

Rules and Policies of Massachusetts Forensic League

Section I. GENERAL LEAGUE RULES AND OPERATIONS

1.1 Mission Statement.

The Massachusetts Forensic League was established in 1958 as an organization to promote interest in speech training through interscholastic debate and competitive oratory, interpretive speaking and interpretive oral reading.

Its mission is:

- To provide the opportunity for students to practice and refine communication skills
- To teach analytical, critical thinking and rhetorical skills
- To help students develop self-confidence through the vehicle of competitive speech and debate
- To provide an opportunity for students to connect with others
- To encourage students to examine their values
- To encourage students to work together effectively

1.2 Eligibility.

- Any Massachusetts high school that is a member in good standing with the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association may join as a member of the MFL and participate in any of the league events upon complying with all terms and conditions established by the Board of Directors.

- Any non-Massachusetts school from an adjoining state that has no equivalent state-level forensics organization may also join as a member chapter of the MFL and participate in any of the league events upon complying with all terms and conditions established by the Board of Directors.
- Students may participate in MFL events provided that they have been approved by the principal and coach of the individual member school. However, no student may participate who does not meet the requirements established by the Administrators Association for athletic contests.
- The MFL consists of high schools. High school is defined as grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. Students in grades 6 and 7 may attend MFL tournaments only at the explicit invitation of tournament directors, and must do so as part of a separate team from a high school, even if the high school is the same school or school system as the middle school. Eighth grade students may compete in the MFL if they are affiliated with an MFL member chapter.

1.3 League Funds.

The League shall maintain MFL accounts and spend them to further the interests of all students in the League. Expenditures must be approved or spending power delegated, in advance of any spending, by vote of the Board. The Treasurer shall maintain a full and accurate accounting of all funds spent and received, and shall deliver an itemized financial report annually to the Board.

1.4.1 The League will not be responsible for expenses associated with providing telephonic or electronic equipment if a Director or member school chooses to participate in a meeting using such means.

1.4 League Dues.

The Board will determine the amount of dues and late fee to be assessed each season. If the Board does not set an alternative date, then the deadline for dues payment shall be December 1st of the current school year. After that date, a late fee will be assessed. If no new amount is announced at the fall meeting or on the invoice, then dues and late fees will remain the same as they were during the previous season. A late fee of \$50 was set at the Board meeting on September 17, 2005.

1.5 League Communications.

The Secretary/VP shall maintain the league contact database and facilitate league communications where needed. Official league communications shall be over email, and the Secretary/VP shall be responsible for distributing rule changes, notifications of Board decisions, and meeting minutes in a timely manner via the email database. Tournament directors who wish to distribute tournament invitations and other communications through the League database must make their request to the Secretary/VP at least one week before the communication must go out.

1.6 Adult Contact with Minors.

Adults present at MFL sanctioned tournaments must comply with all Massachusetts laws and regulations governing contact with minors. It is the responsibility of every member school to ascertain that all adults that they bring to MFL sanctioned tournaments meet current state requirements.

1.7 Voting Classes.

1.7.1 Voting Members of the MFL

Member schools that are located in Massachusetts and that have paid their MFL dues for the current season. If a vote is to take place prior to the dues deadline for the current season, then a school may vote if they paid their dues in the previous season. Each member school is entitled to one vote.

1.7.2 Non-voting Members of the MFL

Affiliate member schools.

1.8 Conflict of Interest

The Massachusetts Forensic League and all Officers, Directors and Committee Members scrupulously shall avoid any conflict between their own respective personal, professional or business interests and the interests of the League in any and all actions taken by them on behalf of the League in their respective capacities.

In the event that any Officer, Director, or Committee member of the League shall have any direct or indirect interest in, or relationship with, any individual or organization which proposes to enter into any transaction with the League, including but not limited to transactions involving:

- a. the sale, purchase, lease or rental of any property or other asset;
- b. employment, or rendition of services, personal or otherwise;
- c. the award of any grant, contract, or subcontract;
- d. the investment or deposit of any funds of the League;

such person shall give notice of such interest or relationship and shall thereafter refrain from discussing or voting on the particular transaction in which he has an interest, or otherwise attempting to exert any influence on the League, or its components to affect a decision to participate or not participate in such transaction.

1.9 Policy on Grants

The MFL Board may appoint a grant committee or committees empowered to award grants in support of member chapters. Grants may be awarded from MFL general funds or funds donated to the MFL for the express purpose of supporting member programs. Grants may be awarded to forensics programs for general funding, or specific purposes established by either the Board in the charter of the particular grant committee, or the committee itself as part of the award. Grant committees shall take reasonable steps to ensure that funds are used for the purposes delineated in the award or to the benefit of the program as a whole.

Grant committees shall consist of no fewer than three people, of whom one is also member of the MFL Board. Grant committee members shall not vote on awards granted to their own programs; alternate members to grant committees may be appointed by the Board as needed to allow for recusal of members with a conflict of interest.

The MFL may receive directed grants on behalf of school forensics programs. If a gift is directed at a particular school's forensics program by the donor, the MFL treasurer or president shall pass on that award to that program directly without need of a grant committee.

1.10 Policy on Scholarships

The MFL Board may appoint a scholarship committee or committees empowered to award scholarships to students of member programs. Scholarships may be awarded from MFL general funds or funds donated to the MFL for the express purpose of awarding scholarships.

Scholarships may be awarded to students for tuition for summer camps or other educational programs, or college tuition, or for attendance to national or regional tournaments. Specific purposes for scholarship funds shall either be established by the Board in the charter of the particular scholarship committee, or the committee itself as part of the award. Scholarship committees shall take reasonable steps to ensure that funds are used for the purposes delineated in the award.

Scholarship committees shall consist of no fewer than three members, of whom one member is also member of the MFL Board. Scholarship committee members shall not vote on awards granted to students from their own programs; alternate members to scholarship committees may be appointed by the Board as needed to allow for recusal of members with a conflict of interest.

SECTION II: TOURNAMENTS AND ENTRIES

2.1 Rules of Professionalism.

All students shall abide by standard rules of professionalism at all MFL functions. Any student found in violation of the code of conduct by any tournament official, judge or chaperone may be disqualified from competition at the discretion of the tournament director. The MFL code of conduct is as follows:

2.1.1. Students are to listen attentively to all speakers during rounds of competition. No eating, drinking, sleeping, or disruptive behavior will be permitted during rounds.

2.1.2. In accordance with Massachusetts Education General Law 71:2A, smoking is not allowed anywhere on school property. Consuming any illegal substance is prohibited.

2.1.3 Students are to be considerate, staying quiet in rooms adjacent to competition, and in school hallways. No student should enter a room during another student's performance. Students should not watch performances through windows or doorways.

2.1.4. Students are encouraged to voice any problems with judges, other competitors, or rooms to the Tab personnel or tournament official.

2.1.5. Students in categories involving preparation room areas are to follow the guidelines of the tournament officials in charge of the prep room. The officials of the preparation room may disqualify a student from competition and remove any student from the preparation facility for breaches of stated procedures.

2.1.6. Students are expected to respect the property and facilities of the host school. All requests by the tournament host and other officials concerning the use of the building and grounds are to be followed.

2.1.7. Award Ceremony Behavior. Students are expected to listen attentively throughout the proceedings, applauding the student receiving an award, not the one who will receive the next one.

2.1.8 No one may communicate with competitors while they are competing, with the exception of judges, official time keepers designated by a judge or tournament official, except as officially allowed by the rules of the event.

2.1.9 At the discretion of the Tournament Director and/or Tournament Host, a rule may be put in place that calls for immediate disqualification from competition if any student or group of students is found in a classroom or in any area of a school that has been designated as off limits,

without adult supervision. The rule must be included in the invitation and announced and/or posted at the tournament.

2.2 Novice Status.

A novice competitor is defined as any student who has not competed in high school forensics in a previous school year. A student who competes in two or fewer high school tournaments while in middle school retains novice status; but if a student competes in more than two high school tournaments, that student cannot be considered a novice. Only novices may enter into Novice events. [See 3.5.9.1, 3.5.10.1, and 3.5.17.1 for clarification of novice status in specific events.]

2.3 Call in period.

Each tournament is to provide a phone number for a call-in period before registration to a tournament. On the morning of a tournament, each school is to call in by the deadline set by the tournament director to either report any drops to their entry, or to confirm that there are no drops. Any school failing to call in may be assessed a \$25 nuisance fee by the tournament director.

2.4 Protests.

Any judge, coach, or tournament official may file a protest with the tournament director if anyone believes an MFL rule has been violated. The tournament director shall adjudicate the protest according to the rules set by the tournament in the invitation and the MFL bylaws. No rank or decision of any judge may be protested – only procedural and rules issues may come under protest. The tournament director shall then prepare a report for the protest log.

2.4.1 Grievance Committee.

If the tournament director feels that the MFL rules governing a protest are ambiguous, or any person involved in the protest believes the tournament director's decision is incorrect, it may be appealed to a Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee shall consist of any three Board members, designated by the Board members present at the tournament. Grievance Committee members may not be affiliated with the same school as either the party being protested or the

party lodging the protest. Grievance Committees shall be chaired by the Vice President of the event group the protest occurs in, or the President if the protest involves general tournament conduct. If any of these officials are not present or are prevented from serving on the Committee due to affiliation, then the Board shall select a substitute chair.

Grievance committees are to hear the complaint and rule on any ambiguity or incorrect tournament director ruling based on MFL Board rules. The Grievance committee therefore only meets to make decisions involving MFL speech, debate, and Congress events, or general MFL conduct rules. If the rule violated is based on the tournament invitation, the tournament director's say is final. The Grievance committee is not empowered to change, only to clarify, existing MFL rules. The Grievance committee must prepare a report for the protest log, and may recommend rule changes to the MFL Board based on the protest if they desire. Decisions of the Grievance Committee are final within the tournament, but may be later overturned by the full Board in official meeting.

2.4.2 Protest Log.

The Board will designate one of its members to maintain the protest log. The protest log should record the nature of each protest, the decision reached, and the reasoning behind the decision. It shall be open for review by any MFL board member, coach, judge, or student, upon request. To protect student privacy, no personal information (name, etc) about the student(s) involved shall be recorded in the protest log.

2.5 Supervision.

No student will be allowed to participate in an MFL tournament without the presence of a supervising agent from his school, or an alternative adult appointed by his school. The MFL will not assume responsibility for any student attending a tournament.

The MFL does not assume responsibility for any damages to property from vandalism and misconduct by participants at MFL tournaments.

2.6 Double Entry

No student may enter any MFL-sanctioned tournament more than once in the same event.

SECTION III: EVENTS

3.1. MFL Sanctioning.

The 16 MFL speech events are required to be offered at sanctioned MFL speech tournaments, and also at the State Speech tournament. MFL debate tournaments must offer all MFL debate events. All sanctioned tournaments must invite all MFL member schools and must follow the MFL Rules and Procedures in conducting their tournaments.

Sanctioning will take place when the calendar is set at a meeting of the Board in the spring of the preceding school year. Schools seeking sanctioning must apply to the Board for sanctioning by the date specified by the Board.

3.2 Sanctioning Exceptions.

The MFL board will appoint a waiving committee to handle sanctioning exceptions. Individual tournament directors may apply to the Board for an exception to the sanctioning rules. Exceptions may be granted to either not offer one or more events, or to substitute a non-MFL event in place of a required event. A tournament failing to offer the required events without an exemption from the Board will not be sanctioned by the MFL. Substitute events will not qualify students for States.

3.3 Additional Events.

Any tournament director may offer events in addition to the required events. Tournament directors are to provide clear rules and regulations for such events in the invitation to their tournament, and also are to provide clear instructions and judging criteria for the judges, either in a handout at the beginning of a tournament or on the ballot/comment sheet.

3.4 Extemp Topics Committee.

The Board shall maintain a standing Extemp Topics Committee, whose job is to assist tournament directors in the writing and editing of extemp topics. Tournament directors may request that the Topics Committee write extemp topics for their tournaments, but must do so at least a month ahead of time. Whether to grant such requests is at the discretion of the individual committee members.

