



Massachusetts Speech and Debate League
State Championship Tournaments
Speech & Congress
Saturday, April 10, 2021 – Sunday, April 11, 2021

The Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Speech and Debate League is pleased to announce the State Finals in Speech, Debate, and Congress. The tournament will be hosted online on April 10th and 11th under the direction of the MSDL Board.

All events will be held live utilizing the Tabroom NSDA Campus and Zoom video platforms.

Novice Extemporaneous Speaking and the Novice Oral Interpretation Final are not offered at States.

Qualification

Competitors must satisfy normal bid requirements, as detailed in Section 6.3 of the MSDL Rules and Regulations ([here](#)). For Public Forum and Lincoln Douglas debate, we have expanded the list of tournaments at which competitors can satisfy these requirements (see the Debate invitation, below).

Entries

Entry is subject to the following limitations:

- Students in Debate, Congress, or Group Discussion may not double or triple enter.
- Students may not enter more than three events *including* Multiple Reading. A student may not use the same material in more than one event.
- Each student may only enter once in any given event.
- Students entered in a prep room draw event (VX or RB) may double – but not triple enter. Students may enter only one prep room draw event.

We will make every effort to make the schedule easy on every student. However, *students should think carefully about the choice to double or triple enter*. Students will be held responsible for making it into all their rounds of competition before the rounds are finished. Students in draw events will be responsible for coordinating with the prep room staff.

In Congress, students will be split into the appropriate number of chambers with specific assignments generated by the Tabroom internet application.

Awards

We will live-stream the awards ceremony at the conclusion of competition on Sunday. Arrangements will be made to distribute awards afterwards. The top novice in each speech category will also receive special recognition. Team

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Sweepstakes awards will be presented to the top ten speech schools based on their best 16 scores from any category. These scores will be computed by using preliminary ranks and final placement.

Fees

For speech, the fee will be \$10 per event entry. In debate, the fee will be \$10 for Lincoln Douglas and Big Questions, and \$20 for Policy and Public Forum.

Drops not reported before 5:00 PM on Wednesday, April 7th will incur a \$10 drop fee.

Registration Instructions

Registrations must be entered on Tabroom (www.tabroom.com) by 5 p.m. on **Tuesday, April 6**. We ask that you register only those students who actually plan to participate in the tournament. Drops should be emailed to jeba78@verizon.net and to jcohen1964@gmail.com and will incur a \$10 drop fee after the drop deadline specified above.

Registration Confirmation

Please text (508-397-5143) or email (jeba78@verizon.net) confirmation of your registration by 8:00 AM on Saturday morning, April 10. This will allow us to manage any last-minute drops and get the tournament off to a prompt start on Saturday morning. Please be sure to include your school name. MSDL rules require all schools to check in before 8:00 AM or face a \$25 fine.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Speech and Congress – Pages 3 and 4
- Debate: CX, LD, PF, and BQ – Pages 5 to 13
- *Log of changes since this invitation was first posted on March 13 – PAGE 14 – Please check periodically*

Speech and Congress

All Events

Both movement and lots of color can contribute to deterioration of video quality over an online platform. We encourage students to wear plain-colored clothing (i.e. minimal patterns), and, if possible, to perform in front of a neutral solid background or plain-colored wall. If a computer-generated background is used, it may only be a single, solid color with no pattern. Only one video camera may be used, and that camera must remain stationary throughout the performance. No sets are allowed. Students may use a microphone or headset, but these should not be used as props or to make non-vocal sound effects.

No time signals will be provided in any events. Students in need of time indicators should time themselves, synchronizing the start of timing with the judge. The judge's time is the official time.

Students may elect to sit or stand for their performance, but they cannot move from a seated to a standing position or vice versa during the performance.

Watch your e-mail and online on Tabroom and msdlonline.org for a guide to online events.

Reading Events

The script should be at least partially visible throughout the performance.

Duo Interpretation

Each student enter the competition space separately – even if both members of a Duo reside in the same household.

