

Version: March 5, 2020

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***Massachusetts Speech and Debate League
State Debate Championship Tournament
Saturday, March 28, 2020***

Hello:

The Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Speech and Debate League is pleased to announce the State Debate Championship Tournament. The tournament will be hosted on March 28th at Chelmsford High School.

We have revamped the invitation to accommodate changes that have accumulated in recent years. There is a lot of information here, and we ask that you carefully review it. Below are some highlights that we want to be sure you take note of:

- Section 3 – Public Forum now has three divisions – Novice, JV (new), and Varsity. Coaches must properly assign entries to these divisions based on their experience level.
- Section 4 – As has always been the case, debaters can qualify for the state championship with a winning preliminary round record at an MSDL tournament. They can qualify in other ways as well.
- Section 5 – Your judges must have at least one tournament of experience before judging at the state championship.
- Section 6 – Take note of deadlines.
- Section 7 – You must pay your school’s registration fee with a single check. We no longer accept cash or separate checks from each participating student.
- Section 8 – The MSDL Board has decided that in LD and PF, we now break to octo-finals to give more students an opportunity to compete in elimination rounds.
- Section 10 – A few things:
 - No use of the internet by debaters because of limited internet capacity (judges come first);
 - Take good care of classrooms (no food, no touching the teacher’s desk, and more); and
 - Double-stacking / Debate café: We will be holding multiple debates in classrooms and in the library simultaneously; we require that students sit closely together and speak in a lower voice than they might be accustomed to using in debate rounds.
- Section 11 – Top finishers in LD and PF have an opportunity to compete in the Coolidge Cup this summer.

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1. **School eligibility**

- Only MSDL member schools are invited to compete.
- Schools from adjoining states are welcome to join the MSDL and participate at the MSDL State Debate Tournament if they have no state championship tournament of their own.
- Middle school students are invited to participate in this tournament, subject to bid requirements (below) and Section 1.2 of the MSDL Rules and Regulations ([here](#))

2. **Debate formats**

The tournament will offer four types of debate.

Format	Abbreviation	Number of debaters per entry	Resolution
Policy	CX	2 ^(*)	2019-2020 topic, “ <i>Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce Direct Commercial Sales and/or Foreign Military Sales of arms from the United States.</i> ”
Lincoln-Douglas	LD	1	2020 March/April topic: “ <i>Resolved: Predictive policing is unjust.</i> ”
Public Forum	PF	2 ^(*)	2020 March topic: “ <i>Resolved: The United States should increase its use of nuclear energy for commercial energy production.</i> ”
Big Questions	BQ	1 or 2	2019-2020 topic: “ <i>Resolved: Objective morality exists.</i> ”

(*) No solo entries can participate in CX or PF at the state tournament, even during preliminary rounds.

3. Debate experience levels and divisions

Each format will have one, two, or three divisions. Please classify your entries as follows. See Notes (a) and (b) following this table for further information.

Format	Divisions
CX	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Varsity – Entries with one or two debaters with 2+ years of experience• Novice – Entries with two debaters both in their Novice year
LD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Varsity – Debaters with 2+ years of experience• Novice – Debaters in their Novice year
PF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Varsity – Entries with one or two debaters with 3+ years of experience• JV – Entries with at least one debater with 2 years of experience, and the other debater with either 1 or 2 years of experience.• Novice – Entries with two debaters both in their Novice year
BQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open – Includes all entries consisting of debaters with any level of experience.

Notes

- (a) To keep the division sizes balanced, we ask that you not put your entries in divisions that either over- or understate their level of experience. For example, please do not put a pair of 2nd-year PF debaters in the Varsity PF division. The varsity division is reserved for entries with at least one debater who has 3+ years of experience.
- (b) A Novice debater is a student who has not competed in debate in two or more inter-scholastic high school competitions prior to the current academic year (2019-2020). “Debate” includes CX, LD, PF, BQ, and Congressional Debate.

4. Registering debaters

Each entry must have earned a *bid* (Section 4.1) or use a *wildcard* (Section 4.2) to qualify for the state championship tournament. Section 4.3 describes how to enter this information into Tabroom when registering debaters for the state championship.

