

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Department Adjutant

Department Oratorical Chairman – Gregory Bertolini

SUBJECT: District and Area Oratorical Contest for 2026

TO: Post, District and Area Oratorical Chairmen

Following is the information needed to conduct your Oratorical contest. The information is for the Post, District, and Area Oratorical Chairman. Please note that a forms packet is located at the end of this memo.

GENERAL ORATORICAL INFORMATION

The Idaho Oratorical Contest is grouped to form four basic GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS in Idaho. They are divided as follows:

Area One: Districts One and Two
Area Two: Districts Three and Nine
Area Three: Districts four and Five
Area four: Districts Six, Seven and Eight

The winners from the above Areas will compete in the Department Contest. The Oratorical Areas has no correlation with Membership areas A, B, and C. District chairman from the host District shall serve as the Area Contest Chairman.

TRAVEL EXPENSE FOR AREA AND STATE CONTESTS

State and Area Contest Travel and Lodging

1. Mileage will be paid for the Area winners to the Sate Contest.
2. Participants will be given \$0.20 per mile round trip from the contestant's home via the shortest route to the contest site.
3. One night's hotel/motel accommodations will be arranged for the contestant on the night PRIOR to the state or Area contest (on approval of the Department Adjutant).
4. Minor contestants MUST be accompanied by an ADULT chaperon to the contests.

Costs of Post contest are to be borne by the Post. Costs of the District Contests are to be borne by the District.

CONTEST DEADLINE DATES

Post Contest (local)	Any time prior to the District Contest
District Contest.....	Any time prior to January 31, 2026
Area Contest	Any time prior to February 21, 2026
Department Contest	February 21, 2026 at Meridian City Hall, Meridian, ID
National Contest.....	May 15 - 17, 2026, at Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, MI

INTRA-SCHOOL CONTESTS

Whereas, there are many High Schools not represented by Legion Posts or have inactive Posts locally; now therefore, be it RESOLVED, by the Idaho Department of The American Legion in convention assembled at Burley, Idaho, July 12-14, 1974, that these schools be allowed to conduct their own Oratorical Contest to the prescribed regulations, as set by The American Legion, and, be it further

RESOLVED, that each High School is allowed to send a contestant to their District Oratorical Contest.

Contestants will be selected by procedures established by each high school in any manner determined suitable by the school. The Names of the local contestants are to be reported to the respective District Oratorical Chairman the day following the Local Contest. The name of the local contestant is also to be certified by an official of the school to the Adjutant, American Legion, Department of Idaho, 901 W. Warren St., Boise, Idaho 83706. Certification to be delivered to the Department of Idaho no later than February 13, 2026.

An American Legion Post May Not sponsor more than one contestant from the same school.

DISTRICT AND AREA CONTESTS

The District Contest shall consist of one contestant from each local contest. District Chairmen are responsible for reporting the names of District and/or Area Contest winners to Department Headquarters, 901 W. Warren St. Boise, Idaho 83706, on the day following the District and/or Area contest. Please use the enclosed form to report the names of the winners.

When reporting the names of the winners, it is crucial to include their full names, local addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, and the school they represent. Please ensure that this information is complete and accurate. Thank you!

Contest chairmen will also need to confirm that contestants are eligible to compete in the contest. Typically a high school counselor, principal, or in the case of a home school contestant, parent can be used to verify eligibility. Eligibility details can be found at <https://www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/oratorical-contest/how-to-participate>.

Area winners must complete the Waiver of Claim Form and have it with them when they attend the Department contest. Additionally, District and Area contest chairmen must complete the American Legion High School Oratorical Contest Winner Certification form and forward it to the Department as soon as possible.

The success of the Department contest depends upon the post and District oratorical chairmen. District chairmen are urged to keep in constant touch with post chairmen. District chairmen are responsible for organizing and seeing that District and Area contests are carried to a successful completion.

The American Legion post in each community in which Oratorical Contests are held should act as host. The post should provide competent judges and a suitable location to conduct the contest.

AREA WINNERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO BRING A WRITTEN MANUSCRIPT OF THEIR PREPARED ORATION TO THE STATE CONTEST.

CONDUCT OF CONTESTS

Please ensure that Post, District, and Area contests are conducted in accordance with the National rules, found at www.legion.org/oratorical. The Department contest will be conducted using the National procedures. Contestants who are unfamiliar with contests conducted according to the National rules may be at a disadvantage. It's important for Post, District, and Area contest moderators to familiarize themselves with the national rules. A "Chairman's Guide" is available online. The speech times have not changed from years past. The prepared oration is 8 to 10 minutes in length, and the assigned topic is three to five minutes in length.

Assigned Topics for 2026 Oratorical Contest

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Article III

Section 3. Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court.

The Congress shall have Power to declare the Punishment of Treason, but no Attainder of Treason shall work Corruption of Blood, or Forfeiture except during the Life of the Person attainted.

Article IV

Section 4. The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened) against domestic Violence.

Article VI

Clause 3. The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.

ORATORICAL AWARDS AND MEDALS

It is suggested that interest in the Oratorical Contest will be enhanced by local Posts, District, and Area contest organizers through arrangement of suitable awards and medals for the young people who place first, second and third, in the Oratorical Contest. Post and District awards are the responsibility of local units. First and second place Area winners will receive a cash award plus Certificate of Distinction.

SUGGESTED IDAHO CASH SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

AREA CONTEST

First Place -----	\$100.00
Second Place.....	\$75.00

DEPARTMENT CONTEST

First Place	\$1,000.00
Second Place	\$750.00
Third Place	\$500.00
Fourth Place	\$500.00

NATIONAL CONTEST SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

First Place	\$25,000.00
Second Place	\$22,500.00
Third Place	\$20,000.00

Oratorical information may be obtained at this URL: <https://www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/oratorical-contest>

If you have any questions, I can be reached by email at greg.b127@gmail.com.

FORMS

The Department Oratorical Contest is February 21, 2026. All Post, District, and Area contests must be completed by then and the results transmitted to the Department Adjutant not later than February 13, 2026. Please advise the Department Headquarters Office as soon as possible the following information:

District Oratorical Contest Report Form

The District Oratorical Contest for District _____ will be held in
_____ on _____. The contest will be held in the
(City) (Date)

_____ Located at _____.
(Where Contest Will Be Held) (Address of Location)

(Signed) _____

District Oratorical Contest Chairman

Area Oratorical Contest Report Form

The Area Oratorical Contest for Area _____ will be held in
_____ on _____. The contest will be held in the
(City) (Date)

_____ Located at _____.
(Where Contest Will Be Held) (Address of Location)

(Signed) _____

Area Oratorical Contest Chairman

WAIVER OF CLAIM FORM

Date: _____, 20____

As a condition of my participation in The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest, I hereby release and hold harmless The American Legion, any subordinate bodies, including but not limited to, Department and Posts and any intermediate organizations subordinate to Department and Posts, employees and members of Department and Posts and subordinate bodies, I further hereby waive any claim against Department and Posts or any subordinate organization or any of their individual employee or members from any accident claim, cause of action or any situation whatsoever.

SIGNATURE OF CONTESTANT _____

SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE HOME: _____

TELEPHONE WORK: _____

The American Legion High School Oratorical Contest Winner Certification

I hereby certify that _____
(Name) (Age) (Grade)

Of _____ High School meets the eligibility requirements of The
American Legion National High School Contest and is the winner of the Post – District – Area
(Circle one) contest held at _____, Idaho
(City)

on _____.
(Date)

Name of contestant parents: _____
Address: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Parent E Mail Address: _____
Candidate e-mail Address: _____

Name of High school coach or teacher: _____
Address: _____

Number of High Schools participating in contest: _____
Number of students participating in contest: _____

Signed: _____
Date: _____

Posts: Report name to District the following day of contest
District: Report name to Department Adjutant day following the District Contest
Area: Report name to Department Adjutant day following Area Contest

This form MUST be signed by the Post, District, or Area Oratorical Contest Chairman.