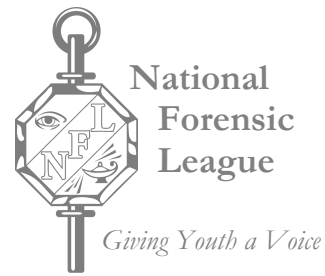


Principal's Guide to Attracting and Retaining Speech and Debate Coaches



The most vital component in developing speech and debate at a school is to find a coach to dedicate his/her time, energy and passion to sponsoring the program. Common characteristics among forensic coaches are love for learning about a variety of subjects, talent for working closely with students, and desire for personal, professional growth.

Following are tactics principals can use in finding and keeping a sponsor:

- Incorporate the responsibility into the job description of a new language arts, theatre, social studies, or world languages teacher. Most teachers in the market for a new position or transfer understand that an extra-curricular commitment is a way to get their foot in the door.
- Enlist parents and alumni to assist. Many community members understand the value of speech and debate training and will be pleased to offer their assistance to a program getting off the ground, particularly if they participated as middle or high school students.
- Reassure the teacher that the NFL offers support mechanisms. We can team new coaches with local mentors, as well as connect them with online professional development programs. The NFL also offers a wealth of video and print resources for our new coaches.
- Encourage the teacher to “start small.” They do not need to create a highly competitive program to be active in the NFL. Even fostering a handful of participation opportunities for students is a solid way to launch a program. Remember that classroom speaking opportunities still yield recognition and advancement.