

MSDL Board Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2024 @ 7:30 PM

ZOOM meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM by the president, Amanda Parker

Board Members in attendance

Joyce Albert, Joe Bowden, Josh Cohen, Scott Caron, Lindsay Donovan, Lisa Honeyman, Jim Honeyman, Ryan Julian, Sheryl Kaczmarek, Janet Novack, Amanda Parker, Tammie Ruda, Chris Sheldon, and PJ Wexler.

1. [State Debate Logistics](#)

Josh spoke about State Debate Logistics for a bit, referencing the linked document.

For the State Debate tournament we hope to broadcast the final round of PFD on a Zoom webinar so more people can watch. We encourage teams to watch because it's a valuable learning experience and also can bring our community together.

Lindsay asks: "Zooming out to see the Big picture: What is our vision of our State Tournament?"

We discussed this a bit.

Questions

- Is our goal to give as many students as possible an opportunity to participate?
- Is our goal is to have a higher benchmark to show "the best of the best?"
- How do we go about being equitable to our speech and congress competitors as well as our debate competitors?

We want to be welcoming and give students an opportunity to perform at their best. We also want the State Tournaments to feel "special" in some way.

A two-day tournament allows for a much more comprehensive tournament - in all events. Sheryl points out that MA is one of few states that run one-day State tournaments. (Other states may have more schools participating - and hence, larger tournaments, which may be why they run 2-day tournaments.

Janet reminds us that in a debate round, you only have two teams meeting head-to-head. In a speech round, you have 5-6 competitors meeting head to head. You need more rounds in debate in order to be sure the strongest competitors advance to out rounds. That takes more rounds and thus, time.

We want to be sure that how we run the State tournaments gives students enough opportunity for them feel like they had a “fair” chance.

One thing we want to discuss at a future meeting is how students qualify to compete in Speech events, Congress & Debate at the State tournaments to review our requirements.

Last year we ran the State Debate tournament over three days, as proposed for this year. It probably won't be much of a surprise if we do it again this year. (2 rounds on Friday night, a full day in person on Saturday, and just the final round on Sunday.)

Amanda will draft a communication about how this year's State Debate tournament will run, run it by the board, and then put it out to the membership.

For the Annual Meeting: Include a discussion about how we run our State tournaments. Specifically, if we're going to make the debate tournament feel more important because it runs over several days, how can we make the experience for our speech & congress competitors feel just as special?

2. New School Liaisons (PJ & Lindsay)

- Could we try to have a “**New Coach**” **open drop in time** (maybe at Mardi Gras) after final rounds before awards for even 20 minutes. From there we can try to gauge interest in either a quarterly Zoom meeting or if people want some other open communication channel (a Slack group maybe?).

There was a generally positive response to the idea of a Slack community for new coaches to ask questions and find support.

Maybe also have a “new coach” drop in time at Needham so that it becomes a regular thing?

We discussed having a drop-in opportunity during Round 1 rather than at the end of the day? (That might require finding some extra judges just for round 1). That led to an observation that when we hold the meeting might have an impact on the types of questions we get.

- If not a physical meeting, could we blast a Google Form out in a newsletter

We talked about a Zoom drop-in meeting that's not at a tournament where new coaches could come together to ask questions - and also meet some of the other new coaches.

- **Website:** Setting up a contact form on the MSDL website specifically for new coaches? I've noticed we get emails from Chris and other coaches passing them along.

There is a page for new coaches. We can add the liaison contact information to that page. (That page also needs to be updated.)

- Have a section somewhere that at least offers the New School Liaison emails to folks?

Regarding Judge meetings for new judges

Debate often has Thursday evening judge Zoom meetings and people do show up.

They tell the new judges about the videos and also have a Q & A.

Coaches assign ratings to Debate judges. Based on the coach-ratings, Josh pulled the 1st time judges and sent them to shadow Round 1 at the NSHS tournament. That was well received.

Name Tags: Maybe give all judges and coaches name tags? (Different colors for different roles?)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

--Lisa Honeyman Clerk/Secretary

Next meeting: March 19, 2024