



Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

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Executive Director

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State Speech Contest Announces School Awards

LA CROSSE, Wis. – Twenty-eight Wisconsin schools received recognition for their overall performance at this month's State Speech Festival. For the first time since the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association (WHSFA) started holding contests 126 years ago, the State Speech Festival was online instead of its normal venue, UW-Madison.

This year, 2,269 students in 1,828 entries, representing 277 schools advanced to the State Festival. While participation numbers are understandably down during this pandemic-impacted school year (2019 saw 4,013 students in 2,840 entries, representing 340 schools), those who participated had to learn a whole new way of speaking and presenting for a camera. Some contestants submitted prerecorded videos for asynchronous evaluation by adjudicators (judges), while others performed in live, videoconference rounds of the contest.

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 (with city listed, if not in name of school)	Coach
Bay Port High School (Suamico)	Krista Greene
Darlington High School	Clarey Schwartz
DeForest High School	Tom August
Fennimore High School	Alexa Chiefari
Ithaca High School, Richland Center	Louise Murphey
Lakeside Lutheran High School (Lake Mills)	Stephen Lauber
Lancaster High School	Pam Curry
Menomonie High School	Andrea Smith
Muskego High School	Joe Meinecke
Platteville High School	Cheryl Schober
Prescott High School	Tanya Sponholz
Regis High School (Eau Claire)	Judine Brey
Waunakee High School	Walter Stenz
Westosha Central High School (Salem)	Brenda Bursek-Krekling
Wrightstown High School	David Winkler

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Additionally, this year, the WHSFA unveiled a new award, the *Distinction in Speech Award*, for **schools whose medal achievement was top six to ten percent**. Those schools and coaches earning plaques are (sorted by school, alphabetically):

School <i>(with city listed, if not in name of school)</i>	Coach
Badger High School (Lake Geneva)	Mark Zastrow
Barneveld High School	Duane Draper
Elkhorn Area High School	Desirae Heckendorf-Reece
Ellsworth High School	Jennifer Kieren
Fox Valley Lutheran High School (Appleton)	Kathy Kolell, Seth Hahnke
Holmen High School	Kam-Lin Roswall
Hudson High School	Jessica Flanagan
Iowa-Grant High School (Livingston)	Jacqueline Rolli
Neenah High School	Andie Peterson
New Berlin Eisenhower High School	Adam Bosetski
Sauk Prairie High School (Prairie du Sac)	Ryan Mussack
West De Pere High School	Natalie Buhl
Winnebago Lutheran Academy (Fond du Lac)	Scott Herrewig

When the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the spring 2020 season, the WHSFA offered an alternative contest format, making it the first time since World War II that the contest had not run. This school year, WHSFA partnered with the National Speech & Debate Association and National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), who offered suggestions for platforms, approaches, and a focus on equity.

“Technology has allowed us to adapt our entire contest season to an online format,” said WHSFA Executive Director Adam Jacobi. “It wasn’t always easy for coaches and students to figure out technology and how to adapt performances to an online medium, but they did it, and provided a constructive learning opportunity for students to continue to express themselves, even in less-than-ideal circumstances. The schools honored with these awards demonstrated holistic excellence among their students.”

About the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association

Since 1895, the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association (WHSFA) has provided programming for middle and high school students in theatre, debate, and public speaking 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.whsfa.org.

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