



NEW JERSEY SPEECH AND DEBATE LEAGUE

The Constitution and By-Laws Of the New Jersey Speech and Debate League

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NEW JERSEY SPEECH AND DEBATE LEAGUE CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - Name

This organization shall be known as the NEW JERSEY SPEECH AND DEBATE LEAGUE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS, or NJSDL.

ARTICLE II - Purpose

The purpose of this organization shall be:

- to promote interest in all forms of public speech
- to encourage a spirit of fellowship
- to confer upon deserving candidates recognition of their achievements

This organization is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Upon the dissolution of this organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.

ARTICLE III - Membership

Section 1: (a) Schools eligible for membership in this League must be accredited secondary institutions.

(b) A school that is organizing one year at a time shall be permitted to join the League on a probationary membership when the 11th grade is organized within its school, pending final accreditation.

Section 2: All accredited and NJDOE-registered public, private, and charter high schools in New Jersey shall be eligible for membership in the League upon fulfilling the following membership obligations:

- written application to the Executive Board
- payment of annual dues
- school's proof of insurance that assumes all standard liability for student participation

Section 3: All students participating in activities of the League must be bona fide students of active member schools and under twenty years of age at the time of participation in League events.

Section 4: Students who attend alternative or magnet programs, or who are homeschooled or on home instruction are eligible for participation in League events, provided that the local Board of Education grants permission and assumes liability in accordance with their own policies.

Section 6: Upon request, the President and Secretary will send reports and letters of participation to the principals of any school.

ARTICLE IV - Officers

Section 1: League Officers

The League officers (Executive Board) shall be:

- President
- Vice President of Speech
- Vice President of Debate
- Vice President of Outreach
- Secretary-Treasurer

A. The President's responsibilities shall include:

1. general supervision of the work of the League
2. promotion of forensics and debate programs in the State of New Jersey
3. to promote publicity for the League and its member schools
4. general supervision of all League contests
5. the authority to call meeting of the Executive Board and to temporarily suspend the Constitution for cases of a particular emergency
6. to call an Executive Committee meeting each fall and spring.

B. The Vice President of Speech's responsibilities shall include:

1. to promote speech activities and programs throughout the State of New Jersey.
2. to assist member schools in developing and expanding quality programs.
3. to assist the President in supervision of all contests in speech by arranging a qualified pool of judges.
4. printing official tournament ballots, when necessary, and procuring and/or preparing topics (Extemporaneous, Impromptu, and Improvisation) for league tournaments.
5. preparing all tournament registration materials according to the direction of the President.
6. coordinating the activities of the Tabulation Room.
7. to organize and supervise the activities of Domestic and International Extemporaneous Speaking (EXT), Original Oratory (OO), Dramatic Interpretation (DI), Humorous Interpretation (HI), Oral Interpretation (OI), Program Oral Interpretation (POI), Impromptu Speaking (IMP), Improvisational Acting (IMV), Declamation (Dec), Duo Interpretation (Duo), Informational Speaking (INF), and other events that the League may deem necessary to add to the competition slate.
8. to assume, in the absence of the President, the duties of the President.

C. The Vice President of Debate's responsibilities shall include:

1. to promote debate activities and programs throughout the State of New Jersey.
2. to assist member schools in developing and expanding quality programs.
3. to assist the President in the supervision of all contests in debate by arranging a qualified pool of judges.
4. printing official ballots.

5. preparing all tournament registration materials according to the direction of the President.
6. coordinating the activities of the Tabulation Room.
7. to organize and supervise the activities of Congressional Debate, Lincoln Douglas Debate, Public Forum Debate, Policy Debate, and other events that the League may deem necessary to add to the competition slate.
8. to assume, in the absence of the President, the duties of the President.

D. The Vice President of Outreach's responsibilities shall include:

1. to promote forensic activities and programs throughout the State of New Jersey
2. to assist member schools in developing and expanding quality programs
3. to act as a liaison with state and media outlets, including the Governor's Awards for the Arts committee
4. to moderate website development and management
5. to assume, in the absence of the President, the duties of the President.

E. The Secretary-Treasurer's responsibilities shall include:

1. the collection of members' dues before the required deadline
2. all necessary League financial transactions, including maintaining tax-exempt status
3. the submission of an annual Treasurer's report
4. the responsibility for having the books audited each year by an independent person
5. making available the schedule, Program of Events, Constitution, registration materials, and other League materials to all members
6. notifying all member schools of the dates and times of meetings
7. recording the official minutes at all League meetings and to make available copies to each member school
8. maintain communication with webmaster regarding league announcements, forms, and materials.

F. Be it understood that all officers have the authority to delegate responsibilities to other members of the executive board.

