



# Newsletter

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## Reflecting with an Optimistic Look Ahead

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 forever transformed our routines and approaches to doing things. Concurrently, a new reckoning with racism and renewed commitment to civil rights sprung forth, following the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and too many more, as well as the police shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha.

Education became immensely more complex as teachers had to pivot to online instruction amid student apathy. The pandemic amplified vulnerabilities and strengths across various systems and processes.

Speech, Debate, Theatre, and Film activities pivoted to offer virtual opportunities, with live/videoconference rounds, as well as pre-recorded asynchronously adjudicated videos. A mere shadow of the full experience gained in a shared physical space, it still allowed students to have *an experience*, albeit more limited. WHSFA's 2020-21 decision to offer fully virtual programming ensured predictability and accessibility for schools. A number of schools understandably passed, waiting for activities to return in person. We are aware how frustrating the past few years have been, and how difficult managing tough choices has been for advisors.

As the COVID-19 delta variant ravaged this fall and omicron spread in early 2022, uncertainty remained even as contests returned in person. Some schools were not allowed to participate in person, while others confronted outbreaks of COVID-19 and other winter illnesses. Winter weather struck some later dates, making virtual performance the only way schools could still participate. Plus, students eager to reclaim opportunities across various activities had multiple conflicts to juggle. Offering a pathway for virtual participation kept a number of students involved.

Still, coaches and directors alike have reported students have been disengaged, with follow-through and



commitment really suffering. Experts have signaled how one of the most concerning, long-term mental health impacts of the pandemic is a social-emotional deficit in students.

Our Association strives for flexibility in fostering access, and virtual options have made a difference. However, when our Board of Control met this month, they affirmed a commitment to our activities as defined by the interaction between presenter and audience. Therefore, as we weigh a still-uncertain future as COVID-19 lingers, other disease outbreaks have surfaced, and winter weather persists, our Association will bring forward next fall procedures for requesting dispensation for virtual participation, which will not be automatic as they were this past season. We also are reviewing feedback to best serve and support directors and coaches.

Renew school membership:

[Join/Renew](#)

Retiring? Resigning?

[Complete Form](#)

## New! Jobs Board

We unveiled an interactive jobs board where coaches and contest managers can post adjudicator positions. Those seeking adjudication assignments may subscribe to updates. In the future, this jobs board also could be used for **recruiting theatre adjudicators, guest artists, Speech coaches, and other personnel** in Speech, Debate, Theatre, and Film activities.

For the 2022 season, 42 Speech adjudicator positions were posted on the board. Visit [whsfa.org/jobs](https://whsfa.org/jobs) to learn more.

**Be proactive! Post 2022-23 season positions early!**

## Help build a Video Library!

Did any Speech contestants or One-Acts participate virtually this year? Those videos could help serve as examples for other schools! Please get permission from each of the students and their parents/guardians; plays must be public domain/ devised works.

[Video Volunteer](#)

# Jacobi Recognized with National Honor

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) named Adam Jacobi, executive director of the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association (WHSFA), as its 2021 Citation honoree for Outstanding Speech, Debate and Theatre Educator. Out of hundreds of thousands of coach-educator-administrators in speech, debate, and/or theatre, the NFHS honors one each year. Jacobi is the first-ever honoree for this citation from Wisconsin.

Designed to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to high school sports and interscholastic academics, the NFHS Citation is one of the most highly regarded achievements in high school activities. Citations are issued in six categories, including Speech, Debate and Theatre, where it is the highest honor possible.

Since 2014, Jacobi has been WHSFA's executive director, coordinating interscholastic middle and high school contests and resources for speech, debate, and theatre. In 2022, WHSFA has added a film festival contest. Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jacobi pivoted all programming to virtual options, and consulted for several other states doing the same. From 2018 to 2022, Jacobi has served on the NFHS Speech, Debate, and Theatre Advisory Committee, representing the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin. In 2018, Jacobi was elected to the board of directors for the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA), founded in 1925 in Ripon, Wis. as the National Forensic League. Jacobi previously worked for the NSDA in coordinating programs and education.



Jacobi also runs the largest invitational competition in the world and coordinates summer enrichment curriculum for Congressional Debate, both with the Harvard Debate Council in Cambridge, Mass.

Jacobi began his teaching career in 1997 at his alma mater, Rufus King High School in Milwaukee, Wis., where he taught theatre and communication as well as coached

several speech and debate state and national champions. He later taught and coached for Ripon College, as well as in Changzhou, China. Jacobi has authored and contributed to several books and guides for speech and debate and has led several professional development workshops in speech, debate and theatre, including serving as a WHSFA Speech Adjudicator Certification trainer since 2002.

"I am humbled to be honored," Jacobi said. "Growing up in the Milwaukee Public Schools, I performed in plays and worked backstage in elementary school. In middle and high school I gave public address announcements and competed in speech. Despite being bullied, these activities were a safe haven for me, where I could build my confidence. I've dedicated my career to bringing that to more youth."

