATIVE SPEAKING RUBRIC

	1-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	18-20
	Developing	Low level of mastery	Fair level of mastery	Good level of mastery	Excellent level of mastery
Vocal Performance of Content: Rate, volume, intonation, emphasis, enunciation, pronunciation	Speaker's rate/volume/enunciation interfered with audience understanding.	Speaker's vocal performance interfered with understanding over ½ of the total speaking time.	Speaker's vocal performance at times (1/2 or less) interfered with understanding.	Speaker's vocal performance helped bolster the audience's understanding and interest. No distracting vocal issues. Confident in speaking.	Speaker's vocal performance expertly supported the message. Delivery was clear, compelling and professional throughout.
Physical Performance: Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, purposeful movement	Speaker's physical performance interfered with understanding. Speaker provided minimal eye contact, and lacked appropriate expressiveness (facial expressions or gestures).	Speaker's physical performance occasionally interfered with understanding. Speaker lacked consistent eye contact, gestures/movement.	Speaker's physical performance showed no major errors but lacked proficiency throughout. Some attempt at purposeful movement was made.	Speaker's physical performance added to the overall understanding of the topic. Gestures and purposeful movement aided understanding and added interest.	Speaker's physical performance expertly supported interpretation of the message. Eye contact, facial expressiveness, gestures and movement all showed confidence and skill.
Speech organization was clear and easy to follow. Intro, main points, and conclusion clearly established. Thematic transitions provided.	Lacked basic structure: introduction, body, transitions and conclusion. Hard to follow along.	Introduction, body and conclusion were attempted, some organizational elements were missing (e.g., preview, transitions, review).	Introduction, with hook and preview used. Clearer transitions between main points, and use of review would be helpful.	All basic organizational elements were properly used. Intro included hook and preview. Basic transitions used. Conclusion summarized points.	Speech was expertly organized with clever use of thematic transitions. Conclusion referenced the hook and provided a perfect sense of closure.
Speech Content and Analysis: Support for main ideas included a variety of supporting structures (e.g., data, expert opinions, etc.). Sources cited.	Support for main points was inadequate/needed development. Sources not cited clearly or correctly. Topic analysis too broad or incomplete.	Some support provided for each main point. More and varied support as well as outside sources needed. Topic analysis limited.	One or more points was well-supported, but varying types of support and/or a greater variety of quality sources would add interest and credibility. Topic analysis ok.	Each point was supported with ample and varying types of evidence. Sources clearly cited. Topic analysis ok, but did not provide novel approaches or perspectives.	All points well-supported. Abundant, quality evidence clearly cited. Topic analysis was highly creative and approach to content was novel.
Overall Presentation: topic is explained in a way that demonstrates speaker knowledge and concern for audience understanding. Use of visual aids enhances speech.	Speaker's overall presentation suggested a lack of understanding or familiarity with the piece and/or topic. Word choice and expression of ideas did not clarify concepts. Use of visual aids did not support understanding.	Speaker's overall presentation showed some understanding and familiarity with the topic. Word choice and explanations brought minimal new knowledge to the audience. Use of visual aids provided some understanding.	Speaker's overall presentation showed a clear understanding of the topic. Word choice and explanations brought new knowledge and interest to the audience. Use of visual aids provided understanding.	Speaker's overall presentation demonstrated thorough understanding of the topic with novel approaches to share new knowledge with the audience. Use of visual aids added understanding and connection.	Speaker's overall presentation expertly demonstrated understanding of the topic. Creative and interesting word choice captivated and informed the audience. Innovative use of visual aids added understanding and connection.

ORIGINAL ORATORY

One speaker performs an original, memorized speech (no notes or cues) about any topic. Often the speech is inspirational/motivational. No notes, props or visual aids are permitted. Sources are cited liberally (generally, at least one source per main point). While there is NO official, required organizational pattern, organization must be exceedingly clear. Problem-Impact-Solution is common. Although speeches need not be civics-related, this is encouraged.

RULES

ORIGINAL ORATORY

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

- ◆ All Original Oratory speeches must be aligned to Florida's state academic standards.
- ◆ Civics and Government or U.S. History standards are preferred, but not required.
www.cpalms.org/public/search/Standard
- ◆ All speech content must have parental/guardian permission submitted to the team coach.
- ◆ Copy of speech must be uploaded to SpeechWire by registration deadline. This requirement will be enforced this year.
- ◆ Topics must be new from year to year. You cannot use a topic that you have previously used in any prior years events. Speeches must be new original content. This means that you cannot simply take a prior piece and alter or change it. It must be an ENTIRELY new speech with no paraphrasing or plagiarism.

PROHIBITED CONTENT

Profanity, sexual content, glorification of violence or drug use is strictly prohibited. Violations of this rule will result in a point deduction and may result in disqualification from the tournament.

Judges should inform the tournament director about inappropriate content and NOT discuss directly with student.

TIME LIMITS

Each speaker must adhere to specified time limits for their speeches.

- ◆ 10-minute time maximum
- ◆ 30-second grace period allowed.
- ◆ There is NO TIME MINIMUM; however, students will not receive the full number of points if their performance falls under five minutes.
- ◆ Speakers who exceed 10:30 minutes are still scored and ranked just not 1st.

NOTES

Performance should be memorized. o Using a script or notes is allowed, however, students who use cues or notes will not be ranked first.

VISUAL AIDS

No props, costumes or visual aids are allowed. Movement is allowed and encouraged.

RULES

ORIGINAL ORATORY

SELECTION OF MATERIAL

Material used for Original Oratory should be a combination of original thought supported by orally cited information. The piece should be engaging, impactful and relevant to the audience.

VOCAL DELIVERY

Utilize vocal techniques such as projection, articulation, pacing and inflection to convey the emotions and nuances of the declamation piece effectively. Pay attention to vocal dynamics to engage the audience and emphasize key points.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Performances may be evaluated based on criteria such as clarity of delivery, emotional impact, vocal and physical expression and overall effectiveness in conveying the message.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

ORIGINAL ORATORY

TOPIC

The topic should be interesting, thought provoking and of some relevance or importance. Judges are prohibited from penalizing students for expressing views that the Judge disagrees with.

STRUCTURE

The introduction should capture the audience's attention, establish the purpose of the speech, and present a clear informative thesis. The body must be logically organized to promote clarity and comprehension. The conclusion should reinforce key points and may reference elements from the introduction to provide a sense of closure.