Section 2: Election of Officers

- A. Nominations are to be mailed to the President for all elected officers by the annual Executive Council meeting.
- B. Nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meeting. A maximum of two (2) adults representing any one school may be elected to and hold office simultaneously.
- C. The officers shall be elected at the annual meeting.
- D. Executive Board officers shall be elected by ballot in the following order: President, Vice President of Speech, Vice President of Debate, Vice-President of Outreach, Secretary/Treasurer.
- E. Each office must be filled in order before voting on the next office.
- F. A slate of Executive Council candidates will be elected with the top nine vote-getters becoming Council members and the next two serving as alternates. Together, the Executive Board and Executive Council will be considered the Executive Committee.
- G. Only members in attendance at the general meeting will be considered for election to any League office unless prior arrangements between the President and the nominee permit that person to run for office in absentia.

H. Each school shall have the power of only one vote in the election of League officers.

Section 3: Policy

- A. All matters of basic policy shall be determined by an Executive Committee. This Committee shall consist of the officers and at least nine other members, all representatives of member schools. If the President should receive a complaint against a particular school, the Executive Committee should meet with all parties involved and if the complaint is judged valid, that school shall be banned from League activities for the remainder of the school year. Otherwise, the Executive Committee shall take whatever action is necessary.
- B. The members of the Executive Committee shall assist the president in the operation of League functions.
- C. The President shall have the authority to assign members of the Executive Committee to serve as liaisons in promoting League activities and in improving communication between the League and its members.

ARTICLE V - NJSDL State Tournament

- A. : In order for a student to receive a bid to the NJSDL State Tournament, the following criteria must be met:
 - a. Students must place in the top 6 at a NJSDL-member hosted tournament. In events where there are less than 6 competitors, the top 20% of such competitors will be awarded a bid to the State Tournament.
 - b. In events where a non-league member has advanced to finals, the next student(s) below the break line will qualify in that event.
 - c. At National Tournaments, as defined by the Executive Board, any student(s) who advance into elimination rounds will receive a state bid.
 - d. Each school is allotted a maximum of 4 spots in each category, with the exception of Congressional Debate, where entries shall be unlimited.
 - e. Each school is awarded one free slot per category, provided that the school does not exceed the maximum allotment of 4 spots in a category.
- B. All NJSDL criteria set forth in this Constitution and its By-Laws must be followed.

ARTICLE VI- Conduct of Contests

Section 1: As early as possible each September, the Secretary-Treasurer, in conjunction with the President, shall complete a schedule of League events for the season. A copy of this schedule shall be made available to each member school. The Secretary-Treasurer is responsible for the compiling of a formal Program of Events that will include the following:

- A. a listing of all League events for the year including the time and place for such events
- B. a current list of member schools and basic contact information
- C. a list of winners of the competitive events of the previous year, their schools, and a list of the highest-scoring ten teams
- D. the names, schools, and contact information of the officers of the League
- E. contest rules, judge training materials, and any other material that the Executive Board deems necessary

Section 2: Application to participate in any contest must be completed online via the appropriate

website identified in the tournament invitation. No late entries shall be accepted.

Section 3: The President or some other officer appointed by him/her must be present at all League-sponsored contests.

Section 4: In no case may a contest be held again. Clerical and technical errors may be reviewed and corrected in a closed session by members of the Executive Board who were present at the contest. Their decision is final.

Section 5: The NJSDL ballot forms must be used in every contest, except in events where no such ballot form exists.

Section 6: Ballots shall be tabulated according to NJSDL rules in the contest headquarters, the President of the League or his/her appointed representatives presiding.

Section 7: All members of the Executive Board shall be rotated in the tabulations room where feasible in all contests.

Section 8: All participants (students, coaches, judges and guests) will adhere to the NJSDL Code of Conduct as communicated in the Program of Events.

ARTICLE VII - Judges

Section 1: Judges, when reaching their decisions, are to adhere to definitions and interpretations of contests as set down in the By-Laws.

Section 2: The Secretary-Treasurer, at the direction of the President, is hereby empowered, when necessary, to remunerate judges.

ARTICLE VIII - Trophies and Awards

Section 1: At the State Championship tournament, the League shall present a school trophy as well as an individual trophy to first place winners. All other participants in the final round shall receive League plaques or trophies.

Section 2: A team trophy shall be presented to the top six schools in Speech and the top six schools in Debate on the basis of their success at the State Championship tournament. Trophies shall also be presented to the top six schools with the best overall performance, in both categories.

