

Executive Board Expands the Use of Digital Resources

There was a significant change legislated at the 2007 meeting of the PHSSL Executive Board that will allow our students to practice information fluency skills in a way that other forensics leagues are just beginning to explore.

- The Executive Board has removed the prohibition on electronic retrieval devices (e.g., laptop computers) in rounds of competition. The use of electronic retrieval devices will be permitted in all PHSSL events. This rule takes effect immediately. This ruling is not meant to imply that any student must use electronic devices, merely that it is now permitted.
- This includes the retrieval -- in preparation rooms and during rounds -- of stored data and, if possible, the online retrieval of current information. This includes using digital resources to flow debates and to prepare speeches.
- There is NO GUARANTEE of power or of Internet connectivity – and there should be no expectation placed on host schools to provide either of these resources. Students wishing to use laptops or other digital devices will have to be responsible for providing these resources and for having an alternative plan if the digital devices fail.
- Most high schools do not provide unlimited access to guests on their networks. This imposes a special burden of fairness on students who are attending a tournament at their home school. If guests cannot use the network, fairness dictates that students who are attending tournaments at their home school refrain from accessing it as well.
- Digital communication between speakers and persons outside of the round of competition is still not permitted. Our intention here is similar to the rules under Cross-Exam Debate and under the Preparation Room Procedures for Extemporaneous Speaking and Commentary.

Being able to collect and organize current data is an important skill in today's digital environment. We believe that having the opportunity to use digital resources to make the best speeches and arguments possible will provide practice in a valuable skill that cannot be matched in any other academic situation.