



2026 NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT QUALIFIERS

NOTE: This document is easier to read if you click on "View" in the menu above and check off "Show outline" that will enable you to maneuver between sections more easily.

The New England District Committee invites you and your students to participate in the **2024 New England District Qualifying Tournaments**.

DISTRICT CONGRESS QUALIFIER:

Saturday, January 17, 2026 - Boston Latin School, 78 Avenue Louis Pasteur, Boston, MA 02115

DISTRICT IE & DEBATE QUALIFIER:

Friday, January 30, 2026 (PF/LD only) - ONLINE

Saturday, January 31, 2026 (All Events)

- IE, BQ, PF, & LD - Concord-Carlisle High School, 500 Walden St, Concord, MA 01742

DISTRICT POLICY DEBATE QUALIFIER:

Date TBD upon interest. Please contact NewEnglandNSDA@gmail.com

2026 NSDA NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE TOURNAMENT [CENTENNIAL YEAR]:

Week of June 14-19, 2026 - Richmond, VA

GENERAL INFORMATION

The New England 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 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. 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.

DISTRICT STATUS & NUMBER OF QUALIFIERS:

- The New England District has attained **Level Three Status** for 2026! This means...
 - The New England District is entitled to 3 qualifiers in every event (*except for Congressional Debate and World Schools 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.
 - Additionally, we may take 4 qualifiers in any event that has 50 entries.
 - **Congressional Debate Exception:** Information regarding the number of qualifiers in Congressional Debate is available on pg. 86 of the NSDA [2025-2026 High School Unified Manual](#).

- **We encourage all member schools with eligible students to participate in one or both of the qualifying tournaments so that we may reach these goals!**
 - It is important that we enter as many students as possible to ensure full qualification within each category. Without proper entry numbers, our district risks losing the opportunity to qualify 3 students per event.
 - If you have students who wish to compete in the qualifier but do not intend to attend the national tournament, please feel free to register them on tabroom.com, and then email NewEnglandNSDA@gmail.com so that qualifying slots may be awarded to the appropriate students. We appreciate your effort to allow others to qualify!

COMPETITOR ELIGIBILITY

- Schools must be current members of the NSDA.
- ***Students must be registered, fully paid NSDA members before the close of registration for the District Tournament.*** They must appear on the school's NSDA roster as both a member and as "districts eligible".
- **Additionally, students must be officially registered as a member user with a valid, unique email address on the NSDA website.**

JUDGING

- **DEBATE:** 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.
- **IE:** All participating schools must provide 1 judge for every 5 entries.
- While judges fulfilling a school's judge obligation are likely to be partial, we ask that all schools strive to provide neutral judges where possible. Given the configuration of the rounds and the likelihood of school conflicts, neutral judges are integral to allow us to provide fair and balanced judging panels.
 - **If you are providing neutral judges as part of your obligation, please indicate this to the tournament staff via newenglandnsda@gmail.com.**
 - **If schools fill their team's judging obligation, but know of additional neutral judges that may be interested in being hired by the district, please have them complete our [Judging Interest Form](#).**

FEEES

- \$15.00 entry fee, plus a \$35.00 school fee
- The school fee is a one-time fee. Schools who participate in both the Congress Qualifier and the IE & Debate Qualifier will only pay the school fee once.
- ***All fees are assessed solely to offset tournament costs (primarily to hire necessary unaffiliated judges).***
- ***Please contact the District Committee at NewEnglandNSDA@gmail.com if you have concerns about fees.***

DROPS

- In order to retain our ability to qualify 3 competitors in each event, the entry minimums outlined under "District Status" must be yielded. Thus, we ask all schools to strive to not have drops if at all possible.
- Day-of-tournament drops will assess a \$25 fee per dropped entry.
- **Substitutions will be accepted and will not incur a fee.**

REQUIRED FORMS

All required forms can be found on the “NSDA Forms” tab on the “[New England District Tournament](#)” registration page on tabroom.com, and must be **uploaded to the tournament website** prior to the start of the tournament.

All Attendees Must Submit:

1. [School Consent Form](#)
2. [Single Entry Letter of Intent Form\(s\)](#): Coaches must BOTH enter their students’ preferences on tabroom.com **AND** submit signed copies of the forms at the district tournament.
 - These forms are required for any student registered for more than one event at the New England District Tournaments.
 - Furthermore, a student who competes at the New England District Tournaments and applies to be a member of our World Schools contingent must also complete this form.

RULES

- This tournament will operate according to the NSDA [2025-2026 High School Unified Manual](#). We highly encourage all participants to read this document.
- For quick reference throughout the above document, new changes for the current year are highlighted in yellow. Other recent changes made within the past one or two years remain highlighted in gray.

