



2026 STATE SPEECH TOURNAMENT PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS GUIDE

Park Center High School
Class AA: Friday, April 24, 2026
Class A: Saturday, April 25, 2026

Congratulations to your student(s) for qualifying for the 2026 MSHSL State Speech Tournament. We are excited for this annual gathering that features the talents of students from all over the state.

The following Speech contest guidelines have been prepared to provide general information about participation in the State Speech Contest. It is the speech coach's responsibility to review and understand all instructions in this Participating Schools Guide and in the MSHSL Speech Rules and Policies, found on your Coaches Dashboard and under "Resources" here: [MSHSL Speech Activity Page](#). More documents can be found on your Coaches Dashboard, on the Speech Activity Page and on Speechwire, as they are available.

The following **TO-DO TASKS** for coaches **are bolded in red** where they appear in detail below:

- Provide phonetic pronunciations
- Cell phone number survey
- Provide scripts
- Discuss subject matter with all attending students

Tournament Registration

Schools and entries will be manually entered into the state tournament Speechwire website based on information received from section managers. Section managers also provided piece and title information; you do not need to enter this into Speechwire.

Please enter students' phonetic pronunciation into Speechwire by **Monday, April 20**.

Please complete this brief form by **Wednesday, April 22** so we have your cell phone number:
[2026 MSHSL State Speech - coach\(es\) and administrator cell phone information – Fill out form](#)

All head coaches will be required to register/check-in in person with tournament management right inside Door L.

Community Standard Form

You do not need to resubmit your Community Standard Form. The form that you completed for subsections and sections can be accessed by tournament management.

Scripts in All Scripted Events

1. At the State Speech Tournament, current scripts must be provided before the first round in all events except Draw Events and Discussion. Please be sure student name and school are on the

script and that all required documentation is included. If you have a google account, **scripts can be provided through a Google drive prior to the tournament** (<https://forms.gle/wa48NFax5kvjpriYA> and **link is posted on Speechwire**), or **hard copies can be submitted at registration.**

- a. In Great Speeches, the student must include the title(s) of speech(es), author, and source(s).
2. **Students who do not submit updated scripts (with introductions and citations) will be disqualified.**
3. Student scripts submitted as hard copies will be available at the end of the day.
4. Note: It is advised that students print or back up electronic copies as soon as possible, in the off chance that the school's drive/cloud becomes inaccessible. Coaches who have dealt with this will testify that this rare situation is a major inconvenience and stressor!

Entrance to Park Center

7501 Noble Ave. N, Brooklyn Park MN 55443. Park near Door L. Registration will be right inside Door L.

Ranking & Speaking Order

1. There will be three preliminary rounds of competition to qualify for the final round. Contestants will speak in sections of six participants in the prelims, and eight in the final round. The Judge will rank the participants heard in each section. The contestants in each section shall be ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th (no two alike).
2. The schedule in each event will be arranged so there will be a balanced number of 1st, 2nd and 3rd place qualifiers in each section.
3. A different competitive section pairing rotation will be used for each event in the contest. Contestants from the same competitive section will not be in the same speaking section. The speaking order for each individual shall be rotated for all three preliminary rounds.
5. The Order of Speaking in the final round will be determined by random draw.

Critiques and Posting

Judges will provide critiques for the three preliminary rounds, but not for the final round of competition. Critiques will be entered onto Speechwire.

Final Round Qualifiers information will be posted in various locations around the campus.

Draws and Prep Timing

Draws will be done on Speechwire. **Students in draw events will need Speechwire access.** They can bring and use their own device; some devices for draws will be available for students who need. Students can use smart watches and smart phones for timing prep, but they need to put their device on airplane mode after drawing. Or students can bring and use stopwatches.

Lunch

There will be a concession stand available for coaches and participants to purchase lunch in the South Gym. There will be ample signage to direct everyone on where this is. Either cash or credit card will be accepted.

Awards Ceremony

Announcement of results and presentation of medals will follow final rounds. Please remind students that this is a formal ceremony, and any stuffed animals or other noticeable spirit items should be left in the audience with family/friends.

Medalists (Final Round participants) must report to the chairs in the South Gym 15 minutes before the presentation. All medalists will be seated in the chairs and will stand and line up to receive medals for their event, and then return to their assigned seat until all awards are completed.

Time Limits

All performances will be timed with time cards being shown to the speaker. Failure to observe the time limit will result in the competitor being dropped one rank in the round.

The contestant shall complete only the sentence already begun except in storytelling and extemporaneous speaking (see specific rules). Being stopped shall in no way affect the rating of the contestant.

Subject Matter

Coaches are expected to ensure that participants and observing team members are aware of the intense, emotional and mature subject matter that may be presented. Discuss this with your teams – and any individuals, as needed – ahead of time.

