



The Arlington High School Speech and Debate Team cordially invites you to the

“St. Nick Showdown”

Speech and Debate Tournament
An MSDL-Sanctioned Competition

Saturday, December 13, 2025



Location: Arlington High School

Car parking address: 14 Mill Brook Drive, Arlington MA 02476

School bus drop-off address: 869 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA 02476

Speech Competition

All MSDL speech events (including Congress) plus Duo Improv as a special event

Debate Competition

Lincoln-Douglas and Public Forum. We are also proud to offer a dedicated division of middle school PF.

Melanie Konstandakis
Tournament Director

Kira Pontes
Maya Venkatesh
Yuija Wang
Tobin Pacheco

Aly Lay
Spencer Carman
Grace Zhu

Student hosts

Contact - For questions related to payment, food, and parking, please write to us at:

speechanddebate.arlington@gmail.com

For questions related to tournament registration, please write to pjwexler06@gmail.com



Welcome!

Our speech and debate tournament will be held at Arlington High School and will feature all MSDL speech and debate events.

We are excited to be hosting for the third time in a brand-new school building (opened in November 2023), and we will celebrate the occasion accordingly with winter-themed fun and festivities throughout the day.

In accordance with the spirit of the event, we will be awarding “best dressed” to the competitor who dresses elaborately and appropriately with the winter theme. Oranges and chocolate coins will be available to all, regardless of dress, in honor of the Holiday St. Nicholas Day.



MSDL Community Standards

The Arlington High School Speech and Debate 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 (reproduced from [here](#)):

- **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.

Our Open-Door Policy

Our tournament promotes an open-door policy in speech events. We ask that competitors issue trigger warnings if their performance or speech involves sensitive issues, such as suicide, sexual violence, child abuse, and so forth. Competitors and spectators who are uncomfortable may leave before the performance begins and return after its completion. Students who choose to excuse themselves must do so before the piece begins and may not re-enter the room until after its completion. Judges may not penalize a competitor for opting to step out after a trigger warning.

Physical accommodations

- **Mobility challenges** - Please let us know of a judge or competitor with a mobility challenge. We can direct you to more convenient parking spaces and arrange competition spaces that reduce travel distance.



- Reach out to us if you have allergies and would like us to provide allergen-free food.

Registration

Key dates and deadlines

- Please register competitors on Tabroom.com by Wednesday, December 10, at 5:00 PM.
- Please register judges on Tabroom.com by Thursday, December 11, at 5:00 PM.
- Coaches may drop entries until Thursday from Tabroom.com, December 11, at 5:00 PM. Fees freeze at this time even if you subsequently drop said entrant. After that time, please send drops to BOTH pjwexler06@gmail.com AND speechanddebate.arlington@gmail.com until Friday, December 12 at 10:00 PM.
- We reserve the right to levy nuisance fees of \$10/per unreported drop, in addition to other fees.

Day-of-tournament registration

- Each school must confirm their registration by text to **(781) 588-2258** between 7:00 AM and 7:45 AM on the day of the tournament.
- If there are no changes to your registration, send a text identifying your school and specifying “No changes”.
- If you must change your registration, specify your (1) school, (2) the event, and (3) the change. Please understand that last-minute changes should be due to necessity only (e.g., illness).

Registration requirements

- **Designate responsible adults:** When registering, please designate an adult or adults as (1) the school contact for issues/problems/emergencies; (2) the recipient for coach emails; and (3) the adult who will be onsite and present throughout the tournament.
- **Middle School entries welcome:** In accordance with MSDL rules (Section 1.2), coaches may register middle school students and high school students from the same school district as belonging to the same team. For awards, the tournament will treat the students from middle and high schools as belonging to distinct teams. Please note that there is a separate middle school public forum debate division.
- **Public Forum Debate - Hybrid entries welcome:** Hybrid entries include students from different schools. Each school must be an MSDL member, and each school must provide a sanctioned adult to be responsible for their participant(s).



- **Speech - Register novice readers in Novice Oral Interpretation:** These entrants include students competing in Children's Literature, Play Reading, Poetry Reading, and Prose Reading. There will be a final round in Novice Oral Interpretation for the top six non-advancing novices who competed in these reading events.
- **Speech - Double entries.** Competitors may enter in two events with the following exceptions: (1) Competitors in Debate, Congress, and Group Discussion may not double enter; (2) Competitors may not double enter in two draw events (Novice extemporaneous speaking, varsity extemporaneous speaking, radio broadcasting).
- **Speech - Triple entries.** Students may triple enter if (1) one of the events is Multiple, and (2) none of the events is a draw event (see previous bullet).

Adult supervision

Students must be accompanied by an adult, approved by their school's administration, who will be responsible for them for the entire time they are present at the "St. Nick Showdown." The responsible adult must be physically present at Arlington High School and reachable by the tournament staff while students from their school are on site.



Event details

Debate resolutions

- Lincoln Douglas MSDL NOVICE division - Resolved: In a democracy, voting ought to be compulsory.
- Lincoln Douglas Novice November December Division: Resolved: The United States ought to rewind substantial tracts of land.
- Lincoln Douglas VARSITY division - Resolved: The United States ought to rewind substantial tracts of land.
- Public Forum (VARSITY and NOVICE, including hybrid entries) - Resolved: The United States federal government should require technology companies to require lawful access to encrypted communications.
- Big Questions - Resolved: Moral systems rooted in theism are preferable to non-theistic moral systems.