Extemporaneous Speaking

Preliminary round questions will cover international, national, and economic topics. All questions will be derived from online and print editions of current political and news sources. The final round topic area will be: States Issues.

Students will be assigned to a specific prep room where they will receive three questions. Throughout the prep period, students remain in the prep room space with cameras and microphones turned on.

Note – There will be no cross-examination in this event for this tournament.

Group Discussion

The topic area for Group Discussion is Energy and the Environment. Focus areas are renewable energy, economic impact, Paris Climate Accord, impacts of overpopulation, and nuclear options.. Students will receive specific questions from the judge at the start of each round.

Informative Speaking

Modifications to visual aids for optimal viewing over NSDA Campus are acceptable, but visual aids must not be electronic.

Multiple Reading

Multiple will perform in three preliminary rounds. A student may participate in only one Multiple. Please include the names of the students in the Multiple from the drop-down menu on the website. Each student in the Multiple should enter the competition space individually – even if more than one member of a Multiple team resides in the same household.. Blocking and movement may need to be extremely limited. It is acceptable for student performers to remain seated while presenting the reading, although that is not required. Six multiples will advance to finals; in the event of an unbreakable tie between 6th and 7th place, only five will advance.

Radio Broadcasting

Students will be assigned to a specific prep room where they will receive a link to the radio package for that round. Throughout the prep period, students must remain in the prep room space with cameras and microphones turned on. The broadcaster may present with the video function turned off to simulate an actual radio broadcast. We will be providing a copy of the packet for each round to the judge.

Novices

A “novice” competitor is defined as any student who has not competed in high school forensics in a previous school year. A student who competes in two or fewer high school tournaments while in middle school retains novice status; but if a student competes in more than two high school tournaments, that student cannot be considered a novice. In Extemporaneous Speaking, a student may be considered a novice if it is his/her first year in high school Extemp. Please make sure to indicate all novices in your student roster online. Special recognition will be given to the top-ranking novice in each category.

Congress Legislation

Congress Legislation is due to Mr. PJ Wexler by Friday, April 2 at 3:00 PM. Please email bills & resolutions to Mr. Wexler at pjwexler06@gmail.com by that date. If you do not receive an acknowledgement within one business day, please call Mr. Wexler at 781-330-6610. One piece of legislation per school will be chosen, provided that legislation meets basic requirements. It is expected that every school participating in Congress will submit legislation or receive a waiver from Mr. Wexler. Specific information about Congress will be e-mailed out to schools in the coming weeks.

Judges

Schools must provide one judge for every four Speech and Congress entries, or fraction thereof. All judges must be capable of conducting rounds online and judging online through Tabroom. All judges must have graduated from high school at least six months prior to the date of the tournament. Given that this is our State Finals Tournament, we urge coaches to provide experienced judges, who are qualified to judge high-level competition. **At a minimum, schools must provide judges who have judged or competed at one speech tournament.** Coaches should spend time with their judges in advance of the tournament reviewing the events to ensure that they are prepared for the competition.

A \$50.00 penalty will be imposed for each missing judge. This penalty is not to be used in lieu of your requirement; if we do not have sufficient judges, we may have to reduce your entry numbers in line with your number of judges.

Tentative Schedule – subject to change

Saturday, April 10

8:30	Speech Judges Meeting
9:00	Congress Meeting & Session 1
9:00	Speech Student Meeting
9:00-6:30	Speech and Congress Rounds
7:00	Awards

Standard rules of professionalism and etiquette shall apply at all times.

We look forward to seeing you at the tournament!

