



Dear Colleague,

I'm reaching out on behalf of the Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association (MIFA) regarding an opportunity to start or expand upon **speech, debate, and theatre** activities for your students. Our programs are perfectly suited to foster future-ready skills for all learners.

When we think of the core skills we want to develop in middle and high school students, four come to mind: critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. In fact, employers today say that these are among the most important skills they value in the employees of tomorrow.

If you are not familiar with us, we are the premiere statewide non-profit organization that administers competitive speech, debate, and theater events for Michigan secondary schools. Our mission:

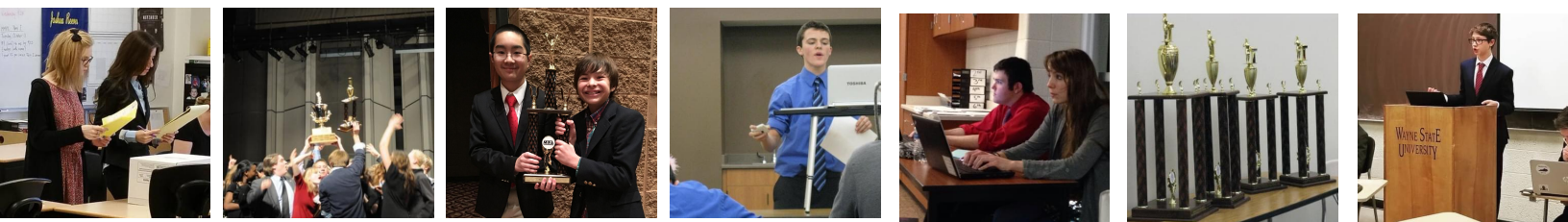
"The Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association empowers students to become proficient and ethical communicators, critical thinkers, lifelong learners and leaders in a democratic society through interscholastic speech, theater and debate activities for middle and secondary school students."

Speech activities change lives – building confidence, improving communication, fostering creativity and sharpening critical thinking skills. Our activities provide life skills vital to a young person's future success regardless of their occupation.

For the 2023-24 school year, MIFA is expanding access to schools and lowering barriers. Membership is open to new schools for only \$1. Join now to provide your students with this invaluable experience.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Becker
Executive Director



Debate Activities

MIFA currently offers four styles of debate at various times throughout the course of the academic year. MIFA administers "The MIFA Pappas" season opener in early October and the culminating State Debate Tournament in mid- December. The invitational season tournaments are organized by various high school programs and run from September through early December. Most tournaments are Saturday ONLY. Entry fees average \$10-15 per student/tournament.

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE



Congressional Debate (aka Legislative Debate) is a format in which students emulate members of the United States Congress by debating a series of bills and resolutions they have prepared for the tournament using their research of the topics, Robert's Rules of Order and a little political charisma.

PROGRESSIVE DEBATE



Progressive Debate is a round robin format in which students take turns responding to the person who spoke before them, then presenting their view on a topic announced prior to the tournament.

POLICY DEBATE



Policy debate is a two-person team format in which teams argue in favor or against various interpretations of the resolution adopted for the year by the National Federation of High Schools. Arguably the most rigorous in terms of research, commitment and .

PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

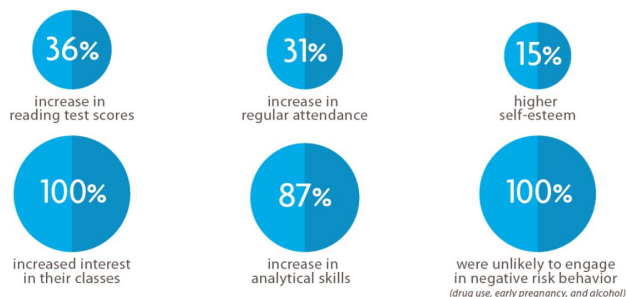


Public Forum, also a two-person team format, is often compared to the TV show 'Crossfire'. Successful PF debaters make persuasive, logical arguments accessible to a wide variety of audiences. MIFA follows the National Speech & Debate Association topics which change throughout the season.

