



Wisconsin Interscholastic Speech & Dramatic Arts Association

1501 Saint Andrew St, Ste C200
La Crosse, WI 54603-2817

Building confidence since 1895
(920) 710-1895 | www.wisdaa.org

Tuesday, May 7, 2024

State Speech Contest Announces School Awards

LA CROSSE, Wis. – Thirty one 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. This year, more than 3,050 students, representing 300 schools advanced to the State Festival. While most schools participated in person, about a dozen only participated online, but one-third had at least one entry who submitting a video of their performance to be evaluated online.

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
Chippewa Falls High School	Karen Koehler
Darlington High School	Clarey Schwartz
Fennimore High School	Donna Williams-Richter / Micki Becwar
Mineral Point High School	Kristin Staver
Muskego High School	Joe Meinecke
Platteville High School	Cheryl Schober
Regis High School (Eau Claire)	Judine Brey
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 / Andrew Mildebrandt
Wrightstown High School	David Winkler

-- MORE --



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)
Brookwood High School (Ontario)	Kim Neal Nofsinger
Cameron High School	Sheri Hagen-Salm / Sarah Pica / Bambi Forcey
D.C. Everest High School (Schofield)	Dawn Whitsett
Ellsworth High School	Jennifer Kieren
Iowa-Grant High School	Amanda Linscheid / Michele Wetter
Kaukauna High School	Holli Ferguson
Lake Mills High School	Brenda Morris / Renee Mitchell
Lodi High School	Anne Lembcke / Renee Moldenhauer / Erica Bardwell
Menomonie High School	Andrea Smith
Niagara High School	Ginger Anderson
Oconto Falls High School	Michelle Desterheft / Gayle Gander
Oshkosh West High School	Scotti Thurwatcher
Prescott High School	Tanya Sponholz
Randolph High School	Adam Iverson / MacKenzie Gehrke
Shoreland Lutheran High School (Somers)	Nicholas Mitchell
Waterford Union High School	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).

“For a third year, we are grateful to 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 continue to rebuild after the pandemic and recognize the essential 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.”

-- MORE --

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.

###

CONTACT

Adam J. Jacobi, Wisconsin Interscholastic Speech & Dramatic Arts Association, adam@wisdaa.org, (920) 355-1895