DEVELOPMENT

The speaker is responsible for clearly articulating and supporting their main points. Evidence should be relevant, credible, and drawn from a variety of reliable sources. Common types of evidence include paraphrased content, direct quotations, examples, and statistics.

LANGUAGE

Language should be precise, appropriate, and engaging. Rhetorical devices and figures of speech should be used effectively and purposefully to enhance meaning.

VOCAL DELIVERY

The speaker should demonstrate clear articulation and fluent delivery. Vocal variety—including changes in pitch, volume, rate, pausing, and stress—should be used to maintain interest and emphasize key ideas. The speaker's tone should be confident and appropriate to the content, helping to establish a connection with the audience.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

ORIGINAL ORATORY

PHYSICAL DELIVERY

Facial expressions should align with the tone and content of the speech. Consistent eye contact should be maintained to engage the audience. Posture should be poised and movements purposeful. Gestures should be visible and supportive of the message without becoming distracting.

TIME

While there is NO MINIMUM, speeches should be at least five minutes to 10:30 minutes. speakers who exceed 10:30 minutes are still scored and ranked, just not 1st.

SCORING

The top score is 100 and should be reserved for a flawless performance. Adherence to the rubric will result in scores between 60-100, with scores under 70 reserved for “developing” performances. Judges are required to provide written justification for any score below 60.

CONTENT

- ___ Message is original ___ Approach is creative ___ Topic has universality
- ___ Topic is appropriate ___ Cogent and easy to follow organizationally (intro, body, conclusion)
- ___ Signposting/transitions used ___ Points are explained, supported and sourced
- ___ Word choice enhances message ___ Enunciation

DELIVERY

- ___ Rate ___ Volume ___ Pronunciation ___ Emphasis and timing
- ___ Energy/emotion ___ Eye contact ___ Physical expression
- ___ Purposeful movement

**Reminder–We never make judgments based on a speaker’s ideology, background, or appearance. If a speaker says something that makes you uncomfortable, it’s important to be specific and tactfully explain why you’re uncomfortable. Ultimately, it’s the speaker’s writing and speaking skills that should be evaluated.*

Do NOT share any oral feedback or decision with the speakers whilst at the competition.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

ORIGINAL ORATORY

ORIGINAL ORATORY SPEAKING RUBRIC

	1-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	18-20
	Developing	Low level of mastery	Fair level of mastery	Good level of mastery	Excellent level of mastery
Vocal Performance of Content: Rate, volume, intonation, emphasis, enunciation, pronunciation	Speaker's rate/volume/enunciation interfered with audience understanding. Speaker's emphasis/intonation conflicted with the message.	Speaker's vocal performance interfered with understanding over ½ of the total speaking time.	Speaker's vocal performance at times (or less) detracted from the delivery of the message.	Speaker's vocal performance helped bolster the audience's understanding and interest. No distracting vocal issues. Confident in speaking.	Speaker's vocal performance expertly supported the message. Delivery was clear, compelling and professional throughout.
Physical Performance: Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, purposeful movement	Speaker's physical performance interfered with the message. Speaker provided minimal eye contact, and lacked appropriate facial expressiveness and/or	Speaker's physical performance occasionally interfered with the presentation. Speaker lacked consistent eye contact, gestures or purposeful movement.	Speaker's physical performance showed no major errors but lacked proficiency throughout. Some attempt at purposeful movement was made. Eye contact,	Speaker's physical performance added to the overall presentation of the topic. Gestures and facial expressions along with purposeful movement aided	Speaker's physical performance expertly supported interpretation of the message. Eye contact, facial expressiveness, gestures and movement all showed confidence and

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

ORIGINAL ORATORY

ORIGINAL ORATORY SPEAKING RUBRIC

	gestures. Movement was distracting.		facial expressions and gestures ok.	understanding and added interest.	skill.
Speech organization was clear and easy to follow. Intro, main points, and conclusion were clearly established. Thematic transitions were provided.	Lacked basic structure: introduction, body, transitions and conclusion. Hard to follow along.	Introduction, body and conclusion were attempted, some organizational elements were missing (ex. preview, transitions, review).	Introduction, with hook and preview used. Clearer transitions between main points, and use of review would be helpful.	All basic organizational elements were properly used. Intro included hook and preview. Basic transitions used. Conclusion summarized points.	Speech was expertly organized with clever use of thematic transitions. Conclusion referenced the hook and provided a perfect sense of closure.
Speech Content and Analysis: Support for main ideas included a variety of supporting structures (e.g., data, expert opinions, etc.). Sources cited.	Support for main points was inadequate/needed development. Sources not cited clearly or correctly. Topic analysis too broad or incomplete. Overarching message unclear/inappropriate.	Some support was provided for each main point. More outside sources needed. Topic analysis too limited. Overarching message unclear/inappropriate.	One or more points was well-supported, but varying types of support and/or a greater variety of quality sources would add interest and credibility. Topic analysis ok. Message may not be consistent or compelling.	Each point was supported with ample and varying types of evidence. Sources clearly cited. Topic analysis ok, but did not provide novel approaches or perspectives. Main message of interest to the audience.	All points well-supported. Abundant, quality evidence clearly cited. Topic analysis was highly creative and approach to content novel. Main message was impactful and valuable to the audience.
Overall Presentation: Topic is explained in a way that demonstrates speaker knowledge and concern for audience understanding. Speaker demonstrates the value of the topic to the audience for maximum influence and impact.	Speaker's overall presentation suggested a lack of understanding or familiarity with the piece and/or topic. Word choice and expression of ideas did not support the message. Speaker's energy did not match what was needed for the speech. No influence or impact.	Speaker's overall presentation showed some understanding and familiarity with the topic. Word choice and explanations were vague or confusing. Lacked originality or did not demonstrate value to the audience.	Speaker's overall presentation showed a clear understanding of the topic. Word choice and explanations brought some new knowledge and interest to the audience. Audience was challenged to consider new perspectives.	Speaker's overall presentation demonstrated thorough understanding of the topic with novel approaches to share new perspectives with the audience. Through delivery and content, the speaker helped the audience see the world in a different light.	Speaker's overall presentation expertly demonstrated understanding of the topic and value to society. Creative and interesting word choice captivated and influenced the audience. The message expressed through passionate delivery and impactful content influenced the audience's way of thinking.

