

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Angela McMillan

National Speech & Debate Association

angela.mcmillan@speechanddebate.org

(920) 748-6206

## **Uplift Education Launches New Speech and Debate Programs with Support from the National Speech & Debate Association**

November 13, 2023 – Uplift Education, a leading network of charter schools in the Dallas area, has launched new speech and debate programs in twelve of their schools with support from the National Speech & Debate Association's Pay It Forward Fund.

The Pay It Forward Fund was founded in 2022, with inaugural donations from Joe and Pam Wycoff and the alumni of Apple Valley High School, MN. The fund is instrumental in making speech and debate programs more accessible by providing assistance in the form of NSDA memberships—a boost to new initiatives and strengthening existing programs.

Initiating the onboarding of this activity across all Uplift Education schools, educator and speech & debate coach, Andrew Eddy explains, *“Last year when my team qualified students for the first time to attend the National Tournament in Phoenix, the NSDA supported us with a Tate “Road to Nationals” grant. With our success, my district is supporting a speech and debate club on each of its campuses and the NSDA provided the necessary school membership/coach life time memberships at a reduced rate.”*

Eddy went on to describe how speech and debate has impacted his students, *“Daily I see how my students’ self-esteem improves, public speaking skills are enhanced, and critical thinking is becoming more prevalent in their everyday lives. Through speech and debate, my students know that so many more doors are open for them.”* Everyday, speech and debate is shaping students into confident leaders by fostering critical thinking, self-assurance, and providing a platform for diverse voices.

The NSDA is committed to their vision of a speech and debate program in every school. Initiatives like the Pay It Forward program help make it possible. If you are interested in bringing speech and debate to your school, please visit [www.speechanddebate.org](http://www.speechanddebate.org). For more information on the Pay It Forward Fund, please visit [www.speechanddebate.org/program-grants/](http://www.speechanddebate.org/program-grants/).

###

**About the National Speech & Debate Association**

The National Speech & Debate Association is the authority on public speaking and debate in the United States. The Association builds the infrastructure for speech and debate competitions around the world by providing topics, educational resources, and training for students and coaches. For nearly 100 years, the National Speech & Debate Association has built a platform for youth voices that culminates in the National Tournament, the largest academic competition in the world. For more information, visit [www.speechanddebate.org](http://www.speechanddebate.org).