

2026 New York City District Tournament Series Invitation Letter

The New York City District Committee invites you and your students to participate in the 2026 New York City District Tournament Series!

Dates and Locations

- February 21st: Congress and Big Questions at Loyola & Regis
- February 22nd: All Speech Events at Collegiate
- February 28th-March 1st: Public Forum, Lincoln Douglas, and Policy at Berkeley Carroll

2026's NSDA National Tournament will be held June 14-19, 2026 in Richmond, VA.

District Status & Number of Qualifiers

The NYC District is a Level 3 District this year. This means the following:

- The NYC District is entitled to 3 qualifiers in every event (except for Congressional Debate), as long as there are a minimum of 10 entries in that event.
 - Any event not meeting that threshold is entitled to two qualifiers, as long as there are at least 4 entries in the event.
 - Information regarding the number of qualifiers in Congressional Debate is available on pg. 109 of the [NSDA 2025-2026 High School Unified Manual](#).
- Additionally, we may take 4 qualifiers in any event that has 50 entries or more.

We encourage all member schools with eligible students to participate in each leg of the tournament series so that we may reach these goals and send as many students to Nationals as possible! Even if your school cannot attend nationals, we encourage your participation.

We must enter as many students as possible to ensure full qualification within each category.

- If you wish to participate in the qualifier but do not wish to attend the national tournament, please feel free to register on tabroom.com, and then email District Chair WK (they/she) at wkay@berkeleycarroll.org so that qualifying slots may be awarded to the appropriate students. We appreciate your effort to allow others to compete!

Eligibility

- Schools must be current, paid members of the NSDA

- Only individuals affiliated with member schools (coaches, students, judges) are allowed at District-sanctioned activities. Any and all parents/guests of programs must be registered with the tournament ahead of time via tabroom.com under the appropriate date's "Non-Judge Chaperones/Observers" tab.
- Students must be registered, fully paid NSDA members before the close of registration for the District Tournament Series. They must appear on the school's NSDA roster as both a member and as "districts eligible" (having earned 25 points). Students must also be registered with a valid, unique email address on their NSDA account.
 - In the past, when a student received 25 points, that student automatically became a member and an invoice was created for that student's membership. That has changed. You may make any student a member, regardless of the number of points the student has (you have to pay!), and you need not make a student a member, even if that student has reached 25 points (but that student cannot compete and does not count towards your strength.) If you look at the School Roster on the NSDA website, you will see a column marked MEMBER. That column has either a blue check or a red X with the word BUY. You must purchase memberships for students now; it is no longer automatic. If you click on the BUY option, it will give you a list of non-members, and you can purchase the ones you wish to add.
 - As you may remember from the past, students had to complete a registration themselves before strength counted. Now, you can start the process. In the column next to the MEMBER column is a column marked ACCOUNT. If there is a pencil and an account name, that student is registered. If there is a blue +ADD, you need to register that student. Click on the +. Put in a username and password. Give the student the username and password so that the student has access to his or her account.

Registration

This year, we will once again be using Tabroom for registration and tabulation. If you log onto tabroom.com, you should see the district tournament at the top of your list of tournaments. The program will keep track of the number of students you are allowed to register (see [Entry Limits](#) below). Guidelines for District Tournament Series registration can be found on pp. 68-71 of the [NSDA 2025-2026 High School Unified Manual](#).

Registration for the District Tournament Series is open.

You must sign the school consent form and the double entry forms. Please prepare them and email the scanned documents to wkay@berkeleycarroll.org at least 3 days before the first leg of the tournament you are participating in. This will make registration much easier.

NEW THIS YEAR: The deadlines to register are as follows:

- Judge registration and hire requests are due as follows:
 - Congress/Big Questions/Speech are due by 11:55pm on Wednesday 02/11
 - PF/LD/CX are due by 8pm on Wednesday 02/18
- Entry registrations are due as follows:
 - Congress/Big Questions/Speech are due by 11:55pm on Wednesday 02/18
 - PF/LD/CX are due by 8pm on Wednesday 02/25

Entry Limits

A school's entry limit will be determined by its chapter strength (calculation chart on p. 91 of the [Manual](#)). IEs/Debate and Congress are tallied separately, and Big Questions entries do not count towards a school's entry limits. Regardless of strength, schools will be limited to no more than 4 entries in any event, and may not exceed the number of allowed entries based on their strength.

