



Public Speaking Competition

Overview

Self-composure, confidence, and the ability to articulate and communicate information are essential skills for all educators. The Public Speaking competition aims to showcase students who exemplify these qualities through thoughtful preparation and confident delivery in an engaging presentation on a current education topic.

Participants will compose and deliver a speech of approximately 400 to 600 words (three to five minutes when spoken aloud) on the assigned topic. Competitors will present their speeches to a panel of on-site judges.

Participation Details

- This is an individual competition.
- Only one (1) entry per chapter will be accepted. Each chapter must select one student to represent it.
- A maximum of twelve (12) entries total will be accepted, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Assigned Topic

Addressing Chronic Absenteeism and Student Engagement in Today's Schools

Chronic absenteeism has become a significant challenge for schools across the country. When students frequently miss school, they lose valuable instructional time and opportunities to build relationships, participate in school activities, and stay connected to their learning. As prospective leaders and educators, your perspectives can help schools better understand why students disengage and how school communities can encourage consistent attendance.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, chronic absenteeism is generally defined as missing at least 10 percent of school days in a year, whether absences are excused or unexcused. Chronic absence can negatively affect academic achievement and increase a student's risk of falling behind.

How does chronic absenteeism affect student achievement and the overall school community? What factors contribute to students frequently missing school or becoming disengaged from their education? What strategies can schools implement to improve attendance and help students feel more connected to learning? What roles can educators, families, students, and communities play in addressing chronic absenteeism?

Citation:

U.S. Department of Education. "Chronic Absenteeism."

<https://www.ed.gov/teaching-and-administration/supporting-students/chronic-absenteeism>.

The guidelines for the FIU Public Speaking Competition are adapted from the national Educators Rising competition guidelines and are used for educational purposes. All credit for the original competition structure, objectives, and evaluation criteria goes to Educators Rising. FIU's adaptations are intended to align with our institutional context and support student success within our programs.



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Competition Guidelines

- A. The speech must be about the assigned topic. Research and use of data are encouraged.
- B. The length of the speech should be approximately 400 to 600 words.
- C. Three copies of the Public Speaking Competition speech script must be brought to the competition and given to the judges at the start of the presentation.
- D. The competitor may use up to five 4x6-inch index cards while delivering his or her speech. Only one side of each index card may be used for notes.
- E. Notecards should have notes, not the full text of the speech. Students must not read their entire speeches from their notecards.
- F. Each presentation is to be a minimum of three minutes and a maximum of five minutes. Contestants will respond to judges' follow-up questions. The entire presentation and question session will last no more than 10 minutes in total.
- G. One judge will serve as the timekeeper. To adhere to the schedule, the judges will stop any speech that exceeds the five-minute limit.
- H. Competitors will receive a visual, non-verbal indication that there is one minute remaining when they reach the four-minute mark of their speeches.

Judging and Scoring

- A. Competitors must be present at the scheduled time; otherwise, they will be disqualified.
- B. The judges' decision is final.
- C. Competitors agree to be bound by the FEA General Competition Rules.
- D. The entry will be scored using the Public Speaking Competition rubric.

How to Enter

- A. This is an individual competition. Only one (1) entry per chapter will be accepted.
- B. All entries for individual and/or chapter competitions must be submitted by the chapter's sponsoring teacher via the Online Competition Entry Form **by 5:00 pm on Friday, October 30, 2026.**
- C. Entries submitted by email will not be accepted.



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Presentation Content

Points Available	Accomplished 16 – 13	Commendable 12 – 9	Developing 8 – 5	Needs Improvement 4 – 1
Depth	The speech demonstrates a profound and comprehensive understanding of the multiple factors and perspectives involved in the issue. It succeeds in uncovering root issues and proposing compelling, well-founded solutions.	The speech demonstrates a thorough understanding of the issue and effectively proposes well-founded solutions.	The speech is on topic. Responses offer multiple good points but would benefit from more exploration, detail, or research.	The speech reflects a limited or flawed understanding of the issue. The solutions offered may not be plausible. An effort by the speaker to prepare by gathering relevant information may not be evident.
Insight	The content of the highly focused speech reflects a keen understanding and striking insight into a significant public issue.	The speech offers helpful, well-detailed ideas that warrant further exploration beyond this session.	The speech offers intuitive ideas that would have benefited from further unpacking in this session.	The inconsistently focused speech may offer ideas that are only partially developed and feel incomplete.

Presentation Delivery

Points Available	Accomplished 16 – 13	Commendable 12 – 9	Developing 8 – 5	Needs Improvement 4 – 1
Structure	The speech demonstrates an awe-inspiring and nuanced understanding of how to craft and deliver a powerful message. The speech is successfully and strategically sequenced to move the listener.	The speech reflects a largely successful effort to develop a compelling message to the listener.	The speech follows a traditional structure. While on-topic, the speech lacks strength at one or more moments. The structure may be lacking or weak in one or more areas.	The speech reflects an attempt to address the prompt, but it is missing multiple necessary components to convey a cogent and compelling message.



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Presentation Delivery Cont.

Points Available	Accomplished 16 – 13	Commendable 12 – 9	Developing 8 – 5	Needs Improvement 4 – 1
Presence	The speaker's sustained eye contact, effective posture, and professional demeanor expertly complement the substance of the speech, delivering maximum impact to the listener.	The speaker's mostly sustained eye contact, positive posture, and pleasant demeanor complement the content of the speech quite well. The presenter may appear to slip in and out of character when beginning and concluding the speech. With further practice, the speaker could develop into an accomplished public presenter.	The speaker's inconsistent eye contact, posture, and demeanor reflect a straightforward recital of the material. The speaker could do more to fully capitalize on the added impact possible with a focused, sustained presence.	The speaker's eye contact, posture, and demeanor could benefit from more practice and coaching so that the speaker's presence consistently complements the content.
Vocal Delivery	Clarity of voice, pacing, eye contact, and tone were expertly crafted to deliver the maximum impact and understanding to the listener.	The clarity of voice, pacing, eye contact, and tone were strong, allowing the listener to understand the speaker's intent.	The clarity of voice, pacing, eye contact, and tone were inconsistent, distracting the listener from understanding.	The clarity of voice, pacing, eye contact, and tone were inconsistent, and the listener struggled to understand the speaker's intent.



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Overall Impact

Points Available	Accomplished 16 – 13	Commendable 12 – 9	Developing 8 – 5	Needs Improvement 4 – 1
Overall Impact	The content and delivery blend seamlessly to craft an exceptional experience. The speech is ready to be delivered to policymakers and education stakeholders now, as it has the potential to influence the debate on this issue.	The content and delivery work to offer a commendable speech. With some revisions and delivery tweaks, the speech would be ready to deliver to policymakers and education stakeholders.	The speech reflects a developing effort to engage in oratory on public issues. The delivery and content have room for improvement.	The speech requires significantly more work. Delivery and content would benefit from guided practice. Significant errors may distract from the content of the speech.

Length

Points Available	4	2	0
Length	The speech is between three and five minutes long.	The speech is between 2.5 and three minutes or five and 5.5 minutes.	The speech is shorter than 2.5 minutes or longer than 5.5 minutes.

Speech Copies

Points Available	2	0
Speech Copies	The competitor provided hard copies of the speech to each of the judges at the start of the presentation.	The competitor did not provide hard copies of the speech to each of the judges at the start of the presentation.