

Phoenix Debate

September 7, 2023

Dear Rock Ridge Debate Parents,

As we begin our tenth season, the Phoenix Debate Team looks forward to working with you to help make the experience a positive and rewarding one for your child. Debate is a unique activity that combines critical reading, writing, and thinking with the opportunity to develop confidence in persuasive public speaking. Debaters learn skills that will directly help them as they pursue success in education and in their future careers. For 2023-24, our plan is to hold in-person practices and to compete in a mix of in-person and virtual tournaments.

Rock Ridge debaters can pursue four styles of competitive debate, including: Lincoln-Douglas Debate, an individual event focused on philosophical values; Public Forum Debate, a paired event in which teams debate current issues; Policy debate which is being piloted this academic year; and Student Congress, a parliamentary style of debate that involves writing legislation and speaking in a mock legislature setting. Regular practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays (Policy only on Wednesdays) help prepare students for competition in debate tournaments, which are held on Saturdays from October through February (some of these will be virtual). Hosted by WACFL, the DC area's largest public and private high school debate league, these all-day events provide students with an opportunity to compete in four rounds of debate against a variety of competitors from area schools. Students who qualify during the regular season have the opportunity to represent Rock Ridge at WACFL metro finals tournaments, where varsity debaters may qualify for NCFL nationals, and at the Virginia High School League (VHSL) regional and state tournaments in the spring. The practice schedule is posted on the debate team web page located on the activities page of the school website. We will also post tournament information on our Schoology course page as we find out more details. Debaters will receive information on how to access our Schoology site once they have registered and paid dues.

To join the team, debaters and their parents are asked to complete the online team registration forms, as well as pay \$85 dues to help cover the costs of team registration fees and team events/supplies. **All registration materials are available on the debate team web page of the RRHS website and are due by Thursday, September 21 no later than 5 p.m. – that is a firm deadline, so please aim to have registration completed early. The field trip permission form needs to be completed in hard copy and is due by Friday, October 6. Payment of \$85 towards the team dues is due by October 6 and will be payable through SchoolCash Online. The payment link will be available soon after registrations are completed on September 21.**

We also ask for your help with judging. In order to meet judge quotas for tournament entries, we need parent help with judging at virtual tournaments. No experience is required, and we are happy to provide training for you, starting with an in-person training session on Saturday, September 30. Without judges, we cannot register large numbers of students for debate events, which can negatively impact the team. While we are able to pay judges a nominal fee for their services, we also welcome donations of your time. In the past, we have also needed help with hosting tournaments at Rock Ridge. We will be hosting the WACFL Congress III debate tournament on Saturday, December 2 here at Rock Ridge. We will be looking forward to any volunteer contributions from our debaters and parents. We will provide details for volunteer opportunities as we approach the tournament.

Please let us know if you have any questions. Thank you for helping your debater complete team registration no later than September 21 by 5 p.m. We look forward to working with you this year!

Sincerely,

Rama Srinivasan, Tim Greening, & Kevin Briscoe (Debate Team Coaches)