

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT DDF

Q What is DDF?

A Drama, Debate & Forensics is a co-curricular activity which promotes public speaking, discussion of public issues and interpretation of literature through a series of interscholastic competitions in debate, speech and drama.

Q What are the advantages of participating in DDF?

A DDF students learn poise, self confidence and the ability to think on their feet. They make friends with students from all over the state and become conversant in literature, drama, current affairs, social problems and philosophy. Students from small towns can also attain the satisfaction that comes from competing with larger schools and knowing they can hold their own among the best in the state.

There are also long-term benefits. Studies show that students who excel in forensics in high school earn an average of \$10,000 more per year as adults and effective debaters, some \$30,000 more per year. Because debate is considered the premier activity for providing the skills necessary to succeed in college, scholarships are often available to students who excel in debate.

Apart from these practical considerations, DDF is fun and exciting.

Q Who is eligible to participate?

A Any student satisfying the standard KPBSD and ASAA criteria and academic requirements.

Q What are the events?

A There are three types of debate, extemporaneous speaking; two types of oration; solo and duet acting; humorous, dramatic and duo interpretation; readers' theater; and mime.

Q How long does the season last?

A Practices will begin in September. The first tournament is September 19-20. The state tournament is February 19-21.

Q How many events may a student compete in?

A Any three events (four at certain tournaments). However, students may not compete in more than one form of debate or more than one form of extemporaneous speaking. Students must compete in at least two events to attend a tournament and are encouraged to compete in three or four.

Q What about practices?

A Practices will generally be twice per week after school in the library on Mondays and Mr. Pitzman's room on Wednesdays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Mondays will be devoted to debate. We will work on the dramatic, interpretive and forensics events on Wednesdays. There may be an extra practice during the week of a meet. Students not competing in debate need not attend Monday's practice.

Q Who are the coaches?

A Amy Johnson and Kyra Wagner. In addition, other community members contribute their time and expertise.

Q What is the cost?

A Students will be charged a non-refundable fee of \$150 to participate on the team. Parents of students for whom this fee will present a financial hardship should contact the coach about financial assistance.

Q How do trips work?

A Anchorage meets run from Friday afternoon through Saturday evening. Students are expected to be at the HHS parking lot Friday morning at the designated time. The bus will not wait longer than 10 minutes for anyone. During the winter, students must bring appropriate clothing or they will not be permitted on the bus. Upon arrival in Anchorage, we stop at the Dimond Center for lunch and then head to the meet. Afterwards, we go to the hotel or school and check in. We return to Homer late the following day (Saturday), arriving back in town between 11:00 p.m. and 12:00 midnight. Parents will need to make arrangements to pick up students upon arrival at HHS.

Q What about hotels?

A Students traveling to meets may be charged a per night fee for lodging and three meals. This fee will be \$20. Several same-sex students will share a room and will likely share beds.

Q What about food on trips?

A Students are responsible to pay for some of their own food on trips. We generally stop at the Dimond Mall for lunch in the food court on the way into town. Students can brown bag it if they wish. We will provide a simple dinner Friday night at the meet. Saturday breakfast is provided by us or the hotel and we provide Saturday lunch. We stop at a sandwich shop or pizza buffet on the way out of town for supper and the students pay for their own food.

Q Is there a dress code for meets?

A At meets, males must wear a jacket and tie. Females must wear comparable conservative attire, including skirts that are no more than 2 inches above the knee. All clothing must meet the school dress code. No jeans, Carharts, T-shirts or similar clothing. Casual attire is fine for traveling and while at the hotel.

Q How many students can participate?

A At present, we do not plan on putting a cap on the number of students on the team, but may do so depending on how many wish to participate. No more than 15 may compete at the State tournament.

Q What about team rules?

A The rules are set forth in a contract which students and parents must review and sign.

Q What about fundraising?

A We are planning our Random Acts of DDF for a weekend in January. We are also open to other ideas for fundraising.

Q How much preparation is involved?

A Most of the preparation work for DDF occurs outside of practice, with debaters researching and writing out their cases and performers memorizing and practicing their pieces. Practices at school will be spent on fundamentals; polishing and critiquing pieces; and mock debates. Students who have nothing to work on will be asked to leave.

Q How are debate topics chosen?

A Debate topics are selected by the National Forensics League. For Policy debate (2 on 2), the same topic is used all year. For public forum debate (2 on 2), the topic changes each month. For Lincoln –Douglas (1 on 1), the topic changes every other month. Students do not know which side they will argue until just before the round. Students must be prepared to argue both sides of the issue, regardless of their personal beliefs.

Q What is the coaching philosophy?

A The emphasis will be on learning to speak, perform and debate in an open and friendly atmosphere. Students will learn the importance of preparation and execution. Compliance with the code of ethics and etiquette of the program will be mandatory. Judging in DDF is entirely subjective. Students will be encouraged to focus on doing well, rather than on winning.

Q How long has HHS had a DDF program?

A This is our eleventh year.

Q Can students take a leave of absence to participate in other activities or join the program later in the year?

A Yes, but arrangements must be made with the coach in advance. We do not want “casual” involvement in DDF. However, if a student is involved in a particular activity which precludes participation for a certain period of time, a leave can be arranged with the coach.

Q How is student eligibility for the state tournament determined?

A In addition to the standard ASAA and KPBSD requirements, in order for a student to compete at the state tournament in a particular event, the student must have been among the top three finishers from HHS in that event in at least two meets during the year.

Q How can parents help?

A We will ask for food donations for our meets. We occasionally need chaperones, especially male chaperones, as our coaching staff is all female.

Q Where do students find materials to use for the dramatic and interpretive events?

A Students are responsible for finding their own pieces. Books of monologues, plays, excerpts from classic literature, etc., are available on the DDF cart in the HHS library for perusal and copying by students. Pieces are typically edited or “cut and pasted” by students in order to satisfy the time requirements for the event. Students also find pieces from independent sources, such as their own reading materials or by searching the Internet under “monologues.” We subscribe to an on-line service where the students can access stored materials in a commercial database. Except for the original oration and expository speaking events (in which the pieces are prepared by the students), the dramatic and interpretive pieces must be from a published source.

Q Where can I find more information on DDF?

A Check out the National Forensics League website. The ASAA website contains the state DDF manual.

Q What is the coach’s contact information?

A Questions should be directed to Amy Johnson between 8am and 6pm at 235-4667 or via email to AJohnson@kpbsd.k12.ak.us