

Speech & Debate Advisory Committee Recommendations

Spring 2026

- _____ 1. Recommend adding verbiage to the “ethics” section of manual: “For competition purposes, a “novice” competitor is a high school student who is in the first year of any event of competitive high school speech & debate in the activity. A student who has represented his or her school in any interscholastic speech or debate tournament event in a previous year shall not compete in novice divisions of any event in any subsequent year. It is the responsibility of the tournament manager to define the divisions of the tournament. (2.D.1) (8-0)
- _____ 2. Recommend amending the wording of section 5.E.3 to “All speech events, except radio speaking, shall allow for a 30-second grace period for audience reaction. If a student performs beyond the 30-second grace period, the student SHALL NOT be ranked 1st in that round. The ranking of such a student is at the judge’s discretion, provided they are not ranked 1st. (5.E.3) (6-2)
- _____ 3. Recommend amending the wording of Poetry to “Read poetry from literature obtained from a publicly accessible source. (6.H.2.a) (6-2)
- _____ 4. Recommend amending the language in 6.H.6.c (poetry) for judging criteria to “Delivery: Although the material should be well in mind, it shall not be memorized and shall be read from the printed page. ~~Was the student’s voice suited to the selection? Did it indicate lively imagination and sympathy for the mood of the material, or did it fall into a tone and/or rhythm pattern? Was pronunciation correct? Enunciation clear cut? Did bodily action contribute to the interpretation? Did the student’s voice fit the selection and reflect its mood and meaning? Was pronunciation accurate and enunciation clear? Did vocal variety enhance the interpretation, or did the delivery become monotone or overly rhythmic? Did appropriate physical expression support the performance?~~ (6.H.6.c) (8-0)
- _____ 5. Recommend amending the language of 6.H.2.c (poetry) to: Select material from sources other than plays or prose. For the purpose of this event, poetry is defined as published verse intended as poetry and excludes prose and dramatic literature (novels, short-stories, non-fiction essays & articles). All selections must consist exclusively of poetry; multiple poems may be used only as part of a unified poetry program. Non-poetic prose excerpts are not permitted. (6.H.2.c) (8-0)
- _____ 6. Recommend amending the school judge requirements for both speech and debate events (5.G.5.a.i & 5.G.5.b).
 - High school coaches/directors will be assigned to judge preliminary rounds of Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, and Public Forum debates, at both the district and state tournaments, but shall not be paid. ~~For the district tournament, each school shall be prepared to provide one judge for each debate event entered in classes one and two and class two schools will be required to bring one additional judge overall IF they have a 3rd debate entry in any single debate event. For Class One: at the district tournament schools are required to have a coach judge, plus an additional judge minimum for each round of competition. Judge requirements may be increased based on need at the manager’s discretion. For Class Two: at the district tournament, each school shall provide one judge for every two Policy Debate entries and one judge for every four Lincoln-Douglas and/or Public Forum entries. If a school has an odd number of entries (e.g. 3 teams), they shall provide judges rounded up to the next provision block (e.g. 2 judges for 3 policy teams entered).~~
 - High School coaches/directors will be assigned to judge speech events at both the district and state tournaments, but shall not be paid. ~~For the district tournament, each school shall be prepared to provide one judge for every seven entries in Speech events, not to exceed three judges total for class one schools and not to exceed five judges total for class two schools. For Class One: at the district tournament, schools with 10 or more entries are required to bring an additional judge. For Class Two: at the district tournament, each school shall provide one judge for every four entries in individual speech events. District managers may require schools with fractional entry counts (e.g. 7 entries) to round up their provision to the next whole judge.~~ (8-0)

- _____ * 7. Recommend in the event that students cannot attend the State Tournament, the next student from MSHSAA district qualifiers will be moved up into the state qualifying position. The substitution must be made by Friday of Week 39 in order to be filled. A fine applies to the team dropping the entry. (8-0)
- _____ 8. Recommend that scheduling of debate events at the district tournament be handled just as it is in Policy Debate. Debates will be scheduled so that they run two rounds to every one round of Policy Debate, at manager's discretion. (5.G.2) (8-0)
- _____ 9. Recommend the creation of a subcommittee to iron out and further define the format and scheduling of debate rounds at the district and state tournaments to present to the Board. (8-0)

BOARD ACTION

*	DENIED
**	TABLED FOR FURTHER STUDY
***	APPROVED AS AMENDED
****	NO ACTION

ALL OTHERS APPROVED