

MSDL Board Meeting Agenda

February 11, 2019 @ 6:30pm
Natick High School, Room 235

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by the president, Amanda Parker.

In attendance

Joyce Albert (Natick), Josh Cohen (Newton South), Sue Hennessey (A-B), Lisa Honeyman (Newton South), Jim Honeyman (Newton South), Adam Nir (Needham), Amanda Parker (Natick), Chris Sheldon (Bancroft), PJ Wexler (Needham)

Not present: Greg Cunningham (Needham), Sheryl Kaczmarek (Lexington), Marc Rischitelli (Shrewsbury)

1. Tax Filing / Annual Report

Jim has not filed yet. He'll do it. Annual Report gets filed at the end of the year.

2. Dissolving MFL update

Still working on this. We have submitted all of the signed documents to our lawyers. Nothing left for us to do at the moment. We will send a thank you to the lawyer's firm.

3. State Debate Tournament Planning

March 30 at Chelmsford

- Josh & Peter have been in contact with one another about hosting
- Broadened eligibility criteria, so expect a bigger crowd
- Sue will bring roses - although she can't stay for awards
- Amanda will take care of cupcakes & trophies - Amanda will get the trophy orders put together and send them to Josh (debate) and Joyce (speech) so that she can order them by the end of February.
- JTC to add notice to debate invite asking coaches to identify seniors.
- JTC to follow up with debate teams that have not paid dues. Email sent to Arlington 2/11.
- Dana Hall might be interested in attending in Novice Policy -- New Program (Kaz)

4. State Speech Tournament Planning

April 6 at Acton-Boxborough

Joyce will prepare the invitation

We'll do online balloting for everything except congress

Adam will copy congress materials (ballots)

Sue will get flowers

Amanda will do trophies & cupcakes

Joyce will do Radio

Finals for Extemp - either Massachusetts or States Issues - need to decide for invitation

Lisa will have the Extemp committee write the questions & will prepare them

Greg will write group prompts - we need a topic area (Immigration)

Need Debbie Simon "Best New School Award"

5. HOF Nominations Open

Nominations are open until February 24. Check website for details.
MSDLonline.org/nominate.

6. 2019-2020 Tournament Sanctioning

a. Inclusion statement?

We shall craft a league inclusion statement and encourage all tournaments to post the statement.

Also - a gender-neutral bathroom

And designated prayer space

We could put a “you’re hosting a tournament” checklist on the website so hosts can print out what they need. It would include the statement as well as reminders.

Last year, we did sanctioning applications on-line using a Weebly or maybe it was a Google form.

We discussed the pros and cons of form output. It was really difficult to navigate. We could post a Word document online and ask people to fill it out and then submit it. All they would have to do is email it or hand it to a league official at a tournament.

Anything to be sure we include?

Clear ability to designate if the school is hosting speech only, debate only or both.

Amanda/Joyce will try to create a one-page document for schools that want to apply for sanctioning to fill out and that is also easy for us to digest when we receive it.

7. Board Elections

We will hold the elections in the same manner that we held them last year. Amanda read the email that Susan Marianelli sent out last year with details about running for a board position. We agreed to use that note as a basis for this year’s communication to the league.

We encourage everyone who is interested in serving on the board to consider running for a position.

8. Annual Meeting Planning

Saturday, May 4. We don’t have a time or location yet. Amanda will put out a request for a host in the next newsletter, as well as a call for agenda items.

We agreed to take some time between now and the next Board meeting to review our existing documents - perhaps talk with our lawyers - in order to find out what we are allowed to do and what will make our members feel heard. We may re-word the following before putting it to a vote at our March meeting.

“Under Article IV of the bylaws, add a second paragraph: At the annual meeting, any school in attendance but not represented on the board of directors may designate one designee as an associate member to be granted voting rights on rules & regulations of the MSDL.”

9. Tournament Ombudsman (Adam)

On the speech side, Sarah Donnelly held meetings early in the season, designating a person that students could take concerns to. The ombudsman we are talking about would be tournament-specific. We would need a way to let folks know who the designated person would be from tournament to tournament.

The designated ombudsman needs to be someone knowledgeable about all sorts of tournament issues, not just gender issues, because they are going to get all sorts of questions, including things like “my judge just gave me the wrong time signals, what do I do?” Maybe we can designate 2-3 people who will rotate in this position. These people will need some training about how to deal with sensitive issues - so they handle them well and also so there is continuity from person to person.

Perhaps we can have a professional person come in and do some training for all of our member coaches about how to deal with sensitive issues.

Jim will look into some options for us. He will report back to the board via email.

The NSDA is also working on this issue. We can reach out to them for materials, as well.

10. Re-creating the SAB (PJ)

It would be good to have a forum for students to express their concerns. If we have a adult person moderating and teaching students how to voice their concerns, it could be valuable. It is important that meetings such as these maintain a positive perspective, rather than devolving into gripe sessions. If moderated, a session to express frustrations could lead to positive outcomes.

Maybe we could designate a few tournaments per year where we put out a call for agenda items and allow students to submit issues for discussion. If students submit proposals, then, we have a moderated discussion.

Question: When could we do this and how could we do it without extending a tournament day too much?

Could we get information to coaches to share with their students so that if students have something that they would like the board to consider/address, they should submit a proposal to the board? Then, we could set up a time when they can sit down with a board member to discuss their concern(s) and we follow up as appropriate?

Students need to know that there is a mechanism for being heard when an important issue arises, but it doesn't have to be an "institution" like the SAB.

For most issues, students should be going to their coaches - at least as a start.

Some places I have been have used pairing breaks or the lunch break to allow for conversations, or the time when finals results are being tabulated. Would that work for us? (General consensus appeared to be - no).

One thing we can do right now is to make our suggestion box more prominent on the MSDL website in order to encourage students to make their concerns known.

11. Online Judge Training (Tim Averill)

Tim suggests we create an online training platform for judges. We like the idea of having training materials, but we don't see the need to pay someone thousands of dollars to create them for us, as we can make our own short videos. We need to be mindful of differences in perspectives from program to program, but it is possible to present varying perspectives in the videos and let the trainees make their own decisions.

Lisa, Joyce Chris, Jim and anyone else who would like to be involved will work on speech training videos over the summer.

Josh & Adam will discuss whether or not they will produce debate judge training videos over the summer, too.

12. Coolidge Cup (Josh)

The Coolidge Foundation (VT) holds a debate-only tournament over the summer with financial prizes. Jared Rhodes contacted Josh and asked if the MSDL State tournament would be interested in being a bid tournament for the Coolidge tournament. (The Coolidge Cup format is different from the debate types we offer.)

Seems like a chance to give some of our students an opportunity to do something really interesting over the summer. We have some questions -- and Josh will contact them for clarification.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

--Lisa Honeyman

Clerk/Secretary

Next meeting:

Monday March 25, 2019

Natick High School. 6:30 PM.