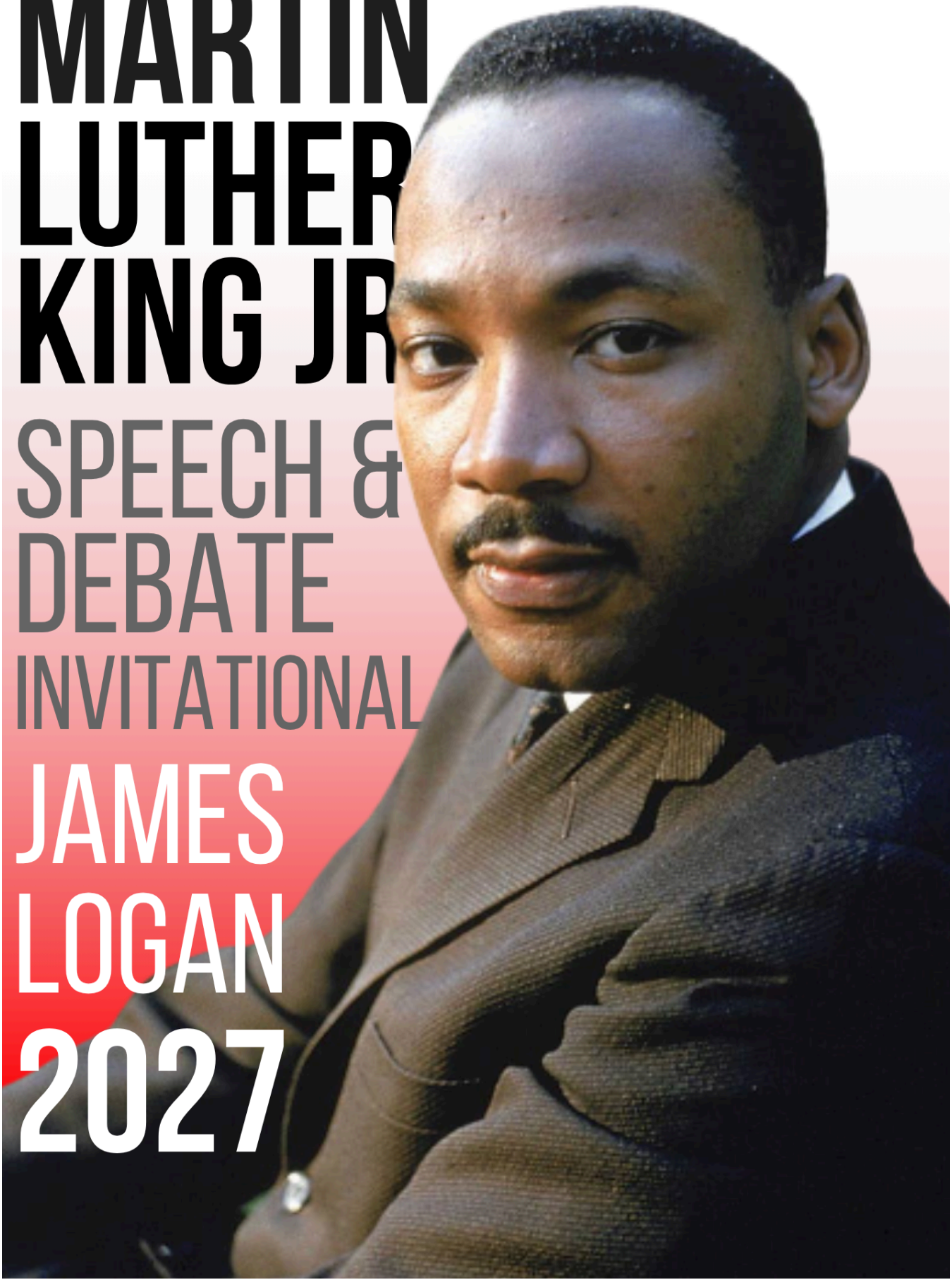
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR

SPEECH & DEBATE INVITATIONAL

JAMES LOGAN

2027



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. INVITATIONAL
JAMES LOGAN SPEECH & DEBATE



Coaches & Competitors,

Welcome to the 2027 Martin Luther King Jr. Invitational. We look forward to inviting competitors, coaches, and judges to the James Logan High School campus for our 35th year. We take pride in being able to offer an activity that continues to honor Dr. King's legacy of empowering young voices.