Jacobi's husband, J. Scott Baker, Ph.D., was the NFHS 2017 Citation honoree for Outstanding Speech, Debate and Theatre Educator, earned for his teaching and coaching in Texas, as well as his extensive dissertation research into what coaching entails as well as the impact of speech and debate, post-high school. Baker is now a university level teacher educator.



# Speech Season Successes

This year's State Speech Festival involved 2,474 students comprising 1,892 entries, from 306 schools. Schools had the opportunity for their students to participate in person or by submitting a video of their performance; 80% of schools had in-person entries and 36% had online entries. Overall, 17% of schools had entries in both divisions.

The WHSFA continued to recognize squad achievement with school awards, based on medals earned by students. The top 5% of schools and head coaches are recognized with the **Excellence in Speech Award**:

- ◆ Barneveld High School - Duane Draper
- ◆ Bay Port High School - Krista Greene, Scott Pamperin
- ◆ Burlington High School - Robbie Twohig, Matt Nie
- ◆ Darlington High School - Clarey Schwartz
- ◆ DeForest Area High School - Tom August
- ◆ Fennimore High School - Alexa Chiefari
- ◆ Menomonie High School - Andrea Smith
- ◆ Mineral Point High School - Kristin Staver
- ◆ Monroe High School - Carolyn Schultz
- ◆ Platteville High School - Cheryl Schober
- ◆ Prescott High School - Tanya Sponholz
- ◆ Regis High School - Judine Brey
- ◆ Shoreland Lutheran High School - Alex Moore, Megan Rosenau
- ◆ Waunakee High School - Walter Stenz
- ◆ Westosha Central High School - Brenda Bursek-Krekling
- ◆ Wrightstown High School - David Winkler

Schools whose medals placed them in the top 6-10% earned a **Distinction in Speech Award**:

- ◆ Badger High School - Mark Zastrow
- ◆ Cameron High School - Sheri Hagen-Salm
- ◆ Chippewa Falls High School - Karen Koehler
- ◆ Hudson High School - Jessica Flanagan
- ◆ Iowa-Grant High School - Jacqueline Rolli
- ◆ Ithaca High School - Juli Thompson
- ◆ Kaukauna High School - Holli Ferguson
- ◆ Muskego High School - Joe Meinecke
- ◆ Neenah High School - Andie Peterson-Longmore
- ◆ Sauk Prairie High School - Ryan Mussack
- ◆ Southern Door High School - JamieLynn Teska
- ◆ St. Lawrence Seminary High School - Martin Vu
- ◆ Winnebago Lutheran Academy - Scott Herrewig
- ◆ Wisconsin Lutheran High School - Anne Holmes

The State Office again mailed every participating school's principal a letter commemorating their participation and achievement, and all the extra work coaches had to do to adapt to virtual contests.



## Cumulative Critic's Choice Medallion (Gold)

Ellie Klumb, Bay Port HS  
 Tessa Homuth, Campbellsport HS  
 Sydney Heise, Central HS-La Crosse  
 Lauren Jarantowski-Bezjak, Cudahy HS  
 Lin West, Darlington HS  
 Samantha Wubben, Fennimore HS  
 Brooklyn Granger, Ithaca HS  
 Emma Schoen, Ithaca HS  
 Amelia Heider, Lodi HS  
 Micaela Boucher, Luxemburg-Casco HS  
 Samantha Kahr, Luxemburg-Casco HS  
 Hailey Carey, Medford Area Sr HS  
 Hailey Fisher, Medford Area Sr HS  
 Emmy Bignell, Menomonie HS  
 Jazmine Cool, Mineral Point HS  
 Greg Sokup, Regis High School  
 Max Shavlik, Sauk Prairie HS  
 Bethany Werth, Sheboygan Lutheran HS  
 Quinn Soltis, South Shore HS  
 Dalena Pakalske, Southern Door HS  
 Jasmine Neumann, Three Lakes HS  
 Amanda Rieck, Three Lakes HS  
 John McGovern, Tomahawk HS  
 Martin Schmidt, Tomahawk HS



# Film Debuts

We were excited to pilot our Film Festival this year, featuring seven films from two schools.

Earning the **Critic's Choice** award were:

- "Suicide Prevention," Public Service Announcement (PSA) by Lakeland Union HS (see screen shot below)
- "Rotary Club," PSA by Lakeland Union HS



Earning the **All-State** award were:

- "Got Graphite," Commercial by Regis HS
- "Halloween Music Video," Music Video by Lakeland Union HS
- "International Students View of America," Documentary by Regis HS
- "Life in a Push," Narrative film by Regis HS
- "Uncover Minocqua," Episodes 1-3, Documentary by Lakeland Union HS

We are in talks with the Wisconsin Film Festival/UW-Madison and will be holding another Film Steering Committee meeting later this summer, and are looking forward to building

# Middle Level Speech Update

We rolled out a free online course for training Middle Level Speech adjudicators. Those who complete the course can earn a WHSFA certification and documentation of 3 clock hours spent in professional development. The course will reopen in mid to late-fall 2022, to account for any rules changes passed by the Board of Control in September. Learn more at [whsfa.org/middle-level-speech-adjudicator-training/](https://whsfa.org/middle-level-speech-adjudicator-training/).