2023-24 Key Dates

9/30 PF Debate Workshop @ W.Bloomfield HS
10/14 Pappas Invit Season Opener @ Wayne State U
12/16 Debate State Finals @ Wayne State U

Debate and Academic Performance



Source: Snider, A. C. & Lawrence, E. W. (2011). DEBATE: Important for Everyone. Retrieved from <https://debate.uvm.edu/dcpdf/DEBATE-4%20Important%20for%20Everyone.pdf>

Graphic Source: National Speech & Debate Association. www.speechanddebate.org



"In this era of electronic mediated communication, debate programs offer invaluable, human to human, communication skills. Students on our teams master life-long skills such as critical thinking, active listening, and effective message delivery. Participation in debate lays the building blocks for student success in whatever career they choose."

Ruth Kay

Speech and Debate Teacher and Director
Detroit Country Day School
MIFA Debate & Rules Committee and Council Member

Debaters and Life After Graduation



Source: Minch, K. & Summers, K. (2006). Value of Speech, Debate and Theatre Activities: Making the Case for Forensics. Retrieved from <https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/Making-The-Case-NFHS.pdf>. Person icon by Alice Design from the Noun Project.

Graphic Source: National Speech & Debate Association. www.speechanddebate.org

Learn More
[MIFA Debate](#)





Individual Events

IE (aka “Forensics”) is split broadly into two disciplines: **Public Address (PA)**, in which students write their own speeches, and **Interpretation (Interp)**, where students perform the work of another author. Most events are single person presentations that are 5-8 minutes long. There are also two-person, “Duo” events for PA and Interp and Multiple Interpretation which is 3-5 people.

The invitational season tournaments, organized by various high school programs, run from January through March. MIFA organizes “The Punxatourney” season opener in late January, as well as Regional contests which qualify students for the State Tournament, held annually in late April or early May. Most tournaments are held on Saturday ONLY, with entry fees averaging \$10-\$15 per student/day. The State Final Tournament hosted over two days being the exception.

PUBLIC ADDRESS

Broadcasting
Duo Commentary
Extemporaneous
Impromptu
Informative
Oratory
Sales

INTERPRETATION

Dramatic Interpretation
Duo Interpretation
Multiple Interpretation
Poetry Interpretation
Program Oral Interpretation
Prose Interpretation
Storytelling

A [LinkedIn](#) survey of more than 660+ million professionals revealed the most in demand soft skills in 2020. Here's how speech and debate helps students master them:

Creativity

Students are empowered to make artistic choices about how they bring words to life through performance. Unique arguments are encouraged and thinking outside the box differentiates students from their peers debating the same topics.

Persuasion

Students learn how to best convince an audience in the face of equally well-informed, persuasive competition.

Collaboration

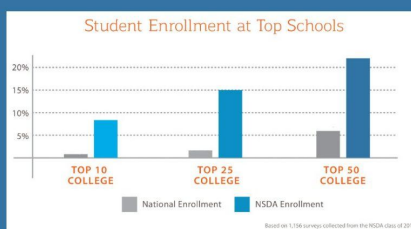
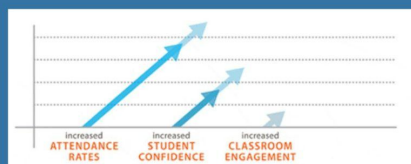
Students work with teammates and coaches to craft stories, create arguments, build upon feedback, and perfect their performances.

Adaptability

Students learn to think on their feet and tailor a performance to a given audience.

Emotional Intelligence

Students learn to see both sides of an issue and to use appropriate strategies for questioning things they do not understand.



“Forensics changed my life. It taught me the skills necessary to get into college, and helped me in every single one of my classes from writing to delivering presentations. When I decided to go into education, I realized that I used speech tools every day in the classroom. I built relationships and made connections still follow me today.”

Roger Rothe

Teacher, Forensics Coach, Birch Run
MIFA Council Member

2023-24 Key Dates

1/27 Punxatourney Season Opener @ Troy HS

4/13 Most Regionals @ various

5/3-4 IE State Finals @ Kellogg Community College

Learn More
[MIFA Individual Events](#)





Theatre

MIFA offers two tracks (Competition or Rating) for schools to participate in Theatre activities. Both provide the opportunity for students to receive written and oral feedback regarding their performances and productions. Our competitive **One Act Play Festival Series** has travelled the state, showcasing some of our brightest talent for over 40 years while the “feedback only” option began during COVID.

