

FLORIDA EDUCATION FUND NAS VOICES

The Florida Education Fund (FEF) NAS Voices Speech and Oratory Contest provides an opportunity for Achievers and Believers to enhance and display their spoken and written communication skills as they form opinions on thought-provoking national and international issues. The FEF believes this Contest will improve contestants' public speaking, critical thinking and writing skills, while increasing social, political and global awareness.

2025 Official Topics

1. Social media platforms should/should not be regulated to prevent the spread of misinformation.
2. The rise of artificial intelligence is/is not a threat to human employment.
3. Current U.S. gun control laws are sufficient/are insufficient to reduce mass shootings.
4. Schools should/should not implement gender-neutral bathrooms to accommodate all students.
5. Affirmative action is necessary/is not necessary to address racial and gender inequalities in education and employment.

Section I — Contestant Qualifications

The Contest is open to members of the National Achievers Society, including Believers, enrolled in grades 9 through 12. Each Center of Excellence may enter one student in the Contest and is encouraged to provide an opportunity for that contestant to deliver the speech at the local level in front of an audience.

Section II — The Written Speech

1. Each contestant must research and write his or her own original speech on one of the official topics listed above. Any quotation or copyrighted material used in the speech must be properly attributed to the original source.
2. The contestant may receive advice in the preparation of the speech and may make minor changes or improvements to the speech at any time prior to submitting the final typewritten, double-spaced version to his or her COE Director by January 31, 2025.

Section III — The Oral Presentation & Contest

1. When presenting, contestants must wear proper business casual attire. Sneakers, shorts, jeans or t-shirts are not permitted.
2. When presenting, contestants may not use props, special costumes or clothing, or prompters, and the use of such aids will result in disqualification. Contestants may use notes and podiums.
3. Contestants will draw numbers for order of presentation.
4. After drawing numbers for order of presentation, all contestants must wait in a designated area outside the Contest room until it is their time to present. While waiting to present, a contestant may not communicate with anyone except other contestants and Contest officials. Failing to remain in the designated area or communicating with anyone except other contestants and Contest officials while waiting to present will result in disqualification.
5. Contestants must speak for 4 to 5 minutes. Failure to complete the oration within these time limits will result in a 2-point penalty for each 15 seconds or fraction thereof over or under the allotted time.

6. Each contestant must state his or her official topic before beginning the presentation in order for the timekeeper/scorer to record the exact time of the speech. Failure to state the official topic will result in a 3-point penalty.
7. Timing will begin immediately after the contestant states the official topic. Any salutation to judges, the audience, etc, should precede the announcement of the topic. Timing will stop when the contestant concludes his or her speech.
8. Any quotation or copyrighted material used in the speech must be identified orally during the presentation. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
9. No one, including members of the audience, is allowed to clap, talk or enter or leave the room during a presentation.
10. The FEF has the right to edit, publish and record any speech presented in the Contest without payment to the author.

Section IV — Officials & Judging

1. The officials for the Contest will include a Chief Judge, two associate judges, a timekeeper/scorer, and an ombudsman. The Chief Judge will decide all Contest protests in accordance with the official rules and will listen to and complete a scoring form for each presentation. Each associate judge will listen to and complete a scoring form for each presentation. The timekeeper/scorer will keep the official time for each presentation, record any scoring penalties, and tabulate the scoring forms. The Ombudsman will keep order in the room and prevent the audience from clapping, talking or entering or leaving the room during an oration.
2. Protests regarding originality and speech timing must be made by judges and contestants orally immediately after the protested condition is noted. Protests received after the next contestant has been introduced, or, in the case of the last contestant, after the timekeeper/scorer begins to tabulate the scores, will not be accepted under any circumstances. The decision of the Chief Judge will be final as to protests, and no higher appeals will be recognized.

Section V — Scoring

For each contestant, each judge will complete a scoring form, assessing points for each of the following categories:

1. *Appearance*: Poise, up to 6 points; Attire, up to 4 points
2. *Speech Content and Development*: Subject adherence, up to 10 points; Content, up to 20 points; Logic (including organization, clarity of thought), up to 10 points; Originality, up to 5 points; Word choice, up to 5 points
3. *Delivery and Presentation*: Articulation (including pronunciation), up to 5 points; Gesticulation, up to 5 points; Eye contact, up to 5 points; Sincerity, up to 5 points; Preparation, up to 5 points
4. *Overall Effectiveness*: Persuasiveness, up to 5 points; Impression, up to 5 points; Effect, up to 5 points

Each contestant's final score will consist of adding the total points awarded by two of the three judges, minus any penalties.

In the event of a tie, the timekeeper/scorer will add the scores awarded by the third judge to the final scores for the tied contestants. If the third judge's scores do not break the tie, the winner will be determined by a drawing.