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March 4, 2021

RE: Inaugural Commonwealth Championships

Dear Pennsylvania Speech and Debate Coach:

I am pleased to invite you to the Inaugural Commonwealth Championships tournament scheduled for April 30-May 1, 2021. The tournament will be run virtually.

PURPOSE

Our goal is to provide speech and debate programs a well-run, ethically sound culminating event that would also assist in preparation for the National Catholic Forensic League Grand National Tournament and/or the National Speech and Debate Association national tournament. We have assembled a competent tab staff with experience running tournaments on the east coast.

QUALIFICATION PROCESS

The Commonwealth Championships will run on a bid qualification system as follows:

- Speech students who reach the elimination rounds of a varsity event at **one** or more qualifying tournaments will be eligible.
- Debate students who reach the elimination rounds of a varsity event at **one** or more qualifying tournaments will be eligible.
- Congress students who reach the elimination rounds of a varsity event at one or more qualifying tournaments will be eligible. For students who compete in tournaments without super sessions we will accept a top six finish in at least a 12-member unicameral congress.
- Students who **qualify** to the Pennsylvania High School Speech League tournament, the National Catholic Forensic League Grand National Tournament or the National Speech and Debate Association national tournament will be auto-qualified to the Commonwealth Championships.
- Each participating school will have one speech and one debate wild card entry. Either can be used for a student congress entry instead.
- Each participating school may send one entry in each of the supplemental events.

Qualifying Pennsylvania tournaments from across the Commonwealth will be identified throughout the season via Tabroom.com results. Examples of events we envision as qualifying include, **but are not limited to**, the Bethel Park Black Hawk Invitational, Dallastown Wildcat Invitational, Shikellamy, La Salle Forum Invitational, M & M Lake Erie Invitational, Pennsbury Falcon Invitational, Sterner Steel City Invitational, and William Tennent Invitational. Tournament directors may also proactively identify their events as bid eligible by contacting Chris Berdnik at cberdnik@pennsburysd.org.

EVENTS

The Commonwealth Championships will offer the following events:

- Congressional Debate – NSDA rules
- Declamation – NCFL rules
- Dramatic Performance – NCFL rules
- Duo Interpretation – NCFL rules
- Extemporaneous Speaking – NCFL rules
- Informative Speaking – NCFL rules
- Lincoln-Douglas Debate – NCFL rules
- Oral Interpretation of Literature – NCFL rules
- Original Oratory – NCFL rules
- Policy Debate – NCFL rules
- Program Oral Interpretation – NSDA rules
- Public Forum Debate – NSDA rules

SUPPLEMENTAL EVENTS

The Commonwealth Championships will offer the following supplemental events:

- Big Questions – NSDA rules
- Extemporaneous Debate – NSDA rules
- Impromptu – NSDA rules
- News Broadcasting – PHSSL rules
- Parliamentary Debate (two-person) – PHSSL rules

DOUBLE-ENTRY

Double-entry will be permitted in main stage speech events only for students qualified in both events. No double-entry will be offered in congress, debate, or supplemental events.

SWEEPSTAKES

The tournament will offer sweepstakes in speech and debate. Supplemental events will not count towards sweepstakes.

TOPICS

Policy will use the annual national topic. Lincoln-Douglas and Public Forum will use the NCFL Grand National tournament topics.

SCHEDULE

The Commonwealth Championships will run on the following schedule:

- The tournament will open Friday after school and conclude on Saturday.
- Speech will feature four preliminary rounds, breaking to semifinals.
- Lincoln-Douglas and Public Forum debate will feature five preliminary rounds, breaking to octofinals.
- Policy/Parliamentary/Big Questions/Extemporaneous debate will feature four preliminary rounds, breaking to quarterfinals.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 412-992-8472 or cberdrik@pennsburysd.org.