Sincerely
The MSDL Board

DEBATE

Here are the highlights:

- Section 1 – The resolutions – We are using March/April for LD and March for PF.
- Section 2 – Public Forum has three divisions – Novice, JV (new), and Varsity. Coaches must properly assign entries to these divisions based on their experience level. LD and Policy have two divisions – Novice and Varsity. BQ has one open division.
- Section 3 – Your judges must have at least one tournament of experience before judging at the state championship.
- Section 4 – Qualifications (earning a bid to compete) – We will be using standard qualification rules, but the list of tournaments that count now includes the New York local competitions.
- Section 5 – The schedule: Depending on registration numbers, LD and PF may now break to octo-finals to give more students an opportunity to compete in elimination rounds.
- Section 6 – A few things:
 - Normal rules for use of internet are in force – so, you may use the internet for research during the round, but you may not communicate via the internet with anyone not competing or judging the round;
 - This section describes the accommodations we are making if participants run into internet problems during the competition.
- Section 7 – Debate sweepstakes
- Section 8 – Preparation time for the online tournament

If you have any issues registering for debate, please contact Josh Cohen at jcohen1964@gmail.com. I am happy to help you.

1. Debate formats

The tournament will offer four types of debate.

Format	Abbreviation	Number of debaters per entry	Resolution
Policy	CX	2 ^(*)	2020-2021 topic, “Resolved: The United States federal government should enact substantial criminal justice reform in the United States in one or more of the following: forensic science, policing, sentencing.”
Lincoln-Douglas	LD	1	2021 March/April topic: “Resolved: The United States ought to guarantee universal child care”
Public Forum	PF	2 ^(*)	2020 March topic: “Resolved: On balance, the benefits of creating the United States Space Force outweigh the harms.”
Big Questions	BQ	1 or 2	2020-2021 topic: “Resolved: Mathematics was discovered, not invented.”

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

2. 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 ^(a)	<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 ^(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varsity – Debaters with 2+ years of experience Novice – Debaters in their Novice year
PF ^(b)	<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) For LD and CX, coaches may assign first-year debaters to the varsity division.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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 (2020-2021). “Debate” includes CX, LD, PF, BQ, and Congressional Debate.

3 Registering Judges

3.1 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 will use electronic balloting. *All judges must have accounts on Tabroom.com.* For more information on setting up accounts, see [here](#). They must have devices capable of connecting to the NSDA Campus Platform (see test [here](#)) and be willing to have their cameras on during competition.
- Please be sure all judges are familiar with basic round formats (speech order, speech times, prep time). *We may 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.

3.2 Number of judges owed

Schools must provide 1 judge for every 2 entries in CX, LD, PF, and BQ, rounding up. Please note the following additional requirements:

- These debate formats have separate judge pools, so each judge that you bring can fulfill only the requirement for one division. For example, a school that enters 1 CX team and 1 PF team must provide a judge for the CX pool and a second judge for the PF pool. A school that enters three LD debaters and 3 PF teams must provide 2 LD judges and 2 PF judges.
- Because the tournament maintains a separate judge pool for the Novice divisions, each school must provide enough Novice judges to cover their Novice entries and enough Varsity / JV judges to cover other entries in each format. For example, a school entering 3 varsity PF teams and 3 novice PF teams must provide 2 varsity/JV division judges and 2 novice division judges.

3.3 How long judges have to stay at the tournament

- Judges may register to participate on Saturday, April 10, on Sunday, April 11, or on both days. Schools must cover their obligation on both days of the tournament.
- All Sunday judges are obligated through the first two round of any division in which their school has an entry.
- Judges are in addition obligated one round past the round at which their school has debaters competing. For example, Varsity/JV PF judges from a school with a JV PF team that competes until the quarter-final round must be available to judge semi-finals.
- Throughout the tournament, judges who are obligated to be available for a round but who do not receive an assignment should come to the judge lounge Zoom room. The staff will dismiss judges without assignments as soon as we have verified that we have a judge available for every debate in that round.

3.4 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.

3.5 Entering judges into Tabroom

- Judges can participate on Saturday, Sunday, or on both days. To make a judge available on only one day, click on "All rounds" in the **Availability** column in an event's judge list. You will then see two rows – one for Saturday, and one for Sunday. In the far right column, click on the AVAILABLE button, and it will change to UNAVAILABLE. (You can click on the UNAVAILABLE button to toggle it back to AVAILABLE).