4.1 Earning a bid

Policy (CX) – Any debater can participate in CX at the state championship. There are no prior requirements.

Lincoln-Douglas (LD)

- Varsity – A debater earns a bid in the Varsity division at the state championship by satisfying any of the following criteria in an open or varsity division in LD:
 - Earning a winning preliminary round record at an MSDL-sanctioned tournament, or
 - Placing among the top eight entries at an MSDL-sanctioned tournament, or
 - Earning any record at three MSDL-sanctioned tournaments.
- Novice – A debater earns a bid in the Novice division at the state championship by satisfying any of the following criteria in any division in LD:
 - Earning a winning preliminary round record at an MSDL-sanctioned tournament, or
 - Placing among the top eight entries at an MSDL-sanctioned tournament, or
 - Earning any record at three MSDL-sanctioned tournaments.
- Public Forum (PF)
 - Varsity and JV – Two debaters earn a bid as a pair in the Varsity or JV divisions at the state championship by satisfying either of the following sets of criteria:
 - Earning a preliminary round winning record in an open or varsity PF division at an MSDL-sanctioned tournament, *debating together as a pair*; or
 - (a) Earning a preliminary round winning record in an open or varsity PF division at a Tournament of Champions qualifier tournament, *debating together as a pair*, and (b) for both partners – debating individually (with other partners) or together in PF at four MSDL-sanctioned tournaments during the year.
 - Novice – Two debaters earn a bid as a pair in the Novice division at the state championship by satisfying either of the following sets of criteria:
 - Earning a preliminary round winning record in any PF division at an MSDL-sanctioned tournament, *debating together as a pair*; or
 - (a) *Debating together as a pair* in PF at an MSDL tournament during the year; and (b) for both partners – debating individually (with other partners) or together in PF at four MSDL-sanctioned tournaments during the year.
- Big Questions (BQ) – Any debater who has achieved a winning record in Big Question Debate at an MSDL tournament during this academic year is eligible to attend the state championship tournament. Partners must both qualify (although not necessarily with each other).
- Tournament records are [here](#).

4.2 Wildcards

Schools receive wildcards as follows:

1. “New” schools may each send a total of four wildcard entries across the LD, PF, and BQ divisions. A new school is one that has not competed in Policy, LD, PF, or BQ debate in the MSDL during the previous four years.
2. Other schools may each send a total of two wildcard entries across the LD, PF, and BQ divisions.

4.3 Registering debaters into Tabroom and entering their qualification information

When a coach enters a team into Tabroom for the state championship, a QUALIFYING INFORMATION table will appear. Fill in the first row of the table as follows:

- If an LD, PF, or BQ entry qualifies by virtue of a winning record or a top-eight finish:
 - Enter the tournament name under TOURNAMENT;
 - If the entry had a winning preliminary round record, enter that record in the PLACEMENT / POINTS column as Wins – Losses (e.g., “4-2” for a 4 win, 2 loss record);
 - If the entry did not have a winning record, but did place in the top eight, enter in the PLACEMENT/POINTS column the entry’s rank at that tournament (e.g., “third place”).
- If an LD, PF, or BQ entry qualifies by use of a wildcard, enter “Wildcard” under TOURNAMENT. Leave the PLACEMENT/POINTS field blank.
- If the entry has qualified for the state championship in some other way:
 - Enter “Excel” in the bid field when you register the entry.
 - Download and save to your own computer a copy of the state debate championship Excel workbook ([here](#)).
 - Record your entries on the appropriate sheets within the workbook.
 - Rename the Excel workbook <<School name>>.xlsx (e.g., “NewtonSouth.xlsx”) and email the file to the MSDL Chair of Debate (Joshua Cohen – JCohen1964@gmail.com). Be sure you get a return email from the Chair confirming receipt of this file.