WE THE PEOPLE: A CITIZEN SHOWDOWN

In We the People: A Citizen Showdown, students compete individually in a civics-themed quiz bowl-style competition. Participants demonstrate their knowledge of American government, the Constitution, civic duties, key historical events, and contemporary issues in world affairs through rapid-response trivia rounds. This event promotes critical civic knowledge, quick thinking, and individual academic competition.

RULES

WE THE PEOPLE: A CITIZEN SHOWDOWN

- ◆ Students compete individually in rooms of up to 8 competitors.
- ◆ Questions will cover the U.S. Constitution, American government, founding documents, Supreme Court cases, civic duties and responsibilities, and contemporary issues in world affairs.
- ◆ Students must answer without external assistance. No notes, books, or electronic devices are permitted during rounds.
- ◆ Students must respond to each question within the designated time limit.
- ◆ Disruptive behavior or use of unauthorized materials will result in disqualification.
- ◆ Appeals must be made immediately after the conclusion of a round.

STRUCTURE

WE THE PEOPLE: A CITIZEN SHOWDOWN

- ◆ Preliminary Rounds
- ◆ 3 10-minute periods per round
- ◆ Questions are read aloud by a moderator and/or displayed visually
- ◆ Students have 5 seconds to buzz in and 10 seconds to answer after buzzing in

SCORING

Correct Answer: +10 points

Incorrect Answer: -3 points

Tiebreakers: In the event of a tie after the Championship Round, a sudden death format will be used where additional questions are asked until the tie is broken.

JUDGING AND EVALUATION

WE THE PEOPLE: A CITIZEN SHOWDOWN

- ◆ A moderator will read questions aloud and accept the first complete answer given.
- ◆ Judges will confirm the accuracy of responses.
- ◆ Judges' decisions are final in all matters of scoring and appeals.
- ◆ Final awards will be determined based on rank within sections and ties will be broken by cumulative point totals across all rounds at regional and online qualifiers. At the statewide qualifiers and state championships, this will be used to determine break rounds and then advancement will simply be based upon section rank.

JUDGES OVERVIEW



WHO CAN BE A JUDGE?

Any willing member of the community is eligible to judge in FCDI tournaments. The FCDI actively recruits and values the participation of judges from all walks of life. Having a judge pool with people from all different backgrounds enriches the quality of feedback that students receive. Encouraging community judge participation also strengthens the activity of speech and debate in that area. Judges need not have speech and/or debate experience to participate in our tournaments. Online, self-paced and guided training is available for anyone wishing to serve as a judge. While an abbreviated overview will be offered on site prior to the first round of a tournament, judges are encouraged to empower themselves by completing the full training option prior to the tournament.

FCDI students are encouraged to present their ideas in ways accessible to all members of the community. Our goal is to have first time judges be comfortable judging and be able to successfully navigate competition so that they can provide the best feedback. We welcome coaches, parents, teachers, volunteers, alumni or any other member of the community to judge FCDI tournaments.

Students judges are allowed with the following restrictions. Student judges must be in the 11th or 12th grade, with at least 3 years of experience as a participant within FCDI tournaments.

REGISTERING AS A JUDGE

- ◆ Go to [SpeechWire.com](https://www.speechwire.com)
- ◆ Click the “Sign Up” button in the top right corner.
- ◆ Provide basic account information.
- ◆ Choose your role – judge.
- ◆ Note school affiliation and experience level.

JUDGES CODE OF CONDUCT

Thank you for judging!

Your valuable time allows us to provide this opportunity to students. Without your help and generosity, tournaments would be impossible. We require all our judges to read and abide by our FCDI Judge Code of Conduct. Please read it below.

We also require all of our judges to complete the FCDI Judge Training Course. FCDI judges must provide only constructive feedback and engage in the competition with respect.

FCDI judges must consider all students equally, no matter who is competing, nor the subject matter of the speeches/debates. Judges must not bring up issues with rules or behavior with students; instead they must bring these issues to the tournament staff.

No matter what you are judging, please remember to never make judgments based on a student's ideology, background or appearance. If a student says something that makes you uncomfortable, it's important to be specific and tactfully explain why you're uncomfortable on the ballot. Ultimately, it's the student's writing, editing, critical thinking, and speaking skills that should be evaluated. Also, do NOT share any feedback or decision with the students whilst at the competition.

Even if you are an experienced judge, please make sure you double check our rules before making any decisions about rule violations on your ballot. If there is anything you are unsure about please contact tournament staff prior to making a decision.

When you receive your ballot and see which event you will be judging, please review the overall speech or debate instructions in addition to the specific instructions for the event.

Please remember to start your ballot and run the round in a timely manner.

If there are concerns, conflicts of interest or questions about how to judge an event, please ask.

QUICK REFERENCE

EVENT NAME & ABBREVIATION	NOTES?	INTERNET USE?	TIME CONSIDERATIONS	OTHER
LEGISLATIVE DEBATE (LEG)	Yes	Yes	See Legislative Debate page.	All speeches should be original. Outside sources orally cited.
DECLAMATION SPEAKING (DEC)	No	No	No minimum. Max = 10:00 with 30 seconds of grace.	Middle school and novice events only.
RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL (RPD)	No	No	See time guide.	
EXTEMPORANEOUS DEBATE (EXD)	Yes	Yes	30 minute prep BEFORE debate begins.	All speeches should be original. Outside sources orally cited.
IMPROMPTU SPEAKING (IMP)	Yes (Notecard allowed.)	No	7 minutes counting down from the moment they select prompt. 30 seconds of grace.	All speeches should be original. No research.
INFORMATIVE SPEAKING (INF[O])	No (Visual aids allowed.)	No	No minimum. Max = 10:00 with 30 seconds of grace.	All speeches should be original. Outside sources orally cited.
LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE (LD)	Yes	Yes	See time guide.	
ORIGINAL ORATORY (OO)	No	No	No minimum. Max = 10:00 with 30 seconds of grace.	All speeches should be original. Outside sources orally cited.
PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE (PF)	Yes	Yes	See time guide.	Coin flip determines side and order.
EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING (EXT)	Yes (Notecard allowed.)	No	No minimum. Max = 7:00 with 30 seconds of grace.	All speeches should be original. Outside sources orally cited.
WE THE PEOPLE: CITIZEN SHOWDOWN (WTP)	No	No	(3) 10 minute "periods" per round.	

N = Novice (less than one year of experience in Speech and Debate) for high school students.
V = Varsity (more than one year of experience in Speech and Debate) for high school students.
M = Middle School (no distinction between varsity and novice).

