

BSHS SPEECH AND DEBATE

2021 – 2022 Handbook

Yearly Focus:

PATHOS



“Any great thinker ought not be an institution.” – J.P.S.

More Information/Primary Contacts:

Head Coach: Melissa Dowdy: mdowdy@mcpsmt.org Assistant Coach: Jayden Beed: beedjayden@gmail.com

Or See Practice Schedule And Drop In!!! :)

BSHS Contact: 3100 South Ave W, Missoula, MT 59804 : (406) 728-2401

[NOTE: Please feel encouraged to reach out to the head coach (primary team contact) for more information regarding our practice schedules, networking platform, with any questions/comments/concerns, and IF YOU WISH TO JOIN!!! (The last option is highly encouraged: Before you ask, it is never too late.)]

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

Welcome to our 2021-2022 Speech and Debate Season! My name is Melissa Dowdy, and I am the Head Coach for the Big Sky team this season. This will be my first year coaching, and I am very excited to get to know the team and see what goals each student has in mind so I can support you all in the best way possible.

For those of you new to Speech and Debate, there are many events to choose from, some are singles events and others require partners. There is a complete list of events available at speechanddebate.org (please note, Montana does not have every event listed).

My goal for this season is to assist students in discovering or improving upon their own unique abilities as far as speaking, writing, critical thinking and teamwork. I will expect our students to attend all required practices, and to attend the majority of the meets our school participates in. Big Sky Speech and Debate has a long tradition of not only excellence in competition, but excellence in our student values and behaviors which I expect to be maintained.

I also want to emphasize that no student should be barred from participating in Speech and Debate due to financial concerns, participation in other fall or winter sports, or other circumstances. Please talk to me and we can figure out a way to make it work for your student! Speech and Debate is an exciting and wonderful opportunity for students and we want to encourage as many students as possible to join our team.

Because of the unique nature of school and extra curricular activities during COVID, we are still waiting to hear exactly what Speech and Debate will look like this season. At this time it is looking like we will resume our traditional travel for tournaments, but with the spike in COVID cases as of late, we may end up virtually competing. As soon as we have more information we will let you know. However, as for right now we are planning to proceed with our season as usual. This means we will begin to practice on October 1st, and the season will go through February. Our expectation is that students will attend all required practices, and will make an effort to be at every tournament, in person or virtually.

I encourage parents to participate in a variety of ways, including fundraising, joining a rotating snack list for our tournaments, assisting with decor and photos for our bulletin boards, and volunteering for our home meet! We will be sending out lots of requests and reminders so be on the lookout. I am looking forward to working with your students and to a great season! If you have any questions feel free to send me an email.

-Coach Moe

(Melissa Dowdy)

mdowdy@mcpsmt.org

Tentative 2021/22 Schedule*

(This is a VERY TENTATIVE meet schedule, open to change at any time. Please do not plan on these locations until a final decision is received from MHSA. We wanted to provide some rough outline of what the season would look like!

| Date | Day | Event |
|-------------|------------|----------------------------|
| 10/30/2021 | Sat. | Kalispell Kickoff @ GHS |
| 11/06/2021 | Sat. | Billings Kickoff @ Capital |
| 11/12/2021 | Fri. | Regionals @ Missoula |
| 11/13/2021 | Sat. | Regionals @ Missoula |
| 12/03/2021 | Fri. | @ Bozeman |
| 12/04/2021 | Sat. | @ Bozeman |
| 12/10/2021 | Fri. | @ Great Falls |
| 12/11/2021 | Sat. | @ Great Falls |
| 01/07/2022 | Fri. | TBD |
| 01/08/2022 | Sat. | TBD |
| 01/14/2022 | Fri. | @ Butte |
| 01/15/2022 | Sat. | @ Butte |
| 01/28/2022 | Fri. | AA State @ Helena |
| 01/29/2022 | Sat. | AA State @ Helena |
| 02/11/2022 | Fri. | NSDA @ Kalispell |
| 02/12/2022 | Sat. | NSDA @ Kalispell |

*BSHS Forensics reserves the right to modify this schedule at any time within reason, to be adjudicated by BSHS.

