



Kansas “State of the State” 2011-12 Debate/Speech Report

In Kansas we have two separate seasons. Debate is in the fall and Speech & Drama is in the spring. Kansas is a policy debate program. In 2011-12 in Debate we had 133 schools participate with 2,337 boys and 2,216 girls representing their schools throughout the first semester. We were up in the number of student participants from a year ago by 373. We offered 4-speaker and 2-speaker competitions culminating with our State Championships on January 13 & 14, 2012. At 4-Speaker Regional tournaments, 84 schools participated in hopes to qualify for 4-Speaker State. We do not have Regionals for 2-Speaker - teams qualify for state based on a standard (each individual debater must have a **cumulative** win/loss record of 50 percent or better over four (4) **in-state** tournaments above the novice division). At state, 33 schools participated for the 4-Speaker State Titles (in 4 separate school classifications) and 91 schools represented by 236 teams participated for the 2-Speaker State Titles (in 4 separate school classifications). Teams may not compete in both 2-speaker and 4-speaker state competition. These numbers were up 10% from 2010-11. Our smaller schools are struggling to continue to offer Debate and geography and travel continue to present challenges in maintaining Debate programs in our state. All in all, policy debate is alive and well in Kansas.

In 2010-11 we split our State Tournament in half and now host 6A-5A at one site and 4A-321A at another site. After two years, the member schools are very supportive of continuing this format. However, we continue to face challenges in finding a large enough facility to host our 4A-321A State Tournament site. The requirement of 65 classrooms and lack of motels in our smaller school cities has been a challenge for the 4A schools wishing to host.

2011-12 was the first year Kansas allowed computer usage during debate rounds. It worked well. The only major challenge was tied to our “sharing of evidence” policy for computer usage and lack of “sharing of evidence” policy for non-computer use. As a result, in 2012-13 we now have adopted a “sharing of evidence” policy which is consistent for all debaters.

We did not have any major issues regarding the Space topic in 2011-12. The Debate season ran smoothly. Kansas is anxiously looking forward to debating Infrastructure in 2012-13.

In 2011-12 in Speech & Drama we had 224 schools participate with 3,255 boys and 4,454 girls representing their schools throughout the second semester. This represented a student participation decrease of 6% from 2010-11. Our schools participate in the following events: Extemporaneous Speech (Domestic and Foreign), Informative Speech, Original Oration, Poetry, Prose, Humorous Solo Acting, Humorous Interp (HI), Serious Solo Acting, Dramatic Interp (DI), Duet Acting (Humorous & Serious), Improvised Duet Acting, DUO, Impromptu Speaking, One-Act Play, and Lincoln-Douglas Debate. In Kansas every 3 years we allow the coaches to vote on what events they wish to compete in for the next 3 year cycle. Thus, it is possible that each of our 6 classifications could compete in a different combination of events. The next vote is scheduled for September 2013.

In Speech we offer two formats of participation to our students. They may choose to participate in a State Speech Festival or State Speech Championship format. If they don't qualify for State Champs they may qualify for State Festival. Festival is a one performance per event rating only system. Champs are a 3 to 5 round ranking system. Our state is divided into 6 separate school classifications in Speech & Drama. Last year we had 3 State Speech Festival Sites and 6 State Championship Sites on May 5, 2012. We had 219 schools qualify one or more students and chose to compete at State Champs. This represented 1,972 individual entrees which was up 5% from last year. We had 84 Lincoln-Douglas teams participate at State, which was up 27% from a year ago (Lincoln-Douglas debate is held in the spring only). Effective with the 2010-11 school year, we voted for a 2 year trial to hold L-D on Friday vs. Saturday to eliminate conflicts with State Speech Championship IE events in an attempt to boost L-D participation. Obviously, the plan is working and we now have made this a permanent policy. We had 9 One-Act Plays participating at State Festival in 2012. During the spring season, over 98% of the invitational tournaments are championship tournament format. We had 755 entries at State Festival in 2012 representing 151 schools. These numbers were level to a year ago.

Effective with the 2012-13 season, Kansas has adopted a “new” policy for Extemporaneous Speaking allowing computer use in the prep rooms with no Internet access.

Unfortunately, Kansas elected a Governor who is extremely unsupportive of funding education. He has implemented huge cuts in education and school funding. Consequently, there are even more signs where some schools are cutting fine arts activities or reducing the number of fine arts events allowed. This is particularly true where speech/debate teachers retire and their positions are not replaced.

-Reggie Romine, Assistant Executive Director, KSHSAA