

ISSA + YOU



cracking
the
code



COACHES CONVENTION
OCTOBER 9-10, 2026
GATEWAY HOTEL, AMES



cracking the code

The big red phone on the desk begins to ring urgently. Underneath, a jazzy, mysterious soundtrack plays. You pick up the phone. The voice on the other end says one thing, "Speech season is coming. Are you ready?" Click.

Of course you are! You climb into your Lamborghini dressed in your coolest clothes. Destination? The Gateway Hotel in Ames. The date? October 9 and 10. The mission? Join your fellow speech agents in IHSSA + YOU: Cracking the Code.

Whether you are a seasoned agent with decades of missions and countless poetry programs under your belt or a rookie just learning to navigate this tricky, box and chair-filled world, there is something for YOU. Together with your fellow speech coaches, you will crack the speech code of contest, coaching, categories, and collaboration. As you begin to plan your mission for the season ahead, IHSSA agents will share the wisdom needed to build your team into the best they can be.

Explore the "special operations" worlds of Large Group, IE's, and Debate! Special highlights will include a well-informed, thrill-seeking keynote speaker (and former IHSSA student herself), the Hall of Fame banquet featuring agents who have loved to tell the tale, and the sumptuous "Dessert Buffet Safe Room" provided by the Southeast District Agents. In addition, be prepared to follow the lead of all the latest tools and gadgets to "Crack the Code" of Short Film and the new IE category of Videocasting.

When you return from the weekend to take up your missions with Iowa's speech students, you can be confident that you will have the tools you need and the support from all fellow agents to "Crack the Code!"

IHSSA CONVENTION COMMITTEE

Robin & Darrin Crow (Cedar Valley Christian)

Wendy Buseman & Emileigh Eilderts (Hampton-Dumont-CAL)

Lindey Krug (Fort Dodge)

Marissa Kuiken (Waukee Northwest)

IHSSA 54TH ANNUAL SPEECH COACHES CONVENTION

OCTOBER 9-10, 2026

GATEWAY HOTEL, 2100 GREEN HILLS DRIVE, AMES, IA

800.367.2637/515.292.8600

WWW.GATEWAYAMES.COM

IHSSA + YOU

cracking the code

COACHES CONVENTION
OCTOBER 9-10, 2026
GATEWAY HOTEL, AMES

CONVENTION

REGISTRATION:

ALL CONVENTION
REGISTRATION IS
ONLINE AT

WWW.IHSSA.ORG.

LINK: WWW.IHSSA.ORG/DEFAULT.ASPX

HOTEL

REGISTRATION:

DOUBLE/KING: \$149

EXECUTIVE KING: \$149

JR. SUITE: \$149

OR CALL: **515.292.8600**.

REFERENCE IHSSA CONVENTION

**DUE: SEPTEMBER 17! AFTER
SEPTEMBER 17, THESE ROOMS
WILL BE RELEASED! RESERVE
YOUR ROOM EARLY!**

**ONLINE [GATEWAY HOTEL](http://GATEWAYHOTEL)
RESERVATIONS LINK HERE**

5 YEARS OF LESS?

IF YOU ARE COACH OF 5 YEARS
OR LESS, PLEASE CHECK THE
IHSSA WEB SITE FOR A
POSSIBLE FREE CONVENTION
REGISTRATION! INFO
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
OF SWIFT! DUE: OCT.1

WOW!

SCHEDULE LINK:

FRIDAY, OCT. 9

PRE-CONVENTION: 9:30 AM

TICKETED LUNCH: 11:15 AM

KEYNOTE: 12:15 PM

SESSIONS: 1:15 PM

DISTRICT MEETINGS: 4:30 PM

FORMAL HALL OF FAME

DINNER: 6:30 PM

BE SURE TO TELL GATEWAY HOTEL YOU ARE
ATTENDING THE IHSSA CONVENTION.
GATEWAY WILL HOLD ROOMS UNTIL SEPT. 17.
THEN, ALL ROOMS WILL BE OPEN TO THE
PUBLIC. RESERVE YOUR ROOMS EARLY.