5 Registering Judges

5.1 Judge qualifications

- *All judges must be former debaters in PF, LD, or CX, or have judged in at least one prior interscholastic debate tournament.*
- The tournament may use electronic balloting. *All judges must have accounts on Tabroom.com.* For more information on setting up accounts, see [here](#).
- Please be sure all judges are familiar with basic round formats (speech order, speech times, prep time). *We will not have time to review those points in the judge briefing.*
- *Varsity, JV, and Open divisions* – Judges must be adults and not current high school students, and cannot have graduated from high school during the current academic year.
- *Novice division:*
 - Any judge qualified to judge Varsity, JV, and Open divisions is also qualified to judge in the Novice division.
 - Novice division judges may be high school students in at least their third year of high school debate. That is, they would be classified as “Varsity” debaters, as defined in Section 3 of this invitation. Judges may not compete at the state championship tournament.

5.2 Number of judges owed

Schools must provide 1 judge for every:

- 2 entries in CX,
- 2 entries in LD,
- 2 entries in PF, and
- 2 entries in BQ.

Please note the following additional requirements:

- These divisions have separate judge pools, so each judge that you bring can fulfill only the requirement for one division. For example, if your school enters one CX team and one PF team, you need a judge for the CX pool and a second judge for the PF pool.
- Each school must have enough adult judges to cover the ratios specified above for debaters entered in the Varsity, JV, and Open divisions.
 - For example, if your school brings two varsity teams and two novice teams, at least one judge brought by your school must be able to judge in the varsity division (to cover your two teams entered in that division).
 - The number of varsity-division judges a school brings for each format must be at least one-half the number of Varsity, JV, or Open division teams the school enters for that format. For example, if a school enters 3 Varsity PF teams and 3 Novice PF teams, it will owe a total of 3 judges (6 teams total and a 2:1 team-to-judge ratio). Because it has 3 Varsity teams, and one-half of 3 is 1.5, at least 2 of its 3 judges must be qualified to judge Varsity.

5.3 How long judges have to stay at the tournament

- All judges are obligated through the first break round of any division in which their school has an entry.
- Judges from schools with teams that break are obligated through the **semi-final round** in that division.
- Judges from schools with teams that win one break round are obligated through the **final round** in that division.
- Once the tournament staff has identified and verified the presence of judges for an out round, they will send notification via email to the judge pool so that other judges who are not obligated past the current round can depart if they wish. For example, once the staff has verified that all octo-final judges are present, other judges whose teams did not break to octo-finals can depart.

5.4 Penalties for missing judges

- Missing judges and judges who leave early seriously compromise the smooth operation of the tournament. If a school has a judge who must leave before the end of his or her obligation, that school must provide a qualified replacement, or be potentially subject to a \$50 missing judge penalty.
- Unfortunately, the league cannot guarantee that it can provide hired judges directly to schools for this tournament. If a school does not have sufficient judges, the tournament director may have to reduce that school's entry numbers to be in line with its judge roster. If warranted and feasible, the league may attempt to hire outside neutral judges to make the judging pool more experienced and easier to manage. If you know of any experienced neutral judges who may be interested, please direct them to Joshua Cohen at jcohen1964@gmail.com.

5.5 Entering judges into Tabroom

When you register an individual to judge at the state championship, tabroom will prompt you for additional information about each judge, as illustrated in the screen grab below:

ADDITIONAL DETAILS NEEDED

Judge Pools		Each judge must be in a minimum of 1 pool:		
PF1 Varsity	Chelmsford High School	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	0 Judge(s) required , 1 provided
PF2 JV	Chelmsford High School	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	✓	0 Judge(s) required , 1 provided
PF3 Novice	Chelmsford High School	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	0 Judge(s) required , 1 provided

Other Info

ADA/Accessible Rooms Needed?

Save Details

- **JUDGE NOTES:** Let us know: (1) if your judge is a current high school student (so that we know that judge cannot be switched into the Varsity or JV judge pool); (2) if a judge should not adjudicate rounds involving a particular school or a particular debater from *another* school. For example, a judge who knows a debater from another school through activities outside of debate should not judge that student. (3) Enter anything else we should know. Be sure to erase information from past tournaments that is not pertinent to the state championship tournament. This field will likely be blank initially for most of your judges.
- **JUDGE POOLS** (Varsity, JV, or Novice) – Check ONE box for each judge so as to apportion your judges as closely as you can to the ratio of novice to varsity plus JV debate entries or teams you have in the corresponding division. For example, if roughly 1/3 of your PF teams are NOVICES, roughly 1/3 of your judges should be designated for the Novice division. Enter “States: Novice”). If your apportionment differs substantially from your team split, we may reassign your judges.
- **OTHER INFO (ADA/ACCESSIBLE ROOM NEEDED)** – Check this box if a judge needs to be placed in only those rooms that are ADA/Accessible.

