

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 17, 2020

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. The code is @

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 18 and 19. **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 a the banquet ticket for graduating seniors. Additionally, our fundraising efforts cover transportation, evidence, supplies, and help fund the tournament entries as well.

The fee is \$200 for the school year. Please make payments through RevTrak. The system will take partial payments and keep track of what you owe until you have paid the entire fee. **The school requires that the fees be paid in the**

first two weeks of school, but we are more than willing to work with individual families for whom this is difficult. If you are not able to take care of the fee during the first two weeks of school, you **MUST** contact me to discuss the issue. We also have a limited amount of need-based scholarship money for families who are unable to pay the full amount because we do recognize the value and importance of participation for all students. Please contact me directly to inquire about the scholarship opportunity.

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

August 14, 2020

- 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.

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@fortbend.k12.tx.us. 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,

Bonnie Bonnette

Director of EHS Forensics

Team Point System

In order to manage a large team with limited funds, we are instituting a point system for earning tournament attendance privileges. Students must earn **35** points for each tournament they wish to attend.

Points will be updated regularly online, so students and parents can see how many points a student has earned. Captains and coaches have the ability to award and remove points from students.

Activity/Event	Points Earned
Attend summer debate camp	Points are waived for students who attend camp
Attend after school practice	10 (for each practice attended)
Cut debate cards	1 per card
Cut interp pieces	10 per piece
Participate in a mock round at Elkins	10 for a win; 5 for a loss
Donate a case of water or snacks for a tournament	5 per donation up to 15 per tournament
Donate to the hospitality room for the Elkins tournament	5 per donation up to 15
Provide a judge for our tournament	15 per judge (must remain for entire time)
Provide a judge for a tournament we attend	10 per judge
Earn TFA qualifying points	1 per point
Novice only: final in an IE or make it to quarters in a debate event	5 points
Win a tournament	20 points
Merit points awarded by officers	1 to 5 points

2019-2020 Tournament Schedule*

Date	Tournament	Notes/Information
8/30-31/2019	Foster/George Ranch Swing	
9/6-7/2019	Grapevine	Varsity only; overnight; extra fee
9/13-14/2019	Alief Elsie/Alief Early College Swing	Novices expected to attend
9/20-21/2019	ELKINS	REQUIRED; Students and Parents MUST be in attendance
9/27-28/2019	Houston Memorial High School	
10/11-12/2019	Dulles High School	REQUIRED; transportation not provided
10/18-19/2019	Stratford HS	
10/25-26/2019	Cypress Lakes High School	
11/1-2/2019	Spring Woods High School	
TBD	UIL Congress	Qualifiers only
11/8-9/2019	Alief Taylor High School	
11/15-16-2019	Katy Taylor High School	
11/22-23/2019	Cy Creek/ Cy Fair Swing	
12/6-7/2019	UT and Tompkins	UT—qualifiers only; overnight; extra fee
12/20-21/2019	Mayde Creek High School	
1/10-11/2020	Churchill	Qualifiers only; overnight; extra fee
	UIL CX Districts	Qualifiers only
1/17-18/2020	Clear Creek High School	
1/24-25/2020	Lamar High School	
1/31-2/1/2020	Texas City High School	
2/7-8/2020	Seven Lakes High School	
3/4-7/2020	TFA STATE	Qualifiers only; El Paso overnight (district paid)
3/19-21/2020	UIL CX State	Qualifiers only; overnight (district paid)
3/27-28/2020	UIL Districts	Qualifiers only
3/30/2020	NSDA Congress	Qualifiers only
4/17-18/2020	UIL Regionals	Qualifiers only
4/23-24/2020	NSDA Districts	Qualifiers only
5/26-28/2020	UIL State	Qualifiers only; overnight (district paid)
6/13-20/2020	NSDA Nationals	Qualifiers only; overnight; Albuquerque, NM (district paid)

Practice Schedule

Monday	2:55-4:55	PF and Congress	Room 131
Tuesday	2:55-4:55	Interp and IE's	Room 131
Wednesday	2:55-4:55	CX and LD	Room 131
Thursday	2:55-4:55	PF Novices	Room 131

*Schedules are subject to change at the coach's discretion

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 B. Steinart 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:** _____

Expectations for Debate

- Students who are in the class are automatically on the team. They are expected to attend a minimum of two tournaments per nine weeks for the first three nine weeks if in Debate I or a minimum of three tournaments if in Debate II or III.
- Students are **REQUIRED** to wear business attire to tournaments. Casual dress is **NOT** permitted.
- Parents and students are **REQUIRED** to participate in the tournament we host each year. This year, the tournament will be held on September 18 and 19. Parents should plan to be present for the entire tournament as judges.
- Hospitality donations for our tournament are required. A signup will be made available on Signup Genius.
- Students who lose their eligibility to compete and who do not regain it within six weeks will be expected to drop the class.
- Students and parents are **REQUIRED** to sign up for Remind.com. The information for signing up is:
 - Student Remind: @elkdb8
 - Parent Remind: @db8par19

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the requirements and expectations for participating in debate for the 2020-21 school year.

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date