

FLORIDA DISTRICT
DIVISION 8
EXCHANGE CLUBS

2026 Americanism
Speech Contest
with a scholarship award for the winner

Contestant Application

The complete application must be <u>TYPED</u> and E-mailed to
Div 8 Americanism Speech Chair at
Div8Ex@gmail.com
If you have questions, call or text 941-587-7930 (text first please)

Co-Chairs: Chuck Walker & Isaac Valley
E-MAIL: Div8Ex@gmail.com
CELL: 941-587-7930

Florida District Division 8 Exchange Clubs

2026 Americanism Speech Contest

We are proud of the fact that our 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2022, 2023 and 2025 representatives not only competed but won the Florida District competition. As with every year, we hope to have the statewide winning student come from Division 8 (Manatee/Sarasota) again this year. Listed below are past representatives and their placement at the State District level,

Year	Student	High School	District Place
2025	Kate Warrington	Providence Community School	First Place
2023	Reagan Rosenthal	Palmetto High School	First Place
2022	Leah Dubose	Booker High School	First Place
2018	Kea Kamiya	SCF Collegiate School	First Place
2017	Gabby Francois	Southeast High School	First Place
2016	Kaitlin Folsom	SCF Collegiate School	First Place
2015	Devan Kreitzer	Bayshore High School	First Place
2014	Caleb Francois	Southeast High School	First Place

As you can see, the Division 8 has performed exceptionally well at the statewide district level.

Program Rules and Awards

The Americanism Speech Contest is one of the Florida District Exchange Clubs' most honored traditions. Nationally, since 1946, this contest has provided high school Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors with an opportunity to:

- Express their patriotic ideals on the opportunities of this country's democratic system and its responsibilities and privileges
- Sharpen their oratorical skills and self-confidence
- Compete for a $1000 scholarship at the local Division 8 level
- District 8 winner will compete for a $3000 scholarship at the statewide level

Contest Overview

Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors enrolled in the Manatee or Sarasota School System are eligible to participate in this District 8 speech contest. Eligible students interested in participating should review this informational packet. The students' **application and speech are due to the committee email at Div8Ex@gmail.com by 12 noon on Friday, March 27, 2026**. The **local Division 8 speech contest will start at 5:30 pm** on **Wednesday, April 8, 2026, Keiser University on Lakewood Ranch**. The first-place winner at the local Division 8 level will then participate in the **State of Florida District Contest** being held on **Saturday, May 2, 2026** in **Destin, Florida**. The Division 8 Exchange Clubs sponsor the Division 8 winner by paying for one room night at the conference hotel, Friday Dinner and Saturday Youth Luncheon for the student and one chaperone. Additional family members are encouraged to attend but will be responsible for their own expenses.

Eligibility

Any high school Sophomore, Junior or Senior who is enrolled in a high school or alternative high school-level educational program in the Manatee or Sarasota County School Districts is eligible to enter this contest. A student winner graduated at the mid-term must have been declared a

winner prior to his or her graduation. Any previous first place winner of the state district contest will not be eligible to compete again.
To participate in the Division 8 Exchange Americanism Speech Contest, contestants must affirm that if chosen as the winner, they will be available to represent Division 8 Clubs at the District Competition to be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026 in Destin, FL.

Speech Subject

The contest is designed to allow contestants to express their patriotic ideals on the opportunities of this country's democratic system. Each contestant may choose their own title and subject for a speech, but the speech must carry a positive theme of patriotism, relating to the American way of life or encourage continuance of the American democratic form of government.

It is felt that by prescribing broad guidelines, each contestant with the assistance of a faculty sponsor, will be free to be original and creative. Choice of subject is very important. The subject should inspire interest and the judges will consider its effectiveness as well as the patriotic theme.

Some example topics include, but are NOT LIMITED TO:

- The U.S. Constitution and its system of checks and balances.
- Separation of church and state.
- Responsibilities and privileges under our American form of government.
- The role of Federal, State or Local Governments.
- The Bill of Rights.
- The role of religious freedom in the United States.
- The American political system.
- The necessity of maintaining a lawful and orderly society.
- The opportunity for change under our form of government.
- Individual rights and the rights of groups.