Be sure to click on SAVE DETAILS when you are done entering information for this judge.

6 Registration Deadlines

Team registration	Due Tuesday, March 24 at 5:00 PM	Enter on Tabroom.com (http://www.tabroom.com)
Judge registration	Due Wednesday, March 25 at 5:00 PM	Enter on Tabroom.com
Team changes	Due Tuesday, March 24 at 5:00 PM	Enter on Tabroom.com
Team drops	Due by Thursday, March 26 at noon	Before March 26 at 5:00 PM, make drops at Tabroom.com. After that time, email jcohen1964@gmail.com

All schools entering the MSDL State Championship Tournament must have paid their MSDL dues in full prior to March 20th in order to compete.

7 Fees and payment

7.1 Cost per entry

- CX: \$20
- LD: \$10
- PF: \$20
- BQ: \$10

7.2 How to pay

- Payment must be by check (personal checks are fine) and must be paid the morning of the tournament when you arrive.
- Please make payment with a single check for your registration.
 - The league will **not** accept individual checks from each debater on your roster.
 - The league will **not** accept cash.
- The check should be payable to the Massachusetts Speech and Debate League
- Be sure that the check clearly indicates your school's name (which sometimes does not match the town or city specified on the check's address).

8 Tournament schedule

As we cannot be sure we have cellular reception at the tournament site, **registration confirmation is in person from 7:45 to 8:15 AM**. If you run into unusual problems, you can try to text 617-606-2264. Please remember to include the name of your school in your text message. Please leave adequate time for unanticipated delays. Teams that are late may face forfeiture of their first round.

Round times are for LD and PF

These events represent the vast majority of tournament participants. CX and BQ will hold rounds in parallel.

- **7:45 to 8:15 – Onsite registration**

If you run into unusual problems, you can try to text 617-606-2264 (cellular reception at Chelmsford HS is spotty). Please remember to include the name of your school in your text message. Please leave adequate time for unanticipated delays. Teams that are late may face forfeiture of their first round.

- **8:20 to 8:50 – Judge and student briefings in the third floor library.** *Note – All judges, including experienced judges, former debaters, and current student debaters who are judging must come to the judge briefing.*
- Pairings released by 8:45
- 9:00 – Round 1
- 10:05 – Round 2
- 11:20 – Round 3 plus lunch
- 1:00 – Round 4
- 2:15 – Round 5
- 3:30 – Octo-finals in PF and LD
- 5:00 – Quarter-finals
- 6:20 – Semi-finals, run in parallel with awards.
- **7:30 – All but finalists and final round judge panel depart**
- 7:30 – Finals – in cafeteria
- 8:30 – End of tournament

Note – only entries with winning preliminary round records are eligible to participate in break rounds.

9 Sweepstakes

- A school's sweepstakes score will be calculated based on the top two scores earned by its entries in each division, with Novice, JV and Varsity divisions counting separately.
- An entry's score is the number of wins it earns from both preliminary and elimination rounds, including byes and coach-overs. Wins in Policy debate will be scaled up by a factor of 1.5.

10 Student conduct

10.1 Internet usage

The WiFi at Chelmsford HS will be seriously overwhelmed by too much demand, and the judges need the WiFi to do their ballots. All participants should refrain from streaming music or videos or playing online games for the ENTIRE day and debaters should minimize their use of the Internet whenever possible. Students used to using email chains should instead use flash drives (if possible), and students should download materials from Dropboxes or other online storage sources if at all possible because rounds cannot be delayed by the loss of WiFi. PF and LD debaters should bring printed or at least downloaded cases (if technically possible on your machine) because, if past experience is any guide, the WiFi will not be available for at least some of your rounds.

10.2 Care of the host school

Please remember that we are guests at Chelmsford High School. Finding a school to host the debate championship tournament is challenging, so please respect the building. Other than rearranging student desks for the round, please leave each room exactly as you found it.