COST:

\$150

LUNCH ADD ON:

\$25

HALL OF FAME
DINNER IS A TIME
TO
DRESS UP A BIT.
WE SUGGEST
BUSINESS ATTIRE

SCHEDULE LINK:

SATURDAY, OCT.10

BREAKFAST: 7:30 AM

SWIFT SESSIONS: 9:00 AM

SESSIONS: 10:00

JUDGE

CERTIFICATION CLINIC:

12:30 PM

3 GRADUATE CREDIT HOURS!

YOU WILL BE ABLE TO EARN 3
GRADUATE CREDIT HOURS AT
THE CONVENTION. LOOK FOR
MORE INFO IN THIS SWIFT AND
ONLINE AT WWW.IHSSA.ORG

IHSSA COACHES CONVENTION HOTEL INFORMATION

GATEWAY HOTEL

REGISTRATION

DOUBLE/KING: \$149

EXECUTIVE KING: \$149

CALL: 515.292.8600.

**REFERENCE IHSSA
CONVENTION**

**DUE: SEPTEMBER 17! AFTER
SEPTEMBER 17, THESE ROOMS
WILL BE RELEASED! RESERVE
YOUR ROOM EARLY!**

**ONLINE GATEWAY HOTEL
RESERVATION LINK:
[GATEWAY LINK](#)**

**BE SURE TO TELL
GATEWAY HOTEL
YOU ARE
ATTENDING THE
IHSSA
CONVENTION.
GATEWAY WILL
HOLD ROOMS UNTIL
SEPT. 17**

**THEN, ALL ROOMS
WILL BE OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC.
RESERVE YOUR
ROOMS EARLY.**

IHSSA + YOU



cracking
the
code



**COACHES CONVENTION
OCTOBER 9-10, 2026
GATEWAY HOTEL, AMES**

OVERFLOW HOTELS

SPARK BY HILTON AMES: \$169

2609 UNIVERSITY BLVD
AMES, IOWA 50010 USA

HERE IS [DIRECT ONLINE LINK.](#)

