Constitution

The founding rules of the Washington Area Speech and Debate League.

Version 2026.SEP.12 · Washington Area Speech and Debate League

Article I. Name

The name of this association shall be the Washington Area Speech and Debate League (WASDL).

Section A. NCFL Affiliation

This association shall be composed of two memberships only for the purpose of affiliation with the National Catholic Forensic League (NCFL).

1. One membership shall include schools located within the Archdiocese of Washington.
2. One membership shall include schools located within the Diocese of Arlington.
3. If no local league from the Diocese of Richmond exists within the NCFL in a given year, one additional membership shall include schools located within the Diocese of Richmond.

Section B. Joint Tournaments

Neither Diocesan membership may hold independent WASDL tournaments.

Article II. Purpose

The purpose of the Washington Area Speech and Debate League shall be the development of critical thinking and articulate leadership by the promotion of speech and debate activities in and among the teams of its member schools.

The WASDL is organized as an association exclusively for charitable and educational purposes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal code. Upon dissolution of the WASDL, any assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal, state, or local government, for a public purpose.

The WASDL as an association shall have the further right to do any other act or thing incidental to or connected with the foregoing purpose or in advancement thereof, except, however, the association (i) will distribute its income for each tax year at a time and in a manner as not to become subject to the tax on undistributed income imposed by section 4942 of the Code; (ii) will not engage in any act of self-dealing as defined in section 4941(d) of the Code; (iii) will not retain any excess business holdings as defined in section 4943(c) of the Code; (iv) will not make any investments in a manner as to subject it to tax under section 4944 of the Code; and (v) will not make any taxable expenditures as defined in section 4945(d) of the Code.

The WASDL has not been formed for pecuniary profit or financial gain, and no part of the net earnings, assets, income, or profit of the association shall be distributable to, or inure to the benefit of, any private person, except that the association shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in this article. No substantial part of the activities of the association shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation, and the association shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, the association shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an association exempt from Federal Income Taxation under § 501(c)(3) of the Code, or (b) by an association, contributions to which are deductible under § 170(c)(2) of the Code.

Article III. Membership

Section A. Eligibility

Any public or private middle or high school in the Washington metropolitan area shall be eligible for membership in the WASDL.

Section B. Certification

Application for membership shall be made to the Secretary-Treasurer of this association. Full rights of membership, including the right to vote at meetings, the right to participate in League competition, and the right to be enrolled as a member school of the NCFL, shall be granted only upon receipt of the full payment of dues as established by the Executive Committee. For the purposes of organization, the right to vote at the Fall Meeting of the Executive Committee will be granted to all schools in good standing during the previous school year.

Section C. Fees

The Executive Committee shall establish dues and fees for the member schools.

Article IV. Officers of the League

Section A. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of the coaches or the adult representatives of the schools holding membership in the League. It shall determine League policy in all matters not covered by the Constitution or its By-Laws. It shall approve all expenditures not incurred in the ordinary administration of local tournaments.

Section B. Executive Council

The Executive Council shall consist of the League officers, the NCFL Representatives (IV.B.3.f) and the President Emeritus (IV.B.3.g). The officers of the League shall be a President, a Vice President for Policy Debate, a Vice President for Speech, a Vice President for Lincoln-Douglas Debate, a Vice

President for Student Congress, a Vice President for Public Forum Debate, a Secretary-Treasurer, a Tournament Director for Policy Debate, a Tournament Director for Speech, a Tournament Director for Lincoln-Douglas Debate, a Tournament Director for Student Congress, a Tournament Director for Public Forum Debate, a Tournament Director for Middle School Public Forum Debate, and a Director of Publicity.

