



NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE
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ADVOCATING Debate and Speech (Forensic) Education

BOOSTING student performance:

- A study published in *Rostrum* October 2009 shows a direct relationship between higher reading and writing test scores and participation in interscholastic speech and debate..
- A 1999 study published in the *Wall Street Journal* revealed that interscholastic speech and debate give students a decisive edge in college admissions, by as much as 30% more than non-forensic peers.
- 90% of speech and debate participants matriculate to college, and a majority continue to graduate school.

MEETING standards and frameworks:

- Speech and debate participation meets all English Language Arts *Common Core Standards* and *College Board Standards for College Success*;
- Participation in forensics meets the first three core areas of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' *Breaking Ranks* strategies.

STIMULATING cognitive outcomes:

- Literacy skills: reading, listening, speaking, writing;
- Critical thinking at the highest levels of *Bloom's Taxonomy*.

ENHANCING behavioral outcomes:

- Speech and debate activities foster intellectual curiosity;
- Competition motivates students to improve themselves;
- Successful competitors spend hours reading, researching, and practicing;
- Top competitors invest effort comparable to a graduate school thesis (Minch 2006);
- Both at-risk and gifted students engage more and act out as much as 50% less.

BUILDING affective outcomes:

- One-on-one tutoring/coaching model provides individualized instruction;
- Squads provide a safe, familial atmosphere that nurtures student growth.

IMPROVING outcomes in urban schools:

A study in Chicago schools¹, published in October 2009, suggests that participation in competitive debate drastically improves educational outcomes for underperforming students in urban schools. Specifically, students who participated in at least 25 rounds of debate during their high school careers showed the following improvements:

- Average graduation rate 40% higher than non-debating peers (77% compared to 55%);
- African-American males had an average graduation rate 70% higher than non-debating peers (73% compared to 45%);
- Average GPA of .20 points, or 20% of a letter grade, higher than non-debating peers;
- African-American males had a GPA of .50, or 50% of a letter grade, higher than non-debating peers;
- 50% more likely to reach the ACT's college-ready benchmark on the English portion of the exam;
- African-American males were 70% more likely than non-debating peers to score at or above the college-ready benchmarks on both the ACT English and Reading exams.

¹ Source: *The Journal of Negro Education*. (2009).

SERVING successful students for more than 86 years:

- 112,000 students at nearly 3,000 middle and high schools;
- 1.3 million alumni from all 50 states;
- \$200,000 in college scholarships awarded annually.

LOOKING for more information on the proven benefits of forensics?

- Visit www.NFLonline.org/AboutNFL/Advocate