If a speaker brings notes up to speak in a competition event where notes are not permitted, the speaker should not be ranked first. In your comments, document if a speaker used notes. If a student speaks over the time limit (including grace period), they may not be ranked first. Rooms cannot be "cleared." Judges should NOT be alone in a room with a single competitor. Students should never enter a competition room until invited to do so by judge or tournament staff.

TEAM LOGISTICS



COACH CHECKLIST FOR TOURNAMENT REGISTRATION

BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT

◆ STEP 1: CREATE YOUR ACCOUNT

Create/log into your account on www.speechwire.com. At the top of the page, click on the "Your Account" link. If you already have an account, simply log-in. If you need to create an account, click the button labeled "Create Account" and follow those instructions.

◆ STEP 2: CREATE A TEAM ROSTER

Select the "Team Roster" icon. Add new student member names AND email addresses. The email address is important as this is how the students will access ballots after the tournament. Students will need to activate their accounts. You can see which students have activated their accounts on your roster. You can always go back and add email addresses if you don't have them at the time. Once your account and roster are created, you will skip the first two steps in the future.

◆ STEP 3: FIND YOUR TOURNAMENT

You can do this one of two ways.

- You can use the "Tournament Calendar" link on the left hand margin on the Speechwire home page. Click on that link and find the tournament you wish to register for. Click on the "register" link and then log into your account.
- If you are already in your account, go back to your home page. Select the "Tournament Registration" icon. You may see the tournament listed if you were invited or if you had marked the tournament as attending when you were browsing the calendar.

◆ STEP 4: REGISTER

You will see a series of icons to work your way through. You will update your entries, add URLs for videos of any asynchronous events entries, update your judges, view your entries (as a double check), and view your invoice. FCDI participating programs do not pay for competitions, so disregard the invoice.

You have completed the first part of preparing for online competitions! The next set of instructions will be for the Day of the Tournament.

CHAPERONES

Coach Presence: All teams must have either a coach or assistant coach present at every event the team participates in for the duration of the tournament. If an FCDI registered coach cannot attend the tournament, coaches may designate a proxy coach on a per tournament basis. This change must be asked for in writing and approved by the FCDI. Proxy coach requests must be submitted with a letter from the principal stating that the proxy coach is approved to supervise the students. Any team found in violation of this rule will be disqualified from the tournament and asked to leave. A letter will also be sent to the school principal notifying them of this rule violation.

Chaperones are crucial in ensuring the safety, organization and support of our students throughout the FCDI tournaments and should be utilized when feasible. A team parent, who is not slated to judge, is an ideal chaperone. Chaperones should be 21 years or older and registered with their district volunteer system.

Please familiarize yourself with the following instructions:

CHECK-IN AND ATTENDANCE

- ◆ Arrive at the designated check-in location at least 60 minutes before the first round of the tournament begins.
- ◆ Ensure all students under your supervision are present and accounted for.
- ◆ Collect emergency contact information for each student.

SUPERVISION

- ◆ Maintain a visible presence throughout the tournament venue, especially in common areas and during breaks.
- ◆ Monitor student behavior to ensure adherence to tournament rules and respectful conduct towards opponents, judges and other participants.
- ◆ Address any issues or conflicts promptly and appropriately, seeking assistance from tournament organizers if needed.

TRANSPORTATION

- ◆ If responsible for transportation, ensure compliance with school and district policies.
- ◆ Coordinate departure and arrival times with students and other chaperones, ensuring punctuality and safety.
- ◆ Confirm with parents the who, when and where of drop-off and pick-up.

SUPPORT

- ◆ Encourage and support students before and after their debates.
- ◆ Provide emotional support and reassurance, especially during stressful moments.
- ◆ Help students stay organized and manage their time effectively between rounds.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- ◆ Familiarize yourself with emergency procedures and evacuation routes at the tournament venue.
- ◆ In case of emergency, remain calm and follow instructions from tournament officials or venue staff.
- ◆ Have quick access to all necessary health-related student information.

PROFESSIONALISM

- ◆ Serve as a positive role model for students in behavior, attitude and sportsmanship.
- ◆ Respect the rules and guidelines set forth by the tournament organizers.

Thank you once again for your dedication and support. Your involvement ensures successful and memorable experiences for our students. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or require assistance during the tournament.

TRANSPORTATION

Teams participating in FCDI speech and debate tournaments are required to arrange their own transportation to and from the event. It is the responsibility of each team to ensure compliance with their respective school and district policies regarding student transportation. This includes adhering to guidelines for safety, supervision and any specific regulations governing the transportation of students to off-campus activities. By organizing their transportation arrangements responsibly and in accordance with school policies, teams contribute to a smooth and successful participation in the tournament.

Coaches: It is strongly recommended to create a contractual document for parents to acknowledge their responsibilities regarding transportation.

Having a signed document clearly listing the who, what, when and where of drop-off, carpooling and pick-up will go far in eliminating confusion and setting and upholding boundaries.

Parents **MUST** provide a phone number to their team's coach that they can and will answer on tournament days.

NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVERS

Welcome to the guidelines for non-participant observers at speech and debate tournaments! Whether you're a parent, teacher or simply a curious individual, we appreciate your interest in witnessing the intellectual rigor and eloquence displayed by young debaters and speakers.

REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

◆ CODE OF CONDUCT

Non-participant observers are expected to adhere to a code of conduct that promotes respect, professionalism and courtesy. This includes refraining from disruptive behavior, such as talking loudly during rounds or using electronic devices in prohibited areas.

◆ OBSERVER ETIQUETTE

While observing rounds, it's important for non-participants to maintain a respectful distance from competitors and judges. Avoid giving unsolicited feedback or coaching during breaks or after rounds.

◆ NON-INTERFERENCE POLICY

Non-participant observers should refrain from interfering with the tournament proceedings in any way. This includes refraining from entering competition areas unless specifically permitted by tournament officials.

◆ CONFIDENTIALITY

Respect the confidentiality of the tournament proceedings. Avoid discussing specific rounds or disclosing information about competitors' performances outside of the tournament venue.

◆ UNDERSTANDING OF RULES AND PROCEDURES

While not required to be familiar with the intricacies of debate formats or speech categories, non-participant observers may benefit from a basic understanding of the rules and procedures governing the tournament. This can enhance their appreciation of the performances they witness.

◆ FEEDBACK PROTOCOL

Non-participant observers may not offer feedback to participants or judges and should refrain from speaking about their observations while in the presence of participants and judges.