LIMIT JOSHUA COHEN'S AVAILABILITY

Block	Time Not Available	Fee if under obligation	Available
Saturday 5/23	Sat 8:30 AM through Sat 6:00 PM	\$25	Available
Sunday 5/24	Sun 8:30 AM through Sun 4:00 PM	\$25	Available

Toggle the "Available" button to mark a judge as not available for a given time block.

You owe your full judge burden for every time block. A judge marked available for only part of the tournament will result in a fee unless another judge is made available for the parts the first judge is missing.

- Then click on the "Return to" button to the right. You will see the change you made to the Availability column. You will also see a warning above this table if you no longer cover your obligation.

Edit	Name	Link?	Availability	Pools	Details	Conflicts	
	Joshua Cohen	✓	Not available Sunday 5/24	PF1 Varsity			
	Keith Henzer	✓	All rounds	PF3 Novice			
	Robin Ruthazer	✓	All rounds	PF1 Varsity			

- Note that the POOLS column specifies the division for each judge (novice or varsity).

4 Qualifying to compete at States – Earning a bid

This section describes how debaters qualify to compete at States (Section 4.1), how many wildcard entries each school receives (Section 4.2) and how coaches can enter the qualification information into Tabroom.com when registering debaters for the state championship (Section 4.3).

4.1 Earning a bid

In short, BQ and CX debaters qualify to compete at States without prior requirements (Section 4.1.1). PF and LD debaters can qualify by having earned a winning record at an MSDL tournament during the season (Section 4.1.2), by using a wildcard (Section 4.1.3), or in other ways (Sections 4.1.4 for LD and 4.1.5 for PF).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the MSDL Chair of Debate (Josh Cohen – jcohen1964@gmail.com).

4.1.1 BQ and CX – no need to qualify

Any debater can compete in BQ or CX at the State championship. There are no prior requirements.

4.1.2 PF and LD – Qualifying with a winning record at an MSDL tournament

PF teams and LD debaters qualify to compete at States if they earned a winning preliminary round record at any of the following tournaments:

9/26/20 – MSDL Online No. 1	12/05/20 – MSDL First Frost	02/06/21 – NY/NE Bronx Local
10/09/20 – Byram Hills	12/19/20 – NY/NE Regis Debate	02/27/21 – MSDL Polar Bear
10/31/20 – Averill (Manchester)	01/09/21 – MSDL New Year	03/13/21 – MSDL Spring Fling
11/14/20 – MSDL Cranberry	01/16/21 – Big Lex	
11/21/20 – Little Lex	01/23/21 – NY/NE Malcolm Bump	

Records for tournaments that count as MSDL competitions are [here](#).

Note – LD debaters can also qualify by being among the top eight finishers at an MSDL tournament.

Note – For LD, JV records count for qualifying to compete in the Varsity division in LD at the State Championship.

Note – A PF debate pair with a winning record wins qualifies to compete at States with only the same person they earned that winning record with. So – if Mary and John have a 4-1 record at MSDL Online No. 1, they are qualified to debate at States with each other. If they want to debate with other partners at States, they must earn a bid independently with those other partners.

4.1.3 PF and LD – Qualifying with a wildcard

Each school gets 2 or 4 wildcard entries (See Section 4.2). A school can use a wildcard to qualify any LD or PF debater. For example, a school with two wildcards can use those wildcards to qualify one LD debater and 1 PF team that would otherwise not qualify to compete at States.

4.1.4 LD – Qualifying without having earned a winning record or top-8 finish at an MSDL tournament this season

An LD Debater can qualify to compete at States by competing at any three MSDL tournaments during the current season (see Table in Section 4.1.2).

4.1.5 PF – Qualifying without having earned a winning record at an MSDL tournament this season

Debaters not qualifying to compete at the State Championship as described in Sections 4.12 or 4.1.3 can qualify as follows.

Varsity and JV qualify by satisfying both of following conditions:

- 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
- For both partners – debating individually (with other partners) or together in PF at four MSDL-sanctioned tournaments during the current season (see Table in Section 4.1.2).