We host this tournament to further support the diversity of this activity in hopes that our youth will be inspired to engage in social change in their community and the world. Our hope is to provide a brave and inclusive space for competition where competitors can bring performances and researched cases to continue to fight for social justice.

The tournament will take place from **Friday, January 15 - Sunday, January 17, 2027** at James Logan High School in Union City, California. In this invitation letter you will find important information regarding registration, logistics, and changes to our tournament.

If you have any suggestions, comments, or recommendations to help us improve the tournament, please feel free to contact me. If you have questions regarding any of the information do not hesitate to reach out. We are pleased you have chosen to compete at our tournament and wish you and your team the best of luck!

Sincerely,

Justin Kurup
Director of Speech & Debate
James Logan High School

Tournament Director
Contact: jkurup@nhusd.k12.ca.us

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

We will be hosting the tournament at James Logan High School located at 1800 H Street, Union City, CA 94587. Public parking is located on H Street, across the street from the James Logan Performing Arts Center adjacent to the swim complex & basketball courts. Please do not arrive on campus before 3:45 PM on Friday and before 7:00 AM on the weekend.

We will continue to run the tournament on Tabroom.com (www.mlk.tabroom.com) this year. All students and judges must be linked to their school via Tabroom.com prior to the competition. Coaches can review the Linking Students to Tabroom document for assistance.

SCHEDULE

The schedule for all events will be posted on www.mlk.tabroom.com. As a reminder **all times are posted in Pacific Standard Time (PST)**.

EVENTS

Debate	Speech	Congress
Lincoln Douglas (LD)	Declamation (DEC)	National Circuit
Public Forum (PF)	Dramatic Interp (DI)	
Parliamentary Debate (PARLI)	Duo Interp (DUO)	
Policy (CX)	Humorous Interp (HI)	
	Impromptu (IMP)	
	Informative (INFO)	
	International Extemp (IX)	
	National Extemp (NX)	
	Original Advocacy (OA)	
	Original Oratory (OO)	
	Original Prose & Poetry (OPP)	
	Program Oral Interp (POI)	

CROSS ENTRY

The tournament allows cross-entry in one (1) Debate event and up to three (3) speech events. Cross-entry between Speech & Debate events are allowed, however, **students entering in Congress may not cross-enter to compete in any other event.**

Triathlete competitors, or students who have entered in 3 speech events, are eligible for the annual competition awarded to the top 3 performers in the entire tournament.

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DIVISION

The MLK tournament is a **varsity** competition in all events. Coaches must only enter students who are competing at the varsity level in their events. We cannot accept any independent entries at this time. All competing students must represent a registered high school. ***Any student competitors found in violation of this will be immediately disqualified from the competition.***

There is **no middle school** division this year.

REGISTRATION EVENT CAPS

If needed to uphold the integrity of competition and ensure a fair break, we may implement an entry cap per school in all events to balance the overall entry.

Debate events - 7 entries
Speech events - 15 entries per event
Congress - 15 entries

Any entries greater than these caps will remain on the waitlist. Further entries per school will be admitted if space allows by January 11, 2027.

Coaches can claim "TBA" slots in Tabroom. All entries will be waitlisted and cleared once names are registered. **Competitor names must be added by January 8, 2027**. Waitlisted entries beyond this date will be cleared once space becomes available. Coaches will be notified if waitlisted entries have cleared up until Monday, January 11, 2027.

EVENT RULES

We will adhere to NSDA rules (section 2 of High School Manual) for all national circuit events: this includes Lincoln Douglas, Public Forum, Policy, DI, Duo, HI, Info, IX, NX, OO, and POI.

We will be following CHSSA rules & regulations for all California state events which include Parliamentary Debate, IMP, DEC, OA, and OPP.

Congressional Debate rules and regulations are posted in the Congress packet available on Tabroom. Congress legislation will be posted by December 15, 2026.



If there are questions or concerns that arise regarding the rules during rounds, please have a coach submit the form to the Protest Committee within ninety (90) minutes of the conclusion of the round, or prior to the start of the next round - whichever comes first.

DATES & DEADLINES

Friday, December 18, 2026

- ➔ Recommended registration deadline for all events is due by 11:59 PM PST (before Winter Break)
- ➔ Please input competitors names into Tabroom by this date to be cleared off the waitlist.

