EXPECTATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS FOR JUDGES

QUALIFICATIONS OF JUDGES

Judges must have read all 40 books on the current Battle of the Books list. Judges may be school staff members, parent volunteers, school volunteers or former students who have participated in the program and read **all** the books on the current Battle list.

Judges need to be available on the dates of the Battle competitions, especially the Regional Competition at Colorado College.

**If possible**, judges should not judge their own teams in the Regional Competition. Sometimes this is not possible if the judge is also the team chaperone, but it should be avoided if possible.

THE SET-UP AT COLORADO COLLEGE

The Regional Battle is held mostly in the classrooms at Armstrong Hall (corner of Cache la Poudre and Cascade), but occasionally other buildings and rooms are used depending on the number of teams participating. Registration begins at 8:15 in Armstrong Hall. The first round of competition begins at 9:00. Arrive a little early because parking is on the street, not in the school lots. Locate the rooms where you will be judging and one of the restrooms (these are in the basement and on the third floor). There are three rounds of questions with each team receiving 10 questions. There is an approximate 15 min. break between each round. Each room will have a reader, scorekeeper, two judges and a set of Battle Books. If possible, new judges will be assigned to judge with experienced judges. These are classrooms so there are not a lot of audience seating options. The third round of questioning ends at 12:30. Your judging is completed at this point. Return your packet with questions to the registration desk. This is followed by lunch (12:30 – 1:15) and the assembly to recognize teams, announce awards to the top teams and present awards (1:15-1:45).

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF JUDGES IN THE ROOMS

Arrive early and check in at the registration desk to receive your judge’s packet and room assignments. If you are not there by 8:45 your rooms will be reassigned. The packet contains questions for each round you are judging, other information you will need for each round, score sheets, and medals for those on the winning team of each round.

When all teams have arrived in your assigned room, check to be sure they are seated at the correct table for scoring accuracy Scores are reported by table number.

Assist the reader in your room to get volunteers to be scorekeeper and timer. A scoring chart should be drawn on the blackboard or dry erase board so that everyone in the room can see it.

You and the reader are responsible to keep order in the room. Although there is little space for audience seating or standing, members of the audience (including alternate team members) should be seated as far away from the teams as possible, and in spots where the reader and judges can observe their behavior. There will be few extra chairs, so parents will either have to sit on the floor or stand. Parents and alternates must not attempt to help or communicate with the teams in any way during the round of questioning. Cell phones are to be turned off. No video cameras or audio recording devices are permitted and people should not be writing down the questions and answers, since some questions will be used again next year. Cameras that take still pictures are permitted if pictures are taken before or after the round or without a flash.

At the end of the round, check scores, initial the paper and bring it down to the registration table so they may begin compiling the scores. Give medals to the winning team of kids who participated in that round including the team alternate.

Keep the kids in the rooms for the entire time listed on the schedule. Not all rooms will finish their round at the same time, and students milling around in the hallways provide a noisy distraction.

All teams should treat other teams as well as officiating adults with respect.

Make the competition as fun as you can. The kids are tense and nervous already. Keep a sense of humor, smile at the kids and help them to relax. The focus of this program is the reading, not this competition, so try to make it enjoyable for everyone.

GUIDELINES FOR JUDGING THE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Questions for each round have been selected by a representative committee of the participating schools, with an attempt to provide increasing difficulty as the battles progress. The question order is done by random computer selection. The committee tries to avoid choosing questions with ambiguous answers.

Regional Battle Rules: Each question will be read twice and addressed to a specific team. The team has 30 seconds to decide what the answer is and who will stand up and give the answer. Once the time is up, there should be no talking among that team or any of the other teams. If team members continue to talk or coach the person giving the answer the judges may disqualify them for that question giving the team a zero. The standing student will face the judges and answer the question. Answers do not have to be given in complete sentences.

Answers given by team a member must be clear and specific indicating that the student has read the book and has a good understanding of it, though not necessarily word-for-word what is written in the answer sheet. The answer should be correct as you know the book. Some answers on the answer sheet have words included in parentheses. This information is not required to have the answer correct, but if a student gives an acceptable answer and then qualifies it with incorrect information, the answer should not be considered correct. (For example: from A Different Kind of Hero: What special pet did Zi have? The stated answer is “A white bird that talked (white raven).” An acceptable answer to the question is “a bird.” An unacceptable answer is “a bird that was an owl.”) Students are not required to identify character names in their answers (proper nouns).

Expansion of answers may be requested by the judges if one or both feel the answer given is ambiguous and may be partially correct. The judge should say **ONLY**, “Can you tell me more?” or “Can you clarify the answer?” These words should be used so as not to lead the student to the answer. You cannot ask for specific information that is missing from the answer. The student must elaborate without talking to any of his teammates. When expansion is given, the judges must determine if the answer is indeed acceptable.

If two judges are conflicted by an answer and are unable to come to agreement (one thinks it’s correct and the other doesn’t) the answer is considered correct and the points are awarded in favor of the team.

Judges need to know they can consult the books for further clarification of an answer, and they need to pay careful attention to how the question is worded—exactly what is being asked. It may take a few minutes to find the answer in the book. The question may have been written from another edition, and the page numbers may not be exact, but they should be close. This is one reason it is so important for judges to have read all 40 books. Looking up too many answers eats up the time needed by the teams.

If the answer given is incorrect, you **must** give the correct answer and, if necessary, explain why the answer given was considered incorrect.

THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES IS FINAL. If you choose to let a team question your decision, it should be done immediately so the book can be referenced on the spot and the issue settled before the round continues. If parents want to complain about a judge’s answer, they need to do so at the desk downstairs and not to the judge in the room.