

2021 MSBA STUDENT ESSAY/SPEAKING CONTEST



PURPOSE

The purpose for this contest is two-fold. First, it is designed to give 11th and 12th grade Mississippi students an opportunity to express creative ideas and concepts, conduct research, think critically, practice public speaking skills, and subsequently receive recognition for doing so. Secondly, it is an opportunity for our conference attendees to see and hear examples of the quality of young men and women the schools within our state are producing.

RULES & GUIDELINES – Please print and distribute as needed

The Mississippi School Boards Association (MSBA) is holding a personal essay/speaking contest. The winner(s) will have an opportunity to present before an audience of approximately 400 school board members and administrators at the 2021 MSBA Annual Conference held virtually on February 15-17, 2021.

This is the second year MSBA will hold such a contest. Our goal is to feature the writing and speaking abilities of our students in the public schools and to allow our attendees to witness examples of the creative, thoughtful, accomplished students from districts across the state.

Specific Rules and Guidelines begin on page 3.

TOPIC

Can and Should Freedom of Expression and Civility Co-exist?

In the name of the First Amendment and the freedom of expression it guarantees, rancorous rhetoric is fast becoming more common place across our country, causing many to wonder if it is safe or beneficial to engage in democratic discourse. Is there a way to participate in conversations in which various opinions and options for solving problems of common concern, weighing alternatives, resolving differences, and co-existing without acrimony and hostility are possible? Is practicing civility (reasoned public discourse where respect, restraint, responsibility, and empathy coexist with free expression) still as important as self-governance, freedom of expression, and individual dignity or does civility hamper free expression?

For Additional Information:

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RECOGNITION

The contest offers the following incentives:

\$1,000 prize for the best student essay from each Mississippi Congressional District. The Mississippi School Boards Association reserves the right to award no prize in a Congressional District if the “best student essay” does not meet the criteria set forth below.

- ☆ The winners are required to attend the virtual 2021 MSBA Annual Conference.
- ☆ Winners will be recognized on the MSBA website.
- ☆ The winning students and their work will be recognized in an issue of the MSBA quarterly publication, *Update*.

DATES & TIMES

Specific times for presentations during the conferences will be scheduled after winners are determined in mid-January (approximately).

SELECTION AND PREPARATION OF CONTESTANTS

Only one student per MSBA member high school may submit a contest application. Each school may select its one applicant by whatever method it considers most appropriate.

ENTERING THE CONTEST & REGISTRATION DEADLINE

This contest is open now until 4:00 p.m. on January 8, 2021, to all 2020-2021 school year juniors and seniors who are enrolled in school districts/organizations that are current members of the Mississippi School Boards Association. The application and all materials must be emailed to Dr. Tommye Henderson (thenderson@msbaonline.org) no later than 4:00 p.m. Friday, January 8, 2021. All items should be submitted at the same time through the same email.

Receipt of applications will be time-stamped by MSBA. Confirmation will be sent to the applicant within 3 business days of receipt.

Applicants must submit ALL of the following by the date shown above to be part of the contest:

- ☆ An application form with link to video
- ☆ A 600-750 word personal essay
- ☆ A video of the essay presented as a speech
- ☆ A completed and signed Parental Release Form (see page 6 of this document)

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HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR PRESENTATION TO MSBA

All of the required materials listed in the section above shall be emailed to Dr. Tommye Henderson (thenderson@msbaonline.org) no later than 4:00 p.m. Friday, January 8, 2021. The video portion of the submission must be uploaded to YouTube and the link provided on the application form. Remember that partial submissions will not be considered for participation in the contest. Be sure to include all four items with the email.

