

MASSACHUSETTS SPEECH & DEBATE LEAGUE

SEPTEMBER 2023

WELCOME BACK!

Hello MSDL coaches and welcome back to another season of speech and debate! I hope you had a chance to relax and refresh over the summer - spending time with friends and family, traveling, getting outside (when the weather cooperated), or doing whatever brings you joy. As we launch back into speech and debate, I wanted to pass along a few important updates and reminders.

At last year's annual league meeting, we adopted a set of **Community Standards**. This set of standards, combined with our Mission Statement, helps to ensure the MSDL is a safe space for every member of our community. We want to be a place where members have the freedom to openly debate or present ideas on a wide variety of topics with a wide variety of opinions, but that is only possible with a shared understanding that words and actions matter and that treating each other with dignity, respect, and professionalism is paramount. Please review these Community Standards with your team members before attending your first MSDL tournament of the season.

Another item we'll need **before your first tournament of the season** is your completed **2023-2024 Participation Agreement**. This agreement was revised this year, so we do ask that every coach read the document in its entirety before completing it. We require "wet signatures" from your team's head coach and school administrator. These signatures confirm the signers have read and agree to the terms of the MSDL Participation Agreement, so please read it carefully. At the bottom of the form, you'll find the invoice for our annual dues. The completed participation agreement must be submitted before you register for your first MSDL tournament this season, and your dues should be paid as soon as possible but no later than 12/2/2023.

I am excited to announce that we will be piloting our **Professional Development Grant** program this year! MSDL coaches now have the opportunity to apply for up to \$1500 to pursue professional development and/or activities which benefit the MSDL Speech and Debate community as a whole.

Applications for projects to be completed during the 2023-24 school year, including the summer of 2024, should be submitted electronically **by Sunday, January 14, 2024**. More information and a link to our application can be found on MSDLOnline.org/grant.

September is always a little bit hectic as we navigate the start of a new school year and a new speech & debate season. If there is anything we can do to help you get started with the MSDL this year, please don't hesitate to reach out to MSDLBoard@gmail.com. I'm looking forward to seeing you all in the very near future!

Amanda Parker, MSDL President

2023-2024 MSDL TOURNAMENT CALENDAR



Saturday, October 21 - MSDL Novice Meet @ Thayer Academy (C, D, S)

Friday, October 27 - Saturday, October 28 - The Averill Invitational @ Online (D)

Saturday, October 28 - Revere Fall Fest @ Revere High (C, S)

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 High (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)

Saturday, March 2 - Mardi Gras @ Shrewsbury High (C, D, S)

Saturday, March 16 - March Merryness @ Needham High (C, D, S)

Friday, March 22 - Saturday, March 23 - MSDL State Debate @ Online & Chelmsford High (D)

Saturday, April 6 - MSDL State Speech & Congress @ location TBA (C, S)

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

IMPORTANT CALENDAR NOTES:

- It was brought to our attention that our State Debate Tournament for next year was inadvertently scheduled for Easter weekend. We apologize for the error. Luckily, we were able to reschedule this for Friday, March 22 - Saturday, March 23, 2024. Friday evening rounds will take place online and Saturday rounds will take place in person at Chelmsford High. Extra thanks to Peter Zopes and the Chelmsford team for accommodating this date change!
- We are still in search of a host for our State Speech & Congress Tournament scheduled for Saturday, April 6, 2024. If you are interested in hosting or learning more about hosting requirements, please contact MSDLBoard@gmail.com.

JOIN A COMMITTEE!

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

- Writing impromptu topics
- Writing extemp topics
- Assisting with debate operations

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 to receive a calendar invitation and the meeting link.

- Tuesday, 10/3/23
- 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 on Saturday, May 4, 2024. We are still in need of a host for this event. If you would be interested in hosting MSDL coaches for this meeting, please email MSDLBoard@gmail.com.



MSDL COMMUNITY STANDARDS

The Massachusetts Speech and Debate League (MSDL) affirms and upholds the following values and standards and expects those who take part in our tournaments to do the same:

Inclusivity and Equity

We, the MSDL community, welcome people associating with any intersection(s) of identity and uphold that all members of our community deserve respect. We are made stronger by embracing the differences of our members.

Dignity and Safety

We believe that the welfare and dignity of our community members must be protected and preserved. In practice, this means that all community members (coaches, students, judges, and observers) will be mindful of the impact and consequences of their words and actions. We share responsibility to act with the intention to protect the well-being of others, even when engaging with conflicting ideas and opinions.

Integrity and Honesty

All members of our MSDL community must conduct themselves honorably, and must scrupulously compete within the rules of our events while promoting our community standards.

Collegiality and Fun

We aim to support each other and create camaraderie even while being serious about competition.

Please share these newly developed standards with your students before attending your first MSDL Tournament of the season. Thank you!



