



Wisconsin Interscholastic Speech & Dramatic Arts Association

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State Speech Contest Announces School Awards

LA CROSSE, Wis. – Thirty three Wisconsin schools received recognition for their overall performance at the Wisconsin State Speech Festival. The event was held this year at DeForest Area High School as well as online, with plans to return to UW-Madison in spring of 2024. This year, more than 2,800 students, representing 304 schools advanced to the State Festival. 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.

Adjudicators rated each student or performing group to determine a medal award, and the **top five percent of medal-earning schools** are recognized with *Excellence in Speech Awards*, with the school and coach each presented with a plaque. This year, 15 schools earned this honor (sorted by school, alphabetically):

School (<i>city listed, if not in name of school</i>)	Coach(es)
Barneveld High School	Duane Draper
Burlington High School	Robbie Twohig, Matt Nie
Darlington High School	Clarey Schwartz
DeForest 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 / Megan Dilley / Michelle Kister
Muskego High School	Joe Meinecke
Platteville High School	Cheryl Schober
Prescott High School	Tanya Sponholz
Sauk Prairie High School (Prairie du Sac)	Ryan Mussack
Southern Door Schools (Brussels)	JamieLynn Teska
Waunakee High School	Walter Stenz
Westosha Central High School (Salem)	Brenda Bursek-Krekling
Winnebago Lutheran Academy (Fond du Lac)	Scott Herrewig
Wrightstown High School	David Winkler

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Additionally, the following schools earned the *Distinction in Speech Award*, for medal achievement in the top six to ten percent. Those schools and coaches earning plaques are (sorted by school, alphabetically):

School (<i>city listed, if not in name of school</i>)	Coach(es)
Bay Port High School (Howard-Suamico)	Sarah Meyer
Cameron High School	Sheri Hagen-Salm
Chippewa Falls High School	Karen Koehler
Germantown High School	Theresa Schmechel / Erin Warborg
Holmen High School	Kam-Lin Roswall
Hudson High School	Jessica Flanagan
Iowa-Grant High School	Amanda Linscheid / Michele Wetter
Ithaca High School (Richland Center)	Juli Thompson / Emily Zorea
Kaukauna High School	Holli Ferguson
Lancaster High School	Pam Curry
Niagara High School	Ginger Anderson
Randolph High School	Adam Iverson
Regis High School (Eau Claire)	Judine Brey
Richland Center High School	Sonia Clarson
Shoreland Lutheran High School (Somers)	Alex Moore
Waterford Union High School	Neil Hepworth / Kelly West

During the COVID-19 pandemic, WISDAA, like many state activities associations, sought alternative approaches to holding speech contests, working with such organizations as the National Speech & Debate Association and National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). As UW-Madison transitions back to hosting events on their campus with various new protocols, WISDAA returned to nearby DeForest Area School District, thanks to its Speech coach, Tom August.

“For a second year, we are indebted to Tom August and the rest of the DeForest Area School District staff, students, and administration for graciously hosting us at their newly-renovated secondary schools,” said WISDAA Executive Director Adam Jacobi. “The amount of praise and appreciation expressed by coaches and students in attendance this year was overwhelmingly positive.”

Jacobi added: “It has been a challenging time for schools to participate in interscholastic academic sports like Speech. As an association affiliated with the NFHS, we are aware participation numbers among schools are lower across the country, and Wisconsin is no exception. As we emerge from the pandemic and recognize the dire need for social-emotional learning experiences to help address mental health needs of students, activities like interscholastic Speech are more important than ever. The coaches and students who continued participation despite the challenges facing them should be commended.”

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About the Wisconsin Interscholastic Speech & Dramatic Arts Association

Founded in 1895, the Wisconsin Interscholastic Speech & Dramatic Arts Association (WISDAA) has provided programming for middle and students in theatre, debate, and public speaking (archaically called “forensics”) activities. Each year, our nonprofit organization serves about 10,000 Wisconsin students from 375 high schools, and 150 middle schools in the longest-running high school speech contests in the nation. Our aim is to empower students to enhance their skills in presentation through interscholastic assessment. For more information, visit www.wisdaa.org.

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