Room rules

- *No students in rooms before the judge arrives.*
- *No food in classrooms.*
- *Move almost no furniture* – Students may not move any items in the classroom other than student desks.
- *Touch no items on surfaces* - Judges and debaters may not touch any items on desks, tables, or other surfaces.
- *Touch no teacher desks* – Judges and debaters may not use the teacher’s desk, chair, or touch anything on a teacher’s desk. Tournament participants may not use any classroom supplies (paper, pens, etc.).
- *Do not unplug anything ever* – Judges and debaters may not use, move, or unplug any electronic device – even temporarily. Only outlets with nothing plugged in may be used.
- *Do not write on whiteboards* – Judges and contestants may not erase or write anything on any whiteboard. Do not write on Smart Boards; doing so can cause costly damage.
- Members of the Chelmsford High School community will be checking on and photographing rooms before and after rounds.
- Any violation of these rules can result in a forfeit or a double-forfeit0.

10.3 Multiple rounds in a classroom or in the library

Regrettably, we do not have enough space to allocate a separate classroom for each debate round. Many of you will find yourselves in classrooms hosting more than one debate, or in the library, where we expect to hold about a dozen debates simultaneously.

We refer to this strategy, which has made it possible for many more students to participate in debate, as “*double-stacking*” of rounds, or as “*Debate Café*”. The idea is that debates should resemble closely packed groups of people holding conversations around tables in a café, rather than speeches delivered to a room full of people.

To make it easier for everyone to hear, please observe the following guidelines when in a round using a shared space:

- Debaters and judges should sit as closely together as is feasible. Judges should sit at the same table with the debaters, or at a desk which is pushed up against the debaters’ desks.
- In classrooms, judges should have their backs to an adjacent wall so that debaters in separate rounds are speaking toward a wall and away from each other.
- Debaters should lower their voices to a level that is appropriate to a conversation among a group seated at a table, rather than speaking at a level appropriate to orating to roomful of people.
- Debaters should stay seated while delivering speeches.
- Tournament staff will be periodically monitoring these spaces. *If we discover a debater speaking unnecessarily loudly and feel it may be interfering with another debate, we may briefly interrupt the speech to ask the debater to lower his or her voice.*

10.4 Inclusion

- The Massachusetts Speech and Debate League fosters a culture of diversity and inclusion. We expect all members of our community to treat one another with respect. Should you have any issues, please come to the TAB room and ask to speak with a member of the MSDL Board.

10.5 Professionalism

- Standard rules of professionalism, etiquette, and respect for our hosts and their school shall apply at all times.

11 Qualification opportunity for the Coolidge Cup

- We are pleased that this year's state tournament serves as a qualifier for the Coolidge Cup, an invitational debate tournament hosted by the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation in Vermont during July. The top six debaters in Public Forum and Lincoln-Douglas events will each receive an invitation to compete at the Coolidge Cup, all-expenses-paid, and the opportunity to win \$15,000 in scholarship prizes. The top debaters in Public Forum and Lincoln-Douglas will be identified by team (top three PF teams) or entry (top six LD entries) finish (first place, second place, semi-finalist, etc.), with ties broken by preliminary round seed.
- For more information about the Coolidge Cup, please consult the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation's website ([here](#)).

We look forward to seeing you at the tournament!

Sincerely,

The MSDL Board

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Driving Directions

Chelmsford High School
200 Richardson Rd
North Chelmsford, MA 01863

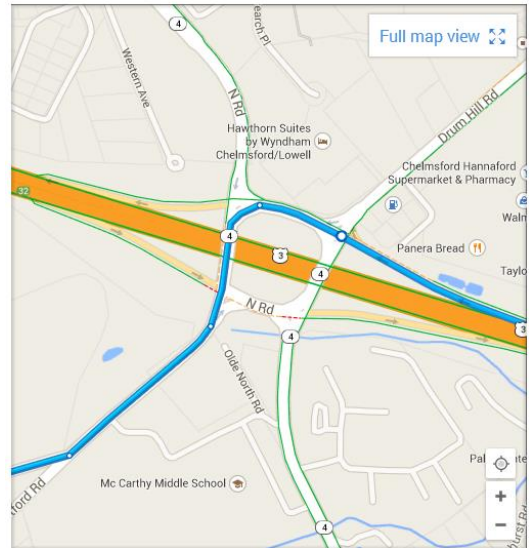
From Rte. 3 North, take Exit 32 onto Drum Hill Rotary. As you reach the end of the exit ramp (at the right edge in the figure below), you will cross over Drum Hill Road. By the second traffic set of lights move to the left center lane. Once through the second set of lights (now on Old Westford Road), move into the right lane. You will be crossing over Route 3. Stay to the right, and continue straight on Old Westford Road.

