

## MSDL Board Meeting Agenda

January 25, 2021 @ 7:00 pm

Via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by the president, Greg Cunningham

### Board Members in attendance

Joyce Albert, Joe Bowden, Scott Caron, Josh Cohen, Greg Cunningham, Sue Hennessey, Lisa Honeyman, Jim Honeyman, Sheryl Kaczmarek, Tammie Ruda, Chris Sheldon and PJ Wexler.

### Agenda:

1. Can we allow middle schools to attend the final two regular MSDL Tournaments in February and March. (Marc R. via Greg)

When we competed in person, we invited middle schoolers to Mardi Gras & Needham. In keeping with that spirit, we will invite middle schoolers from Massachusetts to compete at the remaining MSDL tournaments. (Prior to, but not including, States).

2. Debate judge training on shared cases. (Kaz and PJ)

Kids who share cases were penalized at a past tournament because judges had heard the same case earlier in the day. We need to be sure to discuss with judges the fact that material is shared on teams and judges should not consider this behavior as plagiarism. Judges should focus on an entire debate, not just the first speech of the round.

More broadly, some judges seem to decide that students are “breaking rules” because they see something they don’t like. We want judges to check with a tournament official before they take it upon themselves to punish students, either by giving them a loss in the round or chastising (“verbally lambasting”) them for what they perceive as a rules violation.

During the judge meeting, we’ll be sure to mention that debate judges should judge only based upon what they see in a round, not what happened at another time. And, judges should check with a tournament official before they take it upon themselves to chastise or punish students.

3. Policy Debate topic selection 2021-2022 (Kaz)

Kaz represented the MSDL at The Federation Policy committee meeting in December. She is planning to write a paper prior to the next meeting. She plans to get more involved with this committee work.

4. MSDL spring elections and nomination committee (Greg)

Our bylaws require that we create a nomination committee. Greg asked if anyone on the board is not planning to run for a named position on the next board and wants to be on the committee, they should let him know. The committee will need to discuss how to handle ballot security since voting will likely need to be done electronically.

5. Updating Extemp rules/use of notes (Joyce)

On Saturday, an experienced judge contacted Joyce about a speaker they had seen in VX who was very obviously referring to a paper on the desk/table. We voted years ago not to allow VX students to use a notecard and it has been updated in some parts of our online material. Lisa will go through to make sure it is updated everywhere extemp is discussed.

6. Group Discussion Focus Areas and Topics (Greg)

Feb 13: Joyce & Julia will write topics. Joe will help.

Feb 17: Joe will write questions.

We'll figure out who will write for the March tournaments closer to the time.

Lisa suggested that topic areas might focus on "heritage" months. (February is Black History month. March is Women's History month).

7. Radio observers (Sue)

Students in Radio and Extemp are welcome (and encouraged) to stay and listen to their competitors after they speak. Students can learn a lot you can learn by watching!

8. Can we do anything to increase participation for the second half of the year? (Greg)

Numbers seem to be dropping. We opened the next tournament up to middle schoolers and students from schools outside Massachusetts. If we don't have enough interest for the February 13 speech tournament to run, we may cancel it. Zoom fatigue seems to be taking a toll.

To make it more friendly, at the next tournament we will set up 3 utility rooms and let the students know they will be open and they can pop in to say 'hi' to one another. Maybe make some friends and 'hang out' together.

In order to provide a bit more excitement, and encourage people to stay at the awards ceremony, at each of the next three tournaments we will draw four names and give four \$25 gift cards to competitors who are present at awards ceremonies. (You have to be there to win.) These would be open to any competitor (middle/high school).

9. Financial Report (Jim)

Jim sent this report out to the board yesterday. Things are looking good regarding teams paying their entry fees. All things considered, it's running pretty smoothly. Greg mentioned that we need to purchase more medals because the first shipment is almost depleted.

Perhaps we could look into using some funds, starting with states, to pay an honorarium to an equity officer to help us at tournaments. If there's a problem, people could reach out to this person during a tournament. Kaz had someone available at Big Lex and it was really helpful when there were incidents between kids that needed to be addressed.

10. Website Update - a "Web Workshop Day"

After States, the board will review the entire MSDL website to be sure everything is up to date and accurate. We'll update whatever needs to be updated at that time.

11. Community outreach (Lisa)

Can the MSDL take on a service role? We could collect needed goods at tournaments or coordinate community outreach. In order to make it work, we would need a board member who was responsible each month to collect and transport items like food for a food drive or winter coats. We are interested in thinking of intangibles, too, like maybe reading to children or other outreach into communities. We could have kids write greeting cards for children in hospitals etc. NSHS students will write up a formal proposal to submit to the board.

Motion to adjourn: Joyce Albert

2nd: Tammie Ruda

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

--Lisa Honeyman

Clerk/Secretary