



international debate education association

Resource Center Accreditation Standards

IDEA believes that the establishment of strong resource centers is essential to the development of sustainable, high quality speech and debate programs. For many IDEA member organizations, community centers serve as resource centers for speech and debate activities. Such centers often take the form of donated space, such as schools or youth centers, which can accommodate a small library of instructional materials (i.e., textbooks, video tapes, etc.), as well as research materials that students and teachers can use to prepare for speech and debate activities. While IDEA encourages its members to establish resource centers, it also realizes that securing and operating these spaces may be difficult or even impossible due to local circumstances.

The standards listed below offer a description of an ideal resource center, and are meant simply as guidelines:

1. A resource center should be centrally located and easily accessible.

A resource center should be centrally located, offering easy access to teachers and students and providing space for various activities. The resource, depending upon its size, may serve as a meeting place for coaches and students, or as a location for trainings, workshops, consultations, public events, and other activities. If possible, provisions should be made to ensure accessibility for handicapped individuals. In order to accommodate teachers and students, resource centers should be opened at regular hours (usually after regular classes are over).

2. A resource center should be equipped.

A resource center should be equipped with adequate office facilities – ideally, a computer with Internet access, a printer, and a photocopying machine. These facilities should be available to students and teachers alike. Although use of the equipment may be regulated (by financial considerations or otherwise), access should not be limited solely to the center coordinator or to a single individual from one school or youth club (for example, the school or youth club that hosts the center).

3. A resource center should have a selection of pedagogical and research materials.

The resource center should have a section containing instructional and pedagogical materials, as well as a selection of research materials on various topics for use by teachers, coaches, and debaters. Even if regulated, resource materials should be available to everyone and they should be encouraged to use them.

4. A resource center should be adequately staffed and maintained.

A resource center should be staffed with appropriate personnel (be they employees or volunteers), whose duties would include opening and closing the center, overseeing the center's equipment and resources, and providing assistance to teachers, students, and coaches.