◆ LIMITATIONS ON RECORDING

Non-participant observers should adhere to FCDI restrictions on recording or photography of rounds. Respect the privacy of competitors and refrain from recording rounds without explicit permission.

◆ APPRECIATION AND SUPPORT

Lastly, non-participant observers are encouraged to show appreciation and support for the efforts of competitors and organizers alike.

Your presence adds to the atmosphere of camaraderie and intellectual engagement that defines speech and debate tournaments. By following these requirements and guidelines, non-participant observers can contribute to the success and positive atmosphere of speech and debate tournaments. Thank you for your interest and support!

FLORIDA CIVICS AND DEBATE INITIATIVE IMAGE AND MEDIA RELEASE FORM



Name of School: _____

Name of Student: _____

IMAGE AND MEDIA RELEASE

In connection with my participation in events sponsored or run by the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative and the Florida Debate Initiative, I hereby expressly grant to the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative and its affiliates and designees (collectively the "Initiative") the irrevocable, perpetual, worldwide right and permission to make or record video (or other digital media) images and recordings, audio and or visual recordings or photographic images or likeness of me in connection with my participation in any Initiative events and activities in which I participate, either in person or online/virtually, (the "Recordings") and to use such Recordings as well as any materials I create, submit or use in connection with or related to the Initiative or its events or activities ("Materials") or any portion of the Recordings and Materials, with or without alteration, alone or in conjunction with other images or elements of any type, in any manner (whether now known or later invented), by any means (whether now known or later invented), and in any and all media (whether now known or later invented), without restriction including, but not limited to, in any and all of the Association's publications (including online/web-based publications), promotions and advertising. I acknowledge that the Initiative has no financial commitment or obligation to me as a result of this Image and Media Release (the "Release") or the use of the rights granted in this Release. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising out of or related to the use of Recordings or Materials. I understand and agree that the Initiative and/or its authorized representatives shall have exclusive right, title and interest, including copyright, in regard to the Recordings or Materials. I hereby irrevocably release, forever discharge, and hold harmless the Initiative and its authorized representatives from any and all causes of action, claims, demands, damages, costs or expenses, including attorney's fees, which relate to or arise out of any creation, development or use of these Recordings and Materials.

I have read and understand the Release and I agree to and accept its provisions. I affirm that I am at least 18 years of age, or if I am under 18 years of age, I have obtained the required consent of my parents/legal guardians as evidence by their signatures below. I Accept:

Student Name (Print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

If under 18, parent or legal guardian must sign.

I am the parent/legal guardian of the person signing the Release and I hereby ratify it and release all claims whatsoever which either I or above student may have with respect to the matters covered by the Release.

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

SUBMITTING BILLS FOR LEGISLATIVE DEBATE

STATE LEGISLATION TEMPLATE

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED.

The title, required by the Florida Constitution, is the portion of the bill that expresses the purpose of the bill. The title should briefly express the subject of the proposed legislation so that a mere reading of it will indicate the nature of the details that are embodied in the bill.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. In actual state legislation Section 1 is the directory that lists the section of Florida statutes that is either created or amended by the bill. For FCDI legislative debate, this section will be the body of the bill. In this section, students will write a full description of the new policy or law.

Section 2. The effective date. July 1 of the same year as the legislation 18 19 is the most used effective dates.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION TEMPLATE

A BILL TO [ACTION WORD] [ARTICLE] [OBJECT] TO [SUMMARIZE THE SOLUTION SPECIFICALLY]

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

Section 1. State the new policy in one or a few brief declarative sentence(s).

Section 2. In one of the sections, you may define ambiguous terms not obviously 4 clear or technical in nature.

Section 3. Name the government agency(ies) that will oversee enforcement along 6 with the specific enforcement mechanism.

Section 4. This legislation will take effect on [insert date here, formatted 8 9 as "FY 2024" or "July 1, 2024"]. All laws in conflict with this legislation are hereby declared null and void.

COACHING STRATEGIES



STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING YOUR TEAM

SKILL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Conduct workshops and training sessions focused on specific speech and debate skills, such as research techniques, argumentation, public speaking and performance. Offer hands-on exercises, drills and simulations to reinforce learning and skill acquisition.

MOCK COMPETITIONS

Organize mock competitions or practice rounds to simulate tournament conditions and provide students with valuable experience and feedback. Rotate roles as competitors, judges and timekeepers to expose students to different perspectives and challenges.

PEER FEEDBACK AND COLLABORATION

Encourage peer feedback and collaboration among team members. Facilitate peer review sessions where students can provide constructive criticism, share insights and offer support to one another. Model feedback and provide rubrics and comment stems.

VIDEO ANALYSIS

Record students' performances during practice sessions for later review and analysis. Use video playback to identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement in speech delivery, body language and overall performance. Encourage students to self-critique videos.

GOAL SETTING AND PROGRESS TRACKING

Work with students to set clear, achievable goals for skill improvement and competition performance. Establish benchmarks and milestones to track progress over time and celebrate successes along the way. SMART Goals are helpful.

RESEARCH SUPPORT

Provide guidance and resources to support students' research efforts on speech topics, argumentation, and current events. Offer access to libraries, databases and online sources, and teach effective research methods and citation practices.

DEBATE DRILLS AND EXERCISES

Conduct debate drills and exercises to help students practice argumentation, rebuttal and cross-examination skills. Create scenarios and case studies for students to analyze, develop arguments and engage in structured debates.

PERFORMANCE COACHING

Offer one-on-one coaching sessions to help students refine their speech delivery, stage presence and performance techniques. Provide feedback on vocal variety, body language, pacing and overall presentation style. Provide sign-ups for meeting times.

TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Organize team-building activities and bonding experiences to foster camaraderie, collaboration and mutual support among team members. Encourage a positive team culture characterized by respect and trust.

TOURNAMENT PREPARATION

Prepare students for upcoming tournaments by conducting mock competitions, refining strategies and addressing logistical considerations such as travel arrangements and competition etiquette. Help students develop pre-competition rituals and routines to stay focused and relaxed on tournament day. Communicate and adhere to deadlines.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Encourage students to engage in reflective practice by reviewing their performances, identifying strengths and areas for improvement and setting goals for future development. Foster a growth mindset that embraces challenges and values continuous learning and improvement.

