



February 3, 2026

NDHSAA Board of Directors,

Thompson High School requests speech regular season qualification to respective state tournaments be amended. This request is made due to a competitor's planned family event that does not fit within the crisis or academic conflict currently required within the rule.

Speech Regulations Current Rule Page 20:

16. If a state qualifier cannot compete at his/her regional tournament, the coach must request an exemption and must receive written approval from the NDHSAA. Exemptions include: 1) hospitalization, extreme illness or crisis within immediate family; 2) academic educational conflict. No exemption will be granted if the student is ineligible for the region tournament because of academics or the drug alcohol rule. Students who have received an exemption must be registered and paid for on the region registration form, but these entries do not count as actual participants on the day of the tournament. (2015)

Proposed Rule Page 20:

16. If a state qualifier cannot compete at his/her regional tournament, the coach must ~~request an exemption and must receive written approval from the NDHSAA~~ **notify their region manager their qualifier will not compete and list the tournament/date the competitor qualified.** ~~Exemptions include: 1) hospitalization, extreme illness or crisis within immediate family; 2) academic educational conflict. No exemption will be granted if the student is ineligible for the region tournament because of academics or the drug alcohol rule.~~ Students ~~who have received an exemption~~ must be registered and paid for on the region registration form, but these entries do not count as actual participants on the day of the tournament.

Rationale:

Speech competitors who pre-qualify through the regular season should be allowed access to their respective state tournament via the regional registration process. The proposed change does not impact overall regional registration limits or competitor numbers, which would remain at a max 4 entries per category per school, and, would prohibit schools gaining competitive advantage by having pre-qualifiers not compete.

Further, we ask that academic and alcohol language be struck from this rule as school administrators determine eligibility and student participation as outlined within current NDHSAA By-Laws.

Sincerely,

Jason Schwabe
Principal
Thompson High School