Tentative 2021/22 Practice Schedule/Requirements

MHSA requires **ALL** participants to have attended a **minimum of 10 practices** in order to compete in any tournament.

Practices run Monday-Friday with the exception of when we have two-day tournaments starting on Friday and ending Saturday. Competitors are **required to attend 3 practices a week** with the exception of tournament weeks where they will need to **attend all 4**.

Holiday practices are TBD at this time, but will be communicated in advance to all participants.

Additional Participation Requirements

1. **Required Forms** – Turned into activities Secretary Karen Sweeney in the Main Office. Students will not officially be on the team roster until all forms are turned in, and students who do not have their forms turned in by the Monday before a tournament will be taken off the travel roster. Please fill out all forms ASAP. The only form not required is the Physical Examination-you do not need to receive a physical!
 - a. Medical Information and Insurance
Both sides of this card must be filled out and signed by a parent or guardian in order for a student to get on the bus or compete. **Make sure to include medical insurance company and policy # information.** Insurance can be purchased at a discount through the school if needed.
 - b. Risk Disclosure Agreement
 - c. Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct
 - d. Season Activities Code of Conduct - Students **DO NOT** have to have a doctor's physical.
 - e. Concussion Fact Sheet
 - f. Signed Handbook acknowledgement form
2. **Required Fees** – paid to activities Secretary Karen Sweeney in the Main Office. Fees should be paid at the same time as the 5 required forms are turned in, unless other arrangements are made with Karen. Pay your fees ASAP!! You will not officially be “on the team” until your fees are paid!*
 - a. \$60 Participation Fee
 - b. \$25 Activity Fee

*We may decide as a team to include a “white fee” of \$25 to purchase a team T-shirt or sweatshirt. We will inform you of this ASAP!!

3. **COVID-19 Info**-- In order to keep our team healthy throughout the season we'll be following all protective and preventative measures that MCPS has decided upon. This includes but is not limited to: wearing masks during all practices (even while giving practice speeches), maintaining 6 feet of social distance, regular sanitization of practice spaces and commonly touched surfaces, and good hand washing/sanitizing practices. As of the beginning of the season, all tournaments will be held in person but this is subject to change as the season progresses. If you have a fever, or other COVID symptoms please stay home from practice. We will try to accomodate illness and quarantines as best we can, if necessary.

- 4. Fundraising** -- All team members are expected to assist in team fundraisers during the year, which are events organized by the coaches and/or parents. Team fundraising is essential to running the team, as well as providing additional materials such as spirit gear and tournament snacks/meals.
- 5. Tournament Dress Code** -- Competitors are expected to wear professional clothes during two-day competitions. These guidelines have flexibility but, this generally means no tennis shoes, no open toed shoes, no jeans, no short skirts, and no blouses with revealing necklines, no distracting jewelry, makeup, or hair. Students DO NOT need to go out and spend a large amount of money on a new wardrobe. Instead, they should talk with their coaches and teammates to determine what clothes are most appropriate for their events. If you don't have the correct clothes, River of Life, Goodwill, or H&M are the best places to start looking. Many adults in life buy professional clothes for a specific time and only use them once or twice, leaving lots of good clothes available.
- 6. All Other Applicable BSHS and MHSA Handbook Guidelines** -- Expectations maintained by the MHSA as well as BSHS apply to all students participating in any school sanctioned extracurricular event. As such, we encourage both students and parents to review the handbook(s) before signing the *Handbook Acknowledgement Form*, as the rules and regulations outlined there are also being acknowledged upon signing.