The Speech

Each contestant's speech is to be the result of solely their own composition efforts. The use of any artificial intelligence tools is strictly forbidden. Facts, data, and direct quotations may be secured from other sources with proper acknowledgment. Each contestant must submit a copy of their speech and the completed application to the Chairpersons of the Speech Committee listed on the front of this packet by email and the deadline of Friday, March 27, 2026. The speech delivered at the local District 8 level must be the same speech submitted for the State District competition.

Speech Rules

Prior to the start of the speech, all speech contestants will be taken to a room to await their turn. The order of the speech contestants will be determined by drawing lots. The Speech Contest Chairperson or their designee will bring each contestant, one at a time, to the front of the room where the speech is to be delivered. The audience will be made up of area

Exchange Club members and guests. The prompter and timekeeper, who will be sitting at the front of the room, fully visible to the contestant, will be identified prior to the start of the contest.

The speech contestant must follow the context of the previously submitted written speech. *It is highly recommended that contest contestants memorize the speech for delivery, to the best of their ability.* Each contestant will be permitted to hold and refer to notes printed on no more than two three-by-five inch index cards during their speech. Contestants may not use audio/visual equipment, printed displays, or other prompts in conjunction with their speech.

The prompter will have a copy of each speech and will provide the first few words of the speech only when the speech contestant signals for assistance. Points may be deducted for prompting.

Each speech shall last at least five (5) minutes, but not be more than eight (8) minutes in length. The timekeeper will briefly at five minutes hold up a green paddle. At eight minutes, the timekeeper will hold up a red paddle until the conclusion of the speech. A minimum of two (2) points will be deducted if the speech is less than five (5) minutes or exceeds eight (8) minutes. At the conclusion of the speech, one of the judges will ask one impromptu question related to the topic and content of the speech. The contestant will be provided two (2) minutes to answer the question.

Judges for the Speech Contest

The judges for the local and State Division 8 Exchange Club Speech Contest will consist of three to five residents drawn from the community or region. These judges may include but not be limited to teachers, coaches, career counselors, advisors, or authors and are selected for their objectivity, professionalism, experience, and knowledge of public speaking.

The judges will receive a copy of each contestant's speech prior to the day of the local District 8 contest. Each speech must be anonymous with all indications of the speech contestant's identity removed from the printed copies. The judges will receive an advance copy of the Speech Contest Scoring Sheet with instructions on the scoring methods.

After each speech, the speech contestant may take a seat in the audience for any remaining speeches.

At the conclusion of the speeches, the judges and the speech chair will assemble in a conference room to complete their individual scoring sheets and tabulate a compiled score. Once the scoring is tabulated, the results will be provided to the Chairperson or their designee who will announce the results.

Speech Contest Awards

The winner of the Local Division 8 Speech Contest will receive a $1,000 cash scholarship and represent Division 8 at the Florida District Speech Contest to follow at a Florida location. Each contestant will also receive a framed certificate commemorating the event. Arrangements will be made to photograph the contest winner presentation. At the completion of the event, and as time permits, a photo session may be held with each contestant's school advisor/family who have attended the event.

The Florida District Exchange Clubs Americanism Speech Contest

The Local Division 8 Exchange Club Americanism Speech Contest winner is required to participate in the Florida District Exchange Clubs' Americanism Speech Contest. By participating in the regional Division 8 speech contest, the contestant agrees to attend and compete at the Florida District competition, if they are the District 8 winner. In 2026, the Florida District competition will be held during the Florida District Convention, Saturday, May 16, 2026, in Destin, Florida. If the winner of the Local Division 8 Speech Contest cannot attend, the committee may select a runner up based on the judges scoring and that alternate could represent Division 8 at the Florida District level.

