



MASSACHUSETTS SPEECH & DEBATE LEAGUE

Board Meeting

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

Via [Zoom](#)

7:30-8:30 PM

Board Members in Attendance: Joyce Albert, Joe Bowden, Scott Caron, Josh Cohen, Jim Honeyman, Lisa Honeyman, Ryan Julian, Sheryl Kaczmarek, Janet Novack, Mike Plunkett, Tammie Ruda, Chris Sheldon, PJ Wexler.

Guest: Nisreen Ameer

Absent: Lindsay Donovan

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by the president, Tammie Ruda.

1. Welcome (Tammie)

Tammie welcomed us and shared the agenda with the group. She also welcomed Nisreen, a new MSDL coach, who is joining us this evening.

2. Hall of Fame Selection Committee (Tammie)

This group is typically made up of Hall of Fame members. Tammie reached out to Marc Rischitelli (who has chaired in the past) and he has agreed to co-chair this year. Tim Averill has agreed to work with Marc. Tammie asked if anyone else would like to be on the committee. Lisa Honeyman agreed to be on the committee as the board liaison. We have two nominations so far and Tammie will put out a final call for nominations. The deadline will be January 15, 2026.

3. Upcoming Tournaments: LS, Arlington, Holly, Newton South

Lincoln-Sudbury:

- Joyce surveyed the board members to determine who will be at the tournament so she and Josh can organize tournament staffing. Kaz and Janet will help with debate settings remotely. Joe is looking for additional parliamentarians. He hopes to pull Br. Cavet into Congress.
- Joyce will check in with Nancy re: rooms and make sure L-S has arranged for awards. Lisa, Joyce & Josh will work with the L-S students to make sure the awards ceremony runs smoothly.

- Jim mentioned that there are several schools listed as attending L-S but who have no students or judges registered. We don't think they are actually interested in attending, so we will not follow up on trying to collect their participation agreements and annual dues.
- Tammie suggested that host schools put a note in their invitation so that any schools that don't already have a participation agreement on file know they need to file one. Alternatively, host schools can spell out their own requirements in their invitations.

Arlington:

- PJ is leading the Arlington tournament. He met with them this week and discussed tournament logistics with them.
- They have worked out the parking situation.
- They have added rooms since last year, which should be helpful re: rooms.
- Most of the board members will be at the Arlington tournament to help.
- We have to be finished with competition by 4:30 so that we can be out of the building by 5:30 pm. That will mean we will need to be very efficient during the day!
- Greg will be running the speech side of things.
- There will be a General Tab Room Open House for coaches/advisors at Arlington
- In order to facilitate the Open House, we need additional coaches at the INFO table.

Holly:

- Joyce reports that things are going fine re: planning.
- Most board members will be at the tournament to help with things.

Newton South:

- There will be a Debate Tab Room Open House for coaches/advisors at Newton South
We do want to keep in mind that a lot of what we want people to know about doesn't actually happen in the TAB room at tournaments. Often we're outside of TAB doing things like chasing ballots in classrooms - or having conversations in the hallway.

We had a general conversation about the purpose of having TAB room open houses. We have two disparate goals: one is to work with people who may want to work in the TAB room someday and the other is to invite new folks in for a short visit so they can see what we do - to be open and inviting. In Debate, a lot goes on during the day in TAB. On the speech side, most of the tournament is pre-set and we are only putting out fires during the day if something comes up (like a student gets sick and has to withdraw from the tournament.)

4. Communications Requests – Tammie (on behalf of Lindsay)

A. Volunteers for Board Member Profiles

- Let Lindsay know if you are willing to be profiled in an upcoming issue of the newsletter.

B. Pitches for December Brief

C. Keep the Tournament Photos Coming

- D. We want to encourage people to apply for a Professional Development Grant. We have one person who applied at the beginning of September and we need to respond to that. Tammie asked if we could put one more note out about it and set a deadline for the first round of grants. Lisa will update the website to reflect decisions we made about grants at the October 21, 2024 board meeting. Grant applications are due as follows:

Deadline 1: January 5, 2026

Deadline 2: April 11, 2026

5. Discussion: Can we periodically hold Board meetings in person?

- We met in person in August. That was nice. (We enjoyed it!!)
- We will meet in person as well on May 2, 2026, as well. (Annual board meeting).
- We decided that while we do enjoy “hanging out together,” we don’t need to meet in person because the logistics are too difficult to make it worthwhile. (Traffic on week nights, commitments on non-tournament weekends, etc.)
- Maybe we can get together in person in a more social context??

6. New Business

- We expressed our love for Janet's cat.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM

Respectfully submitted,

--Lisa Honeyman

clerk/secretary