Friday, January 8, 2027

- ➔ All registration payments must be RECEIVED no later than this date. If your registration is not received by this deadline, your team's entries will be immediately dropped.
- ➔ All TBA slots will be dropped after this point.
- ➔ The DROP DEADLINE for this year's tournament by 11:59 PM PST.
- ➔ Any drops made after this deadline will incur the full registration fee penalty for that event.
- ➔ ***ALL FEES WILL BE FROZEN ON THIS DATE***. Drops after this date will not be refunded. Any outstanding fees owed will need to be taken care of prior to the start of the tournament.

Monday, January 11, 2027

- ➔ Judge registration deadline at 11:59 PM PST.
- ➔ Waitlisted entries to the tournament will be cleared by this date and coaches will be contacted. Teams not cleared by this date will have little to no chance of being entered into the tournament.

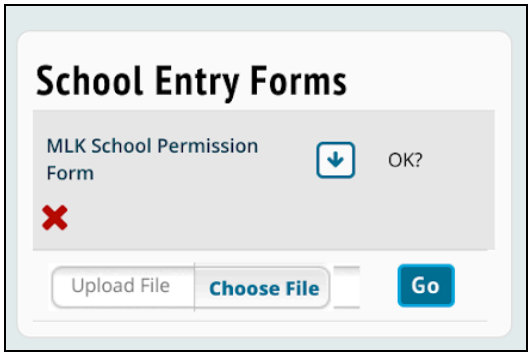


TOURNAMENT LOGISTICS

PERMISSION FORMS

Each school will be responsible for submitting a school permission form signed by their school administrator in order to complete registration. The **document is available for download on Tabroom and will be due by January 8, 2027.**

1. **MLK School Participation Permission Form →** Signed by school-approved chaperone and school administrator. *When registering in Tabroom you can download, sign, and upload the PDF on the right side panel.*



Private academies will have additional paperwork each student will need to complete. Please email the tournament director for instructions.

TOC BIDS

We are pleased that the MLK Invitational is a bid tournament for the 2027 National Individual Events Tournament of Champions (NIETOC) and the Tournament of Champions (TOC) at the University of Kentucky.

Octofinals Bid	Quarterfinals Bid	Semifinals Bid	Finals Bid
Public Forum (Sliver) Original Oratory	Public Forum (Gold) Humorous Interp Informative International Extemp National Extemp Dramatic Interp	Duo Interp Program Oral Interp	Congress (Top 16)

Note: Bid rounds for speech events are based on predictions from the last several years. Actual bids are based on entry sizes and are subject to change.

We are an approved NPDL-TOC tournament for Parliamentary Debate.



ENTRY FEES

Entry fees are as follows:

Congress - $60/entry

Speech - $60/entry

Duo - $90/team

LD - $80/entry

Parli/Policy - $100/team

PF - $110/team

REGISTRATION PAYMENT

We request that all payments be made electronically via our website: www.jamesloganforensics.org/mlk. Credit card payments will be processed through Squarespace. Once payment is submitted you will receive a confirmation email. Tournament Director will update the Fees tab in your Tabroom account with confirmed payment or with remaining balance.

All payments are made as a donation to the James Logan Forensics nonprofit, **Friends of Forensics (Tax ID: 94-3228131).** If requested by your school administration, please download the Friends of Forensics W-9 Form.

Please contact Tournament Directors if your school is only able to make payment via check. **Checks must be received in the mail by January 8, 2027**. *Absolutely no personal checks will be accepted.*

FEE WAIVERS

As a Title I public school, we understand that fundraising efforts can be difficult. As always, we want to support competitors and their programs as best we can. If applicable, complete the MLK Financial Assistance Request by **January 1, 2027.** For more information regarding fee waivers and/or financial assistance please contact the Tournament Director.

ONLINE REGISTRATION

On Friday, January 15, 2027 electronic registration will be automated for schools who do not have outstanding fees or necessary drops. For those schools with outstanding fees and/or late drops, registration will take place before 12:00 PM PST. We request that schools competing in only speech events still register during this time slot.



