

Qualification Required for State Tournament participation

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Summary of proposal

In order for a student to compete at the state tournament, they must have qualified through a qualification process. This process happens by breaking into a final round at an invitational tournament during the regular season.

Current Practice

Teams are allowed 25 entries with a maximum of four entries per category. There are no limitations or requirements related to prior performance.

Rationale for Change

- Other states (including Minnesota, Nebraska, Illinois, Missouri) have qualification processes for their state tournament. The WSHFA also uses a qualification process to determine those performing at the state festival.
- If a qualification system were in place, it would encourage students to work even harder to improve their skills. Some students may choose to pursue another category with the goal of qualifying for state.
- More schools may host tournaments as a way to improve student's chances of qualifying for the state tournament.
- An added sense of prestige would be created to the state tournament with students feeling like they earned their place at state.

Proposal Details

Qualifying Tournaments

For a tournament to be considered a qualifying tournament, the following standards must be met:

- A minimum of 8 schools must participate in the tournament. Exceptions will be made for conference tournaments. If a tournament has 8 schools registered and weather or circumstances out of the control of the host causes fewer schools to attend, an appeal for the tournament to be counted as a qualifier can be made to the WFCA.
- A minimum of three ranks must be earned by the students participating over the course of the tournament.

Qualifying Entries

For a student to be considered qualified for the state tournament, the following must happen:

Tournaments with a three prelim/final round format:

- If a final round is conducted, break into the final round of their category.
- if a final round is not conducted (due to a low number of students in the category), the student must finish in the top 50% of the total contestants in the category. If there is an odd number of contestants, round up from 50% for the number of qualifying spots. (For example, if there are 7 students in radio and no final is held, the top 4 would earn qualifying spots. $50\% \text{ of } 7 = 3.5$. Round up: 4).

Tournaments with a two prelim/final round format:

- If a final is conducted, break into a final round of their category.
- If a final round is not conducted (due to a low number of students), a second judge must be added to one of the two preliminary rounds to ensure three judges evaluate all competitors. Then students who finish in the top 50% of the contestants in the category. If there is an odd number of contestants, round up from 50% for the number of qualifying spots. (For example, if there are 7 students in radio and no final is held, the top 4 would earn qualifying spots. $50\% \text{ of } 7 = 3.5$. Round up: 4).

Tournaments with two or three prelim rounds/no final format:

-The table below is used to determine qualifiers:

Number of entries	Qualifying spots
1-2	1
3-4	2
5-6	3
7-8	4
9-10	5
11+	6

-In the event of ties for the last qualifying spot, all students with the same total rank will earn a qualifying spot. (For example, there are 10 students in extemp. Three students are tied for 5th place. All three students earn a qualifying spot)

Limitations

Novice:

- All novice categories would not be eligible for earning state qualifications.
- Novice finals will not be eligible for earning state qualifications.

Group events (Duo, Group Interpretation, Play Acting):

-50% or more of the students earning the qualification must participate at state. (For example, if three students in group interp earn a qualification, at least 2 of those students must compete as part of that group for state.)

OIL/Poetry/Prose

-Qualification must be earned in the category competing in at state. An OIL qualification does not allow someone to compete in Poetry or Prose at state. A qualification in Poetry and Prose does not allow someone to compete in OIL at state.

National Qualifiers

-National qualifying tournaments will not be considered qualifying tournaments.

Subdistrict/District Festivals

-WHSFA subdistrict and district festivals will not be considered qualifying tournaments.

Timelines

-All qualifications must be earned by the Sunday before the state tournament.

Verification

-All tournament hosts/directors must make a full results packet available to the state tournament director(s) in order to verify qualifications.

-The state tournament director(s) will verify that students registered for state are eligible to compete.

Questions & Answers

Q: My student earns a qualification at the first tournament of the season. Can they continue to compete?

A: Yes. Earning a qualification does not mean the student must stop competing.

Q: Can tournaments that are invite-only be eligible for qualification.

A: Yes. As long as they meet the standards of a qualifying tournament.

Q: Wouldn't this system punish schools who don't compete as often?

A: Those students would have fewer chances to qualify, yes. But qualification is based on performance at a single tournament, not a series of competitions.

Q: What impact would this have had on entries at the 2017 state tournament?

A: 16 random schools were analyzed for a sample. Results from tabroom, speechwire and the WFCA website were used to estimate entries based on those results.

For those 16 schools, 120 out of their 214 entries (56%) would have qualified for state under this system. Admittedly, this does not include all possible results for the season, so the actual number of qualified entries would be larger. Nor does it account for how schools may adjust their own entries over the course of a season to try and get more students qualified. For example, if a prose student makes finals the first two tournaments of the season, I might encourage them to pick up another event to open up a possible spot for a teammate.