Section 3: In determining the team awards, the following table is to be used:

Sweepstakes Points (+1 base per entry)							
Speech		Congress		PF/LD		CX	
Placement	Points	Placement	Points	Placement	Points	Placement	Points
1 st	12	1 st	12	1 st	12	1 st	6
2 nd	10	2 nd	10	2 nd	10	2 nd	5
3 rd	8	3 rd	8	Semifinalist	7	Semifinalist	3.5
4 th	6	4 th	6	Quarterfinalist	3	CX (<6 entries)	
5 th	4	5 th	4			1 st	3
6 th	2	6 th	2			2 nd	2.5
7 th /Finalists	1.5	7 th	1.5			Semifinalist	1.75
8 th	1.5	8 th /Finalists	1				
Semifinalist	1						

ARTICLE IX - Amendments

Section 1: Proposed amendments to this Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the President, who shall send copies to all member schools prior to the annual Spring meeting.

Section 2: The amendment shall become effective upon the approval of 2/3 majority of the coaches present at the meeting.

Section 3: League By-Laws may be amended by a simple majority.

ARTICLE X - Conduct of Meetings

Section 1: All questions of procedure at any League meeting will be decided by Robert's Rules of Order.

NEW JERSEY SPEECH AND DEBATE LEAGUE BY-LAWS

I. GENERAL

- A. The New Jersey Speech and Debate League of Secondary Schools shall offer a program of events designed for student participation.
- B. The annual membership fee will be \$200.00 unless paid at the previous year's state tournament where the fee will be \$175.00.
- C. All schools are expected to adhere to a high standard of ethics. Prohibited are the use of recording devices during competitive events.
- D. The President will keep records of each tournament for one year.

II. ANNUAL TOURNAMENT PROGRAM

- A. Each year the League will sponsor statewide tournaments in the following events: Varsity Policy Debate, Junior Varsity and/or Novice Policy Debate, Varsity Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Junior Varsity Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Novice Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Varsity Public Forum, Junior Varsity Public Forum, Novice Public Forum, Congressional Debate, Extemporaneous Speaking, Original Oratory, Dramatic Interpretation, Humorous Interpretation, Oral Interpretation, Declamation, Impromptu Speaking, Improvisational Acting, Duo Interpretation, Informative Speaking, and Program Oral Interpretation.
- B. The annual Program of Events will be printed each fall. It shall contain a complete listing of all winners in the previous year's competition and the schedule of tournaments for the coming year.

III. JUDGES

- A. It shall be the responsibility of each participating school to supply the stipulated number of qualified judges for each contest. Judges are obligated for the entirety of each contest, unless otherwise directed.
- B. A moderator of record of each participating school must be present for all league tournaments.
- C. The President is empowered to hire qualified judges as necessary for all league events, to be remunerated at a rate determined by the Executive Board.
- D. Penalties may be assessed by the President and/or Secretary-Treasurer for schools and/or judges who fail to meet their judging assignments and obligations.

IV. DEBATE EVENTS

- A. Debate topics shall be the national debate topics for each event as determined by the National Speech and Debate Association. All rules and regulations for these debate events will follow those established by the National Speech and Debate Association, except where noted. Competition will be offered at the Varsity, Junior Varsity, Novice divisions. The minimum standards for a League-sanctioned qualifying tournament are the following:

- four (4) rounds of debating
- one (1) powered round
- three (3) place awards in the division

It is the responsibility of the team's coach to validate a team's awards and eligibility when entering contestants for the State Tournament.

- B. A Varsity debater is any 9-12th grader who is entered in a varsity debate event. A Junior Varsity debater is any student with no more than one year's experience prior to the current school year. A Novice debater is any 9th or 10th grade student who is in his or her first year of debate, computed from June 30 of the previous school year.
- C. Rounds 1 and 2 will be randomly paired. In Round 3 and all subsequent preliminary rounds all teams are power-bracketed according to the best record based on win-loss record, total speaker points, number of ballots won and total speaker ranks. Elimination rounds will be paired according to the high/low system. Brackets will not be broken, and each team will be treated as an independent unit, not as a school unit. If two teams have previously met, they will switch sides.
- D. There will be one judge in each preliminary round and at least three judges in the elimination rounds.
- E. Awards for debate events shall be given to all elimination round participants.
- F. Debate events offered by the League shall include:
 - a. Policy Debate (CX)
 - b. Lincoln Douglas Debate (LD)
 - c. Public Forum Debate (PF)

Congressional Debate (CON)

All debate events will follow National Speech and Debate Association rules, with the following exceptions. Public Forum Debate will follow National Speech and Debate Association rules with two exceptions. First, sides and speaking order will be set prior to the round and be clearly marked on the published pairing. The Pro team will always speak first. Second, evidence challenges will be adjudicated by a 3-member committee of state executive board members whose students or judges are not involved in the round. Evidence challenges must be launched before the conclusion of the round. If the challenge is upheld, the offending team will receive a loss and 0 speaker points. If the challenge is denied, the challenging team will receive a loss and 0 speaker points. Formal evidence challenges may be issued only in instances of distortion, non-existent evidence, and clipping per NSDA rules.

