

SPEECH AND DEBATE

Communication is essential to and affects all students; thus, the Dade County Public Schools' speech and debate curriculum is dedicated to providing students with comprehensive and realistic means and methods of becoming an effective communicator. Emphasis is placed on adapting theory to practice through a hands-on approach. Thus, a flexible curriculum that complements the competencies, as well as promotes and enhances fundamental skills has been adopted.

The speech and debate curriculums are based on developing fundamental skills necessary for becoming successful in today's society. Because students have the potential to participate outside of the classroom, every effort is made to help students develop high self-esteem, and nurture an awareness of themselves as physical, social, and creative beings. Speech and debate aids in a developing strong interpersonal skills, and enhances social skills while nurturing the ability to be empathetic in a variety of situations.

Speech and debate are integral parts of the academic curriculum. Experiences provided within the classroom promote skills that are applicable both to other academic areas and are useful in the world outside of the classroom. The promotion of organizational skills, critical thinking, complex research, theory, problem-solving, interpretation, and judgment all provide sound educational implications. Activities include, but are not limited to, the continued use, evaluation, and improvement of oral communication skills while maintaining a sound educational environment.

Expression of oneself is the key to the speech and debate program. Because each student is an individual, he/she is evaluated as such. The belief that success is an on-going process is supported by the vast array of outside activities available for students in speech and debate. While some students demonstrate special, innate talents, others are also entitled to share in the wealth of outside activities; therefore, all students are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular forensics competitions. However, whether a student chooses to participate outside of the classroom or not, he/she is expected to maintain the high standards of the speech and debate program. Opportunities exist in this pro-

gram that enable students to not only become better communicators, but also become assets to their schools, communities, and society in general. The speech and debate program promotes on-going, realistic learning for all students.