

BY-LAWS

PA SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization is the PA Speech and Debate Association, herein known as PSDA.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

PSDA is dedicated to the effective teaching of speech and debate and ethical use of effective coaching of Forensics in the schools of the Commonwealth. Specifically, its members seek to do the following:

- Encourage recognition of speech communication, debate activities, and drama as inherent parts of basic human skills.
- Advocate education in competent speaking and listening through the adoption of at least one required course in speech communication in all Commonwealth school districts and institutions of higher learning.
- Encourage competent oral communication and listening across the curriculum, in all class activities.
- Encourage young people to participate in co-curricular activities that develop speaking and listening skills.
- Encourage academic sharing and social interaction of high school speech and debate teachers and forensics coaches.
- Train all students in critical thinking and effective communication of their ideas.
- Communicate emerging or on-going concerns regarding speaking and listening in its various settings to decision-makers in government, organizations, business and the arts.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1: Membership is open to all individuals engaged in, working with or concerned about speech communication, debate, and drama. Membership is for one year, commencing September 1 and expiring August 31.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS AND DUTIES

SECTION 1: The officers of PSDA will be a president, vice-president (for speech education), vice-president for forensics, executive secretary, and PDE/PASSP liaison official.

SECTION 2: The term of office will be for two years. All officer terms will commence at the conclusion of the convention during which they are elected. The president and vice-president for speech education shall be elected on odd number years and the vice-president for Forensics and the executive secretary shall be elected on even number years.

SECTION 3: No officer may have his/her office for more than one successive term, but any officer may run for another officer vacancy.

SECTION 4: The president of PSDA will function as its chief executive officer. In that capacity, he/she will perform, but not be limited to the following duties:

- a. Represent the Association throughout the state.
- b. Select the site and date for the upcoming conventions.
- c. Preside at all Association meetings.
- d. Appoint all committees and committee chairs necessary for the business of the organization including but not limited to a Convention Committee and chair.

SECTION 5: The vice president for speech education will perform, but not be limited to, the following duties:

- a. Co-chair and plan the convention program.
- b. Serve in place of the president when necessary.

The vice president for Forensics will perform, but not be limited to, the following duties:

- a. Co-chair and plan the convention programs.

- b. Serve in place of the president, when necessary.

SECTION 6: The liaison officer will serve as the official contact with the PA Department of Education, the PA Association of Secondary School Principals and other groups to promote speech education and high school Forensics in the Commonwealth.

SECTION 7: The executive secretary will perform, but not be limited to, the following duties in the maintenance of the day-to-day business of PSDA:

- a. Handle all PSDA finances.
- b. Keep accurate minutes of all meetings.

ARTICLE V: VACANCIES, NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

SECTION 1: Any vacancy occurring during the term of an elected officer will be filled by the Executive Council until the next business meeting at which time the membership will elect an officer to serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

SECTION 2: An appointed Nominating committee will submit to the executive secretary in time for publication in the SPEECH NOTES prior to the annual convention a slate of at least one name for each officer vacancy. Persons nominated must be members in good standing at the time of their nomination and throughout their terms of office. Persons nominated must have agreed to serve if elected and will submit a brief statement of their goals of office for publication in the SPEECH NOTES.

SECTION 3: Members have the right to offer additional nominations during the annual convention business meeting providing that the nominee has agreed to serve and is given the opportunity to make a brief statement of his/her goals of office.

SECTION 4: Elections will be at the annual convention and overseen by the Nominating committee. If there are at least two candidates for a given office, the vote will be by secret ballot. In other cases if no candidate receives a majority for two successive ballots, the person with the lowest recorded vote will be dropped in the succeeding ballots until a candidate receives the necessary majority.

ARTICLE VI: THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

SECTION 1: The Executive Council will consist of the officers of the organization.

SECTION 2: As the governing body of the organization, the Executive Council members are responsible for the individual duties their various positions require and for the overall administration of PSDA. In this general capacity, the Council will decide by majority vote of members present to do the following:

- a. Approve all financial budgets for the organization.
- b. Set membership fees in all categories.
- c. Arrange affiliation/disaffiliation with national/state/local associations concerned with the same purposes as those of PSDA.
- d. Provide whatever guidance and service PSDA requires.
- e. Serve as the final decision-maker in the case of disputed termination of an ad hoc committee.

SECTION 3: The Executive Council will meet at least twice each year, one of those meetings to coincide with the annual convention. The president will notify the members in writing of the time and place of such meetings and send each an agenda at least three calendar weeks before the scheduled meeting. A quorum of the Council will be a majority of its members.

SECTION 4: The president may appoint whatever ad hoc committees he/she deems necessary, such committees having responsibility to the president and the Executive Council. Such committees terminate ordinarily when the task for which they were constituted is completed. In case of dispute over the completion of a given task, the Executive Council will decide whether the committee is to continue.

SECTION 5: No committee may incur expenses without the approval of the Executive Council. Neither may any committee or its individual members speak for PSDA or use the organization's name without notification to and approval of the president.

ARTICLE VII: ANNUAL CONVENTION AND MEETINGS

SECTION 1: The Executive Council will approve a time and place for a yearly convention. Such approval must be

granted at least two years in advance of the anticipated date. Selection of the location for the convention should be guided by ease of accessibility, cost and appropriateness of local resources.

SECTION 2: The annual convention should bring together members and prospective members so that:

- a. Programs of highest quality will be presented.
- b. PSDA can have its yearly business meeting, elect persons to vacancies and attend to the concerns of the organization.
- c. The Executive Council of PSDA can meet.
- d. Issues of concern to the organization and the Commonwealth might be discussed and action begun.
- e. Bonds of professional and social affiliation can be established and maintained.

SECTION 3: At the yearly convention, an all-member business meeting, chaired by the president, will convene so that the following can occur:

- a. Election of persons to vacancies will take place.
- b. The business of the organization needing member approval could be resolved.
- c. Committee reports can be heard.
- d. Member concerns can be heard.

SECTION 4: The Executive Council meetings will take place according to the provisions of Article VI.

Emergency meetings may be called by the president or by petition of two of the Council's members.

SECTION 5: A convention committee will be appointed at the yearly PSDA Conference. The committee will consist of a hospitality subcommittee, a social subcommittee, and a site arrangements subcommittee. All these subcommittees plus the two vice-presidents in their capacity as program planners will report to the convention chair.

SECTION 6: Chairs of committees will hold their meetings at times and places needed to complete the tasks for which their committees are charged.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these by-laws require a 2/3 vote of those in attendance at the yearly convention business meeting, providing that notice of such amendment is published in the SPEECH NOTES announcing the convention or if such notice is sent to the membership separate from the SPEECH NOTES at least two weeks prior to the convention.