

Elkins Speech and Debate

7007 Knights Court
Missouri City, TX 77459
281-634-2711

I know this letter is long, but it contains VERY important information, so please read the whole letter.

August 12, 2025

Dear Parents:

Welcome to a new competitive year for Elkins Speech and Debate! We are looking forward to another fun, educational and very successful year in high school forensics.

There will be a very important parent meeting soon. Please check Schoology regularly for more information!

You can also get updates by joining the Parent Remind.

We are a rigorous and demanding program that has far-reaching benefits for the future lives of our team members. Almost every student who has graduated from the Elkins team has gone on to college, many on scholarships earned because of forensic competition, and they are uniquely prepared for the fast-pace and quick thinking needed in the university setting. Studies have shown that students who compete in debate in high school make an average of 100 points higher on the SAT than those who do not. A full 25% of the students who are accepted at schools such as Rice have high school forensics on their transcripts. Clearly, competing for three or four years while in high school has great benefits for the students involved.

Unfortunately, these benefits come with a price tag. Competition is sometimes exhausting, often grueling, and very expensive. We rely on the parents for much during the year. Our parent group arranges to have lunches brought to the local tournaments for us and works for us at our tournament in hospitality, concessions and, most importantly, in judging. If we did not have this type of parental support, the biggest fundraiser of the year (our high school tournament) would not be a success. Elkins prides itself on hosting a fair and well-run tournament each year, and I am again depending on all of you for your help and support. This year, the tournament will be held September 19 and 20. **I will need all of you.** Please understand that every student in the class and on the team will be required to provide at least one adult (high school graduate) to be present at our tournament for the entire time and to provide at least two items for concessions or hospitality. This does not mean it has to be the same person; two or more people can take shifts, but someone must be here for the full tournament. Without community support, we would not be able to host this tournament, and the fees for competition would be significantly higher (several hundred dollars!). Remember, this event only happens once a year!

In addition to time, we also need money. It is an unpleasant but necessary fact. Competitive forensics is an expensive activity. We work hard throughout the school year to raise the money we need for competition, but there just are not enough fundraising activities and free time available to raise all of the money needed. Due to this situation, we have been forced to charge a competitive fee to our students. The fee covers tournament entries to all of the tournaments a student wishes to attend and also pays for the team shirt for the year and the banquet ticket for graduating seniors. Additionally, our fundraising efforts cover transportation, evidence, supplies, and help fund the tournament entries as well.

Beginning this year, we will have the fees paid to our parent booster club. The fee schedule and ways to reduce the payments will be discussed at the parent meeting upcoming in a few weeks. Again, please be on the lookout for the information about the meeting date, time, and location.

Attached to this letter, you will find a tournament schedule for the regular competitive season. The UIL and NFL schedules have not been set, but they will be held in March, April and May as they have been in the past. There are not too many changes to the schedule; we intend to return to our favorite tournaments.

I have also attached our permission slip. We keep the in-town permission slips on file for use during the entire competitive season. I will send home overnight permission slips for each overnight tournament your child will attend, so you will know exactly where we are going and in what hotel we will be staying.

Finally, I want to cover some of the most important regulations concerning travel.

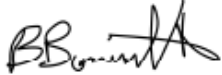
- Students are not permitted to compete if they have lost eligibility due to failing grades on a progress report or report card. This is a STATE law and applies to ALL students.
- Tournament attendance is mandatory for all students who take Debate or Oral Interpretation. I expect that students attend three per nine weeks for the first three nine weeks of the year. They are, of course, welcome to attend more!
- Tournament attire is professional. Male students wear dark suits and ties. Female students should wear suits (either skirts or pants) or nice blouses and skirts. All students should wear closed-toe shoes.
- After students have finished competing at a tournament, they may change into an Elkins speech and debate shirt and jeans or long pants. Any student who is in quarterfinals of CX or LD or who is in finals of an individual event (including Student Congress) must remain in competitive dress until after the awards ceremony.
- Students who register for a tournament who are then unable to attend will be required to pay drop fees. The tournaments we attend charge us for ALL entries, and the price doubles (and sometimes triples) on the day before or the day of the tournament. Our budget does not allow us to cover these fees, so any student who drops will pay the fees. This is true even if the student is able to find a friend to cover his/her events, as a student who is not prepared to compete in an event will not do well, and we do not have the money to waste.
- Occasionally, we will have opportunities to attend out-of-town tournaments. There will be an additional charge for these tournaments to cover hotel expenses and transportation. Some of the rules for hotels are as follows:
 - No students of the opposite sex are allowed in the rooms unless the door has been propped open.
 - No students of other schools or any other non-Elkins people are permitted in the hotel rooms for any reason.
 - All students will be in their rooms from midnight until 6 a.m. Students are not permitted to leave their rooms for any reason without first calling a sponsor and asking for permission.
 - Any student who knows about a violation of the rules that has been committed is REQUIRED to inform a sponsor about the violation immediately. Not making this information known will be considered a serious discipline offense and will result in disciplinary action (including either temporary or mandatory suspension from the team).
 - Any infraction of the overnight rules will result in disciplinary action, including the student being sent home from the tournament.

