

July 25, 2023

Dear District Leader,

The Board of Directors has made an exception to the *Speech Contest Rulebook* and determined that all speech contests at the Area, Division, and District levels may be conducted either in person only, online only, or in a hybrid format for the 2023-2024 speech contest cycle.

In-person contests are defined as those in which all participants are onsite at the specified contest location. Online contests are defined as those in which all participants are online. Hybrid contests are defined as those in which some participants (contestants and judges) are onsite in a physical location, and others are online.

When selecting a contest format, consider the additional resources required to successfully support the chosen format. If you are considering a hybrid or online contest, review the [Online and Hybrid Speech Contest Best Practices](#) document from the 2022-2023 program year and consider details such as:

- Cost of the online platform needed to support your contest needs
- Cost of audiovisual (AV) equipment needed to run your selected contest format
- Additional supporting roles needed
 1. For example, you may need people to run your technology, support contest officials and contestants, and coordinate logistics
- Additional contest official roles needed
 1. For example, hybrid contests typically require a set of timers that are present online and a set present onsite

After evaluating these needs, ensure the selected format will not take critical resources away from initiatives that support the District mission and success in the District Recognition Program.

Your District Executive Committee must recommend the selected speech contest format (in person, online, or hybrid) for each level (Area, Division, and District) to the District Council for approval no later than September 30 to allow for proper budgeting. Once a format is approved for each level, no changes can be made.

Regardless of the contest format your team selects, all contests must be conducted live, with all speech contestants and contest officials participating during the event. Judging must be completed by the end of each respective contest.

If desired, your District may choose to record an in-person, online, or hybrid speech contest with only contestants and contest officials and play the recording during the District Conference to help prevent bandwidth issues that may arise when livestreaming a contest with a large audience. Also, if all contestants of a hybrid speech contest select to be in person,

the contest officials may be in person as well.

We look forward to another invigorating program year of inspiring speeches, and thank you for your team's efforts in supporting speech contests!

Sincerely,

Speech Contests Team
Toastmasters International
toastmasters.org

This email has been sent to Area Directors, Division Directors, District Directors, Program Quality Directors, Club Growth Directors, Region Advisors, Past International Presidents, Past International Directors, and Past Region Advisors.