Participating Schools Lodging Information

There are no hotel blocks reserved for teams; there are many hotels within 10-15 miles of Park Center High School.

Student Inability to Compete

If you must drop a qualified entry, you must contact Amy Doherty (adoherty@mshsl.org), Polly Reikowski (paulette.reikowski@district196.org) 651-248-5390, AND Zach Prax (zachary.prax@district196.org) as soon as possible. Please, make every effort to have your entries attend the state tournament. There are no alternates to state competition.

Prayer, Meditation, Quiet Room

There will be a Prayer/Meditation/Quiet Room available in the art department. There will be students assigned to help navigate to this space, as well as signage labeling the space.

Private/Gender-Neutral Restroom

There is a gender neutral bathroom available in the cafeteria and will be clearly labeled.

Souvenir Apparel

Souvenir apparel will be available for purchase on site and on the [MSHSL website](#). **Merchandise on site is available with credit card only.**

Tournament Program

The digital tournament program will be published on www.mshsl.org/programs the week of the State Tournament. It will be linked through the "Tournaments" page, as well as the Speech Activity page. There will not be printed programs at the tournament; the digital version is formatted for self-printing.

Tournament Certificates & Souvenir Bag Tags

Activities Directors have access to print tournament certificates through the "AD's Dashboard." Please contact your AD for certificates.

A souvenir bag tag will be provided for each student participant in the packet coaches will pick up when registering on site.

Tournament Registration Fee

Beginning in 2022, there is a \$20 registration fee per entrant. Unlike other tournaments during the year however, the MSHSL will invoice your schools' activities office directly. Coaches are welcome to give administration a heads-up, but otherwise there is nothing for coaches to do with/for this.

Background Information: The MSHSL Board of Directors approved a registration fee for multiple events in December 2019, in addition to adding spectator entrance fees for others. Because charging an entrance fee for spectators comes with a limitation on the number of coaches a school can bring at no cost and because of the complexity of doing this at State Speech, the Board voted to do a participant registration fee instead of attendance cost. There is still no attendance fee for spectators.

Plan Ahead

The 2027 State Tournament will be at Park Center High School on April 23 (Class AA) and April 24 (Class A)



MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

These policies “elevate standards of sportsmanship and encourage the growth of responsible citizenship among the students, members schools and their personnel,” consistent with the Minnesota State High School League’s Founding Purposes and the belief that sportsmanship needs to have a constant presence in all school-based activity programs. The League and its member schools work intentionally to create safe, welcoming and inclusive environments for fine arts activities and sports in our schools and competitions.

School officials are responsible for the proper conduct of teams, team members, students, and home spectators regardless of where the contest is being held. (Bylaw 409).

Behavior Expectations

To create safe, welcoming and inclusive environments in fine arts and sports in our school and competitions, I will:

- Lead by positive example and demonstrate respect and support for others.
- Follow all MSHSL, school and venue expectations.
- Refrain from using profanity or ethnic, racial, religious, ability or gender-based comments, posts or messages directed at participants, directors, coaches, officials, spectators, or team representatives.
- Act as a responsible and respectful digital citizen who positively uses social media platforms.
- Speak or act in support of others when they are harmed by words or actions.
- Honor each contest and all involved, including participants, directors, coaches, officials, spectators, and team representatives.
- Hold high standards for myself, engage positively and demonstrate sportsmanship.

Requirements of Attendees

Prohibited Items

- Flags, whiteboards, large signs on sticks, signs with vulgar, obscene or inappropriate language or images, or that obstruct the views of others or similar items
- Balloons, confetti, glitter, baby powder, pom poms or other similar celebratory items
- Artificial noise makers (i.e., megaphones, cowbells, sirens, whistles, thunder sticks and other similar items)
- Drones and laser lights
- Firearms or other weapons
- Vapes, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis or illicit drugs
- The following are prohibited at MSHSL postseason events. These may be prohibited as determined by the venue during the regular season:
 - Backpacks and other bags
 - Outside food and drink
 - Cameras and tripods
 - Pets

Dress Code/Attire

- Spectators may not wear masks or costumes that limit the ability to identify individuals. Masking for medical purposes is allowed
- Spectators must wear clothing that covers the torso
- Clothing worn must not be vulgar, obscene, or inappropriate

Behaviors

- No one may interfere with the contest in any way
- Only members of the official squad may be on the contest surface
- The use of appropriate language is always expected. Profanity, negative chants, booing, trash talk, name calling, personal attacks or other acts of disrespect are unacceptable
- Respect the Flag and the National Anthem

*Venues may have additional requirements and prohibited items.

*For most contests, spectator may bring cameras, including cell phones, that are basic point and shoot, consumer-grade cameras without detachable lenses. The lens may be no longer than 2 inches. Spectators should confirm restricted items for contests with contest management.