SPEECHWIRE HANDBOOK



Registering for tournaments using SpeechWire.com

In order to register for a tournament that is using SpeechWire to run its entry registration, you will need to create a free SpeechWire registration account for your school and then log into your account and register your entries. Each of these tasks is outlined below.

Creating a SpeechWire account for your school

First, open your preferred web browser (any web browser should work) and go to:

<http://www.speechwire.com/login>

Near the middle of the page, click the 'Create account' button. Read the text on the screen, then near the bottom, select the state that your school/team is located in, and click 'Next step'.

Checking for an existing school record and entering your school name

The following screen will appear:



[Account home page](#)

ACCOUNT

[Log in](#)

HOSTING?

[Order SpeechWire](#)

THIS SEASON

[Tournament calendar](#)

[Open tournaments](#)

Check for existing team account

Step 2 of 3: Confirm that no team exists for this team/independent competitor yet

The drop-down list below contains all of the teams in the state that you selected for which records already exist on SpeechWire. Please click on it and scan it to make sure that no record exists for your team yet. Please check for any alternate spellings or ways that your team's name might appear.

Teams already on SpeechWire in Ohio:

If a record already exists for your team, there may already be a head coach account created for the team. If so, you need to contact the current account holder and ask them to change the account information over to you. If you cannot do this or no head coach account has ever been created for the team, please send an email to accounts@speechwire.com, provide the name and email address of the head coach as well as the name of the team, and ask for the head coach account to be created or updated. Either way, if a record exists already for the team, please click the 'Cancel' button below and follow the directions in this paragraph.

If there is not a record for your team yet, please enter your team's name or the independent competitor's name below, select if you are creating a team or independent competitor account, select the account level, and then click 'Next step' to continue.

New team/independent name:

Account type:

Account level:

First please check the drop down list next to "Teams already on SpeechWire in [your state]:" and ensure that your school is not already listed.

If it is already listed, it is likely that either a past coach at your school or a tournament manager running a tournament that did not use online registration has already created a record for your school. If this is the case, please stop now and send an email to accounts@speechwire.com asking to have the account turned over to you. SpeechWire will respond to your request as quickly as possible and will create an account for you on

that school record. If you are in an urgent hurry and you cannot wait for this, you may also create a second record for your school by just spelling the name differently and continuing to follow these steps. If you do this, however, please email accounts@speechwire.com when you are done so that we can ensure that the old account is disabled and future tournaments will use the new account that you created.

Once you have checked to ensure that your school does not already have a SpeechWire account, look near the bottom of the screen. Type in the name of your school, select if it is a school or independent student (SpeechWire also supports independents), as well as the level of the team (high school, college, middle school, etc.) Then, click Next step.

Account owner information and contact information

The next screen will summarize what you have already entered about your team, and then it will ask for two pieces of required information: your name and your email address. An email address is required because your initial account password will be emailed to this address for security reasons, to ensure you actually own the address.

Below these fields are a series of fields asking for optional information. The more information that you provide, the more information that SpeechWire can provide to tournament managers to ensure that they can contact you if they have questions or concerns that they need to bring to your attention.

Finally, the last part of the page contains a security image to confirm that you are a human and not a search engine robot or automated system. Carefully copy the two words shown into the box. If you cannot read the words, you can click the small button with two arrows in a circle to load new words to try.

Once you have completed the page, click 'Create account'. If you have filled everything out properly, SpeechWire will create your account and send your account password to the email address that you provided. Please check the email address for the password, which should generally arrive within a few minutes.

Logging into your SpeechWire account

Once you have created your school's SpeechWire account, open your preferred web browser and go to this address:

<http://www.speechwire.com/login>

The upper portion of the screen contains the login form:

Log in to your SpeechWire account

In order to log in to your SpeechWire account, please enter your email address and account password below and click 'Log in'. If you have forgotten or misplaced your password, click 'Forgot password?'

Email address:

Password:



Carefully key in your email address and your password. Take special care entering your password – capitalization matters! Once you have typed in your email address and password, click 'Log in'. You will see the SpeechWire home page, which looks like this:

Head coach tools



[Tournament registration](#)



[Team roster](#)



[Coaches](#)

Account settings



[Change email or password](#)



[Team address information](#)



[Edit account information](#)



[Order SpeechWire](#)



[Log out](#)

If you like (this part is optional), you can input the names of the students on your team before you register. Click 'Team roster' if you would like to do this and type in the names of your students. Note that SpeechWire will automatically place your cursor in the 'New member' field, and if you hit the 'Enter' key on your keyboard, it will add the student whose name you entered. In this way, you can quickly type in a name, hit 'Enter', and type in another name, all without using the mouse. This can significantly speed the input process.

Once you have entered your students' names, if you want to, return to your account home page and click the 'Tournament registration' button.

Accessing tournament registration for the tournament you want to enter

Once you click 'Tournament registration', you will see the 'My tournaments' screen. If you have been invited to any tournaments or have already registered for any, you will see them listed in the table like so:

My tournaments

You have been invited or have confirmed attendance at the following tournaments. Click on one to manage your entries at the tournament.

[Return to home page](#) [View open tournaments](#)

January 2011	Tournament	Attending?	Status	More information	Location
Jan. 8, 2011	Riverwood's Invitational	YES	OPEN	Info Register	Riverwood, IN
Jan. 29, 2011	North Point Classic 2011	MAYBE	OPEN	Info Register	North Point, OH
May 2011	Tournament	Attending?	Status	More information	Location
May. 28, 2011	Winterford Open	MAYBE	OPEN	Info Register	Winterford, NC

Click the 'Register' link for the tournament you want to enter to register. Tournaments lacking 'Register' links may not have begun their registration yet. Continue to the next page if the tournament you wanted was in the list.

Alternately, if you wish to register for an 'open' tournament that you do not need to be invited to, click the 'View open tournaments' button to show a list of the opens running on SpeechWire. Something like this list will appear:

2012-2013 tournament calendar

These tournaments are using SpeechWire during the 2012-2013 season and meet the criteria above. A few links may appear under 'More information'. 'Info' will let you learn more about a tournament, 'Register' will send you to tournament registration (in your SpeechWire account), and 'Results' will show you the tournament results.

