

2026-27 Speech Arts – General

Classification - based on grades 9-12

Debate

Three classifications; 1/3 of schools attending State in each class.
(*State awards have no classification designation*)

Speech

Four classifications; 1/4 of registered programs.

Division 1 (*smallest school*), Division 2, Division 3, Division 4

Drama

6A (1400 and over); 5A (1399-700); 4A (699 and under)

1. No designated classification for individual event competition.
2. Teams compete by classification.
3. Any competition after the state tournament requires permission of the principal or superintendent and the IHSAA.

Eligibility

All students who participate in debate, speech and/or drama competition are subject to IHSAA eligibility rules 8-1 through 8-16, with the exception of Rule 8-4, Amateur Status, and Rule 8-5, Awards.

Coaches

1. Speech Arts head coaches must be certified to teach in Idaho or have completed NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching online course.
2. All coaches must complete a first aid and CPR course from a school district recognized provider, as outlined in IHSAA Rule 3-2.
3. All coaches (includes head, volunteer and assistant coaches) must complete the St. Lukes online concussion course, the NFHS online Sudden Cardiac Arrest course and the NFHS online Coaching Mental Wellness course on even-numbered years (i.e. 2026-27, 2028-29, etc...). Completion certificates shall be given to the school's administration.
4. Speech Arts head coaches are required to pass the recertification test in their discipline each year prior to their district tournament. Tests will be available at online after the rules webinar. Schools whose coach does not certify may be fined by their district board of control.

2026-27 State Tournaments

Drama	Dec 4-5	District III
Debate	March 12-13	Century HS
Speech	April 9-10	Rocky Mountain HS

State Tournament Fines

Schools will be assessed fines for the following:

1. Entries that withdraw after noon on the Wednesday before State: Fine - \$15.00.
2. Entries that withdraw within one hour before tournament check-in: Fine - \$25.00.
3. Coach leaves the tournament before his/her judging obligation is fulfilled or does not judge required number of rounds: Fine – \$100.
4. School does not bring the required number of “hired” judges: Fine – \$100.

Judges

1. Age: Speech arts judges shall have been graduated from high school for at least twenty months.
2. Certification: Judges shall register and participate in a certification clinic and score 80% on an online test every year.

State Tournament Judging

1. Coaches are obligated to judge until one round after their school's final entry has been eliminated from the tournament. Certified coaches will be compensated for any judging assignments in excess of four rounds.
2. Schools are required to bring additional “hired” judges to state tournaments. Judging fees of certified judges will be paid by IHSAA, but schools are responsible for travel expenses. Requirements:
 - a. Drama / Speech - one judge
 - b. Debate - one judge for every seven students or fraction thereof.
3. Certified judges will be assigned before non-certified judges if possible. Only certified judges will be paid by the IHSAA.
4. Novice judges must attend a non-certifying rules clinic at the state tournament site.

Reporting District-to-State Qualifiers

1. District Tournament Manager Responsibilities
 - a. Submit “District Manager’s Report” of state qualifiers to the IHSAA by *noon Monday* following the district tournament
 - b. Collect Principal Approval/Verification forms from qualifying schools and send to the IHSAA following the district tournament
2. Individual School Responsibilities
 - a. Register state qualifiers using the designated online platform by 4:00 p.m. Tuesday following the district tournament. Failure to register may result in denial of participation at State.
 - b. Ensure that the district manager has a signed Principal Approval/Verification form for submission to the IHSAA.

Coding Entries

A coding system shall be for state tournaments. A numerical or letter code shall be assigned to each school and also to each entry. Sectioning/pairing will be done by codes only.

Tournament Inquiry Procedure

1. During the preliminary rounds, coaches and judges may submit an inquiry form to the Inquiry desk. These inquiry forms shall be used to direct tournament officials to potential irregularities that may need to be investigated. If no investigation occurs, the filing coach shall be informed. If an inquiry investigation occurs, tournament officials shall notify all stakeholders (relevant competitors, coaches, and/or judges) of the inquiry and the results of the investigation before the start of the next round. The results of an initial inquiry investigation may be considered a formal warning but shall not result in further disciplinary actions. Subsequent inquiries for the same issue shall be elevated to grievances by the inquiry committee.
 - a. Except in the cases of plagiarism and script violations which will be referred directly to the grievance committee.
 - b. Evidence violations in Debate will follow the procedure outlined in the Idaho Debate Code.
 - c. The inquiry process shall be used at district and state tournaments. Inquiries filed at districts shall be submitted with the district manager's report.

Inquiries shall be filed in the following chain of command:

- a. Students will report inquiries to their coach or designated chaperone in the case that their coach is not available.
- b. Judges and coaches will report inquiries to the Inquiry and Information desk.

The inquiry committee will consist of the commissioner and two unaffiliated designated tabroom officials.

2. Concerns regarding possible rules violations by coaches or competitors during state tournaments must be submitted in writing to the tournament manager. The commissioner and manager will review the complaint, and if necessary, a grievance committee will be convened to consider the inquiry and determine dispensation. A decision on all grievances must be reached prior to the next round of competition or prior to the awards ceremony, whichever comes first.
3. A contestant who is found to have violated the rules of an event may be disqualified. Any entry disqualified in the final round of competition will still be able to participate in the awards ceremony as a finalist*. That entry will not place or receive sweepstakes points for their team. **Note: If the disqualification was due to an egregious or unsportsmanlike act, the entry will not be allowed to participate in the awards ceremony.*
4. Ethical misconduct at tournaments will be dealt with as outlined in the "Ethical Misconduct Procedures" form.

Ballot Review

1. All coaches will be permitted digital access to online ballots at the conclusion of each round. Breaks will be made available to all coaches at the conclusion of the final preliminary round.
2. If coaches believe errors in tabulation have occurred, they must first address the issue with the Tab Room staff in a timely fashion. If the tournament is still in progress, the protest should be lodged within one round of the audit being available to coaches.
3. Concerns about preliminary results and ballots must be expressed prior to the announcement of the first elimination round. No changes in preliminary results will be made after that time.

State Tab Rooms

Tab rooms will be staffed with representatives from each district if possible. The ISATA commissioner of that discipline will serve as head of the grievance committee.