NOMINATIONS FOR SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Our district has the opportunity to recognize members of our community through the NSDA’s many individual recognitions. Please consider taking some time to nominate not only a Student of the Year, but colleagues across our community for their service to our leagues. We do so much amazing work year-round. Let’s celebrate one another this year!

DISTRICT STUDENT OF THE YEAR

- Coaches may nominate a graduating senior member for the District Student of the Year Award. This award is intended to spotlight a student whose attitude transcends trophies and accolades; a student who characterizes the very traits of humility, integrity, leadership, respect, and service touted by the [NSDA Code of Honor](#).
- All nominations MUST be made through the [NSDA Website Form](#) no later than Friday, January 24, 2025. Once a coach submits a nomination, it will automatically be forwarded to the District Chair.
- The District Committee will recruit a neutral selection committee to review the applications.
- The student selected as District Student of the Year will be submitted as a candidate for NSDA National Student of the Year.

DISTRICT COMMUNITY MEMBER AWARDS

- The NSDA honors other District Community Members for their service in the following categories:
 - Coach of the Year
 - Assistant Coach of the Year

- New Coach of the Year
- Volunteer of the Year
- Alumni of the Year
- Communicator of the Year
- If you would like to nominate a district community member to be recognized, please send a nomination of no more than 250 words via email to NewEnglandNSDA@gmail.com by Friday, January 23, 2026.

All District Recognition Awards will be announced on Saturday, January 31, 2026 at the awards ceremony for the IE & Debate qualifying tournament.

WORLD SCHOOLS DEBATE (and REQUIREMENTS)

Students interested in applying to the New England District World Schools Debate Teams **are required to attend either the District Congress Qualifier and/or District Speech and Debate Qualifier**. Thus, these students will be required to complete a Single Entry Letter of Intent Form declaring their preferred event if they have not already done so at either qualifier.

- The New England District hopes to advance **two** Schools teams to the National Tournament. Each team will consist of 3-5 students from one or more schools.
 - Following our District Tournaments, an email will be sent with application information.
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INFORMATION PERTAINING SPECIFICALLY TO THE CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE QUALIFIER

EVENTS OFFERED

- Senate
- House

ENTRY CAPS

- Schools may enter up to two students in the Senate.
- Schools may enter the number of students in the House equivalent to their member degree allowance noted on page 86 of the [2025-2026 High School Unified Manual](#).
- The number of total entries each school may register is based on your school strength, a formula calculated by the NSDA based on your coach and student participation records.
- Information about your school strength can be found on your NSDA school profile page by logging in at www.speechanddebate.org. Click on the District Info tab.
- Tabroom should automatically limit your entries based on your school's strength.

REGISTRATION

Registration for the Congress Qualifier is now open and will close on Saturday, January 10, 2026 by 8:00 PM.

Note: This is an earlier registration deadline than typical for MSDL tournaments.

LEGISLATION

Legislation is due by Friday, January 9, 2026 at 6:00 PM and should be emailed to NewEnglandNSDA@gmail.com and cc District Committee Member, pjwexler06@gmail.com. The packet will be posted on Tabroom.com. Guidelines for formatting legislation can be found on page 47-48 in the [2025-2026 High School Unified Manual](#).

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF INTERNET-ENABLED DEVICES IN CONGRESS

This tournament will abide by guidelines listed on pages 46 of the [2025-2026 High School Unified Manual](#).

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Details will be sent closer to the tournament via email.

- 8:00 AM - Coach Check-in with TAB
- 8:30 AM - General Assembly (Swearing in and Judge Meeting)
- 9:00 AM - Session 1 (Senate & House)
- 12:00 PM - Lunch
- 1:00 PM - Senate Session 2 & House Final
- 4:00 PM - Recess
- Awards will follow as early as possible

FOOD

The Boston Latin Team will have snacks and lunch items available for purchase in cash throughout the day. Please encourage students to support our hosts by purchasing food at the cafeteria!

CHAPERONES

Teams are required to have an adult representative on-site at Boston Latin School at all times throughout the competition. Teams found in violation of this will be disqualified from the tournament.

INFORMATION PERTAINING SPECIFICALLY TO IE & DEBATE QUALIFIER

DEBATE EVENTS

- Big Questions Debate
- Lincoln Douglas Debate
- Policy Debate (Date TBD upon interest. Please contact NewEnglandNSDA@gmail.com.)
- Public Forum Debate

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

- Dramatic Interpretation
- Duo Interpretation
- Humorous Interpretation
- Informative Speaking
- International Extemp
- Original Oratory
- Program Oral Interpretation
- U.S. Extemp

ENTRY CAPS

- The number of total entries each school may register is based on the NSDA's formulated school strength. The formula is calculated based on your coach and student participation records.
- Information about school strength can be found on your NSDA school profile page by logging in at SpeechandDebate.org. Click on the School Profile tab.
- Tabroom should automatically limit your entries based on your school's strength.