October 2012	Tournament	More information	Level	Location
Oct. 6-7, 2012	VA is for Lovers Fall Swing	Info Register	College	Fairfax, VA
November 2012	Tournament	More information	Level	Location
Nov. 3, 2012	Munster Novice Meet	Info Register	H.S.	Munster, IN
Nov. 3, 2012	Noblesville November Fest	Info Register	H.S.	Noblesville, IN
Nov. 11, 2012	UW-Whitewater Edna Sorber Tournament	Info Register	College	Whitewater, WI
December 2012	Tournament	More information	Level	Location
Dec. 1-2, 2012	GMU Patriot Games Classic	Info Register	H.S.	Fairfax, VA

Locate the tournament that you wish to register for and click on its 'Register' link to enter tournament registration for it. Please continue to the next page for the procedure of how to enter the tournament.

Registering for the tournament

Once you have accessed tournament registration for the tournament that you wish to enter, you will see a screen something like this one:

Riverwood's Invitational

January 8, 2011 - Riverwood, IN

This is an open tournament. Any team can register to attend without an invitation, as long as the tournament is not full. You are logged in as the coach of **Test Team**.

Currently, your team is **unsure if it will attend** the Riverwood's Invitational. Click on the [Will you attend?](#) button below to set whether you will attend or not. Once you say you will attend, you can submit your entries.

Tournament registration



[Will you attend?](#)

Tournament information



[General information](#)



[Files for download](#)



[Tournament schedule](#)



[Fee schedule](#)



[Manager contact info](#)

More information pages for this tournament

[Lunch](#)

If you want to learn more about the tournament, use the second row of buttons labeled 'Tournament information'. Some extra information may be available in additional pages under 'More information pages for this tournament' if the manager has added any.

Once you are ready to enter the tournament, click the 'Will you attend?' button.

Will you attend?

Riverwood's Invitational registration

Will you be attending the Riverwood's Invitational? To add yourself to this open tournament, select 'Yes, my team will attend' below and click 'Submit response'.

Yes, my team will attend

Now, using the drop-down box, select 'Yes, my team will attend' and click 'Submit response'. Click 'Submit your entries now' to enter the names of your students.

Entering your students in the tournament

Once you click on the button to update your entries, you will see a screen like this one:

2-Person Policy Debate

(Varsity/JV)

This team has no entries in this event.

Dramatic Duet Acting

(Varsity/Novice, Capped at 4 entries)

This team has no entries in this event.

Dramatic Interpretation

(Varsity/Novice, Capped at 3 entries)

This team has no entries in this event.

There is a section for every event in the tournament. To add entries in an event, click the 'Add entry' button for that event so that the appropriate number of entries appears. Key in the names of the students that you will enter in each event and select which division to enter the students in. Eventually, your page will look similar to this:

2-Person Policy Debate

(Varsity/JV)

NEW 1: and Division:

Dramatic Duet Acting

(Varsity/Novice, Capped at 4 entries)

NEW 1: and Division:

NEW 2: and Division:

Dramatic Interpretation

(Varsity/Novice, Capped at 3 entries)

NEW 1: Division:

NEW 2: Division:

NEW 3: Division:

Once you have entered your students, click the 'Update entries' button near the bottom of the page. Your entries will be saved. Next, click 'Return to tournament home page'.

Registering your judges

The tournament home page will now look similar to this:

Riverwood's Invitational

January 8, 2011 - Riverwood, IN

This is an open tournament. Any team can register to attend without an invitation, as long as the tournament is not full. You are logged in as the coach of **Test Team**.

Currently, your team is **attending** the Riverwood's Invitational.

Tournament registration



[Will you attend?](#)



[Update your entries](#)



[Piece registration](#)



[Update your judges](#)



[View your entries](#)



[Current invoice](#)

Tournament information



[General information](#)



[Files for download](#)



[Tournament schedule](#)



[Fee schedule](#)



[Manager contact info](#)

More information pages for this tournament

[Lunch](#)

The buttons available may vary depending on how the tournament manager is running their registration. Click 'Update your judges'. Near the top of the page, you will see a form like this:

Add judges

If you need to add one or more judges to your entry, please type in the number of judges to add, and then click 'Add judges'. If the tournament manager wants you to enter the names of your judges, you will get to enter them after you click 'Add judges'.

Number of judges to add:

Type in the number of judges to add to your team's entry and click 'Add judges'. You will now see the middle of the page contain a form that looks something like this:

Code	Name	Type	Clean?	Coach?	Drop?	Blocks	Availability
EE1	<input type="text" value="No name specified"/>	Unspecified ▾	No ▾	No ▾	Drop	Blocks	Mark unavailable times
EE2	<input type="text" value="No name specified"/>	Unspecified ▾	No ▾	No ▾	Drop	Blocks	Mark unavailable times
EE3	<input type="text" value="No name specified"/>	Unspecified ▾	No ▾	No ▾	Drop	Blocks	Mark unavailable times

The fields shown will vary widely depending on how the manager has configured their registration and what information they have chosen to gather about judges. Many of the common fields are shown in the image on the preceding page. From left to right, these fields are shown:

Name: In most tournament situations, tournament managers collect the names of the judges that will be at their tournament. If you see text boxes that you can type the names of your judges into, please enter them now and do not leave them as 'No name specified'.

Type: Many tournaments allow you to designate the type of each judge. This is often referred to as the judge's 'pool' in many regions. Usually, these will be something like 'Interp', 'Public Speaking', 'Lincoln-Douglas', 'LD/PF only', 'Varsity only', 'All events', etc. If the manager has allowed you to select a type, this will let you determine what the judge is best qualified to judge.

Clean? If this column appears, you may use it to mark which judges are Clean, or Neutral. Clean/Neutral judges are allowed to judge any student, **even your own entries. Be very careful with this! Do not mark your judges as clean or neutral unless they actually do not know your students!** Most managers do not allow the registration of this information and handle hired judges themselves.

Coach? Some managers collect which judges are coach judges and which are non-coach judges. This is often used to try and give coaches off-rounds so they can spend time with students, and to utilize hired judges as effectively as possible.

Drop? Use the drop buttons to drop judges you have registered if they are not going to attend the tournament. **Drop fees may apply depending on tournament rules.**

Blocks: Some managers allow you to register blocks for your judges. This may include blocking them from certain events or certain schools (where they have family members or friends competing, for instance).

Availability: Some managers allow you to mark times when your judges are **NOT** available to judge. SpeechWire assumes judges are available throughout the whole tournament unless they are specifically blocked from specific times on specific days.

IMPORTANT: Once you are done entering information about your judges, don't forget to click the 'Save changes' button to save what you entered! Then click 'Return to tournament home page'.