RULES AND GUIDELINES

- ☆ All entrants must be classified as a public high school junior or senior during the 2020-2021 school year. MSBA staff and immediate family members are not eligible.
- ☆ The school district where each participant is enrolled must be a member of the Mississippi School Boards Association. (All public school districts in Mississippi are members.)
- ☆ By entering, the student is agreeing to present his/her essay as a speech at the MSBA Annual Conference if chosen as a winner. This is required to receive any award.
- ☆ Although this is meant to be a personal, rather than an academic essay, attention should be given to content, organization, style, and correctness. Poorly written materials or materials containing inappropriate language may be disqualified.
- ☆ Essays/presentations must be original. However, consultation with teachers, or other resources is encouraged. Plagiarism is not acceptable and will result in disqualification.
- ☆ Credit must be given to any source if borrowed material is directly used or quoted.
- ☆ Essays should be approximately 600-750 words in length (appropriate for 4-5 minutes of speaking).
- ☆ A video of the presentation in its entirety must be uploaded to YouTube and a link must be provided with this application.
- ☆ Presentations should be memorized, but students may use 3x5 note cards as references during their presentations. *Presentations may not be read in the entirety from a manuscript or notes.*
- ☆ Presentations must be approximately **four to five minutes** in duration. **Presentations longer than 5 minutes or shorter than 4 minutes will be disqualified.**

JUDGING

The winner in each Congressional District will be selected by a panel of judges selected by the Mississippi School Boards Association. Criteria for judging the essays and the presentations include: quality of the written essay both in form and content and student delivery qualities as demonstrated in the video. Accuracy of facts, demonstrated mastery of the topic, effective communication of concepts, thoughts, and ideas, proper use of voice and articulation, and originality are all important. A sample of the judging worksheet is shown below. The decisions of the judges are final.

(Sample of Judges Worksheet follows this page.)

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Mississippi School Boards Association Contest Judging Worksheet

For MSBA
Use Only

Student's Name _____

Congressional District: (circle one) 1 2 3 4

Essay/Speech Title: _____

Link to YouTube video: _____

CRITERIA

NOTES

Essay Qualities (_____/30 points)

- No plagiarism in evidence
- Well-organized information
- Accuracy of material
- Informative
- Original & creative thinking
- Resources credited appropriately

Speech Presentation (Video) (_____/35 points)

- Captures attention of audience
- Organizes ideas (presents a specific point of view)
- Introduces and uses research effectively
- Interprets and understands subject
- Uses resources and references appropriately

Student Delivery Qualities (_____/35 points)

- Shows poise, confidence, and passion
- Speaks fluently and with clarity
- Uses satisfactory pronunciation
- Has control of filters (“ums”/ “you knows”/ “like”, etc.)
- Effectively uses voice quality and volume
- Delivery is smooth and natural
- Develops rapport with audience
- Uses body movements appropriately (gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, posture)

Observed Time Limit

Yes No

Time Used: _____

Total Points Awarded: _____/100 points

Judge's Name _____

Additional Comments may be written on back.

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Parent/Legal Guardian Media Recording Release for Students

I, _____, Parent/Legal Guardian of _____ (student's name), hereby grant permission to the Mississippi School Boards Association (MSBA) to use the above-named student's video, photo, and likeness for promotional purposes by MSBA in all manners, including, but not limited to: news releases, photographs, video, audio, website, and other electronic or printed published media. I agree that these videos, photos and/or voice recordings may be used for a variety of purposes without further notifying me. I understand MSBA shall not use any of the student's personally identifying information, except for the student's first name, the school that he/she attends, and the student's grade, without first obtaining my express permission. MSBA has my permission for this use until I submit written revocation of my permission to MSBA at P.O. Box 203, Clinton, MS, 39060, or thenderson@msbaonline.org. I understand the MSBA does not have control over a third party who retrieves my student's information published by the MSBA and uses it without my permission. I agree to hold the MSBA harmless for such misuse of my student's information.

Parent/Legal Guardian Name

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

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APPLICATION

Neatly print or type all information

Name: _____

Grade: (circle one): 11th 12th

Congressional District: (circle one): 1 2 3 4

School: _____

School District: _____

Home Address: _____

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian: _____

Link to YouTube video: _____

(Additional information, including social security number, may be required of contest winners.)