

2026-2027 Competitive Events Guidelines

Public Speaking (High School)

Public Speaking allows members to develop and deliver a well-structured speech on a designated topic. This event helps members enhance their confidence, clarity, and persuasive communication skills through a live presentation before a panel of judges.



Educational
Alignments

Event Overview

Division	High School
Event Type	Individual
Event Category	Presentation
Event Elements	Speech

Event Information:

National Leadership Conference:

Timing Structure:

- **Presentation: Maximum of 5 minutes**
 - one-minute warning
 - **Question & Answer (Q&A): 2 minutes**
- Important: Time allocations are exclusive. Time may not be shifted between segments.*

Important Notes:

- **Internet Access:** Not Provided
- **Event Schedule Notes:**
 - Some events may begin before the Opening Session.
 - All schedules are posted in local time for the NLC host city.
 - Schedule changes are not permitted.

State/Region:

Review Region and State Sections further on in this document.

***** Event specifics are continued below. Review the document in its entirety.**

2026-2027 Topic

Develop and deliver a speech based on the following topic:

Discipline Over Talent: The Habits of Successful Leaders

Deliver a speech exploring the role discipline plays in achieving personal and professional success. Examine how discipline shapes leadership, influences decision-making, and contributes to achieving long-term goals.

Why does discipline often have a greater impact on long-term success than talent alone?

Region

Region Eligibility

Each chapter may enter two (2) participants who are members of active local chapters in FBLA Connect, the FBLA membership system. An active chapter is defined as having members “pending or paid” at the time of the RLC registration deadline submitted by the region adviser to the Executive Director and published on the PA FBLA website.

In order to be registered for this event, student data is imported into Blue Panda, the event registration and competitive events management system, from FBLA Connect. Students are imported and able to be registered only if identified as having “pending or paid” membership. “Paid” membership is defined as a

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dues payment for the student received by National FBLA; “pending” membership is defined as membership for which payment is due to National FBLA 60 days from the date the student appears on the membership invoice.

Members may compete in an event more than once if they have not previously placed in the top ten of that event at NLC. If a member places in the top ten of an event at NLC, they are no longer eligible to compete in that event at RLC, SLC, or NLC.

It is the responsibility of the local chapter adviser

- to pay membership dues for all competitors by the published region deadline and to register students through Blue Panda by the published deadline.

Region Procedure

The following procedures must be used.

1. **The participant must comply with the PA FBLA Dress Code which can be found at <https://www.pafbla.org/about-pafbla/dress-code/>. Points will be deducted for not complying with the dress code UNLESS it is an egregious violation.**
2. There will only be one round of competition at the region level.
3. The participant should introduce himself/herself to the judges.
4. The speech should follow the rating sheet.
5. The speech must be developed around the topic.
6. When delivering the speech, competitors may use notes prepared before the event.
7. No other reference materials such as visual aids, props, handouts or electronic devices may be brought to or used during the event.
8. Five (5) minutes will be given to deliver the presentation.
9. At the end of four (4) minutes, a timekeeper will stand until noticed and hold up a colored timecard indicating one minute is left, and at five (5) minutes the timekeeper will stand and hold up a colored timecard indicating time is up. When time is called, the presenter must end the presentation.
10. Following each presentation, the judges will conduct a two-minute (2) question-and-answer period.
11. The performance is open to all conference attendees, except performing participants of this event. If participants of the event view other presentations before or after their scheduled presentation time, they (or their team if they are part of one) will be disqualified.

Region Judging

The participant will be evaluated by a panel of judges using the rating sheet found in these guidelines.

All decisions of the judges are final. If there is a tie, ties will be broken based on the following:

Judges must make a definitive decision on ranking. Ties are not permitted. The decision of the judges is final.

Region Awards

Each region at a **minimum** must distribute a certificate to the top five place finishers in each event.

