



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Kentucky students win Speech and Debate District Tournament, move on to Grand Nationals

Kentucky Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes named Communicator of the Year

Danville, KY

Kentucky's best high school speech and debate students went head to head at Centre College March 17 and 18 at the annual Kentucky District Tournament of the National Speech and Debate Association. Students competed in eight speech and five debate categories for the right to represent the Commonwealth at the Grand Nationals, the largest academic contest in the world, in Birmingham in June. Students competed in as many as five preliminary rounds before advancing to the finals with the top two entries in each event moving on to NSDA Nationals, a contest dating back to 1931 that features students from Maine to Guam competing for college scholarships and the national titles. Additionally, on Friday, the Congressional Debate events (House and Senate) were hosted by the Danville campus of Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC).

Alison Lundergan Grimes, a former high school speech and debate competitor for Lexington Catholic High School and the current Secretary of State for Kentucky, was named the Kentucky District Communicator of the Year. She gave a rousing speech in support of communication to the assembled students, judges, and coaches to start off the awards ceremony. Woody Zorn, a Trinity High School graduate who serves as Assumption High School's debate coach, was awarded the District's Alumnus of the Year honor in recognition of his support of debate throughout the state.

In the team contests, Danville High School took team honors in Speech with Trinity tops in Congress and Henry Clay winning both debate and the District plaque for overall top performances in speech and debate. Danville High was the winner of the Traveling Team Trophy; Henry Clay was named the District's Chapter Achievement award winner. Hazard High School's Helen Williams was named the District Coach of the Year with Rowan County High School's Corey Newsome named the District's Student of the Year. Grace Sheene of Danville won the Susan Moore Scholarship while Danville's Billy Critchfield won the Harlen Hamm Scholarship.

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Advancing to Birmingham to represent Team Kentucky at Nationals in June are Grace Sheene (Danville) and Leanne Hays (Boone County) in Dramatic Interpretation, Matthew Breunig (Bethlehem) and Erin Donelson (North Oldham) in Humorous Interpretation, David Romines (Trinity) and Lauren Ratliff (Beechwood) in Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Valerie Pallos/Rebekah George and William Merritt/Samuel Clark (Henry Clay) in Policy Debate, Benjamin Hanson/Brendon Bultman (DuPont Manual) and Shelby Amato/Amanda Byerman (Henry Clay) in Public Forum Debate, Cooper Boss (Henry Clay) and Jordan Whittaker (Rowan County) in Program Oral Interpretation, Jasarae McKinney/Corey Newsome (Rowan County) and Anna Cate Brown/Brynn Jones (Murray) in Duo Interpretation, Charlie Hall and Abigail Anderson (Danville) in Oratory; Spencer Schumacher (North Oldham) and Adrianna Waters (Boone County) in United States Extemporaneous, Marina Smart (Murray) and David Ma (Paul Laurence Dunbar) in International Extemporaneous, Callie Freeman (Gatton Academy) and Taylor Williams (Hazard) in the House of Representatives, Alexander Brown (Bethlehem) and Cole Vaughan (Bowling Green) in Informative Speaking, and Jack White (North Oldham) and Cooper Winrich (Trinity) in the Senate.

The National Speech and Debate Association (formerly National Forensic League) is the largest interscholastic speech and debate organization serving middle school, high school, and collegiate students in the United States. The Association provides competitive speech and debate activities, high-quality resources, comprehensive training, scholarship opportunities, and advanced recognition to more than 130,000 students and coaches every year. For nearly 90 years, the National Speech & Debate Association has empowered more than 1.4 million members to become engaged citizens, skilled professionals, and honorable leaders in our society. Visit www.speechanddebate.org or www.kynsda.org for more information.

Contact Steve Meadows, Danville High School, Kentucky District Chair, for more information.

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Attached pictures:

The Kentucky qualifiers to the national speech and debate tournament.



The Kentucky District Committee with Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes. L to R Steve Meadows (Danville HS), Grimes, Katy Cecil (LaRue County), Michael Robinson (Murray), and Ryan Brown (Rowan County).