MASSACHUSETTS SPEECH & DEBATE LEAGUE

MSDL Participation & Dues Agreement (2023-2024)

The Massachusetts Speech & Debate League (MSDL) Treasurer must receive this signed participation agreement **before your school registers for its first MSDL tournament of each academic year**, even if you do not intend to become a MSDL member or participate in either of our State Tournaments. This includes middle schools or out-of-state schools which may, from time to time, be invited to attend MSDL tournaments. Programs or teams that are comprised of students from more than one school are not eligible to register at MSDL-sanctioned tournaments.

From a liability perspective, the MSDL needs evidence prior to registration that your school's participation is approved by your administration and that an adult coach or advisor is registering and managing your team.

The signatures on this document signify that your school's administration and adult head coach acknowledge that:

- All MSDL participants (students, judges, coaches, chaperones, or guests) must adhere to all MSDL rules and regulations, as well as our Community Standards.
- All students representing your school are currently enrolled students meeting the school's requirements for participation in extracurricular activities.
- At MSDL tournaments, your students are chaperoned by an adult approved by your school administration. Adult chaperones are responsible for being on-site with students at all times and for making sure your students follow all rules set by the tournament and the host school.
- Your adult chaperones are further responsible for dealing with any medical or disciplinary emergencies which might arise involving students from your school.
- All judges from your school are adults, which means they are at least 18 years of age AND have not attended high school or competed in the MSDL during the current academic year. The only exception to this is at a tournament that explicitly calls for student judges in their invitation.
- All adults from your school attending MSDL tournaments meet the requirements set by your school's administration for adults who work with students in extracurricular activities.
- Students are not authorized to register themselves or other students for tournaments. Only adult head coaches or their adult delegates are permitted to conduct official business with the MSDL on behalf of your team.
- For online competitions, students may be shown on screen as part of a live stream during selected rounds and/or award ceremonies. Students will have the option to turn off their cameras during those times and may choose not to attend award presentations if they prefer.



MASSACHUSETTS SPEECH & DEBATE LEAGUE

League Information. Information regarding MSDL tournaments and calendar, rules and regulations, policies, updates, and general information can be found at www.msdlonline.org. While we use www.tabroom.com as the online platform to administer our tournaments, it does not contain information specific to our local league.

League Dues. Teams wishing to renew membership and qualify students for our MSDL State Tournaments are responsible for payment of \$50 annual dues to the MSDL Treasurer by the first Saturday in December. A late fee of \$50 will be assessed after the first Saturday in December. New programs, defined as programs which have not participated during the previous four consecutive academic years, do not have to pay dues in their first year. **Only students from schools which have paid annual dues and become members may register for our MSDL State Tournaments.**

This signed agreement may be mailed as hardcopy or scanned and emailed as a PDF, as long as all signatures are handwritten. Electronic signatures will not be accepted. Once the form has been received, your high school will be posted on the MSDL website as eligible to register, and tournament directors may accept your school's registration.

Membership Information:

School Name:	Principal Name:
Adult Coach/Advisor Name:	
Coach email:	Coach Phone #:
Signature of Coach*:	Signature of Principal/Head of School*:

**Signatures confirm the signers have read and agree to the terms of the MSDL Participation Agreement.*

INVOICE

Invoice #MSDL2324

Date: September 1, 2023

For: **Massachusetts Speech & Debate League Annual Dues**

Amount Due: **\$50**

Payment Due: **Saturday, December 2, 2023** (a late fee of \$50 will be assessed following 12/2/23)

To submit your completed form and dues payment by mail, please send it to Massachusetts Speech & Debate League, P.O. Box 365, Needham, MA 02494. To submit your completed form by email, please send it to MSDLdues@gmail.com.



SPEECH JUDGE TRAINING SESSION

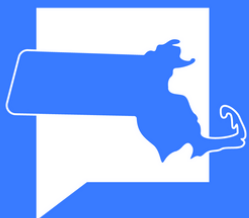
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21 FROM 9:30 AM - NOON
THAYER ACADEMY, BRAINTREE

The MSDL Board would like to invite you and any of your new or prospective speech judges to join us for a judge training session to be held during this year's Novice Meet on Saturday, October 21, 2023. At this session new and prospective speech judges will learn:

- Rules & criteria for judging for MSDL speech events
- How to use Tabroom
- How to run a round
- How to give time signals
- How to rank students and what "quality points" are
- How to write a constructive ballot

This training will be conducted by MSDL Board Member, Chris Sheldon, and will feature live demonstrations by MSDL student volunteers. Please note: Congressional Debate and other Debate events will not be covered in this session, but judge training materials for those events can be found on msdlonline.org.

We know finding and training judges can be challenging, but we are here to help! Register your new and prospective speech judges to join us for this in-depth training when you complete your Novice Meet registration on Tabroom.com. For questions, please email MSDLBoard@gmail.com.



**MASSACHUSETTS
SPEECH & DEBATE LEAGUE**