After you proceed about 100 yards down Old Westford Road, the road splits. Take the right hand fork (softball field is on your right). This is Graniteville Road.

Take the first entrance to the high school (see second figure, below). The “DO NOT ENTER signs can be ignored – they are for school days only). Proceed straight down the hill.

Students should be dropped off at the front of the school (see “1. Student drop off” in figure below).

NOTE – If you are using GPS, you may be directed to the school entrance at the rear of the building (labeled “200 Richardson Road in the Figure below). Or you might be directed to the second school lot entrance that is further down Graniteville Rd. Please instead follow the arrows in the diagram below.



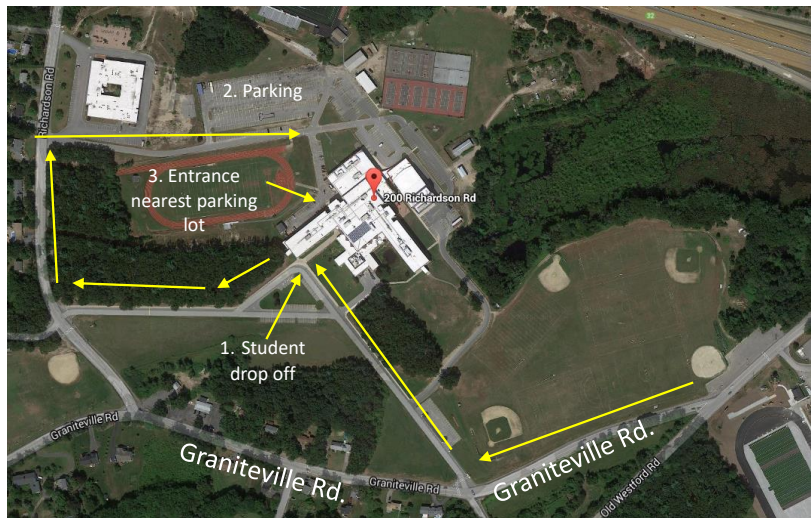
PARKING

Parking is limited in the front of the school. Therefore cars, vans and buses should park around the side of the building. After dropping off students, as described above, continue out the opposite school access road towards Richardson Road.

Turn right on Richardson Road and proceed no more than about one tenth of a mile.

Then turn right again onto Jack Peters Way. Harrington Elementary School will be on the left. As you proceed on Jack Peters Way, the high school will appear on your right. **Take a left into the parking lot (“2. Parking” in the figure to right).** Walk back towards the high school. The running track will be on your right. The gym will be on your left. Go past the large generator.

Enter via the side entrance. Proceed to the double doors (“3. Entrance” in the figure to right). Enter the double doors and then proceed UP ONE FLIGHT of stairs. (DO NOT STAY ON THE FIRST FLOOR). Turn right after the landing, and then left. This will take you to the cafeteria.



Do NOT park, nor enter the building from the Performing Arts Center, or by the Gym entrance. Those doors will be locked.

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LIST OF REVISIONS since March 2, 2020

Date	Page(s)	Revision
3/3	1, 4	JV division is for PF only.
3/3	6	Wildcards may be used for BQ as well as for LD and PF.
3/3	11	Sweepstakes reflects JV records, as well as Novice and Varsity.
3/3	11	Note added to schedule – only entries with winning records can participate in break rounds.
3/3	12	Section 10.1 on internet usage – revised to encourage minimal use of the internet by debaters throughout the day.
3/5	13	Section 11 – Qualification for the Coolidge Cup for top finishers added.