



Special District Executive Committee Meeting

Online Tuesday 22nd July 2025 | 19:00 – 20:00

Time	Item
2	<p>Introduction</p> <p>District Director (DD) Debbie Williams declared the meeting open and issued a warm welcome to the special DEC meeting. She introduced the District Leadership Team (DLT):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Quality Director – Seema Menon DTM • Club Growth Director – Lynne Gayer, DTM • Administration Manager – Deborah Stevens • Immediate Past District Director – Steve Vear, MBE DTM • With apologies from Finance Manager – Guler Cortis and Public Relations Manager - Allen Paul DTM <p>The District Leadership team, together with all Division and Area Directors make up the District Executive Committee, often referred to as the DEC.</p> <p>As detailed in Protocol 7.1 the purpose of the District Executive Committee is to ensure that we, as district leaders, are working together to achieve the district mission.</p> <p>Specifically,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The District Executive Committee reviews and approves the District Success Plan. – It approves the budget and oversees the ongoing financial operation of the district. – It recommends the assignment of clubs to areas and divisions. – It reviews recommendations and reports of district committees, including those of the audit committee. – And finally, it performs any duties assigned to it by the District Council. <p>DD Debbie explained the protocol for addressing the DEC and voting: that only members of the DEC are entitled to speak and only those who registered in advance of the meeting are allowed to vote.</p> <p>The zoom master for the meeting was Rob Dewing and members were advised that by entering and participating in the meeting, consent had been given to the meeting being recorded. The recording would only be used by DAM Deborah to take accurate minutes and would not be shared or published.</p> <p>DD Debbie advised that if anyone wished to speak they were to raise their hand using the zoom symbol to be recognised.</p> <p>The DEC members were reminded that it was vital that any discussion should be germane to the question under consideration, and relevant to the members of this committee. The meeting was run under Parliamentary Procedure and Robert’s Rules of Order, supported by our District Parliamentarian Past District Director, Rupa Datta. DD Debbie clarified the fact that although she, as District Director, has appointed the Parliamentarian, Rupa’s role was to serve both the chair and the meeting. Therefore if</p>



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	<p>any member wished to speak, but wasn't sure of the protocol, they could ask Rupa for assistance.</p> <p>If a vote were required, DD Debbie would request a vote by Unanimous Consent, whereby she would ask if there were any objections to adopting the motion or proposal. If none, the motion or proposal would be deemed to be adopted. However, should even one member object, then there would be a debate, the explanation for which would be explained at the time. If a delegate wished to raise a motion in excess of twelve words, they were to send a private online chat message to DAM Deborah.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>District Mission</p> <p>It is customary at the start of every DEC and Council meeting to read the District mission so as to remind us all why we are here. DD Debbie read the District Mission:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence."</i></p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Roll Call & Quorum</p> <p>Each year the District Director appoints a credentials chair who not only manages the extent to which we are quorate but supports the chair in relation to any voting ballots which are required. DD Debbie informed the DEC that she had appointed Olga Galaiko to this role.</p> <p>Olga declared that in accordance to Article 11 Section A3 of the District Administrative By-laws a majority of the committee shall constitute a quorum. In view of the numbers below the meeting is quorate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEC currently has 51 members • Quorum required 26 registered members • 39 registrations ahead of the deadline • 30 members of DEC in attendance at the start of the call <p>DAM Deborah reported on apologies received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District PR Manager Paul Allen • District Finance Manager Guler Cortis • Division H Director Monica Dragnescu • A46 Area Director Blake Rumfitt • A62 Area Director Kelvin Lam • B18 Area Director Sarah Beckwith • C5 Area Director Eleini Kyrtsia • H35 Area Director Andrew Smith • L16 Area Director Adalgisa Mazzone
<p>5</p>	<p>Contests</p>



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	<p>In accordance with the 2025-2026 Contest rulebook, the District Director recommends which contests are to be conducted and at which event the District-level contests take place (such as the annual District conference or an October/November event). The recommendations are subject to the approval of the District Executive Committee.</p> <p>Districts (including Areas and Divisions) must conduct the International Speech Contest. The International Speech Contest must only be conducted in English. Districts (including Areas and Divisions) may conduct up to three (3) additional English speech contests each year. All contests from Area level upwards must be in person.</p> <p>In addition to the mandatory International Speech Contest, DD Debbie advised the DEC that her recommendation was for the additional 3 contests is to continue with the Humorous Speech, Table Topics, and Evaluation contest. Last year the DEC debated whether D91 could include an online contest, but this could only be achieved at the expense of losing the Humorous Speech contest as the district are only allowed to conduct a maximum of 4 contests in the program year. DD Debbie acknowledged that some members, particularly those online, feel excluded from these formats, the broader feedback supports maintaining our existing contest structure.</p> <p>DD Debbie paused for questions and none were received.</p> <p>DD Debbie laid the motion - The three additional speech contests for the 2025-2026 program year are Humorous, Table Topics and Evaluation Speech Contests.</p> <p>No objections were raised therefore DD Debbie declared that for the 2025-2026 program year, the three additional speech contests the District shall run are the Humorous Speech, Table Topics and Evaluation Contests and is adopted by unanimous consent.</p> <p>As regards when contests take place, in August 2023 Toastmasters International Board of Directors' provided an update to the Speech Contest Policy, which introduced greater flexibility for districts in how they structure contest schedules. The Board has allowed districts the option to choose to split their contests, for example, holding two contests at a separate event (such as in November) and two at the district conference where it supports improved logistics and a better member experience.</p> <p>The Board reaffirmed this flexibility earlier this year, reiterating that districts may adjust the timing and structure of contests, provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes are approved by the DEC, and • All affected clubs are informed well in advance. <p>The Board also stressed the importance of careful planning, particularly regarding the impact such changes may have on club, area, and division-level contests.</p> <p>DD Debbie advised that on the 1st July 2025 she and the Program Quality Director (PQD), Seema wrote to all area directors to consult with clubs as to whether or not District 91 should split their contest events holding the Humorous Speech and Table Topics District contests in November, and holding the International Speech and Evaluation Contests in May.</p>