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State

State Eligibility

The minimum number of competitors each region may enter is the first- and second-place winners who are members of active local chapters on record in FBLA Connect as having dues listed as “pending or paid.” Since a participant’s “pending or paid” membership was required at the time of region conference registration, only students who are “pending or paid” appear in Blue Panda to be registered for and assigned competitive events at the State Leadership Conference.

If any of the eligible winners cannot attend the SLC, it is the responsibility of the:

local chapter adviser

- to contact the region adviser about the student who will not be attending.

region adviser

- to contact the adviser of the next eligible competitor about participating at the State Leadership Conference.
 - to notify the PA FBLA Executive Director/State Chairman of the change before the deadline date published at <https://www.pafbla.org/about-pafbla/important-dates/>, which is posted on the PA FBLA web site.

State Procedure

The following procedures must be used:

1. A **preliminary round** will be held to determine the top participants in the final round. All participants will be divided randomly into groups by a member of the state committee, with an equal number of the top participants from each group advancing to the final round.
 - The order of performance will be drawn at random by a member of the state committee.
 - Finalists for this event will be an equal number advancing from the preliminary round groups to a maximum of 15 in events in which there are no preliminary rounds.
2. The following procedures will be followed during the **final round**:
 - The order of performance will be drawn at random by a member of the state committee.
3. Both rounds will be open to an audience. The performance is open to all conference attendees, except performing participants of this event. If participants of the event view other presentations before or after their scheduled presentation time, they (or their team if they are part of one) will be disqualified.
4. **The participant must comply with the PA FBLA Dress Code which can be found at <https://www.pafbla.org/about-pafbla/dress-code/>. Points will be deducted for not complying with the dress code UNLESS it is an egregious violation.**
5. The participant should introduce himself/herself to the judges.
6. The speech should follow the rating sheet.
7. The speech must be developed around the topic.
8. When delivering the speech, competitors may use notes prepared before the event.
9. No other reference materials such as visual aids, props, handouts or electronic devices may be brought to or used during the event.
10. Five (5) minutes will be given to deliver the presentation.

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11. At the end of four (4) minutes, a timekeeper will stand until noticed and hold up a colored timecard indicating one minute is left, and at five (5) minutes the timekeeper will stand and hold up a colored timecard indicating time is up. When time is called, the presenter must end the presentation.
12. Following each presentation, the judges will conduct a two-minute (2) question-and-answer period.
13. The performance is open to all conference attendees, except performing participants of this event. If participants of the event view other presentations before or after their scheduled presentation time, they (or their team if they are part of one) will be disqualified.

State Judging

The participants will be evaluated by a panel of judges using the rating sheet found in these guidelines. All decisions of the judges are final. If there is a tie, ties will be broken based on the following:

Judges must make a definitive decision on ranking. Ties are not permitted. The decision of the judges is final.

State Awards

The state chapter will present a maximum of ten (10) awards at the State Leadership Conference.

National Conference Eligibility

The first-, second-, third-, and fourth-place award winners at the State Leadership Conference are eligible to attend the National Leadership Conference.

If the first-, second-, third-, or fourth-place winner cannot attend, it is the responsibility of the:

local chapter adviser

- to contact the PA FBLA Executive Director/State Chairman about the student who will not be attending.

PA FBLA Executive Director/State Chairman

- to contact the next eligible award winner about participating at the National Leadership Conference.

National

Required Competition Items

Items Competitor Must Provide	Items FBLA Provides
• Conference-provided nametag • Photo identification • Attire that meets the FBLA Dress Code	• N/A

Eligibility Requirements

To participate in FBLA competitive events at the National Leadership Conference (NLC), the following criteria must be met:

- **Membership Deadline:** FBLA national membership dues must be paid to the specific division by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 1 of the current school year.
- **Repeat Competitors:** Members may only compete in an event at the NLC more than once if they have not previously placed in the top 10 of that event at the NLC. If a member places in the top 10 of an event at the NLC, they are no longer eligible to compete in that event at future NLCs,

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unless the event has been modified beyond a name change. Chapter events are exempt from this procedure.