Novices qualify by satisfying both of the following conditions:

- Debating together as a pair in PF at an MSDL tournament during the current season; and
- For both partners – debating individually (with other partners) or together in PF at four MSDL-sanctioned tournaments during the year (see Table in Section 4.1.2).

4.2 Wildcards

Schools receive wildcards as follows:

1. “New” schools may each send a total of four wildcard entries across the LD and PF 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 and PF 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 or PF entry qualifies by virtue of a winning record or a top-eight finish at an MSDL tournament (Section 4.1.2):
 - 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 or PF entry qualifies by use of a wildcard (Section 4.1.3), enter “Wildcard” under TOURNAMENT. Leave the PLACEMENT/POINTS field blank.
- If the entry has qualified for the state championship as described in Section 4.1.4 or 4.1.5:
 - Enter “Spreadsheet” in the bid field when you register the entry.
 - Copy to your own computer the state debate championship Google Sheets workbook template ([here](#)).

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- Record your entries on the appropriate sheets within the workbook.
- Note – You only need to record entries that qualify via Method 2 (blue cells in sheet). You can ignore the Method 1 columns (yellow cells) because you have recorded Method 1 qualifications directly into Tabroom (see first bullet in this section).
- Rename the Excel <<School>> - MSDL Bids - 2021 (e.g., “NewtonSouth – MSDL Bids - 2021”) and email the link 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 Tournament schedule

- Round times are for LD, PF, and BQ
- CX will run as appropriate given the duration of the rounds

Saturday, April 10

- **8:00 to 8:30 – Judge and student briefings...** *Note – All judges, including experienced judges, former debaters, and current student debaters who are judging must come to the judge briefing.*
- Pairings released by 8:30
- 8:45 – Round 1
- 10:30 – Round 2
- 12:15 – Round 3 plus lunch
- 2:30 – Round 4
- 4:15 – Round 5

Sunday, April 11

- 9:00 to 9:30 – Judge briefings
- 9:30 – Octo-finals in PF and LD, semi-finals in BQ
- 11:30 – Quarter-finals in PF and LD, finals in BQ
- 1:30 – Semi-finals in PF and LD
- 3:30 – Finals in PF and LD
- 5:30 – Awards and festivities (or as soon as all rounds conclude)

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

5 Student conduct

5.1 Internet usage

- Internet usage must comply with rules specified in the MSDL Rules and Policies document, Section 3.3.3.6: “In round internet access in LD, Policy, PFD and Big Question debate events is permitted for research, retrieval and communication but not for communication with persons not actively judging or competing in that debate. Violation of communication rules will result in disqualification of the individuals involved. If a coach is in violation, it will also result in the notification of the principal/head of the associated school. Internet access is not guaranteed. A team that is unable to provide their evidence upon request is assumed not to have that evidence.”

5.2 Connectivity problems during the competition

- Each team will be allocated a bank of 15 minutes to resolve technical issues interfering a competitor’s participation in the round. After that time is elapsed, participation must continue. If one member of a two-person entry cannot participate due to technical problems, his or her teammate may not act as a substitute.

5.3 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.

5.4 Professionalism

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

6 Sweepstakes for Debate

- 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.

7 Preparation time for Debate

To accommodate the use of online technology, we are extending preparation time for the debate events. As described in Section 5.2, each team or entry can also use up to 15 minutes of time per round to resolve technical connectivity issues.

Format	Preparation time
CX	8 minutes per team
LD	4 minutes per entry
PF	3 minutes per team
BQ	3 minutes per entry

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LIST OF REVISIONS since March 13, 2021

Date	Page(s)	Revision
March 23	6	Public Forum is using the MARCH topic (Space Force), not the February topic. The original invite had the right resolution, but specified the wrong month.
March 23	12	The tournament is taking place on April 10 and 11 (not May 23 and 24 – that was last year!)
March 23	12	30 minutes added to preliminary rounds 1 and 2, which are now each 1 hour and 45 minutes long. The last round of the day now ends at 5:30 PM, rather than at 5:00 PM.
March 24	12	Elimination rounds extended to two hours; Awards now at ~ 5:30 PM