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	<p>DD Debbie called upon PQD Seema to provide an update regarding the consultation and make a recommendation via a motion on behalf of the District Director.</p> <p>PQD Seema advised the DEC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultation ran from 1st July to 15th July • Responses were received from each Division Director and their Area Directors • The majority of responses received suggested that the preference was to split the current contest schedule and hold the Humorous Speech and Table Topics Contests in November 2025, and hold the International Speech and Evaluation Contests in May 2026. <p>PQD Seema then paused for questions.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>Q1 - B52 Area Director Fedor Herbatschek - What will be the cost of each of the district contests, and do you think you would get at least the same amount of net surplus as if you hold it only once?</p> <p>A - PQD Seema responded - There are 2 parts to this, the 1st part being in terms of the cost for the November contest, and then the May Conference, the November contest. We are working to keep it as minimal as possible. So we are working on that because it's a 1 day event, and then for the May one, because you have already covered two contests in November we're planning to convert that into a 2 day event, which means that the cost would again be reduced. And that's what we're working towards.</p> <p>Q2 - J22 Area Director Andrew Graner - How is this going to affect the timeline for clubs to have their contests. Is it going to shorten it? I had some questions in my from my areas if that was going to be the case.</p> <p>A - DD Debbie responded - The reason why we're holding this meeting today is so that we can inform clubs early and area directors and division directors can formalize their contest dates well in advance.</p> <p>Hearing no further questions, PQD Seema laid the motion - For the 2025-2026 program year that we split the current contest schedule and hold the Humorous Speech and Table Topics Contests in November 2025, and hold the International Speech and Evaluation Contests in May 2026.</p> <p>DD Debbie asked for any objections to the motion.</p> <p>H15 Area Director Celia Edwards raised an objection. On behalf of my clubs there were 2 objections. One, said it's too soon. The idea is good but would be best if it was next year. And secondly the objection was regard to timing. In September some parents are going to have children going back to school. That may cause some difficulty for them.</p> <p>DD Debbie advised that the DEC would now proceed to debate the motion.</p> <p>DD Debbie asked for a show of hands for who wanted to speak in favour of the motion.</p> <p>The following members raised their hands:</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division C Director Richard Jones • Division D Director Smita Narayan • Division J Director Alison Morris <p>DD Debbie asked for a show of hands for who wanted to speak against the motion.</p> <p>The following members raised their hands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division B Director Mary-Anne Ledger • B6 Area Director Riccardo Ginevri • B52 Area Director Fedor Herbatschek • H15 Area Director Celia Edwards <p>DD Debbie advised as there are not equal number of speakers on each side, the debate will be limited to a maximum of three speakers for the motion and three speakers against the motion. Those wishing to speak should state their name and their role, and confirm whether they are speaking for or against. In accordance with Roberts Rules of Order, speakers will be invited to speak alternate between speakers for and against, beginning with a speaker for the motion.</p> <p>The following members were invited to speak for the motion -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division C Director Richard Jones • Division D Director Smita Narayan • Division J Director Alison Morris <p>In order to ensure there were equal speakers, the following members were invited to speak against the motion -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division B Director Mary-Anne Ledger • B6 Area Director Riccardo Ginevri • H15 Area Director Celia Edwards <p>Once three speakers for each side had spoken DD Debbie concluded the debate and re-stated the motion: that we split the current contest schedule and hold the Humorous and Table Topics Contests in November, and hold the International Speech and Evaluation Contests in May.</p>
	<p>IPDD Steve made a clarification comment - The District is not considering a conference in November. It is considering an event to manage the speech finals and a couple of speakers did reference a November conference. So, for the benefit of the District Executive Committee, I should just want to make that item clear.</p> <p>DD Debbie thanked IPDD Steve for the clarification and invited Credentials Chair (CC) Olga to share the results of the test result overnight.</p> <p>CC Olga advised that 25 people voted in the test vote overnight which saw 60% of people vote for mango sorbet over 40% who voted for lemon sorbet.</p> <p>DD Debbie asked CC Olga to launch a second test vote. The second test vote had 34 people who voted in total. 56% voted for strawberry cheesecake and 44% for lemon cheesecake.</p>



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	<p>DD Debbie asked CC Olga to launch the vote for the motion stated.</p> <p>Once the vote had closed, the results for the motion to hold a humorous speech and table topic contest in November 2025 and an international speech and evaluation contest in May 2026 were shared.</p> <p>79% of members on the call voted yes and 21% voted no.</p> <p>Therefore, D91 will hold the District 91 contest finals for the Humorous Speech and Table Topics contest in November 2025 and the District 91 contest finals for the International Speech and Evaluation contests in May 2026.</p> <p>DD Debbie advised that she would send confirmation of the results via email.</p>
	<p>DD Debbie adjourned the meeting at 7.43pm.</p> <p>The next meeting will be Sunday 7th September in person. The venue will be confirmed asap but this will be in London.</p>