District Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

August 8, 2026

Agenda item: Speech Contest Recommendation. Attendance: 42 voting leaders present Quorum: Majority required = 22 Quorum Achieved: 25 voting leaders present.

Call to Order

District Director Kimberly Angell confirmed that quorum was met with 25 voting leaders present. The meeting proceeded to business.

Rules for Discussion: District Director and meeting chair, Kimberly Angell outlined the rules governing discussion,

District Director and Chair **Kimberly Angell** presented the annual contest recommendation per the Toastmasters Contest Rulebook:

- Districts must conduct the **International Speech Contest** (in English).
- Districts may conduct up to **four non-English contests**.
- Contest recommendations require DEC approval at the first meeting of the program year.

Recommendation:

- **No fall speech contests** for the 2026–2027 program year.
- Conduct **International Speech Contest** and **Tall Tales Contest in person** in **Spring 2027**.

Rationale Presented

The District Director and chair, Kimberly Angell emphasized that she wanted the DEC to **Focus on Club Strengthening in the Fall**

- Fall is a critical period for:
  - Club Success Plans
  - Officer training
  - Membership growth and retention
  - Support for clubs with fewer than 12 members
  - Open houses and outreach
- Removing fall contests allows Area and Division Directors to prioritize club excellence rather than contest administration.

Anoop Kumar moved:

That District 26 conducts no fall speech contests, and that the district conducts the International Speech Contest and the Tall Tales Contest in the spring of 2027.

Second

The motion was seconded by:

- **Bill Moffatt, DTM, Area C1**
- **Jeff Scott Ruiz, Metro Division Director** (recognized for the record)

Request for Unanimous Consent

The Chair requested unanimous consent which was objected to by **AJ Herran.**

Discussion proceeded under the established rules outlined previously.

Discussion

The Chair recognized **Anoop Kumar**, as the mover of the motion, to begin discussion who spoke in support of the motion. He noted that while the change may feel uncertain, divisions may still hold online contests independently if they choose, and the district would support them. He emphasized the trio's desire for clubs to focus on Smedley Distinguished goals, officer training, and success plan submission during the fall.

The Chair then recognized **AJ Herran**, who spoke against the motion. AJ highlighted the geographic diversity of District 26's membership, including members outside the United States and across remote areas of Wyoming and western Colorado. She expressed concern that eliminating fall contests could negatively impact member engagement and growth.

District Director Angell clarified that if the district does not host fall contests, **areas and divisions would not be permitted to host them**, though **clubs may host their own contests** and invite any participants they choose.

The Chair recognized **Jeff Scott Ruiz**, Metro Division Director, who spoke in favor of the motion. He noted that many area directors are new and currently focused on scheduling club visits. Allowing clubs to host their own contests preserves opportunities for participation without overburdening district leaders.

The Chair recognized **Reena McCoy**, who expressed concern that eliminating fall online contests would create challenges for widely dispersed Wyoming clubs, where virtual contests are essential for participation.

The Chair recognized **Burak Malkoc**, who spoke in favor of the motion. He shared observations from early club visits, noting that while clubs run meetings efficiently, club officers need additional training and alignment. He emphasized prioritizing officer development over competition.

The Chair recognized **Carol Baker**, who asked whether clubs could host online contests beyond their own membership. The District Director confirmed that clubs may invite anyone they choose.

The Chair recognized **Emil**, a new Area Director, who spoke in favor of contests as a growth opportunity for both himself and his clubs. He expressed enthusiasm for learning and for the value of competition in sparking member engagement.

The Chair recognized **Sue Creer**, who spoke in favor of pausing fall contests, noting that online contests are often not highly attended. She suggested that holding them every other year might increase participation.

The Chair restated the motion for members who joined late:

Motion: *District 26 conducts no fall speech contests, and the district conducts the International Speech Contest and the Tall Tales Contest in the spring of 2027.*

District Director Angell clarified that the vote does not prevent clubs from holding contests; it only determines whether the **district**, areas, and divisions will host them.

The Chair recognized **Nathan Darnall**, Foothills Division Director, who shared that online contests provide valuable practice for new area directors and support participation from geographically distant members. He acknowledged the workload involved but noted the developmental benefits.

The Chair recognized **Bill Moffatt**, who spoke in favor of the motion. He emphasized that many district leaders are busy professionals and that expecting excellence in all areas simultaneously is unrealistic. He supported focusing on club growth and officer development rather than fall contests.

The Chair allowed one final comment against the motion, but no additional speakers came forward. One final question was raised by **Heather Ann Pearl**, seeking clarification on whether divisions could host online contests. The District Director reiterated that **areas and divisions may not host contests unless the district is supporting that contest type**, but clubs may host contests independently.

A point of information was raised by **Barbara Lewis**, suggesting a possible compromise of offering an online contest option in the spring. The Chair noted that while this idea could be considered in the future, it was not part of the current motion.

Vote

A poll was launched, allowing two minutes for voting. **Result:** *The motion passed.*

Outcome

District Director Angell announced that District 26 will **not** host fall online speech contests this year. The district will host **in-person** contests in Spring 2027, featuring both the **International Speech Contest** and the **Tall Tales Contest**.

Conclusion

The business portion of the meeting was concluded.

Announcements followed by the Trio.