- **Conference Registration:** Members must be officially registered for the NLC and must pay the national conference registration fee to participate.
- **Official Hotel Requirement:** To be eligible to compete, competitors must stay within the official FBLA housing block.
- **State Entry Limits:** Each state may submit up to four entries per event.
- **Event Participation Limits:** Each member may participate in:
 - o One individual or team event, and
 - o One chapter event (e.g., *Community Service Project* or *Local Chapter Annual Business Report*).
- **Competitor Responsibility:** Only registered competitors are permitted to plan, research, prepare, and set up their presentations. Advisers and others may not assist.
- **Participation Requirement:** To be eligible for an award, each competitor must complete all components of the event at the National Leadership Conference.
- **Identification at Check-in:** Competitors must present valid photo identification (physical or digital) that matches the name on their conference name badge. Acceptable forms include a driver's license, passport, state-issued ID, or school ID.
- **Late Arrivals:** Competitors will be allowed to compete until such time that the results are finalized, or participation would impact the fairness and integrity of the event, as determined by Competitive Events staff. If judges have left the competitive event area, it is no longer possible to compete. Five penalty points will be assessed for late arrivals in any competitive event.

Event Administration

This event consists of two phases: a preliminary presentation and a final presentation.

Preliminary Presentation Details

Timing Structure

- **Equipment Set-Up:** 0 minutes
- **Presentation:** Maximum of 5 minutes (one-minute warning)
- **Question & Answer (Q&A):** 2 minutes
- **Important:** Time allocations are exclusive. Time may not be shifted between segments.

Venue & Format

- Presentations occur in-person at the National Leadership Conference (NLC).
- Competitors are randomly assigned to presentation sections.
- Presentations will take place in a large, open area with a designated space of approximately 10' x 10', which includes a table and chairs for the judges.
- The preliminary round is closed to conference attendees and audience.

Restricted Items

- Animals, except for authorized service animals.
- Reference materials such as visual aids, props, handouts or electronic devices.

Copyright Compliance

- All competitors must comply with state and federal copyright laws.
- Facts and data must be cited using credible sources.

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Event Specific Information

- The speech must be developed around the topic.
- When delivering the speech, competitors may use notes prepared before the event.

Final Presentation Details

The presentation guidelines outlined above will apply to the final presentation.

Advancement to Finals

- The top-scoring competitors from each preliminary section will advance to the final round in equal numbers.
- The number of competitors advancing to the final round depends on the number of preliminary sections:
 - 2 sections: Top 6 from each section advance
 - 3 sections: Top 4 from each section advance
 - 4 sections: Top 3 from each section advance
 - 5 sections: Top 3 from each section advance
 - More than 5 sections: Top 2 from each section advance

Scoring

- Preliminary round scores are used to determine which competitors advance to the final round from each section.
- Final round scores determine the final rankings and top award winners.
- Judges are responsible for breaking all ties in both preliminary and final rounds.
- All judging decisions are final. Results announced at the National Leadership Conference are considered official and will not be changed after the conclusion of the National Leadership Conference.

Penalty Points

- Competitors may be disqualified if they violate the Code of Conduct or the Honor Code.
- Five points are deducted if competitors do not follow the Dress Code or are late to their assigned presentation time.

Recognition

- A maximum of 10 entries (individuals or teams) may be recognized per event.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- FBLA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by providing reasonable accommodations for competitors. Accommodation requests must be submitted through the conference registration system by the official registration deadline. All requests will be reviewed, and additional documentation may be required to determine eligibility and appropriate support.

Recording of Presentations

- Unauthorized audio or video recording is strictly prohibited in all competitive events.

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- FBLA reserves the right to record presentations for educational, training, or archival purposes. Competitors should be aware that their presentations may be recorded by FBLA-authorized personnel.

Important FBLA Documents

- Competitors should be familiar with the [Competitive Events Operations Manual](#), [Honor Code](#), [Code of Conduct](#), and [Dress Code](#).