Students entering ANY two events (debate, speech, or Congress or combination thereof) MUST fill out a single entry intent form BEFORE competing in any event, indicating the event in which they will compete at Nationals should they qualify for more than one. EXCEPTION: if BOTH members of a team event also qualify in a single event category, they MAY BOTH enter the single event; however, if only one member of a team double qualifies, both students MUST attend the nationals as a team. Students may not enter two debate events. See [Manual](#), pp. 93-94, for further explanation.

Judge Training Requirements

NEW THIS YEAR: The NYC NSDA District represents one of the most diverse and widespread collection of competitors in the nation, all attempting to qualify to NSDA, compete amongst the

nation/world at NSDA, and represent the district well. To that end, it is important for our NYC NSDA Qualifying Series to establish the conditions that prepare students for those aforementioned ends. It is important that our qualifying tournaments replicate the NSDA tournament itself with judges who are sufficiently experienced enough to discern the talent that are worthy of representing our city, district, and greater community. Judging is a critical component of ensuring competitors are evaluated appropriately, fairly adjudicated, and that excellence is rewarded. For this year's NYC NSDA Qualifying Series, we want to ensure that our judges are prepared for success, adequately trained and experienced, and enthusiastic about accepting a ballot for competitors looking to compete against the world's best. In service of these goals, we have added some judging requirements this year:

1. Judges must have met one of the following minimum requirements:
 - a. at minimum, judged 12 rounds of in-person weekend tournaments tabulated/hosted on Tabroom.com that are tied to the judge's Tabroom.com account, and displayed on their Tabroom account/record;
 - b. or, at minimum, competed in 12 rounds of inter-collegiate debate in NDT-CEDA, NFALD, NPDA/NPTE, and/or Individual Events at sanctioned NFA or AFA tournaments.
 - c. or, attend the appropriate Judge Training Webinar: advance registration is required at the following links
 - i. Speech and Congress on Tuesday, February 17th at 6pm – [REGISTER HERE](#)
 - ii. PF, LD, BQ, CX on Wednesday, February 25th at 6pm – [REGISTER HERE](#)
2. Additionally, all judges must complete the required NSDA Learn Accreditations as listed on [tabroom.com](https://www.tabroom.com) by event. All judges must complete "Level 1: Intro to Impartial Judging," as well as event-specific trainings to ensure minimum understanding of NSDA standards and procedures, and NYC District-specific training to bridge the gap between local circuit practices and NSDA rules. For more specific details and links to the required trainings, [please review this document](#).

For the avoidance of doubt: all judges must meet AT LEAST ONE of 1a, 1b, OR 1c, AND NSDA/NYC-specific accreditations required under 2. Judges entered into the tournament will be reviewed by the NYC NSDA District Committee to ensure all judges entered into their respective pools have met this criteria and have satisfied all mandatory judge training. Tabroom account(s) management, record, accreditation, and other general mechanisms that ensure that a judge meets the criteria in this document is the sole responsibility of the judge - and directors/coaches who need assistance in ensuring their judges are compliant should reach out to the NYC NSDA District Committee well in advance of the judge deadline. School-provided judges that are found out of



compliance of the NSDA Manual could be subject to, but not limited to, removal from the judging pool for the entirety of the remaining qualifying series for the current year and beyond in addition to a \$500 fine to the programme supplying said judge.

Judge Obligations

- *Congress*: All participating schools must provide 1 judge if they have fewer than 5 entries, and 2 if they have more than 5 entries.
- *Speech*: All participating schools must provide 1 judge for every 3 entries.
 - This higher judge burden is because preliminary rounds will have 2 judge panels
- *Debate (including Big Questions)*: All participating schools must provide 1 judge for every 2 entries in each division: for example: 3 LD entries and 1 PF entry will require 2 LD judges and 1 PF judge. For the avoidance of doubt, partial obligations are always rounded up.

Hired Judging **NEW THIS YEAR**

There will be a limited number of judges for hire from the tournament for schools who cannot provide their own judges. Schools in need of such hired judges must make their request via tabroom.com as follows:

- Congress/Big Questions/Speech requests are due by 11:55pm on Wednesday 02/11
- PF/LD/CX are requests due by 11:55pm on Wednesday 02/18

Hiring a judge will incur a \$150 fee per judge, per day of judging. No school may hire out their entire obligation. Requests are not guaranteed and will be filled on a case-by-case basis, so please monitor tabroom.com and your email for communication from the District Committee about the status of your request.