The New York Times

Grown-Up Theater Kids Run the World

A Supreme Court justice. The governor of New Jersey. Senator Ted Cruz. A prominent MSNBC host. Practically half the tech world. What's behind this moment of thespian power?



Nolan Pelletier



By **Madison Malone Kircher**

Madison Malone Kircher has performed in 18 musicals.

Published Aug. 20, 2023 Updated Aug. 24, 2023

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"Creating a wonderful experience for students to flourish in their art and connect with those across the state who have shared experiences and passions, MIFA offers a varied platform for students to discover their full potential. My students strive harder, achieve goals, and develop life-long relationships through this organization."

Malia Koger

English & Theatre Teacher/Director, Olivet High School
MIFA Theatre Committee Member

COMPETITION TRACK

Schools may enter one show in each of two categories which alternate annually between humorous & serious content:

Main Stage - traditional travelling show with larger cast/set **OR**

Studio Productions - black box style focused on acting with little use of set/props.

Shows are 45 minutes with additional time allocated for setup and strike. Schools participate in a District level, public performance, with all advancing. Shows must then qualify out of their Regional to advance into the Top 12 which perform at the State Festival.

RATING TRACK

Schools can submit a video or request a critic attend their performance. Either way, your students receive quality feedback from leading educators and industry professionals.

2023-24 Key Dates

Jan 20	Districts @ various
Feb 3	Regionals @ various
Feb 16-17	State Festival @ Wayne State University

Learn More

[MIFA Theatre](#)





Middle Level Speech Activities

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“I saw students blossom into charismatic and confident beings when they got the opportunity to test the waters during the Fall MIFA Workshop. It is something every middle school forensics potential should dip their toe into without regret.”

Melissa Dodge

7th Grade English Teacher, Forensics Coach
Boulan Park Middle School
MIFA Middle Level Committee Member

Gain Confidence & Earn Recognition through MIFA Middle Level Speech Activities

Middle Level MIFA events are open to students in 5th through 8th grade and offer a variety of ways to foster healthy competition in a supportive, constructive space.

In **Debate** and **Individual Events**, all students are offered multiple rounds of competition at every event and receive constructive feedback from adjudicators regardless of placement. Semi-finalists and finalists receive award recognition as well.

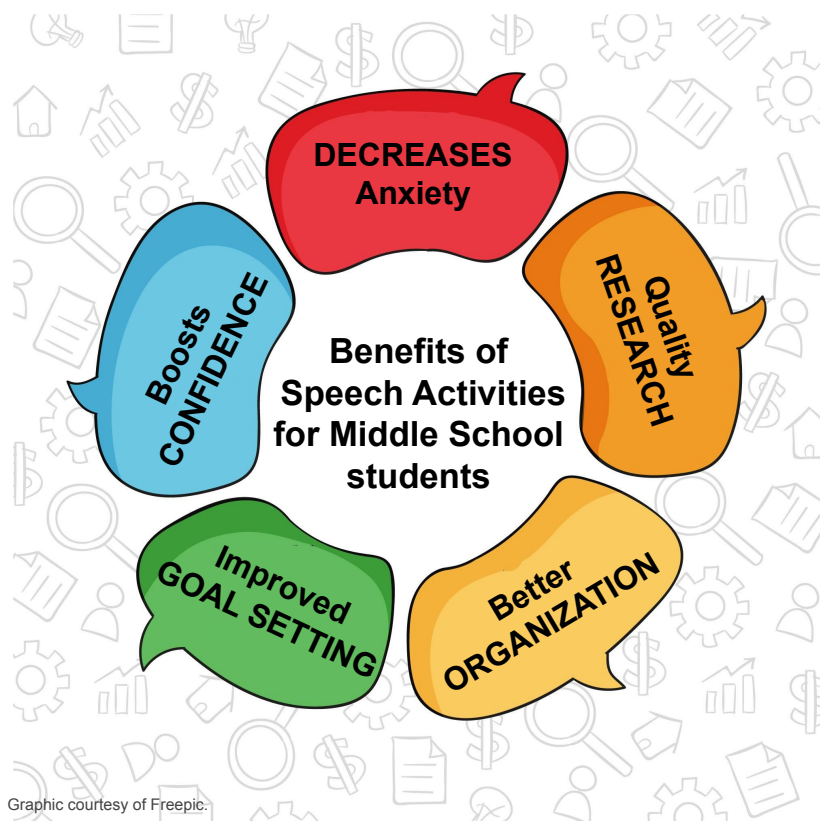
In **Theatre**, all productions receive comprehensive feedback from qualified adjudicators and receive an individual production ranking that is not comparative in addition to the opportunity for individual tiered recognitions within each school's production.

