



# MASSACHUSETTS SPEECH & DEBATE LEAGUE

OCTOBER 2023

Hello MSDL coaches,

Over the summer we had a small but mighty committee of coaches who worked to review equity, belonging, and inclusion guidelines from speech and debate leagues across the country. While providing safe and equitable tournament experiences has always been a focus for the MSDL, we recognized that we needed to develop a standard approach and set of guidelines we could follow when concerns are brought forward.

I want to extend an enormous thank you to Scott Caron from Milton Academy, Pam Sheldon from Bancroft, and Paul (PJ) Wexler from Needham for the countless hours of work they dedicated over the summer to create a comprehensive guide for how the MSDL will approach equity, belonging, and inclusion this season.

The MSDL is dedicated to providing a safe and equitable space for our members. To that end, we have created a Belonging and Inclusion Committee for the 2023-2024 season that will continue the work the Equity Advocate and Equity Consultant did in previous seasons. **We are looking for MSDL coaches interested in equity, belonging, and inclusion to volunteer to serve as Belonging and Inclusion Advocates at our local tournaments.**

Our Belonging and Inclusion Advocates will work to make MSDL members and guests feel seen, heard, and valued. They will also work to ensure that our MSDL Community Standards are upheld. If concerns regarding violations of our Community Standards arise during MSDL Tournaments, our Belonging and Inclusion Advocates will focus on listening to all involved parties and having conversations with members that help us reach our shared goal of creating a safe and equitable speech and debate experience for all.

**If you are interested in serving as a Belonging and Inclusion Advocate, or you are interested in learning more, please email [MSDLBoard@gmail.com](mailto:MSDLBoard@gmail.com).**

I would also encourage you to read our Belonging and Inclusion Guidelines ([MSDLonline.org/equity](https://MSDLonline.org/equity)) to familiarize yourself with our revised process. This is work that will continue to evolve, so if you have questions about our guidelines or suggestions for improvements please contact me.

Have a great day!

Amanda Parker, MSDL President

## UPCOMING TOURNAMENTS

### **Saturday, November 11**

Gracia Burkill Memorial @ Natick High (C, LD, PF, S)

### **Saturday, November 18**

Little Lex @ Lexington High (D)

### **Saturday, December 2**

St. Nick Showdown @ Arlington High (C, D, S)

### **Saturday, December 9**

Warrior Showdown @ Lincoln-Sudbury (C, D, S)

### **Saturday, December 16**

Holly Festival @ Natick High (C, LD, PF, S)

### **Saturday, January 6**

Winter Festival @ Newton South (C, PF, S)

### **Saturday, January 13 - Monday, January 15**

Big Lex @ Lexington High (D)

### **Saturday, January 20**

Boston Latin (C, D, S)

*Event abbreviations: C = Congressional Debate,  
D = Debate events, LD = Lincoln Douglas Debate,  
PF = Public Forum Debate, S = Speech events*

## JOIN A COMMITTEE!

The MSDL is seeking member coaches interested in getting more involved to join one or more of our active committees. If you are interested in any of the following tasks, please contact [MSDLBoard@gmail.com](mailto:MSDLBoard@gmail.com).

- Serving as a Belonging & Inclusion Advocate
- Writing impromptu topics
- Writing extemp topics
- Assisting with debate operations

## CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE UPDATES

- We completed a significant reorganization of Congressional Debate rules and procedures at last April's annual meeting. You can see the details at <https://bit.ly/3ttRTmG>.
- Our league needs Parliamentarians. If your school regularly enters students in Congressional Debate, please consider whether any of your regular judges would be good candidates and put them in touch with our Congressional Debate Chair, Joe Bowden. It's not a difficult task - it's judging, plus developing a basic understanding of rules and procedures. More Parliamentarians means smaller chambers, which means more opportunities to speak for competitors.
- Coaches may submit legislation to our Congressional Debate Chair, Joe Bowden. Please submit legislation to Joe as early as possible, and no later than the Friday one week before the tournament (unless otherwise specified). If multiple submissions from a school are received, we will hold the extras aside for upcoming tournaments. Please don't wait to send bills and resolutions!
- If you have any questions about Congressional Debate in the MSDL, please do not hesitate to contact Joe Bowden at [Joe.Bowden@gmail.com](mailto:Joe.Bowden@gmail.com).

## MSDL BOARD MEETINGS

All coaches are welcome and encouraged to join our MSDL Board meetings. All meetings are held on Zoom at 7:30 PM. Please email [MSDLBoard@gmail.com](mailto:MSDLBoard@gmail.com) to receive a calendar invitation and the meeting link.

- Monday, 11/20/23
- Monday, 12/18/23
- Tuesday, 1/23/24
- Monday, 2/12/24
- Tuesday, 3/19/24
- Monday, 4/15/24

Our annual League Meeting will take place at Needham High School on Saturday, May 4, 2024.