

Instructions to Club Presidents - 2025-2026 Contest

Dear Club Presidents:

We are gearing up for the Annual Rotary Speech Contest. The process can start as early as November (with clubs contacting local schools) and culminates at the finals held at the District Conference on May 2, 2026. This year's conference will take place at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, NV. Rotary International's theme is **"Unite for Good."** Our District 5190's theme is **"Make Dreams Come True."**

This year's theme for our Rotary speech contest: **"Unite for Good: Together, We Make Dreams Come True"**

The target dates to complete the club-level contest are January through March 2026, and for the Area contest, the final date is no later than April 15, 2026. Names of the area contestants moving on to the district contest are due to David Zybert (dzybert@gmail.com) no later than April 21, 2026. The district awards will be \$1,000 for first place, \$750 for second, and \$500 for third. Suggested Club or Area awards should be left to the discretion of the local club or area.

All speech documents and information are available through the District website. Those clubs that have participated over the years know what an exceptional opportunity the contest provides the young people in our communities. Each year, talented students demonstrate their speaking skills in front of Rotarians, guests, and families . . . it is amazing to watch! Again this year, we will be providing students an opportunity to display their talent.

When contacting your local high schools to promote the Rotary Speech Contest, you may want to consider asking to speak to the following staff members:

ASB Leadership Teacher/Adviser
FFA Teacher/Adviser
Key Club Adviser

Interact Club Adviser
English Department Chair
Speech and Debate Coach/Adviser

I am the contact and coordinator for the area winners only. Names and contact information are due to me by April 21, 2026. The club and area contests are to be handled and delegated by the club presidents and AG's. Thank you in advance for promptly responding and supporting the Speech Contest again this year.

David Zybert
Rotary District 5190 Speech Chair
(775) 232-6736
dzybert@gmail.com

2025-2026 District Speech Contest ASSISTANT GOVERNORS - Important Points

1. I'll be communicating with one contact person per area regarding Club, Area and District speech contests. If that contact person is someone other than the area Assistant Governor, please forward his/her name, address, and email address to me ASAP. The contact person must have an email.
2. You must let me know no later than April 21, 2026, if you will have an area contestant in the District Speech Contest.
3. It's okay if you decide to combine with another Area and send one contestant representing two Areas. I must know this by April 21, 2026. You may invite your Area contestant and their family to attend the conference lunch directly after the contest as guests of your area. The first-place contestant will be performing the winning speech during the Saturday (May 2, 2026) lunch meal as the guest of the District Committee. The first-place contestant is then retired from future Rotary District 5190 speech competitions.
4. Your club contests must be completed by March, 2026. Your Area's deadline is April 15, 2026. Please email the name of your Area winner to me immediately after the Area contest, no later than April 21, 2026.
5. The District Speech Contest is to be held the morning of Saturday, May 2, 2026, 9:00 am, at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, NV – Crystal Rooms 1 & 2.
6. All Area Speech contestants' names must be forwarded to David Zybert no later than April 21, 2026, in order to participate in the District finals.
7. Each Club/Area is responsible for all prizes and trophies at the Club/Area contest level. The District will pay the District cash prizes. The cash prize amounts for the District contest are: \$1,000 for 1st, \$750 for 2nd, and \$500 for 3rd. All fourth-place finishers will receive a cash prize of \$50.00 for their participation.
8. It is you or your designee's responsibility to make all arrangements with your Area winner to attend the District conference contest. This includes informing your contestant of me, location, etc. It is important that the first level of communication comes from the Area Speech Chairperson. As a follow-up, I will be communicating with your Area contestant before the week of the District contest.

Thank you!

David Zybert
Rotary District 5190 Speech Chair
(775) 232-6736
dzybert@gmail.com

2025-2026 District Speech Contest Additional Instructions for Club & Area Speech Chairs

Follow the instructions described in the “Checklist for Club Speech Contest Chairman” to prepare for the Club, Area, and District Conference contests.

Once contestants have arrived, have them draw a number from a box to determine their speaking order.

The Master of Ceremonies of the contest should introduce the contest to the club by stating the speech contest theme and briefly listing the rules. Explain that the speakers will be introduced by NUMBER ONLY, with no mention of names or school affiliation until after all contestants have given their speeches. Also explain that there is to be no applause between speakers so that judges are not influenced by the audience, and that there will be silence between speakers to allow the judges an opportunity to rate the speakers. Do not point out the judges before the contest.

Introduce the first speaker as “Speaker Number One,” etc.

After the last speaker is done and there has been enough time for the judges and timekeepers to compile their results, have someone collect the judges’ rating forms and the timekeeper’s form and give them to the teller. It is helpful to have one of the judges selected as the person to let the MC know they are ready for the next contestant.

Have the audience applaud all of the speakers at the conclusion of all of the speeches only. Invite each speaker up by number and have them give their name, grade, school, extra-curricular activities, plans for the future, and anything else you want to include.

The teller should be ready at this point. If you have more than four speakers, say that those scoring fourth and below are tied for fourth place. Introduce the fourth-place winner(s), the third-place winner, then second, then first. Explain that the winner will now go on to represent the Club/Area at the next level.

Be sure to thank the judges, tellers, timekeepers, Club/Area AG’s, and anyone else responsible for the contest. Also thank the high school speech teachers, if present.

Thank you for helping make our District Speech Contest a success!