Speech event topics

- Group Discussion: The overall topic area will be “space exploration”. We will announce specific subtopics for each round, drawing on the focus areas China, Mars, ISS, and Colonization.
- Congress legislation: Bills & Resolutions as distributed by the MSDL & posted on Tabroom. Address legislation inquiries to MSDL Congress Chair, Joe Bowden (joe.bowden@gmail.com).
- Extemp Final Round Topic Area: “Global Human Rights”

Special event - Duo Improv (two-person)

- Each duo must choose a character out of a hat and, without telling each other what character they have, act out their character and create a scene. The scene must have a beginning, middle and end.
- Judges should award credit if either or Duo partners correctly guesses their partner's character and works it into their dialogue (e.g., if one partner is Sherlock Holmes and other says, “That’s a great idea, SHERLOCK”).
- Performances should not exceed 7 minutes.



Fees

Amounts

- \$10.00 per entry in speech events. Duo Improv, and Multiple count as one speech entry.
- \$20.00 per Lincoln-Douglas debate or Public Forum debate entry. \$20 for also for Duo Interpretation.

How to pay

- Please pay by check - one check per school strongly preferred. We reserve the right to require consolidated payment for schools with large rosters.
- Payable to “**AHS General Fund**”
- Memo line - write “Speech and Debate Club”
- Concessions (food) Cash only please

Schedule (tentative)

The Arlington Winter Musical Concert is taking place the Saturday evening of the tournament. Therefore, it is imperative to clear the building by 5:30pm. Please notify those responsible for transportation accordingly.

Speech shall run EITHER in three preliminary time blocks plus finals OR four preliminary time blocks (no finals), depending upon registration.

Debate shall run four preliminary rounds with possibly an elm OR five preliminary rounds , depending upon both registration AND how efficiently students/judges get to their rounds.

- 7:00-7:45 Mandatory Confirmation of Entry
- 8:00-8:30 On-site registration at Arlington HS
- 8:15 Judge Briefings - All judges must attend
- 8:45 Student assembly and round postings
- 9:00 Debate rounds start
- 9:30 Speech rounds start
- 3:00 Elimination rounds begin/find preliminary rounds begin.
- 4:30 Awards



Judge obligations

- Speech - One judge for every five entries or fraction thereof.
- Debate - One judge for every two entries or fraction thereof in each division. For example, a school with two Varsity Public Forum entries and one Novice Public Forum entry owes two debate judges - one for Varsity PF and one for Novice PF.
- A \$50 penalty will be assessed for any missing speech judge and \$75 fee for any missing debate judge. This fine is not to be used in lieu of your judging requirement.
- We welcome extra judges.

Judge qualifications

- Judges in Speech, Varsity Lincoln Douglas, Varsity Public Forum, and Big Questions must be adults who are no longer in high school.
- Judges in Novice Lincoln-Douglas and Novice Public Forum, as well as middle school Public Forum, are required to be high school students (only juniors or seniors) with at least two years of experience in high school competition or adults.

Other requirements

- Judges must have an account on Tabroom.com
- Judges must bring an internet-capable device (preferably a laptop) that they can use to enter their ballots using Tabroom.com.
- We expect schools to ensure their judges are prepared to adjudicate the event(s) they will be assigned to and that they know how to use Tabroom.com to get their judging assignments and to enter their ballots. Schools can either train judges themselves or ensure that their judges take advantage of the MSDL's instructional material.
 - Speech judge material is [here](#).
 - Debate judge material is [here](#).
- Judges must be available throughout the day, including for final rounds (unless they arrange with their coach to split the day's obligation with another individual). We may assess a fine against schools that do not satisfy their judge obligations (\$50 per missing judge for speech per round missed; \$75 per missing judge for debate per round missed; this includes final and/or other elimination rounds).
- Note that schools should not regard this fine as a "fee" to cover their obligation. If necessary, the tournament may remove students from competition if a division is short of judges because their school did not meet its obligation.



Conduct and care of the building

The new Arlington High School is about a year old! Please help us to keep it looking great!

- No food outside of designated eating areas. Except for water, do not bring any food or drink into competition spaces.
- Students should not enter classrooms until the judge is present.
- Nobody may enter areas not designated as tournament spaces. If you are not assigned to compete in a room, do not go into it for any reason.
- Students may not use school equipment that does not belong to them (e.g., computers, printers, refrigerators, etc.).
- No use of teachers' desks - by competitors or judges.
- No unplugging of any device, even temporarily.
- Students and adults are expected to abide by standard principles of professionalism and etiquette throughout the day.
- Students should stay in areas specifically designated as tournament spaces, and may not use school equipment without permission, including but not limited to computers, printers, refrigerators, etc.
- We will dismiss students who do not adhere to these standards.

Food options

- An excellent selection of food will be available for purchase (***cash only***) throughout the day. You will note on the schedule that there is no time slot specifically scheduled for lunch. Students and judges should have ample time to eat between competition rounds and off rounds as well as after preliminary rounds.
- Reach out to us if you have allergies and would like us to provide allergen-free food.
- The judge lounge will serve coffee, bagels, and fruit.

Awards

General

The tournament will recognize:

- All finalists in each event
- The top first-year competitor in each speech event (coaches - please remember to update the “novice status” on Tabroom for each member of your roster.
- Top speakers in debate events.



Special awards

- Best dressed: Awarded to the competitor/judge who wears the most festive holiday attire.
- St. Nicks Royalty: Nominate your friends for the title of St. Nicks Royalty. The competitor with the most nominations will be crowned at the award ceremony!
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Accommodations

Please contact us if you need:

- Accessible parking
- Allergen free food

PARKING

- Schools who are being dropped off via bus use the Mass Ave entrance.
- Other parking should use the Mill Street entrance.

