

Gracia Burkill Memorial Tournament

November 15, 2025

Gracia Burkill was a gifted English literature teacher from 1935 until her retirement in 1987. In 1968 she began a speech program at David Prouty High School with 4 students; in no time, she was bringing a bus full of students to every tournament. A former member at-large and secretary of the Massachusetts Forensic League, she is now a member of the MSDL Hall of Fame.

Dear MSDL Coach,

The Natick High School Speech and Debate Team invites you and your team to the Gracia Burkill Memorial Tournament to be held at Natick High School on **Saturday, November 15, 2025.**

The following events will be offered: Congressional Debate, Children's Literature Reading, Dramatic Performance, Original Oratory, Informative Speaking, Declamation, Duo Interpretation, Impromptu, Prose Reading, Poetry Reading, Play Reading, Program Oral Interpretation, Varsity Extemporaneous Speaking, Novice Extemporaneous Speaking, Radio Broadcasting, Group Discussion, Multiple Reading, Novice Public Forum Debate, and Varsity Public Forum Debate. Students may register for two events, with the exception of those in Varsity or Novice Public Forum Debate, Varsity or Novice Extemporaneous Speaking, Radio Broadcasting, Group Discussion and Congressional Debate. Multiple Reading is counted as an event for double entry purposes. This is a state-qualifying tournament for the Massachusetts Speech and Debate League.

Please note that due to space limitations, we do expect to use caps on the size of the tournament, which may affect all events. All entries will initially be placed on a waitlist and will be accepted as space allows. We encourage you to register your team early but ask that you do not enter TBAs.

Trophies will be presented to the top students in each event and Novice Oral Interpretation. As Gracia Burkill believed in rewarding students for their individual accomplishments, all competitors who earn a first-place rank or a win in any round will be recognized. In keeping with Ms. Burkill's philosophy of recognizing individual effort, sweepstakes awards will not be given.

All students and judges should plan to be in attendance for the duration of the tournament. All students & judges should have active and linked Tabroom accounts to receive round notifications throughout the day, as well as the devices and chargers necessary to access notifications and ballots.

The Gracia Burkill Memorial Tournament is committed to providing a safe and equitable speech and debate competition. In order to do so, we ask that all attendees be aware of and follow the MSDL Community Standards:

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.

Violations of the MSDL Community Standards may be brought to the attention of our Belonging and Inclusion Advocates. Additionally, standard rules of professionalism and etiquette are expected at all times.

Registration Information: Online registration will be available starting Monday, October 27th at www.tabroom.com. Registration should be completed by Wednesday, November 12th at 5:00 PM. Entries received after the deadline will not be accepted. Please email Tournament Director Joyce Albert at jbalbert78@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Drops: May be emailed to jbalbert78@gmail.com up until 5:00 PM Thursday, November 13th with no fee. Any drops made after that point will be assessed a \$5 nuisance fee. If you have drops the morning of the tournament, MSDL rules require you to report them by 8:00 AM.

Mandatory Morning Call-In: Each school is required to **text 508-397-5143 between 7:00-8:00 AM on the morning of the tournament**. Please let us know the name of your school, confirm you have all of your entries and judges, or let us know of any last-minute drops. This check-in is extremely important, as it allows us to make the changes necessary to start the tournament on time. Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Fees: \$20 per Duo and Public Forum Debate entry. All other entries are \$10 each.

Judges: For Speech and Congressional Debate, you are required to bring one judge for every five entries or fraction thereof. For Public Forum Debate, you are required to bring one judge for every two entries or fraction thereof. In Public Forum Debate, students with at least 2 years of high school debating experience may judge the Novice Public Forum division. Student judges may not also be entered as competitors at the tournament. Judging quotas are based on original entry, before drops. A \$50 penalty will be assessed for any missing judge. This fine is not to be used in lieu of your judging requirement. No hired judges will be available for this tournament.

Congress Bills: Congress bills should be submitted to Joe Bowden at joe.bowden@gmail.com by 5:00 on Thursday, November 6th. Bills will be available online at www.tabroom.com approximately one week prior to the tournament.

Group Discussion topic area: Current topics in education with a focus on what happens after MCAS, school vouchers, post-pandemic learning gaps, cell phones, and AI.

Public Forum Debate resolution: The United States federal government should require technology companies to provide lawful access to encrypted communications.

Tentative Tournament Schedule: This schedule is subject to change.

Registration: 8:15 – 8:45 AM

New Judges Briefing: 8:30 AM

Rounds: 9:15 AM- 4:30 PM

Awards: 5:00 PM

Directions: Natick High School is located at 15 West Street, Natick, MA 01760. [Click here for directions.](#)

A variety of foods, including bagels, pizza, salads, sodas, juice, snacks, and candy will be available throughout the day.

Thank you and we hope to see you on November 15th!

Natick Speech and Debate Team