Judges Wishing to be Hired

Judges looking to be hired by the tournament should visit [this page on tabroom](#) to signup. Please share this link with neutral and qualified judges in your network.

Online Balloting

- **This tournament will use online balloting. All judges must have linked Tabroom.com accounts with phone numbers associated with the account. Please contact WK wkay@berkeleycarroll.org if you or your judges need help getting this set up.**

Fees

- Each participating school shall incur a \$15 school fee
- Each entry shall incur a \$20 registration fee
- Hiring a judge (a limited number will be available) will incur a \$150 fee per judge, per day of judging. No school may hire out their entire obligation. Requests are not guaranteed and will be filled on a case-by-case basis, so please monitor [tabroom.com](https://www.tabroom.com) and your email for communication from the District Committee about the status of your request.
- We can accept cash, check, or Zelle payment. All checks should be made out to NEW YORK CITY NFL.
- If fees are an inhibiting factor in your participation in the District Tournament series, please email WK wkay@berkeleycarroll.org

Tournament Rules

This tournament follows all competition rules and tabulation procedures as dictated by the NSDA [2025-2026 High School Unified Manual](#). We know that member schools in our district compete on many different circuits using many different rules: the rules contained in the above-linked manual are the only rules that are relevant to this tournament. We encourage all coaches, competitors, and judges to review the manual to make sure everything is clear on the day of the tournament. Please reach out to WK wkay@berkeleycarroll.org if you have any questions. They will send out more information about connecting with the tabroom as each leg of the tournament series draws closer.

All rounds are open to observers. No observer should be asked to leave unless they are being a disruption to the event, or are breaking a tournament or district rule.

Tournament Schedule: [Tentative Schedules Linked Here](#)

Information by Event

Congress / BQ

- On Saturday, in-person registration begins at 8:30 AM. Registration will close at 9:00 AM., and the first round will begin at 9:30 AM following a mandatory judge meeting for all judges.
- Congress Legislation: Chapters are encouraged to submit at least two bills or resolutions no later than 11:59pm Friday, January 9th, 2026 to wkay@berkeleycarroll.org. All legislation presented shall meet Association formatting criteria (see rules section) and must be the original work of students from the submitting school. Non-original work shall not be considered for

the agenda. It shall be the affirmative duty of each school submitting legislation to ensure their materials are original.

- The District Committee shall attempt to accept at least one bill or resolution from each school submitting bills or resolutions, provided the legislation is submitted by the deadline.
- By January 12th, 2026, each participating school shall receive a copy of at least six bills or resolutions, which shall constitute the agenda for the District tournament.
- Only legislation distributed by the District Committee shall be debated.
- Any docket discussion before the day-of tournament should only occur via one student representative from each participating school in a division, in Docket Discussion Document, shared to students and coaches along with [the legislation packet](#).
- In Big Questions, we will use the national resolution: “Moral systems rooted in theism are preferable to non-theistic moral systems.” All entries with a winning record (4-0 and 3-1) will advance to elimination rounds. The number of elimination rounds will be based on the number of advancing debaters. The debaters in elimination rounds will be seeded. Therefore, same-school rounds may occur, and coaches will be consulted in these instances. Elimination rounds in all three formats will be double elimination. Elimination rounds will continue until we have the correct number of qualifiers – we are hopeful that we will complete all rounds on Saturday, but competition may need to continue into Sunday at Collegiate.
 - See the NSDA [2025-2026 High School Unified Manual](#) for a complete overview

Speech

- In-person registration opens at 8:30am on Saturday and runs until 9am. We will begin Round 1 at 9:30am after a mandatory judge meeting for all judges.
- Events: Dramatic Interp, Humorous Interp, Original Oratory, International Extemp, Domestic Extemp, Program of Oral Interpretation, Informative Speaking, and Duo Interp.
 - NB: Students MAY double enter in speech EXCEPT in the two Extemp (see [Manual](#), pp. 93-94, for further explanation.)
- Advancement will be based on 5/6 judge scores from prelims, with the worst score dropped. If there is a tie for the last one in, all speakers receiving the same score will advance. If 21 or more advance, we will go to quarters; If 8-20 advance, we will go to semis; if 7 or fewer advance, we will go straight to finals.
 - See [Manual](#), pp. 115-117, for further explanation