DOUBLE ENTRY

Double entry is allowed with the following restrictions:

- Double entry is allowed in all IE (DI, DUO, HI, INFO, IX, OO, POI, and USX), but a student may not enter both IX and USX.
- Double entry is not allowed between Debate events (Big Questions, Lincoln Douglas, Policy, and Public Forum) but a debater may also enter an IE event.

REGISTRATION

Registration for speech & debate events will open on Sunday, December 30, 2026 and will close on Friday, January 23, 2026 at 8:00 PM.

Note: This is an earlier registration deadline than typical for MSDL tournaments.

IE SOURCES/REQUIREMENTS

- All contestants must have copies of their cuttings available upon request to TAB staff. All source material must be publicly available throughout the duration of the tournament. See the [2025-2026 High School Unified Manual](#) for details about permitted source material (page 58-60).
- It is the affirmative duty of each coach and each student entered in interpretation events to determine absolutely that the cutting being performed meets all rules for material. Interpretation source material must be available at all district tournaments in the event of a protest.
- All contestants and coaches should read the specific rules that pertain to their event, which can be found in the [2025-2026 High School Unified Manual](#).

ORATORY AND INFORMATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- Each student's manuscript must be available throughout the duration of the tournament.
- The script must identify quoted materials, state the number of quoted words and include a works cited page in APA or MLA format. (Maximum of 150 directly quoted words).
- Both the student and coach must attest by signature that the speech is the original work of the contestant.

DEBATE TOPICS

Big Questions Debate: 2025-2026 Topic

Resolved: Moral systems in theism are preferable to non-theistic moral systems.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate: January/February 2026 Topic

Resolved: The possession of nuclear weapons is immoral.

Public Forum Debate: January 2026 Topic

Resolved: The People's Republic of China should substantially reduce its international extraction of natural resources.

BIG QUESTIONS DEBATE

There are differences in the qualification process and requirements for Big Questions Debate from other events. Please note, the following applies ONLY to Big Questions Debate:

- We will hold a qualifier for Big Questions Debate IF we have at least 10 members from at least 2 member schools registered.
- If we meet the above threshold, the top 2 students will qualify to attend Nationals.
- All students must compete as individuals.
- All competitors must be NSDA members and eligible to compete in the district tournament series.
- Big Questions entries will not count toward a school's district entry limits.
- The qualifying students will not be eligible to compete in the Big Questions division at the National Tournament if they have qualified in a main event. Alternates will be accepted if the qualifiers cannot attend.

DEBATE SCOUTING

The NSDA Executive Council strongly discourages debate scouting at the District Tournament.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The **Tournament LiveDoc** (which will include a more accurate schedule) will be shared closer to the tournament itself. The schedule below may change based on the number of entries and the availability of judges and/or rooms.

- **Friday, January 30th - ONLINE** (PF/LD only)
 - 2:30-4:30 PM - Coach check-in
 - 5:00 PM - Judge Meeting
 - Rounds will begin at 5:30 PM
- **Saturday, January 31st** at Concord Carlisle (All Events)
 - 7:45-8:00 AM - Coach Check-in
 - 8:30 AM - Judge Meetings
 - 9:00 AM - Round 1 BQ & Speech / Round 3 PF/LD
 - 10:30 AM - Round 2 Speech & BQ / Round 4 PF/LD
 - 11:00 AM -
 - 12:30 PM - Round 3 Speech & BQ / PF/LD elimination rounds begin
 - 2:00 PM - Round 4 Speech & BQ
 - 4:00 PM - Speech & BQ elimination rounds begin
 - Elimination Rounds will continue as necessary

FOOD

The Concord-Carlisle Team will have snacks and lunch items available for purchase in cash throughout the day. Please encourage students to support our hosts by purchasing food at the cafeteria!

CHAPERONES

Teams are required to have an adult representative on-site at Boston Latin School at all times throughout the competition. Teams found in violation of this will be disqualified from the tournament.

We look forward to seeing you at our District Qualifying Tournaments! Please feel free to contact any of the District Committee Members with questions.

Sincerely,

[Scott Caron](#)

New England District Chair | National Speech & Debate Association

New England District Committee: [Josh Cohen](#), [Sarah Donnelly](#), [Sheryl Kaczmarek](#), & [Paul Wexler](#)