Each Florida District level contestant will deliver their speech the morning of May 16,2026 in Destin, FL, followed by presentation of contest awards and recognition at the annual Youth Luncheon. The topic, rules, and speech contest format will be the same as those outlined above for the District 8 competition. Judges will be provided for the state event following guidelines used for the District 8 level. The same scoring sheet will be used.

The winner of the Florida District Speech Contest will be presented with a $3,000 scholarship award. All speech contest entrants will be recognized with certificates of appreciation for their participation in the Florida District contest.

The Division 8 Speech Chairperson will be responsible for completing the District application and submission of application and speech to the Florida District Speech Contest Chairperson by the required deadline.

Entry #: _____
(for committee fill-in)

Americanism Speech Contest
Florida District Division 8 Exchange
Clubs 2026 Entry Form

Congratulations on participating in our Americanism Speech Contest! Members of the Florida Division 8 Exchange Clubs are looking forward to your speech delivery in April.

To enter in the Division 8 Competition, please complete this form and follow the submission instructions at the bottom of the page. **Deadline for entries is 12 noon on Friday, March 27, 2026. A copy of your speech must be submitted with this application**.

Please Print Neatly!

Sponsoring Club Information	
Sponsoring Club: Division 8 Exchange Clubs including: Sarasota Business Exchange Club Manatee River Business Exchange Club Exchange Club of South Sarasota County	Speech Contest Program Chair: Chuck Walker & Isaac Valley Telephone: 941-587-7930 (please text first if possible) Email: Div8Ex@gmail.com
Contestant Information	
Contestant's Name: Street Address: City: State: Zip: Telephone: Cell Phone: Email Address: Date of Birth:	Parent/Guardian's Name: Street Address: City: State: Zip: Telephone: Cell Phone: Email Address:
Speech Title:	High School: City: Anticipated Graduation Date: Faculty Advisor:

To submit this contestant application to the 2026 Florida Division 8 Speech Contest:

1. Complete the form and complete speech development and typing, double spaced, on a separate sheet of paper (from the application form)

2. Email the form and the exact speech to be delivered in the competition to: Div8Ex@gmail.com by no later than Friday noon, March 27, 2026, via email

3. Absolute deadline for entries is 12:00 noon on Friday, March 27, 2026.

4. The contestant will receive a confirmation email within 24 hours of receipt of the entry application and speech copy.

5. Any questions on this scholarship opportunity should be emailed to the committee at Div8Ex@gmail.com in a timely fashion. ***Please do not wait until the last week in March to bring up questions.***

Florida District Exchange Club
Americanism Speech Contest – Scoring Sheet

Please complete a form for each contestant by circling the appropriate score.

_____ **Contestant Number**

_____ **Speech Number**

PART I: Speech Content (Maximum Points = 30)	**Scores**				
A. Choice of and Adherence to Topic	1	2	3	4	**5**
B. Organization (Clear division of ideas and appropriate pattern of arrangement)	1	2	3	4	**5**
C. Development (support for thought division based on thorough knowledge of topic)	1	2	3	4	**5**
D. Appropriate Language	1	2	3	4	**5**
E. Soundness of Reasoning	1	2	3	4	**5**
F. Conclusion	1	2	3	4	**5**
Part II: Patriotic Theme (Maximum Points = 5)					
A. Effectiveness of a patriotic message	1	2	3	4	**5**
Part III: Physical Delivery (Maximum Points = 20)					
A. Eye contact	1	2	3	4	**5**
B. Spontaneous gesture and movement	1	2	3	4	**5**
C. Poise	1	2	3	4	**5**
D. Ease before audience	1	2	3	4	**5**
Part IV: Vocal Delivery (Maximum Points = 20)					
A. Distinctness of utterance	1	2	3	4	**5**
B. Fluency	1	2	3	4	**5**
C. Vocal emphasis	1	2	3	4	**5**
D. Tempo	1	2	3	4	**5**
Part V: Question Period (Maximum Points = 5)					
A. Content and organization of responses	1 1	2 2	3 3	4 4 5	**5**
Part VI: Timing (0 if within time limits)					
A. Deductions for time	0	-2	-3	-4	**-5**

Judge's Signature_____