



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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

Governor Beshear named Communicator of the Year

Danville, KY

Kentucky's best high school speech and debate students went head to head at Centre College March 20 and 21 at the annual Kentucky District Tournament of the National Speech and Debate Association. Students competed in six speech and five debate categories for the right to represent the Commonwealth at the Grand Nationals, the largest academic contest in the world, in Dallas in June. Student 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 in eleven speech and debate events.

Governor Steve Beshear was named the Kentucky District Communicator of the Year, the first year for this award, in recognition for his support of the Kentucky Common Core, which has given recognition to speaking and listening as language arts as important as reading and writing. Additionally, Beshear was recognized for his past participation in debate and student government activities at the University of Kentucky and for building on those skills in his professional life. Accepting on behalf of the Governor was his Executive Assistant, Colmon Elridge, a 1999 graduate of Harrison County High School who is a past participant in the NSDA tournaments and who was awarded many times for his speaking skills at the state and national level while in high school. Elridge was awarded the District's first Alumni of the Year honor at the awards ceremony, held at Centre College, the host of the contest along with the Danville campus of Bluegrass Community and Technical College.

Danville High School took top honors in the Speech and Congress team categories with DuPont Manual High taking the team debate prize. Ryle High School was the District Trophy winner; Calloway County High School was the winner of the Traveling Team Trophy; Boone County High School was named the District's Chapter Achievement award winner. LaRue County High School assistant coach Bill Thompson was named the District Coach of the Year with his student Brian Anderson named the District's Student of the Year and Susan Moore Scholarship winner. Scott High School's Casey Child won the Harlen Hamm Scholarship.

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Advancing to Dallas to represent Kentucky at Nationals are Casey Child (Scott) and Austin Barringer (Danville) in Dramatic Interpretation, Lydia Graham (Danville) and Nathan Sudenga (Boone County) in Humorous Interpretation, Emily Hu and Kayla Soren (DuPont Manual) in Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Agdas Khudadad/Madison Von Deylen (Ballard) and Robert Watson/Anthony Survance (DuPont Manual) in Public Forum Debate, Spencer Henderson and Jack Hauersperger (Highlands Latin) in Policy Debate, Olivia Nickell/Makda Mehari (Rowan County) and Zoie Webb/Jacob Thomas (LaRue County) in Duo Interpretation; Abbey Geurin (Rowan County) and Julia Gensheimer (Gatton Academy) in Oratory; Damon Helton (LaRue County) and Emily Falica (Sky Academy Homeschool) in United States Extemporaneous, Brian Anderson (LaRue County) and Lane Hedrick (Rowan County) in International Extemporaneous, Sue Cook and Zane Arnold (Danville) in the House of Representatives, and Jacob Sanders (Harrison County) and Mary-Scott Bugg (Danville) in the Senate. The National Tournament will be held in Dallas June 15-19.

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.

Colmon Elridge addressing the awards ceremony for the 2015 tournament.

Photo credits to Christel Belcher, Danville High School assistant speech coach