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Public Speaking Presentation Rating Sheet

Expectation Item	Not Demonstrated	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Points Earned
Topic & Theme <i>Incorporates provided topic and executes a consistent theme</i>	<i>Provided topic is not mentioned in speech</i>	<i>Topic is not clearly incorporated into speech</i>	<i>Topic was clearly incorporated into speech</i>	<i>Topic was clearly incorporated and expanded thoroughly throughout the speech, using personal stories</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Introduction <i>Introduce the speech</i>	<i>Speech had no introduction</i>	<i>Introduction was not clearly presented</i>	<i>Introduction was clearly presented, and topic was defined</i>	<i>Introduction was clearly presented, and topic was defined with an effective transition into the speech body</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Supporting Information (Body) <i>Include accurate and appropriate supporting information</i>	<i>Speech did not have a topic</i>	<i>Multiple topics presented without clear connections</i>	<i>Central topics were identified, connected, and supported throughout the speech</i>	<i>Central topics were identified, connected, and supported throughout the speech with smooth transitions effectively utilized to support the central topic</i>	
	0 points	1-9 points	10-16 points	17-20 points	
Conclusion <i>Provide effective conclusion connected to the topic & theme</i>	<i>Speech did not have a conclusion</i>	<i>Conclusion was not clearly presented</i>	<i>Effective conclusion was presented</i>	<i>Conclusion provides connection to entire presentation</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Speech Delivery – Pace & Fluency <i>Deliver speech with appropriate pace & lack of filler words</i>	<i>Maintained an inconsistent pace that was either too fast or slow, paired with excessive use of filler words</i>	<i>Displayed a distracting and uneven pace, accompanied by noticeable use of filler words</i>	<i>Maintained an appropriate pace with minimal use of filler words</i>	<i>Maintained a well-varied pace and eliminated filler words, fully engaging the audience</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Speech Delivery – Engagement <i>Deliver speech with varied facial expressions, excellent eye contact with judges, good posture</i>	<i>Does not make eye contact or have varied facial expressions</i>	<i>Minimal varied facial expressions and/or eye contact</i>	<i>Appropriate facial expressions and eye contact</i>	<i>Appropriate eye contact, facial expressions, and didn’t use notecards</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Speech Delivery – Vocal Clarity <i>Deliver speech with appropriate voice projection</i>	<i>Does not have voice projection</i>	<i>Minimal voice projection</i>	<i>Appropriate voice projection</i>	<i>Appropriate voice projection and diction</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Speech Delivery – Poise & Presence <i>Deliver speech with self-confidence, and poise</i>	<i>Did not demonstrate self-confidence, poise, or good posture</i>	<i>Demonstrated self-confidence, poise, or good posture</i>	<i>Demonstrated elevated self-confidence, poise, and good posture</i>	<i>Demonstrated elevated self-confidence, poise, posture, and assertiveness</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Demonstrates the ability to effectively answer questions	<i>Does not respond to questions or responses are completely off-topic.</i>	<i>Provides incomplete or unclear answers that show limited understanding.</i>	<i>Responds accurately and clearly to most questions, showing adequate understanding.</i>	<i>Responds confidently with clear, accurate, and thoughtful answers that enhance the overall presentation.</i>	
	0 points	1-6 points	7-8 points	9-10 points	
Presentation Protocols					

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Adherence to Competitive Events Guidelines	Competitor(s) Did Not Follow Guidelines	Execution Aligned with Guidelines: ✓ Presentation aligned with the assigned topic ✓ Did not leave materials behind after the presentation ✓ Avoided use of food, live animals, technology, visuals, props	
	0 points	1-10 points	
Staff Only: Penalty Points (5 points for dress code penalty and/or 5 points for late arrival penalty)			
Presentation Total (110 points)			
Name(s):			
School:		Section:	
Judge Signature:		Date:	

Comments: