Massachusetts Middle School
Speech League

Massachusetts Middle School Speech League

Fall 2021 Meeting and Training Session
Saturday September 25, 9:00am-11:00am
Zoom

I.   Meeting called to order at 9:09 a.m/ by Lis.
II.   ROLL CALL: Board Member-at-Large Kim Vanaman/NCE, Board Vice President Craig
      Powers/Shrewsbury, Board President Lis Venetiou/The Pike School, Ellen Eberly/Catholic
      Memorial, Board Treasurer Christina Manos/Sherwood Middle School, Board Clerk Yoshi
      Makishima/Milton Academy, Vivian Powers/Shrewsbury Middle School.
III. MEETING MINUTES:
      A. Christina: Weebly is getting rid of teacher accounts, possibly not regular accounts; we
          may be fine in terms of keeping our website online.
      B. Data cards and Dues?
          1. Yoshi and Christina: No data cards or dues received yet.
          2. Yoshi shared link to updated 2021 data card:
              https://mmssl.weebly.com/joining.html
      C. Christina: Treasurer's report:
          1. Significant funds still remaining from the Lumos Debate grant, earmarked
              for the running of tournaments.
          2. Also still a fair bit in the balance from the Big Questions grant (not
              earmarked for a specific use.)
          3. Approx. $1,500 spent last year on NSDA Campus fees; approx. $450 in dues.
              a) Dues amounts probably don't need to change. Going forward, we
                  may need additional funds to cover Tabroom use at in-person
                  tournaments, once those resume.
          4. Kim: Cap on our account as a nonprofit?
              a) Christina: Cap is around $55,000 - we are very well below that
                  amount.
          5. Should we use the Lumos grant toward the $1,500 spent on Campus fees?
              a) Ellen: possible, going forward, to offer a small remuneration in
                  appreciation of tournament hosts?
          6. Lis: are we expecting any in-person meets this year?
              a) Kim: planning carpools and transportation could be challenging later
                  in the year.
              b) Yoshi: Milton may not have funding for busses for later in the year.

        c) Vivian: Shrewsbury team pays for its own busses, but building use will be in question.

        d) Lis: Table until December; most places won't be able to make predictions for now.

    7. Christina: tax form has been completed and filed for this year.

D. Revision to Storytelling description.

    1. Kim: Question of "text" vs. "own words," and expectations around the use of the chair.

        a) Description amended to allow students to use their "own words" (not going against the nature of the original story.)

        b) New phrasing added, to explain that the chair is optional, and that it can be used for "creative" purposes.

        c) Vivian: add "to" to "to be retold." Typo amended.

        d) Christina: Students are still permitted a script?

            (1) Kim: Storytelling can be "from text or memory," to emphasize that they are not required to memorize.

            (2) Craig: "Text" is deliberately vague, to allow for tablets, cards - scripts that aren't just a binder.

        e) Christina: Is the language around fidelity to the text strong enough? Is more context around the story needed (e.g. stories from other cultures and oral traditions)?

            (1) Kim and Craig: Will amend to include fidelity to "retold from source" of text, as well (to make sure they are still using the text as a basis.)

        f) Christina: one final reminder to judges that Storytelling is not Original Literature - the expectation is not that students make up an original story.

E. Clarification on reading events

    1. "Readily accessible, required text" - "readily accessible" covering any options a student might have, including electronic devices, paper, cards, etc.

    2. Lis: best way to disseminate these updates to coaches?

        a) Kim: "small bites" needed; many of them aren't reading materials ahead of time. Maybe on the checklist we can emphasize

        b) Lis: When Yoshi sends out minutes, highlight updates to events, to make sure that, even if recipients don't read the minutes, they still get the key updates.

F. Duo tips.

    1. Yoshi: referring to [Resource Guide](#), Duo guidelines and new rules.

    2. Yoshi and Kim: try to orient facing forward (using the corners of the screen to angle, as needed.) Students can reach toward camera to create the illusion of interaction, and can cover the camera. Students should leverage the space - can walk off-camera, or get closer or further from camera as needed.

    3. Lis: does the rule about eye contact still apply?

        a) Craig: no such thing as eye contact in a virtual performance; Duos can simulate "eye contact" looking at camera.

4. Yoshi: Try to avoid syncopated singing or speaking; does not work over video call.
G. Virtual Tournament Orientation
    1. Lis: Possible to collect student registration docs early in the year?
        a) Yoshi will post to website homepage, email out.
    2. Lis: important to make sure students have Tabroom accounts prepared.
        a) Different schools have different approaches: have students take charge, or does the coach manage accounts?
    3. Lis: How to enlist coaches for upcoming first tournaments?
        a) Ellen: tournament dates?
            (1) Yoshi put incorrect year heading on website; will amend.
        b) Ellen: October 24th will be challenging; CM, when they ran this meet, usually planned to hold the meet a week later, around Halloween.
            (1) Christina: Shrewsbury team has many novices, probably won't be ready for the 24th. Is it a good idea to have the earliest meet be a novice meet?
            (2) Kim: can be helpfully motivating for new students to have something to get ready for...maybe move to early November?
            (3) Yoshi: is there a way to lower the stakes, to set students at ease?
                (a) Craig: tournament is already very low stakes (no finals, all novice.)
            (4) Ellen: CM is ending their term in October; won't be possible for early November either.
                (a) Vivian: we probably won't be attending October, either.
        c) Lis: add tournament calendar to Spring agenda; it seems like we need to be more deliberate about how we structure the year. (Does it make sense to have novice only tournaments? Separate novice division?)
            (1) Lis: school year starting later?
                (a) Craig: Labor Day was late this year.
                (b) Kim: Many schools starting later post-COVID.
                (c) Vivian: Lots of paperwork now required for student activities.
    4. Lis: recruitment? Bringing former members back?
        a) Vivian: will be challenging; many still unwilling to go virtual.
        b) Lis: admittedly we've had to be virtual longer than anticipated.
        c) Kim: individual outreach seemed to work well for Al Hamra; value to having schools reach out to other schools. May not yield results this year, but will help keep the door open and encourage future participation.
    5. Other items for discussion?
        a) Kim: way to more strongly encourage use of checklist?
            (1) Yoshi: possible to use checklist as outline for morning meeting?

        (2) Lis: How are judges getting the checklist?
- (a) Kim: was easier for in-person, when we could hand out paper copies.
- (b) Yoshi: for virtual tournaments, we've been pointing people toward the website. But few people are using it the day of the meet.
- (c) Craig: we should email the checklist out to judges the morning of the meet.

b) Yoshi: will push event updates and judge checklist in email when Minutes are sent out.

c) Vivian: Is Debate coming? Judge burden was always challenging for debate…
- (1) Craig: Will be easier if students can participate as pairs, so judges will cover more students.
- (2) Lis: several Debate opportunities coming up; refer to [MMSSL website schedule of tournaments.](#)
- (3) Kim: will be offered at April Fling, not at Fully-Fling. Will probably apply for funds for Fully-Fling.
  - (a) Lis: May apply for grant as well.
- (4) Lis: shared new [Big Questions topic](#), NSDA resources (membership not available for most.)
  - (a) Christina: Topic Primer not available to non-members.
  - (b) Yoshi and Lis: we'll send it out, to share with membership. We are trying to grow the event.

d) Outreach to past members.
- (1) Board members will take responsibility for reaching out to specific schools. Yoshi will send out contact list for Board Members.
  - (a) Christina: use data cards? Get former contact info, and principal info, in case the contact is not longer at the school?
- (2) Lis: Deadline?
  - (a) Yoshi: When might they want to participate?
  - (b) Lis: Might they want to observe/judge at October meet?
    - (i) Yoshi: Will they be able to observe?
    - (ii) Kim: Was challenging; some newer members wanted to observe before participating, but we couldn't figure out how to make it work.
    - (iii) Craig: Possible to add "observers" as registrants of a tournament. But that only works for Classrooms.cloud.
    - (iv) Lis: Can we add them as judges?
      - (a) Craig: Probably not feasible.

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Kim: Possible to have a "public" zoom?
Lis: Too much pressure to put on novices.

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Kim: expo performance(s) by veteran team members at October meet?
Lis: table, until we find out if we can bring former members back. What are the blocks? What support might they need?

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October 9th set as deadline for outreach.
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Kim: Lumos has forwarded contacts for speech. Possible to find other potential members?
Christina: Bancroft-area middle school?
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Craig: Primarily run by high school teachers.

Second list created, of areas/schools for potential future outreach.

Sheet of assigned schools and 2019-2020 data cards sent to board members.

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10:48 a.m: Meeting adjourned by Board President.