Registering additional information if needed or viewing your submitted information

There are other buttons on the home page that are not documented in this brief handbook, but they may allow you to do things like view your entries, view your current invoice, submit information about what pieces your students will be performing, etc.

Please remember that until the manager closes registration, you can always log back into your SpeechWire coach account and make changes to your registration. Take note, however, of any drop fees the manager has specified in their tournament information screens, as they may apply when you drop entries or judges.

Should you wish to browse a list of all of the tournaments using SpeechWire, you can access it at www.SpeechWire.com/calendar. Please note that not all of these tournaments will be 'open' tournaments that you can add your school to.

If you have any information about using SpeechWire to register, please send an email to support@speechwire.com and support staff will respond to you as quickly as possible, usually within 24 hours, and often significantly more quickly than that. If you have questions about setting up your account specifically, you can email them to accounts@speechwire.com. If you have questions about the tournament itself, you can generally find the manager's contact information by clicking 'Manager contact info' on the tournament registration home page.

If you host a speech, debate or student congress tournament, please consider using SpeechWire to run your tournament! As of this writing, SpeechWire has run more than 1,100 tournaments in 16 states, and the number is always growing. To learn more about SpeechWire, visit www.SpeechWire.com – and if you'd like to order SpeechWire for your tournament, visit www.SpeechWire.com/order and fill out the form on that page. We would love to work with you on your tournament!

Thank you for using SpeechWire to register for tournaments! I hope that you have had a pleasant experience, and I hope that you have a nice day. I appreciate your taking the time to read this handbook.

Sincerely,

Ben Stewart

Owner and creator, SpeechWire Tournament Services

RESOURCES



RECOMMENDED READING

“Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion” by Jay Heinrichs

This book is an entertaining and informative guide to the art of persuasion, drawing from classical rhetoric and modern examples.

“Thank You for Arguing: A Young Adult’s Guide to the Art of Persuasion” by Jay Heinrichs

This version of Heinrichs’ book is tailored specifically for younger readers, making it a great resource for students involved in speech and debate.

“The Art of Public Speaking” by Dale Carnegie

This classic book offers timeless advice on how to become a confident and effective public speaker.

“Speak Like Churchill, Stand Like Lincoln: 21 Powerful Secrets of History’s Greatest Speakers” by James C. Humes

Drawing lessons from some of history’s most renowned orators, this book provides practical tips for enhancing speaking skills.

“The Elements of Style” by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White

While not directly focused on debate, this classic guide to English usage and style is indispensable for anyone looking to improve their writing and speaking skills.

“Competitive Debate: The Official Guide” by Richard E. Edwards and June K. Edwards

This book provides a comprehensive overview of competitive debate, covering everything from argument construction to tournament strategy.

“Rhetoric” by Aristotle

For a deep dive into the origins of persuasive speech and argumentation, Aristotle’s “Rhetoric” remains a foundational text.

“Verbal Judo: The Gentle Art of Persuasion” by George J. Thompson and Jerry B. Jenkins

While focused more on verbal communication in conflict situations, this book offers valuable insights into persuasive communication that can be applied to debate and public speaking.

ONLINE RESOURCES

American Civics and History Initiative

amcivics.org

Ashbrook Center

ashbrook.org

Bill of Rights Institute

billofrightsinitiative.org

Florida Civics and Debate Initiative

civicsanddebate.com

Florida Debate Initiative

floridadebate.org

Florida Forensic League

floridaforensicsleague.com

Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

floridacitizen.org

Jack Miller Center

jackmillercenter.org

Summit Debate

summitdebate.com

NEW COACH TIMELINE

BEGINNING OF SCHOOL YEAR - RECRUIT

- Reach out to administrators, teachers, counselors and other coaches for recommendations on students they think would be good in debate and invite them to your first meeting.
- Advertise your meetings on your school's news and social media outlets. Print posters included in the Teacher Toolkit to display at school.
- Develop a system for students to sign up for competitions and rules to guide them if they have to drop. Be aware that some tournaments charge drop fees in addition to the entry and include policies in your team guidelines to cover these fees.
- Make your team stronger by establishing strong parent relationships. Hold an informational meeting for parents. Parents can get involved by being potential judges or chaperones and organizing carpools or hosting tournaments at your school.
- Encourage students to plan with the end in mind. Be sure students are aware of requirements to qualify for major tournaments like the state or national championship.
- Be aware of league membership and tournament registration deadlines and plan accordingly. Allow enough time when you close your sign-ups for competitions to process a registration fee check.

THROUGHOUT SCHOOL YEAR - COMPETE

- Keep parents and team members informed. It's important to have means to communicate specific tournament information to students, parents and judges.
- Register for tournaments efficiently and completely.
- Double check that competitors are registered in the correct events and divisions. Remember students may only be registered for one event.
- If needed, plan for and order meals in advance.
- Bring a registration check with you to the tournament. League officials will not be able to make change for cash payments.
- Be prepared - gather everything you need for tournament day ahead of time. Don't forget the competitor roster, list of judge names, registration checks, emergency contact information and bus driver contact information.
- Be aware of your students' performance pieces and debate cases. They represent your school and your team.
- Publicize successes!

END OF SCHOOL YEAR - CELEBRATE & REWARD

- Plan an awards banquet. Have seniors present "Words of Wisdom" to their teammates. Words of Wisdom speeches are 3-5 minute speeches where the seniors offer their advice about how to be successful in school, in debate and in life.
- Select team leaders for next year.
- Plan next year's tournament calendar.
- Reflect on this year and make necessary changes to next year's plans.

CLOSING ARGUMENT

Competitive speech and debate supports academic learning, builds character, teaches responsibility and draws out hidden talents in students. Students learn to be flexible and think quickly on their feet. Although there are rules and standards for judges to follow in competitive debate, communication is a subjective process. Students must adapt their arguments to win ballots from a varied judge pool. The feedback students receive from judges helps them better understand how to frame the most effective message. This input helps build students' high-level critical thinking skills.

In conclusion, the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative Handbook serves as an essential resource and guide for educators, students and all stakeholders committed to fostering critical thinking, civic engagement and effective communication skills among Florida's youth. By promoting the values of democracy, respectful discourse and informed citizenship, the FCDI not only supports the development of future leaders but also strengthens our communities and republic as a whole. Together, let us continue to champion the principles of debate, civics education and civic participation, ensuring that every student has the knowledge, skills and opportunities to thrive in a pluralistic society.