The following Speech Activities are offered for Middle School aged students at various times throughout the year.

Public Forum Debate for middle level is offered in conjunction with nearly all of the invitational debate tournaments as well as the State Debate Tournament in December.

Individual Events (aka “Forensics”) is divided into two seasons with a Fall Workshop / Tournament in November and the Spring ML State Championship in April. Most of the high school events are offered plus a couple unique to middle level.

Theatre productions have the opportunity to perform a one act play (up to 45 minutes) for feedback from a panel of leading educators and theatre professionals at various high school District sites in late January.



2023-24 Key Dates

Sept 30	PF Debate Workshop @ W. Bloomfield
Oct 14	PF Debate “Pappas Invit” @ Wayne St U
Nov 18	Fall ML IE Workshop/Tourney @ TBD
Jan 20	ML Theatre @ various HS Districts
April 27	Spring ML IE State Finals @ TBD

Learn More
[MIFA Middle Level](#)





Connections & Mentoring



Numerous opportunities to connect with fellow coaches and organization leadership. Mentors assigned to help newer coaches acclimate.

Judge Certification



Learn how we can improve the feedback given to students following the National Federation of High Schools 3C's model for speech:

- > Compliment
- > Criticize
- > Correct

Coaching Best Practices



We actively share best practices from a variety of coaches with literally hundreds of years combined experience.

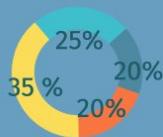
Professional Development



Trainings & workshops are offered on a variety of topics throughout the year.



Over half of coaches direct multiple programs for their school, for example Debate & IE. Less than 5% of coaches direct all 3 activities.



Although 1 coach can start a program, the best build a coaching team. 50% of teams have at least 2 coaches. 10% of teams have 3 or more coaches.



Coaches come from diverse professional backgrounds:

- > teachers
- > para-professionals
- > parents
- > graduates

We provide access to tons of online resources:

- > FAQs
- > script lists
- > speech topics
- > lesson plans



2023-24 Key Dates

8/19 & 9/20 New Coach Workshop @ ONLINE
 Post-States Townhall Meeting w/ Committee
 5/17-19 Networking & PD w/ MSCl @ Mackinac Isl

Membership

The Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association organizes speech activities for Michigan schools including State Championships for debate, theater, and individual events (“forensics”). Membership is all-inclusive, encouraging schools to participate in all of our speech activities.

Member Benefits Include:

- **Professional Development and Training** for coaches and judges.
- **Access to resources** such as instructional and informational material for all MIFA activities.
- **Mentoring and support** from MIFA staff, board, and committees for your program year-round.
- **Eligible to participate** in team debate, individual debate, theatre, individual events and original content invitational and state events.



Who can become a MIFA member?

Any Michigan high school, junior high school, or middle school may become a member of the Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association.

Membership Dues

First-Year Discount!
School Membership is just \$1 for the first year.

Subsequent years

High School	\$500/year
Middle School	\$250/year

“Speech Activities such as debate, forensics, and theatre were absolute game changers. As a student they provided me with confidence and capacity to critically think and examine that paid dividends into grad school and my career. As a teacher and coach I watched those events transform students into their best selves, watched it raise the academic bar and drive success. As a principal, I promoted speech activities as a core good that could elevate any school with its commitment to respectful discourse, research, and communication and critical-thinking skills.”

Tom Lietz

Associate Director of Training & Development
Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals
MIFA Council Member

Join today!

Email members@themifa.org

<http://www.themifa.org/membership.html>

MIFA
MICHIGAN INTERSCHOLASTIC FORENSIC ASSOCIATION