1. Election of officers.
    a. All officers shall be elected by the Executive Committee.
    b. All members of the Executive Committee shall be eligible for nomination.
    c. Nomination and election of officers listed in IV.B.2.a. shall take place at the Spring Meeting of the appropriate school year.
    d. Nomination and election of officers listed in IV.B.2.b. shall take place at the Fall Meeting of the appropriate school year.
    e. All elections shall be the first item on the agenda, following the roll call, the reading of the minutes, and the Secretary-Treasurer's report.
2. Term of Office
    a. The term of office for the President, the Vice President for Policy Debate, the Vice President for Speech, the Vice President for Lincoln-Douglas Debate, the Vice President for Student Congress, the Vice President for Public Forum Debate, the Secretary-Treasurer, and the Director of Publicity shall be for two years, eligible for re-election.
    b. The term of office for the Tournament Director for Policy Debate, the Tournament Director for Speech, the Tournament Director for Lincoln-Douglas Debate, the Tournament Director for Public Forum Debate, the Tournament Director for Middle School Public Forum Debate, and the Tournament Director for Student Congress shall be for one year, eligible for reelection.
    c. Should a resignation occur, a special election at the next regularly scheduled Executive Committee meeting shall be held to fill the vacancy. In the interim, the President shall appoint the official.
3. Duties of the Officers
    a. President
        (1) The President shall be responsible for the enforcement of all provisions of the Constitution and its By-Laws and all regulations enacted under its authority.
        (2) They shall have the authority over all tournament matters not related to policy debate alone, to speech alone, to Lincoln-Douglas debate alone, to Public Forum debate alone, or to student congress alone. (see V.A.)
        (3) They shall be responsible, at their discretion, for the appointment of members of the Executive Committee to various duties.
        (4) They may call special meetings of the Executive Committee, the Executive Council, or other committees of the League when they deem it necessary.
    b. The Vice Presidents

(1) The Vice President for Policy Debate shall act as President in the absence of the President or for an unexpired term, if that office becomes vacant.

(2) In the absence of the President and the Vice President for Policy Debate, the Vice President for Speech shall act as President.

(3) In the absence of the President and the Vice President for Policy Debate, and the Vice President for Speech, the Vice President for Lincoln-Douglas Debate shall act as President.

(4) In the absence of the President and the Vice President for Policy Debate, and the Vice President for Speech, and the Vice President for Lincoln-Douglas Debate, the Vice President for Student Congress shall act as President.

(5) In the absence of the President and the Vice President for Policy Debate, and the Vice President for Speech, and the Vice President for Lincoln-Douglas Debate, and the Vice President for Student Congress, the Vice President for Public Forum Debate shall act as President.

c. The Secretary-Treasurer

(1) The Secretary-Treasurer shall conduct correspondence of the League.

(2) They shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of each meeting of the Executive Committee and shall publish said minutes for distribution to the member schools.

(3) They shall compile the annual Directory of Member Schools and Coaches.

(4) They shall provide the membership with copies of the Constitution and its By-Laws.

(5) They shall keep a history of the League.

(6) They shall receive and pay all bills charged to the League.

(7) At each meeting of the Executive Committee, they shall render an accounting of the League's expenditures and receipts to date.

(8) At the end of each year, they shall publish an itemized annual statement of receipts and expenditures.

(9) They shall arrange for the purchase of awards required by the League.

(10) In the absence of the President and the five Vice Presidents, they shall act as President.

d. Director of Publicity

(1) The Director of Publicity shall bring public focus upon the goals and activities of the League.

(2) They shall introduce the WASDL opportunities to prospective member schools.

(3) The Director of Publicity, or a delegate of the President, shall publish League news, including on the League website.

e. Tournament Directors

(1) The Tournament Directors of their respective divisions will fulfill those duties as specified in (V.B.).

(2) They shall fulfill those responsibilities assigned to them by the Vice Presidents of the respective divisions.

f. NCFL Representatives

(1) The President of the WASDL shall serve as the representative of their diocese to the NCFL.

(2) The diocese not represented by the President shall elect from the membership of that diocese the NCFL Representative. This representative shall be a member of the Executive Council.

(3) In a year in which WASDL serves as the home of the Richmond Diocesan League, those member schools will elect a representative of their diocese to the NCFL. This representative shall be a member of the Executive Council.

g. President Emeritus

(1) The Executive Committee may elect a President Emeritus, who shall be a member of the Executive Council.

Article V. Tournament Officials

Section A. The Vice Presidents

Each Vice President shall have complete charge of all tournaments in their respective division, except as noted in IV.B.3.a(2), in accordance with the rules of such tournaments as specified in the Constitution and its By-Laws.