August 6, 2025

I know a new school and tournament year can be a bit overwhelming, especially to our freshmen and their parents. I urge you to call or email me with any questions you might have. Email is the most efficient way to contact me, and my email address is bonnie.bonnette@fortbendisd.gov. The phone number in my classroom is 281-634-9295, and my cell phone number is 281-389-8029 (for evenings and weekends when we are at tournaments; it does not work in the building). I enjoy hearing from parents, so please do not hesitate to contact me.

It is going to be a good year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BBonnette' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bonnie Bonnette

Director of EHS Forensics

Elkins Speech and Debate Schedule 2021-22

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. This year's unusual nature will definitely affect some tournaments and some participation. In addition, we sometimes change to a different tournament on the same weekend if the original choice is full or cancelled. Finally, no one has to attend all of the tournaments. Students choose the ones at which they want to compete. Also, many of the tournaments will be virtual, but not all of them. All practices will be held in room 625 and 626.

Date	Tournament	Important Information
8/29 to 8/30	Jordan	
9/5 to 9/6	Clear Lake	
9/12 to 9/13	Alief Early	
9/19 to 9/20	Elkins	Every student and parent should plan to be here!
9/26 to 9/27	Spring Woods/Memorial Swing	
10/10 to 10/11	Dulles	Every student should plan to attend
10/17 to 10/18	Tompkins	Hybrid tournament; may start as early as Wednesday
10/24 to 10/25	Cy-Lakes/Cy-Ridge Swing	Hybrid tournament; may start as early as Wednesday
10/31 to 11/1	Clear Falls	
11/7 to 11/8	Clear Brook	
11/14 to 11/15	Katy Taylor	Hybrid tournament; may start as early as Wednesday
11/21 to 11/22	Cy-Creek/Cy-Fair Swing	
12/5 to 12/6	The University of Texas	Qualifiers Only; Overnight; extra fee
12/12 to 12/13	Cy-Ranch/Jersey Village Swing	Hybrid tournament; may start as early as Wednesday
12/19 to 12/20	Clements	Online only
1/9 to 1/10	Winston Churchill	Overnight; all students invited to attend; extra fee
1/16 to 1/17	University of Houston	
1/23 to 1/24	Clear Creek	
1/30 to 1/31	Elsik/Elsik 9th Grade Center Swing	Hybrid tournament; may start as early as Wednesday
2/6 to 2/7	Bellaire	
2/13 to 2/14	Bridgeland/Cy-Park Swing	
TBD	NSDA District Competition	Qualifiers Only
TBD	TFA State Competition	Qualifiers Only; Overnight
TBD	UIL CX Debate State	Qualifiers Only; Overnight
TBD	UIL District Competition	Qualifiers Only
TBD	NSDA Congress Competition	Qualifiers Only
TBD	UIL Regional Competition	Qualifiers Only
TBD	UIL State Academics	Qualifiers Only; Overnight
TBD	UIL State Speech and Debate	Qualifiers Only; Overnight
TBD	NSDA Nationals	Qualifiers Only; Overnight

Practice Schedule

The Practice schedule for this year will be announced at the meetings. Students should plan to attend the informational meetings to learn more.

Final Reminders

Students on the team who are not in the class must attend a minimum of one tournament a month.

We will have a parent meeting in late August or early September. The date will be announced soon. Parents are required to attend.

The team fee for this year will be paid to the parent booster club.

Regular practice attendance is required; plan your schedule around the practice schedule for your events.

We normally leave around noon for tournaments on Fridays, so students will miss 5th through 7th periods. We will stop for lunch on the way to the tournament.

We get home LATE on Friday nights—midnight is not inconceivable.

We leave on Saturday mornings by 6:30 (sometimes earlier depending on how far away the tournament is) and get home at random times during the day depending on how the tournament goes and how well our students do.

Please return the last page signed and dated by Friday!

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY AND PERMISSION FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN
FIELD TRIP**

Student Name: _____

Field Trip and/or Activity: Elkins HS Speech and Debate Tournaments

Your child has the opportunity to participate in a school-sponsored activity. Please complete this form to provide the field trip/activity leaders with information relating to your child.

Teacher: B. Bonnette and A. Burgos

Date: _____

List any physical limitations (temporary or permanent):

List any current medications (prescribed or over the counter) taken:

List any allergies including reactions to medications, food, insects, and environment:

Name of child's physician: _____ **Phone:** _____

Insurance company: _____ **Phone:** _____

Policy Number: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

My signature below indicates that I give my child permission to participate in this activity, to have any medications administered that would normally be given at school, and that I authorize any needed emergency medical treatment. I also acknowledge that I have been informed that Fort Bend Independent School District has immunity from any liability. Transportation, if provided, will be by school bus or commercial carrier.

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Address: _____

Home Telephone: _____ **Work Telephone:** _____

Emergency contact person: _____ **Phone No:** _____