Travel Information

- 1. Varsity & JV** -- The "Varsity" and "JV" travel teams and designations are very fluid and will change at each tournament. Varsity determinations depend on commitment to the team, competitiveness, and the coaches' discretion. Typically, most students have the opportunity to compete Varsity at tournaments held in Missoula, Bozeman, and Kalispell. Beyond that, there may be some limits to who can compete at the Varsity level. Varsity tournaments, including State, usually limit us to a maximum of 4 competitors in each event (or 4 teams in partner events), and 42 competitors overall. Varsity tournaments will be the ONLY time students may ever be asked to enter a different event for the sake of maximizing participation as well as competitive potential.
- 2. 2021-2022 State Travel Team** -- In mid-January, when choosing the 42 students selected for the 2020-2021 AA State Team, the coaches will set the roster based on who has best met the varsity expectations in addition to having the potential for competitive success at State. As such, there is the potential for limited selection at this point.
- 3. Dropping a Tournament** -- Students must make a commitment to attend a tournament one week before the tournament. Coaches will assume that ALL team members are available to compete at ALL tournaments unless they have had a prior discussion with their coaches or have an unavoidable conflict (a medical issue, family emergency, etc.). Additionally, any student who commits to attending a tournament and drops out the week of the tournament will forfeit the privilege to attend the next scheduled Varsity tournament. This is to ensure that no one claims a travel spot and then back out, depriving another student of the opportunity to compete.
- 4. Traveling** -- We will typically leave for tournaments on Friday mornings and return late Saturday evenings. Transportation is on buses provided by the district. The school will book and pay for the busses and the hotels in advance, but we will ask students to commit to attending a tournament a few weeks before in order to know how many hotel rooms to book, as well as to assist the tournament hosts in planning. The medical information cards are kept with the coaches at all times during tournaments. If your child should

need medical assistance, we will take the appropriate action and will notify you immediately. If your child has specific health risks, medications they take, or dietary needs please make sure we are aware in advance. **Because we travel as a team, if your child becomes ill and needs to return home, it will be your responsibility to come pick them up. If your child has a fever or is exhibiting signs of being ill, please keep them at home.**

5. **Food** -- Because tournaments are typically two full days, it is important that students take responsibility to stay well-fed and hydrated. They should eat breakfast at home, and we generally are provided breakfast at the hotel. That means that they should bring: **Food or money for 2 lunches and 2 dinners.** For those students who bring money, we will stop to pick up food on Friday, and, *if decided upon by the coaching staff*, again on Saturday evening. There will NEVER be a guarantee of this final stop, so students are HIGHLY ENCOURAGED to bring snacks or entire meals, depending upon food availability at the tournament. The parents group often provides coolers with snacks and sandwich fixings for the tournaments, while the team generally brings water for students as well as bread for sandwiches.
 6. **Parent Group** -- A robust parent group is essential to the success of Big Sky High School Speech and Debate as a team. The mission of the parent group is self-defined, but generally means supporting the students on our team during the year and especially at competition. For tournaments, the single largest contribution is helping to provide food and snacks for our students. Anyone interested in being a part of the parent group should email Melissa at Mdowdy@mcpsmt.org or opt-in on the handbook acknowledgement form.
 7. **“Remind” Texting Application** – We are no longer using the ‘Remind’ application for communication. Instead, a Basecamp has been constructed and students/parents may contact Melissa for additional sign up information! Students will be instructed on how to get set up with the application prior to its usage as our main team communication.
 8. **Bullying and Hazing**– There will be ZERO tolerance for bullying, hazing, or harassment of any kind on this team. This includes all forms of bullying including cyberbullying. We will treat all of our team members and competitors with respect in and out of rounds and practices. If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to report any instance of bullying please EMAIL mdowdy@mcpsmt.org. Email will allow us to have a record of any conversation if it becomes necessary. Thank you!
 9. **PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM ON THE NEXT PAGE TO MELISSA OR JAYDEN!!**
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Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I agree to follow all of the rules and expectations set out in the 2020 - 2021 Big Sky Speech and Debate Handbook, as well as those applicable rules and expectations from **BOTH** the MHSA and BSHS handbooks.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Group

If you are interested in being a part of our parent group, please include your contact information below. While the coaches will already have access to parent/guardian contact information for safety reasons, families must opt-in for us to share that information with other families.

| Name(s) | Student | Email | Phone # (cell or home) |
|---------|---------|-------|------------------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |