



South Carolina Speech and Theatre Association

Executive Council Meeting Fall Session
Sept 6 2025 2 pm

AGENDA

Leah Wren, *SCSTA Administrative Coordinator-Presiding*
Emily Robinson-*Recording Secretary*

I. Call to Order & Welcome

Leah Wren, Admin. Coord.

- Attendance: Carrie Ponder, Shannon McAllister, Elyssa Mersdorf, Pat Gagliano, Lyle Browne, Mary Joy Reese, Stephanie Van Hassel, Hali Christopher, Emily Robinson, Jennifer Simmons (virtual), Tyrie Rowell (virtual), and Madison Latham (virtual)
- Started at 2:10pm

II. Old Business

A. Review of minutes from [ExCouncil June Meeting](#)

- **Action Item: Make flyer for SCSTA**
- Minutes were approved by all members

B. Admin Coordinator Report

Leah Wren, Admin Coord

- Nothing new to report
- 5 out of the 6 speakers are working
- Signage and a quote was filled out by Hali

C. Treasurer's Report

Pat Gagliano, Treasurer

- Started \$1770.20 on July 1st, 2024
- Taken in \$1498 of income
- Expenses so far: retreat lodging, lunch, and website
- Bank Balance: \$1242.04
- By the end of September: \$1744.04
- Projected Income: \$8390
- Projected Expenses 2025-26 as per budget: \$7120
- Projected income over expenses 2025-26: \$1269

D. Membership Report

Emily Robinson, Membership Chair

- Thank you notes are currently being worked on with the new dates, so that members from last year are aware of festival dates.
- Emily will email out questions to members about a student/school/teacher spotlight on why they attend our festivals.
- Dates will be updated on the website.

E. SCSTA [Executive Council 2025-2026](#)

- The only term expiring is Carrie's role as Past President–nominations will be taken at the Annual Meeting.
- DeAndra Sosa will be serving as the Middle School Secretary (2029-2030).
- Emily Robinson will be serving as Middle School Festival Host for 2025-2026.

F. [SCSTA Constitution and Bylaws](#)

- Where you can find the jobs and responsibilities of each position.
- How to nominate and elect.
- Carrie Ponder will serve on the Communication Arts Award Committee with Mary Joy Reese and Emily Robinson.
- Rubrics updated and sent out by September 30th, not one week after the retreat.

G. [Letter of Decorum](#)

- No phones are not allowed in the room–absolutely no recording or photos (needs to be included in the festival packet).
- Make sure phones are on silent.

III. New Business

A. Division Meeting Reports

Division Meeting Reports

1. MS Division

Hali Christopher, MS Div VP

25 SCSTA MS Division Meeting Minutes 9.6.25

- Sending out a Doodle Poll for dates in January.
- Fall date on the calendar for a meeting.
- Went through and revised the rubrics for each event and left comments on what needs to be fixed.
- Send out to all the adjudicators the dates on their calendars earlier.
- Include a question on the adjudicator form about being connected to a student who's competing to make sure they're not in that room.
- **Action Item:** Mary Joy will send out a President's email, but also an email to past judges and coaches. Adjudicator interest form will be placed online.
- All SCSTA events can count as PD.
- In preliminary rounds there's a penalty, then in a finals round they're DQ.
- That penalty is per judge.
- Limit on the number of students–talk about that in the Fall meeting.

2. [HS Division](#) ; [Minutes](#)

Jennifer Simmons, HS Div VP

- No major changes other than adding back Impromptu Speaking.
- Streamline handbook.
- **Action Item:** Schedule a January meeting

3. College Division ATTACH MINUTES HERE

Lyle Browne, Col Div VP

i. SCSTA College Minutes 9-6-25 Retreat.pdf

- Addressing coaches about their responsibilities–going through the rubrics.

- Game Plan: what happens if we go over our time limit? (plant in the crowd)
- Intermezzo Events: Duet Podcast and Duet Musical Theatre
 - Duet Podcast: coached by Elyssa, doing live feedback, and Instagram Lives
 - USC Host 2027-2028
 - Shannon will reach out to colleges about participating at their festival.

B. 2025-2026 Dates

Mary Joy Reese, President

1. All festival documents complete: **September 30th (uploaded on October 1st)**
2. Membership/Registration due dates
 - i. **Early Bird: December 15th, 2025**
 - ii. **Annual Membership: February 1st, 2026 (postmarked by January 15th)**
3. ExCouncil January Meeting: **January 10th, 2026 at USC 10:00am**
4. Division Meetings mid-year via Zoom
 - i. **College: Monday, October 20th at 4:30-5:30pm**
 - ii. **High School: Thursday, January 15th**
 - iii. **Middle School: Thursday, October 9th**
5. Communication Arts Award Nomination Deadline: **Friday, November 14th, 2025**
6. College/MS Festival - **Saturday, March 28th at Newberry Pat Gagliano, Coll Fest, Host**
7. Annual Meeting: **Saturday, March 21st (at HS Festival during lunch)**
8. HS Division, **Saturday, March 21st at Byrnes HS** *Taylor Smith, HS Festival Host*
9. Ex Council Early June, date TBD at Jan meeting:
 - i. Get some information on the website earlier.
10. Retreat date weekend after Labor Day
11. 2027 Triple Festival: **Saturday, March 20th, 2027**

IV. Items from the Floor / Announcements

Social media

- Nametags for each student—knowing if we can post students on social media or not.
- Consent for posting pictures of the students.
- Asterisk by their name if they can't be photographed.

Festival Packet

- Calling it a festival handbook!
- Have it updated by September 30th.

[Adjudicator Interest](#)

V. Adjourn

Meeting ended at 4:18pm

Action Item: Leah will send out a welcome ceremony agenda to all festival hosts.

SCSTA: Encouraging a passion for excellence in Speech & Theatre Education in South Carolina