- G. Congressional Debate logistical procedures are as follows.
 - a. Legislation for Congressional Debate will be required at a date published in the Program of Events, no later than one full week before the State Tournament contest. All legislation must be formatted according to the guidelines set forth by the National Speech and Debate Association. The president may appoint a committee to approve legislation before dissemination to schools and students.
 - b. The league will make all reasonable efforts to provide judges and parliamentarians who are unaffiliated with any school represented in the chamber(s).
 - c. Chambers should be limited to a maximum of 16 students. If more than 16 students participate, additional chambers will be assigned.
 - d. Competition will consist of four rounds of roughly 90 minutes each.
 - e. Judges and/or Parliamentarians will be used to determine the final advancement and/or ranking of students. No student voting will be utilized at league sponsored events to determine advancement and/or ranking.
- H. Ballots will be provided either in paper format or via electronic submission.

VII. SPEECH EVENTS

- A. Declamation and Oral Interpretation will follow the rules and regulations established by the National Catholic Forensics League. All other speech events will follow the rules and

- regulations established by the National Speech and Debate Association, except where noted.
- B. Speaking order will be determined by random draw by the tab room staff as close as possible to the commencement of competition.
 - C. Each speaker is ranked and graded for each round. The rank of “1” is given to the best speaker in the round, “2” to the second best, etc. Ranks are used to determine a speaker’s placement in the tournament. The cumulative tabulation method will be used to determine winners in the final round of each event.
 - D. Ballots will be distinctively color-coded for each event. A description of the criteria for judging will be printed on the ballot. In addition, each judge shall complete a separate critique sheet for each student, outlining constructive criticisms of the contestant’s performance. The critique sheets will be given to the student at the conclusion of the tournament.
 - E. The printed selection to be performed by each contestant must be available for inspection by the Executive Board.
 - F. Selections for interpretation events should be from a single source of merit that is published, printed and readily available to the general public, or via approved internet sources, as specified by the National Speech and Debate Association.
 - G. No costumes, props, or manipulation of physical environment is allowed for effect, except in Informative Speaking, in accordance with the rules set out by the National Speech and Debate Association.
 - H. For each event, there is a thirty second grace period. Students who go beyond the given grace period may not be ranked one in that round and may incur an additional penalty of rank as determined by the judge. Students who do not exceed the grace period may not be penalized.
 - I. Speech events offered by the League shall include:
 - a. Domestic and International Extemporaneous Speaking (EXT)
 - b. Original Oratory (OO)
 - c. Dramatic Interpretation (DI)
 - d. Humorous Interpretation (HI)
 - e. Oral Interpretation (OI)
 - f. Program Oral Interpretation (POI)
 - g. Impromptu Speaking (IMP)
 - h. Improvisational Acting (IMV)
 - i. Declamation (Dec)
 - j. Duo Interpretation (Duo)
 - k. Informational Speaking (INF)
 - J. All National Speech and Debate Association guidelines for laptop use are in effect for League contests. The League is not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken computers.
 - K. NJSDL-Specific Event Rules
 - a. Impromptu Speaking
 - 1. Students will take no more than seven minutes to deliver an impromptu speech on one of three topics drawn at random.
 - 2. Impromptu topics will adhere to national standards.
 - 3. A contestant’s time may be divided as he/she chooses between preparation and speaking.
 - 4. During the preparation period the speaker may take notes, but notes may not be used during the presentation.
 - 5. The judge will hold the speaker accountable for strict adherence to the topic drawn; well-chosen, pertinent, and sufficient information to support the central thought of the topic; organization of material according to some logical plan in order to produce a complete speech within the time

allowed; delivery free from marked defects in the mechanics of speech — poise, quality and use of voice, enunciation, fluency, bodily expressiveness — and the effectiveness in enlisting and holding the interest of the audience.

b. Improvisational Acting

1. Students will take no more than seven minutes to deliver an improvised scene on one of three scenarios drawn at random.
2. Improvisational acting scenarios may be humorous or dramatic in nature and may be delivered as a monologue or as a dialogue between multiple characters. The scene should be organized with a clear development of plot including a clear opening and closing.
3. Scenarios will be appropriate and accessible to all students. They ought to follow themes and guidelines such as: one-character, fill-in-the-blank, two-characters, multiple characters, and combinations thereof.
4. A contestant's time may be divided as he/she chooses between preparation and speaking.
5. During the preparation period the speaker may take notes, but notes may not be used during the presentation.
6. The judge will hold the speaker accountable for strict adherence to the scenario drawn; and delivery free from marked defects in the mechanics of speech — poise, quality and use of voice, enunciation, fluency, bodily expressiveness — and the effectiveness in enlisting and holding the interest of the audience