1. Each Vice President shall be empowered to establish and promulgate such regulations and procedures as they deem necessary to facilitate conformity with such rule and/or efficient conduct of their respective division.
2. Each Vice President shall adjudicate all disputes that may arise and make interpretations of the rules as may be necessary concerning the conduct of their respective division.
   a. Protests may only be registered by a coach or their properly designated assistant.
3. With the approval of the President, each Vice President may delegate their authority to another member of the Executive Committee. The concurrence of the President is not obligatory when obtaining such approval would be difficult or impractical.
4. Each Vice President shall require participating schools to furnish competent judges to their respective division and shall establish and promulgate qualifications required to judge the categories within the division.
5. Each Vice President shall be responsible for the preparation of instructions for judges and the distribution of those instructions at each tournament.
6. Each Vice President may appoint one or more assistants to facilitate, under their supervision, the conduct of their respective division.
7. Each Vice President may disqualify a judge for cause in writing. In the event where a bona fide Policy Debate, Speech, Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Public Forum Debate, or Student Congress Coach is disqualified in that respective division, in addition to other appeals stipulated in the

By-Laws, they shall have the additional right to appeal to the membership at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Executive Committee. A disqualified non-coach may be reinstated at the discretion of the League Officers.

8. The Vice Presidents shall be responsible for the certification of those contestants who qualify to participate in the Metropolitan Championship Tournament (MetroFinals).
9. The Vice President for Speech shall be responsible for the preparation of an adequate number of topics concerning current events, which shall be, as far as possible, of equal weight and significance for use in extemporaneous speaking.

Section B. Tournament Directors

Each Tournament Director shall fulfill the following duties for their respective division.

1. They shall be responsible for the preparation of all pairings.
2. They shall be responsible for the tabulation of all results.
3. They shall be responsible for the compilation and publication of results.
4. They shall be responsible for the assignment of judges.
5. They shall be empowered to establish and promulgate such regulations and procedures as are necessary or desirable for the execution of the above duties.

Article VI. Meetings of the League

Section A. Official Meetings

1. There shall be two regular meetings of the Executive Committee each year.
2. The President may call other meetings of the Executive Committee when deemed necessary.

Article VII. Voting Procedures

Section A. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of the members present and voting. There shall be no voting by proxy.

Section B. Number of Votes

1. In all matters concerning the League as a whole, each school shall have one vote.
2. Only schools participating in Policy Debate shall vote on matters concerning Policy Debate alone. Each school shall have one vote.
3. Only schools participating in Speech shall vote on matters concerning speech alone. Each school shall have one vote.
4. Only schools participating in Lincoln-Douglas Debate shall vote on matters concerning Lincoln-Douglas Debate alone. Each school shall have one vote.
5. Only schools participating in Student Congress shall vote on matters concerning Student Congress alone. Each school shall have one vote.

6. Only schools participating in Public Forum Debate shall vote on matters concerning Public Forum Debate alone. Each school shall have one vote.

Section C. Vote by Mail, Email or Other Electronic Means

1. The President may call for a vote by mail, email, telephone or other electronic means when they deem it necessary.
2. A quorum in such cases shall consist of the votes received by the deadline set by the President.
3. Each member school casts one vote, and the ballot shall include the full text of any proposal.

Article VIII. Amendments

Section A. Amendment Proposed at a Meeting

An amendment to this Constitution and/or its By-Laws may be proposed at any official meeting by any member of the Executive Committee to be acted upon at the following meeting of the Executive Committee.

Section B. Amendment Proposed by Mail

An amendment to this Constitution and/or its By-Laws may be proposed in writing prior to an official meeting of the Executive Committee to be acted upon at that meeting.

1. The amendment proposal must be in the President's possession at least thirty days prior to the meeting.
2. The President must send copies of the proposed amendment (by mail or email) to the member schools at least ten days prior to the meeting.

Section C. Amendment Proposed by Committee

An amendment to this Constitution and/or its By-Laws may be proposed and acted upon at the same meeting if it results from a report of a committee established at a prior meeting and thereby placed on the agenda with due notice.

Section D. Amendment Ratification

1. Voting Procedures shall be those in Article VII.
2. Approval must be a two-thirds (⅔) vote.
3. All Constitutional and/or By-Laws changes adopted at the Fall Meeting shall take effect immediately. Those changes adopted at the Spring Meeting shall take effect the following competition year, unless a separate motion is made for the change to take effect immediately with this separate motion requiring a four-fifths (⅘) vote to pass.