JUDGING REQUIREMENT

There will be dedicated judge pools based on events. Judges will need to be registered in one of the following pools:

- ➔ Policy
- ➔ LD
- ➔ PF
- ➔ Parli
- ➔ Congress
- ➔ Speech

There will not be a cross-entry option between judge categories to ensure an on-time tournament, allow single-flighted debate rounds when possible, and prioritize judge burnout.

All judge names must be entered and linked in Tabroom.com to cover entries. We are planning on pre-paneling rounds and posting judge obligations the day before the tournament. Uncovered round fines will be strictly enforced this year, so please make sure that your judging commitments are fulfilled throughout the entire tournament schedule. We reserve the right to use any and all judges for ANY event offered at the tournament, in order to ensure that we stay on schedule.

It is the affirmative duty of the school registering for this tournament to ensure their judges are trained in the event they are adjudicating. We are asking that all parent and community judges complete the free Cultural Competency Judge Training offered by the NSDA to better the experience for all competitors.

As always, **we request coaches nominate Elimination judges in all events.** This can be done when entering judges in Tabroom or by contacting tournament officials. We strongly encourage coaches to judge on behalf of their programs for all Sunday elimination rounds. Inexperienced judges may not be used on Sunday at the discretion of the tournament.

Hiring judges is not possible this year. We do not have the people power for this. Missing judge fees are set so high to deter programs from paying the fee and instead encourage them to bring judges. We hope that all schools will be able to meet their judge burden.



Some Judging reminders:

- Please have judges create their own Tabroom account using their own email accounts. We will only accept the real names of each judge.
- Please have judges enter their CELL PHONE number on their tabroom accounts as we will use this number to send text reminders throughout the tournament.
- Please ensure that your judges can stay for their entire commitment. We do not allow judges to judge under any name but their own.
- If a judge does not get an assignment for two rounds in a row, please have them check in with the judge lounge for support.
- We especially need judges committed to the back-to-back debate outrounds starting on Saturday night to ensure that they go smoothly and the tournament stays on time.

TOURNAMENT COMMITMENT

TAB STAFF

Tournament Director
Justin Kurup
jkurup@nhusd.k12.ca.us

EQUITY STATEMENT

As a community of educators, we commit ourselves to the advancement of equity, social justice, and educational opportunity for our people. We understand that we have the privilege to stand on the shoulders of such great leaders of equally great movements, like the namesake of the tournament, and because of this, our commitment to solidarity perseveres.

Tournament officials are committed to the safety and well-being of all its participants -- students, coaches, and judges. Equity Officers will be available to address concerns that challenge safety and fairness of the competition. We have Zero Tolerance of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination of any kind. We expect all competitors, coaches, judges, and staff to make a commitment to providing a safe environment for all students to compete.

The Equity Committee will be able to assist in adjudication of any protests that arise. This committee will serve students and coaches to ensure our diverse populations' concerns are heard and uphold the standards of inclusion that this activity promises to have.



The Equity Committee is honored to be led by:

Chair
Dr. Tommie Lindsey, Jr.
Vice President of NSDA Board (ret.)
Director Emeritus, James Logan

Dr. Lindsey's equity statement:

> "*As we move into unprecedented times it is important for our program to be at the forefront to initiate the ways in which the world should change. Speech and Debate students contribute a diverse, intellectual, and promising narrative for our future. Incorporating equity into our mission as an organization is putting action to the words that often just live on paper. We are committed to equity for all. This core value will allow opportunity to exist for all students.*
>
> *James Logan Forensics prides itself as a team that champions one of the most culturally diverse communities in the nation. It is incumbent on our organization to represent students in a fair and just way. Having an equity committee at the MLK tournament ensures we are holding ourselves and the community accountable so that, regardless of existing issues of access or resources, all of your voices will be heard.*"

AWARDS

The award ceremonies will be held immediately following the speech final rounds. **Names will be recognized "on stage" during the Awards Ceremony for all Speech & Congress finalists and all Debate quarter-finalists and up.**

Awards will be available for the following competitors starting at:

- ➔ *Double-octafinalists* in Debate Events
- ➔ *Quarterfinalists* in Individual Events
- ➔ *Semifinalists* in Congress

MLK MAKERS MARKET

Included in the registration fees is an opportunity for students and coaches to participate in a vendor market of BIPOC local small businesses. More information about Be the Change Vendor Market will be available at www.mlk.tabroom.com.