We continued centralized registration this year to better track participation and aid us in writing for grants to help support fostering programs at more middle level schools.

We also unveiled a new overall rating system ("Merit" or "Excellence"), paired with new green and yellow ribbons (go, Packers!) for Level 1 festivals.

Starting this year, all contestants advance from Level 1 to Level 2 to encourage more growth in students. We also added standards-based indicators for each of the evaluation criteria, to give students and their coaches a better idea specific areas in which more improvement is needed.

This season, about 40% of Level 1 entries earned the yellow "Excellence" ribbon and 60% earned the green "Merit" ribbon; and at Level 2, 55% earned a blue "Excellence" ribbon and 45% earned the red "Merit" ribbon.

About three-quarters of students participate in performance of literature categories, and one-quarter participate in speaking categories, which is consistent with WHSFA high school Speech.

save the date

## FOR THE WCTE CONVENTION THIS FALL

CURATING CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 12, 2022  
AT DOUBLE TREE EAST  
MADISON, WISCONSIN

Listen to Leaders and Innovators in Wisconsin Education

Connect with other Teachers through ConverSTATIONS and shared learning

Collaborate around new understandings with the Wisconsin State Standards, innovations, and state-wide issues

wcteonline.org

Wisconsin Council  
of Teachers of English

# Plan for the Theatre Season



It's hard to believe that in a matter a months, contest one-act play directors will be holding rehearsals, building sets, constructing costumes, and preparing to take their shows on the road for the interscholastic theatre season! We offer this important reminder to directors: **please review**

**the tech specs for the State Festival, and ensure you can work within the parameters at UW-Whitewater (e.g., one of the venues does not really have a practical upstage crossover, and entrance to the stage tends to be from stage left, rather than both sides.** Many of the district and sectional venues are larger and more sophisticated, but for logistical purposes, directors should plan for the more restrictive specifications of the State venue. See [whsfa.org/state-theatre/venue-whitewater/](https://whsfa.org/state-theatre/venue-whitewater/)

## Showcase Work

### Perform a Full-Length Play/Musical at the Festival

We are in search of a full-length play and musical to showcase at this year's festival. The performing company can be a school, higher education institution, community theatre, or professional company. Learn more and apply at [whsfa.org/state-theatre/#Showcases](https://whsfa.org/state-theatre/#Showcases).

Theatre Educators' Conference  
Friday, September 23, 2022  
UW-Oshkosh

Learn more:  
[awte.net](https://awte.net)

## Theatre Contests

### One-Act Plays

Can be a cutting from a full-length play/musical or a naturally shorter play. Schools must obtain permissions and pay royalties for plays that are not in the public domain nor devised works (written by students/director).  
Sequence: District > Sectional > State.

### Thespys

Similar to individual, pair, or small group Speech categories, Thespys offer technicians/designers to present a portfolio of their work, and for actors to showcase performance. WHSFA offers an optional virtual invitational/warm-up in October and contest at the State Festival, where students with Superior ratings can advance to the International Thespian Festival in June.

### Tech Challenge

Formerly *Tech Olympics*, schools compete at the State Festival to show proficiency in various tasks.

## FREE Online Course in Theatre Safety

The NFHS offers a FREE online course that takes about 1 hour to complete, with abundant supplemental resources, designed for anyone who uses a theater space (inclusive of music educators). This course is perfect for *anyone* who uses an auditorium/PAC/theatre space.

[Learn More/Enroll](#)



# Debate to Return this Fall



We are excited to infuse more energy and resources into Debate, and will be announcing initiatives to make Debate easier to learn and more accessible, including a mix of in-person and online contests, as well as a bridge from Speech to Debate. Watch the Debate pages at [whsfa.org](http://whsfa.org). Contact [office@whsfa.org](mailto:office@whsfa.org) if you are interested in more details or wish to contribute to the steering committee.

## Membership/Dues Renewal

Dues to the WHSFA (Wisconsin Interscholastic Speech & Dramatic Arts Association/WISDAA) are \$380 for high school and \$150 for middle level; a **\$50 discount applies for enrollment before October 1** (high school = \$330; middle level = \$100).

Schools must enroll by completing the form **and finishing the check-out** in our online store at <https://www.whsfa.org/membership/>. On that same page, there is a button to check membership status; please check your status before submitting duplicate payment. New this year – whomever inputs the initial enrollment for the school can edit/update throughout the year if there are changes to advisors.



## New! Coaches and Directors can Enroll in NFHS Advisor Add-On

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) offers membership to directors/coaches in their Speech, Debate, Theatre, and Academics Association, which provides additional membership benefits:

- **Liability insurance coverage (\$2 million)**
- Access to NFHS online publications
- Subscription to *High School Today*
- Rental Car discounts through National/Enterprise
- Signature champion ring discount

Schools can add-on membership (@\$20/advisor) to NFHS when listing individual coaches/directors as part of annual membership enrollment. WHSFA will collect dues and communicate enrollment to NFHS.