PF / LD / CX

- On Saturday, in-person registration begins at 8:30 AM. Registration will close at 9:00 AM., and the first round will begin at 9:45 AM following a mandatory judge meeting for all judges. Pairings for all rounds will be released 30 minutes before their start time. All three formats will complete all of their preliminary rounds on Saturday, and all elimination rounds will occur on Sunday.
- There will be 4 preliminary rounds in all three formats, and all teams with a winning record (4-0 and 3-1) will advance to elimination rounds. The number of elimination rounds will be based on the number of advancing debaters. The debaters in elimination rounds will be seeded. Therefore, same-school rounds may occur, and coaches will be consulted in these instances. Elimination rounds in all three formats will be double elimination. Elimination rounds will continue until we have the correct number of qualifiers.
 - See the NSDA [2025-2026 High School Unified Manual](#) for a complete overview
- Resolutions are those as announced by the NSDA:
 - CX: “Resolved: The United States federal government should significantly increase its exploration and/or development of the Arctic.”
 - LD: “Resolved: The possession of nuclear weapons is immoral.”
 - PF: “Resolved: The Federal Trade Commission should establish a federal regulatory framework for sports betting.”
- Public Forum Coinflip Procedure
 - Teams will be notified 2 minutes after the release of pairings as to which team has won the Tabroom auto-coin flip. The team winning the flip will have 3 minutes to choose and report their Side or Order choice to Tabroom. After that 3-minute deadline expires, the first team to report to their respective Tabroom Dashboard will get to choose their Side/Order.
 - Judges, these Sides/Order concerns will automatically be sorted on your ballot - just want to let you know that there will not be an in-person, live coin flip in the room.

World Schools Debate: Apply by January 9th.

Please see [this document](#) for WSD Protocols.

AI and Competition

The New York City District of the National Speech & Debate Association is committed to high quality competition rooted in ethical conduct and fair standards. In this vein, and in accordance with



guidance from the National Office, all instances of AI use during competition rounds shall be treated under the rules for Generative AI found on p. 141 of [the Manual](#).

Harassment and Discrimination Policy

The New York City District of the National Speech & Debate Association is committed to providing its participants, judges, coaches, and staff the opportunity to pursue excellence in their endeavors. This opportunity can exist only when each member of our community is assured of an atmosphere of mutual respect. Accordingly, all forms of harassment and discrimination, whether written or oral, based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, citizenship, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by any applicable federal, state, or local law are prohibited, whether committed by participants, judges, coaches, or observers. All District Tournament Series participants must additionally adhere to NSDA's [Expectations of Conduct](#). Individuals who are found to have violated this policy will be subject to the full range of sanctions, up to and including removal from the tournament.

Belonging and Inclusion Station and Accessibility Contact

The New York City District Tournament is committed to providing a safer, more inclusive speech and debate competition. To that end, we will offer a [Belonging and Inclusion Station](#) as a tournament resource to provide interpersonal support to anyone who feels that an element of the tournament has excluded them. The BIS will also provide safeguards to any concerns about behavior that violates the above harassment and discrimination policy. At the start of each day, tab staff will make an announcement introducing that day's Belonging and Inclusion Advocates who will be able to assist you should you need them. Belonging and Inclusion Advocates and their locations on campus shall be announced closer to the tournament.

BIS Location(s)

The BIS shall have a dedicated room at each tournament site. Those rooms, along with the Belonging and Inclusion Advocates, shall be announced closer to the tournament.

Accessibility Contact

To further our accessibility and inclusion efforts, we have also designated an Accessibility Contact for the tournament. The AC is responsible for accommodations as well as helping with seating, ensuring captioning and other technology is working, maintaining clear pathways, or other needs. This year's AC shall be announced closer to the tournament.



Contact Info & Signoff

If you have any questions about the District Tournament Series, please don't hesitate to reach out to NYC District Chair WK at wkay@berkeleycarroll.org

Sincerely,

Kate Berg, Lydia Esslinger, Sohail Jouya, Teja Vepa, and WK

Your NYC District Committee