

ROTARY DISTRICT 5220 SPEECH CONTEST 2026-27

Communicating With The School

A positive initial contact with either the school principal or designee (guidance counselor, teacher, club sponsor) is critical to the success of the speech contest in the school. You may use the following script, especially if this is the first year of school contact or participation.

Some points to consider during the conversation with the school official:

- Does the school offer a public speaking class?
- Would this contest fit as a special program within the school's gifted program?
- Could participation and winning in this contest be a positive point in a student's resume?
- Does this contest have a place in English, psychology, sociology, drama or speech classes?
- Does the school have clubs like Future Farmers of America (FFA) that include public speaking?

Suggested Script for school discussion

The objective is to schedule time to meet and start building a person-to-person relationship, not explain the entire program on the phone.

"Good morning/afternoon Mr./Mrs. (Principal or Designee), My name is and I am a member of the Rotary Club of During the last several years Rotary Clubs in our district have been partnering with many of our schools to offer a program which challenges students to develop their critical thinking skills and ethical decision-making skills.

This program has been well received by the students participating, and the staff supporting the students.

Is there a good time this week or next that we could meet to find out where this program might best fit in your school? I will have more detailed information with me and will also be able to answer your questions."

"Can you tell me a little more about it?"

"Absolutely. The program is open to students in grades 9 through 12. Students are challenged to identify activities they have been doing or hope to do in the future that is aligned with our district theme, which is How Does Rotary Create Lasting Impact? Students will seek to persuade listeners about their point of view as it relates to the theme or inform listeners what they have done or intended to do in the future as it relates to the theme. Students will need to research what Rotary does in the world and connect it to their views and/or plans.

Students will deliver a 4 ½ to 5 ½ minute speech and have an opportunity to win cash prizes at various levels of the competition.

Is there a convenient time that we could meet to see where this might best fit in your school?"

Suggested responses to possible objections:
--

“The class curriculums have already been finalized.”

I understand and that is why some schools initially offer this program to students as a completely voluntary opportunity outside of the regular school day. The school’s involvement can be limited to helping us get the word out with some flyers.

“I am not sure where this would fit in our school. I will have to get back to you.”

Sure. If I may – could give you some examples of how other schools use this program. We are finding that schools that already offer public speaking courses or competitions are the biggest supporters of our program and use it to reach an additional target audience among their students. Some examples of this are resume building and college exploration, theater and acting, and as part of psychology, sociology and English classes to nurture communication and presentation skills.