3.5: Events.

3.5.1 Children's Literature is a required speech event with the following description:

This event requires the use of a manuscript. The student should present material designed to be read to children so that it may be understood and appreciated by a young child or children. (Note: This does not mean the literature must fall under nursery level only). The selection must be from a single published fictional or non-fictional story, play, a single long poem or a program of poetry. Material from more than one source is not allowed, with the exception of a poetry program. The author's words as published in the literature may not be altered for this presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. The student may use vocal skills, facial expressions, and/or hand gestures to develop a narrator and character/s. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author. The cutting should provide a cohesive scene or storyline (containing a definite beginning, middle and end). No costumes or props may be used in the presentation.

Time: 10 minute maximum, including introduction (30 second grace); no minimum

3.5.2 Declamation is a required speech event with the following description:

Declamation is a memorized event in which the student delivers a speech written by some other person. The speech must have been presented as a public address and found in print, on video, DVD or on an audio recording. Speeches that have been used only for forensic competition are not acceptable, even if they can be found in print. The presentation should include an introduction that provides the title of the speech and the author, and should include relevant information about the theme and date of the oration or its historical significance. Dialects of the

original speaker need not be mimicked. No scripts, costumes, or props may be used in the presentation.

Time: 10 minute maximum, including introduction (30 second grace); no minimum

3.5.3 Dramatic Performance is a required speech event with the following description:

This is a memorized event in which the student presents a selection of literature. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author, and should develop the narrative and/or character(s) via vocal and physical techniques. The selection must be from a single published play, a fictional or non-fictional work, or a poem or program of poetry. Material from more than one author is not allowed. The author's words as published in the literature may not be altered for this presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. No scripts, costumes, or props may be used in the presentation.

Time: 10 minute maximum, including introduction (30 second grace); no minimum

3.5.4 Duo Interpretation is a required speech event with the following description:

Duo is a unique, memorized event challenging two performers to render a dynamic moment utilizing appropriate vocal expression, gesture, and interaction between partners. As a unit, the two performers will vocally and physically respond to each other's verbal and non-verbal cues while maintaining an off-stage focus. Thus, the scene requiring disciplined interplay between partners and the environment is created in the minds of the audience. The students may only touch and make eye contact during their own written introduction. If lines from the selection are used in the introduction, the contestants must adhere to the rules of the event. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author. The selection must be from a single published play, a fictional or non-fictional work, or a poem or program of poetry. Material from more than one author is not allowed. The author's words as published in the literature may not be altered for this presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. Speakers may not take lines belonging to one character and apply them to a different character in the performance. The material may be humorous or dramatic, or may combine both tones,

depending on the work selected. Performers may play more than one character if they choose, but it is not required. No costumes or props may be used in the presentation

Time: 10 minute maximum, including introduction (30 second grace); no minimum

3.5.5 Extemporaneous Speaking is a required speech event with the following description:

The students will draw three topics of current interest from the material prepared by the tournament director. Usually topics are based on articles taken from recent issues of publications from major media outlets. The student must pick one of the three topics to prepare for a presentation. The students will have a 30 minute preparation period during which personal information files of books, magazines, and/or newspapers may be used to put together the presentation. After the preparation period, the student should deliver a speech to be evaluated for content and delivery. A single note-card with no more than 50 written words is permitted. If a note-card is to be used, the judge must review it prior to the presentation. Any note-card violation should be brought to the attention of the prep room coordinator prior to the speech; or, the student may choose to proceed without the use of the note-card. The topic slip must be presented to the judge in the round. No visual aids are allowed.

Time: 7 minute maximum (30 second grace); no minimum

3.5.5.1 Cross Examination in Final Rounds

In the final round of Extemporaneous Speaking, a 3 minute cross examination period will follow each speech. This will not occur in Novice Extemporaneous Speaking.

Each speaker will be cross examined by the speaker who spoke before him/her in the round, with the first speaker being cross examined by the student scheduled to speak last in the round. As a student speaks, the student who will ask him/her questions will watch. Immediately following the speech, the questioner will engage the speaker in cross examination for a three minute period.

The judge or timer should keep time and give time signals to both speakers during cross examination; at the close of the 3 minute period no further questions may be asked, but a speaker may finish the answer to a question past the 3 minute period.

The purpose of cross examination is to expand upon important points in a speaker's speech and test their full knowledge of the subject. Cross examination periods should be cordial and concentrate solely on the topic of the speech. Speakers should not talk over each other, nor should they monopolize the time; they must permit one another time to answer or ask questions. Judges should consider each speaker's answers and the questions they ask in their final ranking of the round.

Neither student may refer to notes during the cross-examination period.

3.5.6 Group Discussion is a required speech event with the following description:

Group Discussion is an event in which students discuss and argue a topic set at the beginning of the round. The topics will present an issue, designed to introduce a variety of conflicting opinions. Students will be given the generic nature of the issue in the invitation, with a specific focus to be discussed at the start of the round. Students should research the topic in advance and may bring notes and outside resources into the competition. After the topic is revealed, students will be given 5 minutes to formulate their argument, draw for speaking order, and then each shall be given 2 minutes to deliver an opening statement. Then an open discussion period of up to 15 minutes shall follow in which the issue is discussed and criteria for a resolution or recommendation are established, followed by another period of open discussion of up to 15 minutes to present and discuss possible solutions that meet those criteria. The students will then have 1 minute to prepare their final arguments and 2 minutes to present their final argument in the reverse order of their opening.

3.5.7 Impromptu Speaking is a required speech event with the following description:

On the speaker's turn, he/she will select three topics from an envelope (or other such container), choosing one of them to perform. After the choice is made, the judge begins to time the event.

The contestant has a total of 6 minutes to prepare and deliver his/her presentation. The time may be divided up as the contestant chooses. (Ex: 2 minutes prep, 4 minutes speaking). No outside materials, notes, props or costumes shall be used during presentation. A student has the option of using up to one 3"x5" index card of notes created during the preparation period. Students may use one blank 3"x5" card during each round. Impromptu topics may include proverbs, words, events, quotations or famous people.

Time: No minimum time, but the contestant must cover the subject adequately, 6 min. max., 30 second grace period.

3.5.8 Multiple Reading is a required speech event with the following description:

This event requires the use of a manuscript. A group of 3-8 students will present a scene or scenes from published material (play(s), work(s) of prose, and/or work(s) of poetry). The material may be either serious or humorous in nature. The students may use vocal skills, facial expressions, and/or hand gestures to develop a narrator and character/s; however, the focus of the performers should be off-stage. The students may only touch and make eye contact during their own written introduction. If lines from the selection are used in the introduction, the contestants must adhere to the rules of the event. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name(s) of the piece(s) and the author(s). The cutting should provide a cohesive scene or storyline (containing a definite beginning, middle and end). The material must be found in printed literature. Props, costumes, and other theatrical devices are prohibited; however, reader's stands or stools may be used.

Time: 12 minute maximum, including introduction (30 second grace); no minimum

3.5.9 Novice Extemporaneous Speaking is a required speech event with the following description:

This event is limited to first year extemporaneous speaking competitors ONLY. The students will draw three topics of current interest from the material prepared by the tournament director. Usually topics are based on articles taken from recent issues of publications from major media outlets. The student must pick one of the three topics to prepare for a presentation. The students will have a 30 minute preparation period during which personal information files of books,

magazines, and/or newspapers may be used to put together the presentation. After the preparation period, the student should deliver a speech to be evaluated for content and delivery. A single note-card with no more than 50 written words is permitted. If a note-card is to be used, the judge must review it prior to the presentation. Any note-card violation should be brought to the attention of the prep room coordinator prior to the speech; or, the student may choose to proceed without the use of the note-card. The topic slip must be presented to the judge in the round. No visual aids are allowed.

Time: 7 minute maximum (30 second grace); no minimum

3.5.9.1: Students may only enter Novice Extemp if they meet the MFL criteria for novice status, with the exception that such status shall be calculated in extemporaneous speaking specifically, not forensics as a whole.

See section 6.3.2 for a note on Novice Extemp at the State Tournament

3.5.10 Novice Reading is a required speech event with the following description:

This event is limited to first year forensic competitors ONLY and requires the use of a manuscript. The student will present material either from prose, poetry, or drama. Children's literature is acceptable in this category. The student may use vocal skills, facial expressions, and/or hand gestures to develop a narrator and character/s. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author. The selection must be from a single published play, a fictional or non-fictional work, or a poem or program of poetry. Material from more than one source is not allowed with the exception of a poetry programs. The author's words as published in the literature may not be altered for this presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. No costumes or props may be used in the presentation.

Time: 10 minute maximum, including introduction (30 second grace); no minimum

See section 6.3.2 for a note on Novice Reading at the State Tournament

3.5.11 Original Oratory is a required speech event with the following description:

Oratory is a memorized event in which the student presents original thought and commentary on a topic of his/her choice. Generally, but not always, the speech is of a persuasive nature. No manuscripts may be used during the presentation. A maximum of 150 directly quoted words is allowed in the oration. Students will be judged on their delivery skills and ability to discuss the topic effectively and intelligently. No scripts, costumes, or props may be used in the presentation.

Time: 10 minute maximum (30 second grace); no minimum

3.5.12 Play Reading is a required speech event with the following description:

This event requires the use of a manuscript. The student should present a scene or scenes from a published play. The material may be either serious or humorous in nature. The student may use vocal skills, facial expressions, and/or hand gestures to develop a narrator and character or characters. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author. The selection must be from a single published play. Material from more than one source is not allowed. The author's words as published in the play may not be altered for this presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. No costumes or props may be used in the presentation.

Time: 10 minute maximum, including introduction (30 second grace); no minimum

3.5.13 Poetry Reading is a required speech event with the following description:

This event requires the use of a manuscript. The student will present material chosen from published poetry. Students may present either a single, long poem or several shorter poems connected either by theme or by author. The student may use vocal skills, facial expressions, and/or hand gestures to develop a narrator and character/s. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece(s) and the author(s). The poetry need not have a rhyming pattern. Free verse poetry is acceptable in this event. Verse dramas such as *For Colored Girls . . .*, including the plays of Shakespeare, are not classified as poetry. The material must be found in printed literature. No costumes or props may be used in the presentation.

Time: 10 minute maximum, including introduction (30 second grace); no minimum

3.5.14 Prose Reading is a required speech event with the following description:

This event requires the use of a manuscript. The student will present material chosen from a single published short story, novel, or essay, fictive or non-fictive. The material may be either serious or humorous in nature. The student may use vocal skills, facial expressions, and/or hand gestures to develop a narrator and character/s. The presentation should include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author. No costumes or props may be used in the presentation.

Time: 10 minute maximum, including introduction (30 second grace); no minimum

3.5.15 Radio Broadcasting is a required speech event with the following description:

Radio Broadcasting is a public address event in which a student presents a classic, “top-of-the-hour” news broadcast in the voice of a single professional broadcaster. In this event, each student will receive a packet of news-copy or a newspaper. The student will report to a preparation room where s/he will have 30 minutes to select and organize the material into a 5-minute radio news broadcast. Judges will listen to (not watch) the presentation. Throughout the broadcast, the timekeeper or judge will keep the student informed of time. Students may use minimal introductory remarks and transitional material. Advertising, including sponsorship taglines, is not allowed even if it is included in the copy provided by the tournament staff.

Time: 5 minutes maximum (5 second grace over or under-time)

3.5.16 Student Congress is a required speech event with the following description:

In this event, students simulate a working House of Representatives or Senate of the US Congress. Students debate legislation they have written, conduct the rules and regulations of the chambers, and vote on enacting bills and resolutions. Students do not pretend to be members of the real US Congress, but instead speak for themselves and debate their own viewpoints. Students should debate the issues with eloquence and strong analysis and research on the legislation, as well as answering and countering the arguments of the opposing side where appropriate. Students should also conduct themselves fairly and responsibly in the workings of

the chamber, and may be penalized for inappropriate or disruptive actions therein. The Student Congress will be run under the direction of a league official called the Parliamentarian. The Congress Chair will maintain guidelines and rules of conduct for the Student Congress.

3.5.16.1 Bills and Resolutions for debate must be submitted in advance of the tournament and approved by the Student Congress Chair. The Student Congress Chair will review the proposed legislation and will accept or reject it based upon its suitability for debate and compliance to the composition guidelines.

3.5.16.2 At the beginning of each day the Parliamentarian will ask one representative from each school to serve in the Rules Committee. The representatives are generally, but not necessarily, authors of bills or resolutions. The Rules Committee will set the docket of the bills, pattern and time period of presiding officer terms, and beginning length and rules governing affirmative, negative and amendment speeches. Rules set by the rules committee are subject to approval by the Parliamentarian, and may be changed by the Congress as a whole by means of a vote to suspend the rules.

3.5.16.3 The parliamentary authority for Student Congress shall be Robert's Rules of Order and the MFL "One Sheet" regarding parliamentary procedure, unless otherwise specified by the tournament's director. This rule may be changed by a motion to suspend the rules by the Student Congress unless stipulated by the tournament's director.

3.5.16.4 Judges and coaches may only serve as Parliamentarians of Congress with the prior approval of the Congress Chair. This rule may not be changed by a motion to suspend the rules.

3.5.16.5 The Presiding Officer (PO) is a member of the chamber who ensures that the rules of order and precedence are followed in accordance with the role outlined for presiding officers in Robert's Rules of Order. The student congress chamber will elect presiding officers for terms specified by the chamber at the beginning of the Student Congress session on a preferential ballot. The Tournament Director may designate an alternative means of

choosing the PO. In all cases in which the PO is a member of the chamber, all judges will be reminded orally and on their ballots/ranking sheets, that the PO is eligible for advancement.

Each Presiding Officer will be judged as having given a speech by the scorers after each hour of service as PO.

Each Presiding Officer will be marked for having given one speech per hour for the purposes of precedence after they complete their term as PO. The speech shall be considered to have been given at the beginning of their time as PO.

3.5.16.6 Debate in Congress alternates from affirmative speakers to negative speakers. If no one wishes to speak on the opposite side from the previous speaker, the may recognize a speaker on the same side of an issue. If three speakers in a row speak on the same side of an issue, the PO shall call for a vote on the issue immediately after the third speaker, without requiring a motion to the previous question. Likewise, if no one wishes to speak on an issue, the PO shall call for a vote on the issue immediately without requiring a motion. This rule may be changed by a motion to suspend the rules.

3.5.16.7 Charts and graphs are permitted. Handouts to an individual member and/or some and/or all members of a chamber are forbidden. Judges may consider the effectiveness of the use and accuracy of such charts and graphs in their evaluation of competitors. This rule may not be changed by a motion to suspend the rules.

3.5.16.8 To expedite debate, the MFL recognizes “friendly” amendments. These are amendments to the bill that the author finds friendly, or in keeping with the spirit of the bill. When a motion to amend is heard, the Presiding Officer will read the text of the amendment, and then ask the author if he/she finds the amendment friendly. If the author agrees, the amendment will automatically be incorporated into the text of the legislation. Amendments that are not found friendly will proceed according to the normal procedure according to the parliamentary authority. This rule may be changed by a motion to suspend the rules.

3.5.16.9 Students may not move to amend bills submitted by their own school. This rule may not be changed by a motion to suspend the rules.

3.5.16.10 By default, MFL student congress will have authorship speeches of 3 minutes duration with a 2 minute cross examination period, and regular speeches will last for 3 minutes with the balance of time reserved for cross examination. This rule may be changed by a motion to suspend the rules or by Rule included in the tournament invitation. Changes to this rule via tournament invitation may not be changed by a motion to suspend the rules. All changes to this rule must be approved by the Congress chair.

3.5.16.11 The student congress should take place throughout the tournament day. Tournament directors choose from one of two models when they offer congress.

1. One prelim session with same three judges throughout. The Parliamentarian does not judge unless as an emergency substitute. Keep current size limits in place. When size permits, the entirety of a Congress entry will occur in one chamber; at larger tournaments the Congress may be divided between several chambers. Congress chambers should not contain more than 25 students and may not contain more than 29.

2. Two judges in each of two preliminary sessions with no more than 15 competitors in each. Each judge would vote and the parliamentarian would have a 5th vote. Neither the students in the chambers nor the parliamentarians will change during the preliminary sessions, although the two judges will change half way through the day.

If there is more than one chamber, either the top contestants in each chamber will receive an award, or the tournament may elect to have a Super Session of Congress with the top competitors from each chamber advancing for an overall final round. Prelims and finals both count towards final rankings in Congress.

3.5.16.12 After the session, the three judges will nominate a ballot of ten students each. The Parliamentarian then shall assemble a final ballot of the ten students receiving the most

nominations. In the case of a tie, the Parliamentarian shall break the tie, whether or not the Parliamentarian is serving also as a judge.

The judges shall then rank the students on this final ballot in order, 1-10. The Parliamentarian shall then add up the ranks. If there is a tie, then the tiebreakers should be used in this order:

1. If there is a two-way tie, break on judges preference.
2. If there is a tie between three or more competitors, break on reciprocals.
3. The Parliamentarian breaks the tie.

This method shall apply both to advancing students from the preliminary student congress chamber, and also the final ranks after a super congress. A tournament director may use an alternate system provided that it is explained in the tournament invitation and that it is cleared by the Chair of Congress.

The standard sweepstakes formula from speech events for the tournament shall apply to the ranks, with students also receiving a sweepstakes point for every nomination they receive, unless otherwise specified by the tournament invitation.

3.5.16.13 If a scenario is to be used in the super-session, then it must be outlined in the invitation or it must be posted on the MFL site by the Tournament Director or the Congress Chair at least 7 days in advance of the tournament.

3.5.16.14 In Supersession, the first pro speech shall be followed by two minutes of questioning, as outlined below. The first con speaker shall likewise be followed by two minutes of questioning, as outlined below. Each subsequent speech on that legislation is followed by one minute of questioning.

Questioning shall be conducted in 30-second blocks during the one- or two-minute periods. Upon a floor speaker's concluding remarks, the presiding officer shall recognize all four questioners for a two-minute period (or two questioners for a one-minute period), who shall question the speaker in the order called on. During each 30-second period, the floor speaker

has control of the exchange, but does not need to yield. When the 30-second period lapses, the presiding officer shall tap the gavel once, and the next questioner shall commence. There is no minimum or maximum number of questions that may be asked during the exchange. Any motion to extend either the length of questioning time or number of blocks shall be ruled out of order. The precedence and recency priority system shall be used to ensure all legislators have an equal opportunity to ask questions.

3.5.17 Debate Events.

The MFL sanctions Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Policy Debate and Public Forum Debate at debate tournaments. The topic for these events will be the same for the same time period as the topics set by the National Forensic League unless otherwise stated in the tournament invitation. The rules for LD and Policy debate as well as for PFD are the same as those set by the National Forensic League for these events unless otherwise stated in the tournament invitation or the Rules and Regulations of the MFL. Prep time shall be at the discretion of the tournament director. An MFL debate tournament may choose to offer divisions of LD and Policy debate, or host single divisions. An Open Division of debate shall count as the same as a Varsity division for state qualification purposes unless a student enjoys novice status in debate. In that case, the student may earn a bid towards participation in a novice division at States.

3.5.17.1: Students may only enter Novice divisions in Debate if they meet the MFL criteria for novice status, with the exception that such status shall be calculated in debate specifically, not forensics as a whole. After a student enters a debate event at a second tournament, he/she loses novice status for the following academic year in all debate events (LD, PFD and Policy.)

3.5.17.2 MFL tournaments may offer Varsity/Open, JV, and Novice divisions of debate for qualification to States. Novice divisions must be limited to students with novice status. Students with a great deal of experience should avoid entering JV. Older students may judge novice and JV divisions of debate. State qualifications in one division, however, will not serve for bids in another division. To avoid overly small

divisions at States, the Board may decide not to offer a division at States, in which case qualifiers will be allowed to compete in another division chosen by Board vote.

3.5.17.3 At the first three local MFL debate tournaments of the year, the MFL will offer a JV division aimed at 2nd year debaters. Bids earned at these tournaments in the JV division will qualify students for the “Open division” at States.

3.5.17.4 The MFL will suggest to tournaments offering PFD that there be recognition for top novice performers. (This can be a novice final round or a “top novice” award or other recognition.)

3.5.18 Lincoln-Douglas Debate is a required debate event with the following description.

Lincoln-Douglas is value debate. Values are often seen as principles or concepts that people believe in. Often (but not always) Lincoln-Douglas topics will focus on value implications of policy topics. In other words, before deciding what type of public schools or taxation system we should have, it is necessary to decide if public education or taxation are something we should have in the first place, given the values of the given community.

This event consists of two students engaging in one-on one debate on a given resolution.

3.5.18.1 The tabulation room shall assign one student to debate the affirmative, the other student the negative. During the tournament's preliminary rounds, students shall debate both sides of the topic. Each student will be assigned a given side fifty percent of the time, except in tournaments with odd numbers of preliminary rounds where the assigning will be as close to fifty percent as possible. During elimination rounds, a coin flip shall determine sides, except in such cases as where the students have met previously, in which case they will debate on opposite positions than the first match. A tournament that uses some other pairing method should explicitly disclose their procedure in the tournament invitation.

3.5.18.2 The topic debated must be announced in the tournament invitation. Usually, but not necessarily, the topic is the NFL topic for the month the tournament falls in. The topic debated at the State tournament shall be the NFL topic for the month the contest falls in, unless the MFL Board votes affirmatively otherwise.

3.5.18.3 The debate time structure is as follows:

First Affirmative Constructive - six minutes.

Negative cross-examines the affirmative - three minutes.

First Negative Constructive - seven minutes.

Affirmative cross-examines the negative-three minutes.

First Affirmative Rebuttal - four minutes.

First Negative Rebuttal - six minutes.

Second Affirmative rebuttal - three minutes.

Prep time (three or four minutes) shall be at the discretion of the tournament host, and may be taken at any time. Prep time at the state tournament shall be four minutes. If a tournament uses a different cross-examination/prep time structure, they must indicate such in the tournament invitation.

3.5.18.4 Constructive and Rebuttal Speeches

All original arguments should be presented in the constructive speeches. Arguments made for the first time in the rebuttal speeches should be ignored by the judge in evaluating the round, except that those affirmative responses to negative constructive arguments which occur in the first affirmative rebuttal are acceptable, as this is the first opportunity to so make them. If a student advocates a given argument in a constructive speech but fails to continue the practice in a rebuttal speech, the argument should be ignored by the judge in making a decision. However, new examples and evidence that support previously made arguments are acceptable.

3.5.18.5 Tournament directors should make every effort to 'power match' preliminary rounds after round two. Students shall not debate another student from their school in preliminary rounds, unless the tournament size makes such a match-up unavoidable. However, elimination round brackets will not be broken to avoid such conflicts at the state tournament. In such cases, the coach of the school with such a conflict shall select the method for advancement.

3.5.18.6 Students are not responsible for particular practical/policy applications. However, if particular practical/policy applications are intrinsic to advocated value systems, that may or may not be appropriate to be debated in a given round. Reasons to consider or not to consider any given argument should be clearly articulated in the round. Lincoln-Douglas is not necessarily a single value debate, though most students will choose to debate using such a framework. Other methods are permissible. Many, but not all students will offer voting standard/criteria/criterion as a means to adjudicate the round. In so far as possible, the judge should evaluate the importance of argued issues applied to the most convincing standard advocated by the students.

3.5.18.7 Debaters must abide by the Standard Rules of Conduct at all times, and may be penalized by a judge for failing to do so during a round.

3.5.18.8 Judges

Judges are expected to be attentive and respectful throughout the debate round. The judge should select one, and only one, student as winner. Reasoning, analysis, appropriate evidentiary support, and responding to the opponent's arguments, are all factors. Speaking ability is clearly an important factor in convincing a critic, however in general a student with strong content and a lesser speaking ability should be ranked above a student with worse content and a better speaking ability. That said, it is the student's responsibility to communicate arguments to the judge. The judge should not credit students with arguments that are not understood. Explaining is the student's responsibility.

3.5.18.8.1 A judge should not allow his/her personal opinion of a given argument to influence the decision. If a student wins an argument that the judge knows/believes to be wrong, that student should still be credited with winning the argument. The round context will determine if an argument won in such a way (or any other) is dispositive.

3.5.18.8.2 Varsity debaters may judge novice division rounds.

3.5.18.9 Speaker points

Speaker points are awarded on a 20-30 scale. Points under twenty-one should only be given for gross ethical violations, and should be clearly indicated on the ballot. Points below 21 will be rejected by the tabulation room unless such reasons are clearly indicated. A '30' should be construed as the best a high school student in a given division could reasonably be expected to accomplish, rather than perfection. Judges should make every effort to be consistent with their point scale during an tournament as speaker points will often determining who receives awards. However, it is appropriate to use multiple scales if a judge adjudicates multiple divisions.

Tournament directors will determine if the winning debater may earn fewer speaker point than their opponents. Ties are permissible. Tournament directors will determine if half-points are acceptable.

3.6 It is the intent of the MFL that interpretation cuttings reflect the intent of the author. Lines spoken by one character cannot be given to another. One cannot change the gender of characters by changing gender references from he to she, him to her, etc. Male/female relationships must be respected. (A relationship between a man and a woman cannot be changed into a relationship between two women or two men, for example.) If a cutting is challenged at a tournament, author's intent will be considered most seriously in rendering a decision about the legality of a piece. In addition, lines in Duo cannot be taken from one character and given to another. Students who are found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

3.7 Students competing in interpretive events, where another's work is used in altered or unaltered form, may not draw from the same source material in subsequent school years. This includes different selections from the same work, but does not include different pieces collected in an anthology of otherwise unrelated work, even if by the same author. This rule applies to students who competed in middle school as well as high school interscholastic competition. Students who are found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

3.8 Students who compete in more than one MFL event may use the same material in different events at different tournaments. For example, a student may use the same piece in Play Reading at one tournament and in DI at another. However, a student may not use the same material in two (or more) different events at the same tournament. Students who are found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified from both events.

3.9 Students in events where they are expected to write or author an original work may not use the same speech, or substantial sections of the same speech, in subsequent school years. This rule applies to students who competed in middle school as well as high school interscholastic competition. Students must use their own work, and may not copy the same speech or substantial sections of the same speech as another contestant. Students who are found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

3.10 Students in Limited Prep Events may not consult any unpublished material during preparation time. This includes notes or self-typed material, except for indexing systems within their files. Students in Limited Prep events must use only the time allotted to them by the tournament officials, and must not collude, share information, or otherwise assist or be assisted in the creation of their speech. Students may share files, as long as they do not consult each other in the process. Students may only bring outside files if allowed by the event; if not, they must be limited to the materials provided to them by the tournament. Students who are found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

3.11 Published Sources.

The intent of the MFL is that all materials presented in interpretation events must be available to all members of the league. All coaches should be able to produce an original source with an ISBN,

ISSN, or IFFN. If the manuscript does not have an ISBN, ISSN, or IFFN, then, upon challenge, the coach or supervising adult must be able to show that the source was purchased or obtained commercially; i.e. from a literary agent or publisher or bill of sale. Material that is publicly available by internet URL and retrieval date is also acceptable. All material for interpretive events must be published in print form: it is not acceptable to transcribe interp material from movies, DVDs or VCR tapes. Students who are found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

3.12 No material that was not obtained in a lawful manner may be used as evidence, scripts, source material or otherwise, in any event. Lawful manner is defined as “acceptable under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States.”

3.13 Students in Limited Prep, Debate, Congress, Oratory or other events where citations of evidence are expected are responsible for the accuracy of their citations based on that material. Students must cite facts and analysis from source material accurately and in keeping with the author’s intent. All competitors must have copies of all sources cited in competition, with full source citations, at the tournament. Debaters should also have such copies in the rounds in which the sources are cited. Debate opponents and judges may request to see sources during the round; sources must be presented if they are requested. Debate judges may evaluate evidence within the round as they choose, but severe ethical discrepancies in the use of sources, in all events, should be brought to the attention of the tournament director. Students found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

3.14 Students must use source material from the appropriate genre for that event. Students may not use source material from an incorrect genre, such as performing a play in prose reading, as defined in the rules of each event. Other than verse dramas, which are not poetry per the rules of Poetry reading, material which crosses genre boundaries may be performed as either genre it falls in, but may only be performed as that genre in a given season by the student. Students found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

A genre encompasses the style a selection is written in, not the content of that style; thus poetry, plays and prose are genres, while for instance Dramatic Interp, Humorous Interp, or Children’s Literature would not count as separate genres; each encompass many genres. Children’s Literature, HI or DI selections therefore can be performed in different categories within the same League Season, though not at the same tournament.

3.15 Students in speech events whose performances exceed the stated time and grace periods of their events shall be penalized by one rank by the tab room for the round where the time violation occurred. Other students in the round shall not have their ranks raised as the result of a time violation. Judges may, at their discretion, also consider the effect of excessive time violations in their rankings, but the 1 rank penalty is mandatory. Judges must have kept accurate time in order for this rule to apply, and should use their discretion in adjusting timing to account for audience laughter, or disruptions beyond the student or students' control.

3.16 Students in limited prep events shall not have substantial communication about their speeches or speech topics with teammates, coaches, or any others during their prep time. Use of phones, internet or other communication devices is forbidden. Use of electronic information storage or retrieval devices in prep is forbidden. Students must take only the prep time given to them, and may not speak out of the order assigned by prep room staff, or otherwise attempt to gain extra preparation time, apart from tournament delays beyond their control. Students found to be in violation of this rule shall be disqualified.

3.17 Students competing in events which forbid the use of props, costumes or visual aids who nonetheless use these in competition shall be disqualified.

3.18 Students who are disqualified may not receive State bids for their disqualified entries. Students disqualified for personal conduct and discipline issues shall be barred from further competition at that tournament. Students disqualified for infractions of the rules of events may be permitted to compete further to receive ballots and feedback, but may not advance to elimination rounds or win awards. Their scores will not count in tournament results or sweepstakes. The scores in all rounds the disqualified entry competed in will be adjusted so as to negate the disqualified entry's presence; any students the disqualified entry ranked better than will be adjusted upwards 1 rank.

3.19 All rule infractions spelled out in these rules, the event descriptions, or tournament invitations, shall be penalized by the judge or judges in their rankings at their own discretion, unless a different penalty has been explicitly laid out in these rules, event descriptions, or the tournament's invitation.

Disqualification rulings shall be made by the tournament director or their designee, and appeals may be made to a Grievance Committee as specified in section 2.4.1.

3.20 If a student in Speech events competes in a round to which they were not assigned, that student receives last place in the room in which s/he should have competed. Scores are adjusted up for the other students in the room in which s/he did compete.

SECTION IV. STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

4.1 The MFL Student Advisory Board, consisting of two voting representatives from each MFL member school, shall meet at any tournament of their choosing in a space and time provided to them by each tournament director. Any MFL student is welcome to attend and speak at SAB meetings as a non-voting member.

4.2 At States each year, the SAB shall elect, by preferential ballot, two co-Presidents for the following school year. The SAB may also choose to elect a Secretary to maintain meeting notes and minutes.

4.3 The MFL Board will designate one of its members as the liaison to the SAB. The SAB liaison shall bring SAB proposals and communications to the attention of the Board in a timely manner, and shall propose questions from the MFL Board to the SAB when the Board wishes to canvass the opinions of the students. The SAB liaison shall also assist the SAB co-presidents in operating the SAB where needed.

4.4 The SAB shall discuss and pass proposals to be forwarded to the Board using any method of their choosing. SAB proposals are non-binding unless passed by the MFL Board itself.

SECTION V. HALL OF FAME

The Massachusetts Forensic League Hall of Fame was established in 2000 to recognize those in the League's past and present who have compiled a distinguished career of service and dedication for their students, and all the students of the MFL. Hall of Fame members are nominated by other members of the MFL. Honorees are inducted into the Hall of Fame at the State Championship Tournaments, and are honored along with all the Hall of Fame members at the annual MFL Hall of Fame Tournament.

5.1 The League shall have a standing Hall of Fame Committee. The Hall of Fame Committee shall be empowered to consider and solicit nominees to the Massachusetts Forensic League Hall of Fame, and upon consideration of said nominees, select new members to be included into the Hall of Fame. The Committee shall be appointed by the Board, and shall include at least one member of the Hall of Fame, if any are willing to serve. The Board shall appoint a director as liaison to the Hall of Fame, who may or may not be a voting member of the Committee. The Hall of Fame Committee shall not induct one of its own current members into the Hall of Fame, nor shall they induct any person who has not been involved in the MFL in some capacity for less than 12 years. The Hall of Fame shall otherwise be governed as set forth in the Rule and Procedures.

SECTION VI. STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

6.1 The League shall annually appoint a State Tournament Committee. This Committee shall include the League Event Chairs (Congress Chair, Debate Chair & Speech Chair), and other members as appointed by the Board. The State Finals Committee shall plan and run the State Finals tournament(s). The Chairs of each event group will serve as the tournament director for their respective tournaments. The invitation will be coordinated by the President, with input from each of the Chairs. The Chairs set policy and decisions left to their discretion by the Rules and Procedures.

6.2 School Eligibility.

Only schools located in Massachusetts are eligible to compete in the Massachusetts State Championships. Any school that is not located in Massachusetts that would like to participate, must request a waiver from the board.

6.2.1 A student may not enter the State tournament unless his/her school has paid all outstanding dues and fees to the MFL.

6.3 Qualification in Speech events.

Students must earn two bids in order to qualify for States in speech events.

6.3.1 In Speech events other than Novice Extemp or Novice Reading, any student who earns a cumulative average rank in preliminary rounds of 3 or less in an event will earn one bid towards States in that event. All students who advance to finals, regardless of their cumulative ranks, will also receive one bid each in the event in which they reach finals.

6.3.2. Novice Reading and Novice Extemp are not offered at States. A student may substitute a maximum of two half-bids in Novice Reading to count as a single bid to one State-qualifying reading event. A student may substitute a maximum of two half-bids in Novice Extemporaneous Speaking to count as a single bid in Extemporaneous Speaking.

6.4 Qualification in Debate events.

Students must earn one bid in order to qualify for States in Debate.

6.4.1 To receive a bid for the State tournament in Debate events, a student must place in the top 30% at MFL sanctioned tournaments. A minimum of 8 entries will receive a bid in each event unless there are fewer than 8 entries.

6.5 Qualification in Congress.

Students must earn two bids in order to qualify for States in Student Congress.

6.5.1 To receive a bid for the State tournament in Student Congress, a student must place in the Super Session of an MFL sanctioned tournament, or the top half of the entry, whichever is smaller.

6.6 Wild Card Entries.

6.6.1 Schools receive two wild card entries to use combined between the State Speech and Congress. They receive four wild cards in policy debate and two additional wild cards to use combined between LD and PFD debate. Wild card entries are not subject to qualification.

6.6.2 A **new school** is a school that has not competed in the MFL in the preceding four years. A new school may enter up to four wild card entries to be used combined between State Speech and Congress during its first two years.

6.7 Events with Multiple Competitors.

Events with two competitors (Duo, PFD, Policy) qualify as teams, not as individuals separately.

The State qualification for multiple will be by piece and one more than 50% of the cast in that piece. Alternatively, 100% of a cast may qualify together and may enter with another piece. In order to qualify for States, casts and pieces must receive two bids.