**BEST WESTERN: \$129/KINGS, \$139/QUEENS
515-296-2500**

**SPEAK WITH ON-DUTY AGENT. TELL THEM YOU
ARE NEED A ROOM IN THE IHSSA SPEECH BLOCK.**

**DUE: SEPTEMBER 17! AFTER SEPT. 17, THESE
ROOMS WILL BE RELEASED! RESERVE YOUR
ROOM EARLY!**

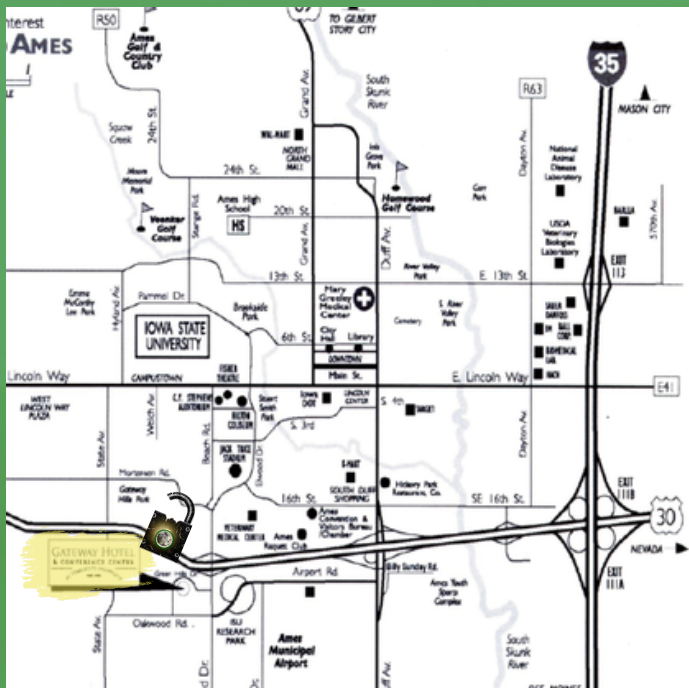
2026 IHSSA COACHES CONVENTION

IHSSA + YOU: CRACKING THE CODE

Friday, October 9 & Saturday, October 10



	NORTH	CENTRAL	SOUTH	OTHER	NOTES
FRIDAY 9:30 AM	CONTEST MANAGERS MEETING		NOVICE COACHES FORUM ★ 9:30 - 11:00 Kimberly Cavalier, Molly Christensen, Christina Moyer, Noah Tiegs	CONVENTION REGISTRATION LOBBY 9:00 - 12:15 GALLERY LOBBY	EXPERIENCED COACHES FORUM HARVEST ROOM 9:30 - 11:00 Dirk Waller
10:00 - 11:30	BREAKOUT IE CONTEST MANAGERS	BREAKOUT LG CONTEST MANAGERS			COACHES CONVENTION FOR UNI CREDIT LOBBY 11:00 Marilyn Shaw
12:15 - 1:20		KEYNOTE ADDRESS ANGIE TOOMSEN ★		MINI SESSIONS	FRIDAY'S LUNCH: ★ MUST BE PRE-REGISTERED*** Lunch in the Garden Room 11:15 - 12:00 TICKETED LUNCH REGISTER ONLINE
1:30 - 2:30	CHARACTERIZATION Nicole Goodman, Ben Hirdler, ★ Reagan Hirdler	LIT PRO/POE/ PROSE Trisha Koenig, Robin Kudej	KEYNOTE TOPIC Angie Toomsen	1.SHORT FILM Matthew Colling 2. CREATIVE MINDSET Kevin Hosbond	
2:30 - 3:20	STUDENT LEADERSHIP Rylee Gehlsen, Cynthia Koster, Laurel Olsen	LG GROUP EVENTS Emily Klaumann, ★ Brienne Magill	VIDEOCASTING Molly Holkesvik, Ryan Runyon	1. SPONT SPEAKING Kenton Engels 2. DEBATE Jeremy Fitzpatrick	
3:30 - 4:20	JUDGE FEEDBACK FOR STUDENTS ★ Vince Hrasky, Laura Travagiakis	TECH ADVICE Abby Avis	VISUAL AIDS Tara Rechkemmer	1. IMPROVISATION AJ Bleskacek 2. 8 th GRADE Kevin Seney	
4:30 - 5:15	SE	NE	NW	SW Harvest Rm	HALL OF FAME Meeting
6:30 - 7:00		HALL OF FAME RECEPTION Gallery Lobby ★		FRIDAY NIGHT IS A TIME TO DRESS UP and CELEBRATE. We suggest BUSINESS DRESS.	
7:00 - 9:00		HALL OF FAME BANQUET Garden Ballroom ★			
9:00 - ???		DESSERT/COFFEE Meadows Room ★			
SATURDAY 7:30 AM		BREAKFAST BUFFET, DOOR PRIZES, & MESSAGE Garden Ballroom ★			SWIFT PRESENTERS Sarah Bode Linda Brandt Charis Crozier Mary Fasse-Shaw Jacob Gute Teresa Lawler Lyra McKnight Logan Pratt Layne Sheetz Shawn Starr Marcine Tracy Gabe Twedt Pam Wymer
9:10 - 9:55		SWIFT: Speech Workers of Iowa Feature Themselves Experienced, Intermediate, Novice Tracks ★			
10:20 - 11:10	USING AI FOR THE REAL REASONS Emma Bedard, Jacque Seidl	ONE ACT PLAY Kate Engelkes, Melissa Kaufman, Michael McNurlen	BALANCING YOUR JOBS ★ Kyle Weber		
11:15 - 12:05	BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL CULTURE Greg Ernzen, Debbie & Matt DeVore	WRITING YOUR OWN MATERIALS Kim Keller, Grant Freeman	ALL IE EVENTS Carrie Buddenhagen, Austin Pauling ★		
12:10 PM		MORE DOORPRIZES! Gallery Lobby ★		ALL CONVENTION CHECK OUT 9:55 - 10:15	
12:30 - 2:30	JUDGE CERTIFICATION ★				



DIRECTIONS to the GATEWAY HOTEL:

Take HWY 30 into Ames.
Exit at 146 or Elwood Drive.
Head south on Elwood Drive.
Turn right (or west) on Green Hills Drive.
You can see the GATEWAY from the HWY.



FREE CONVENTION REGISTRATION DRAWING for 5 YEARS or LESS IHSSA Novice COACHES

4 free registrations will be given away to IHSSA coaches who have been coaching 5 years or less!

1 free registration will be given away to a young coach in EACH of the IHSSA districts. Winners will be announced at the breakfast on Saturday morning of the Convention. YOU must be present at breakfast to win! To submit your name (and this is so EASY!):

Write a 50 word or LESS paper on why you feel going to the IHSSA Coaches Convention would help you this coming year.

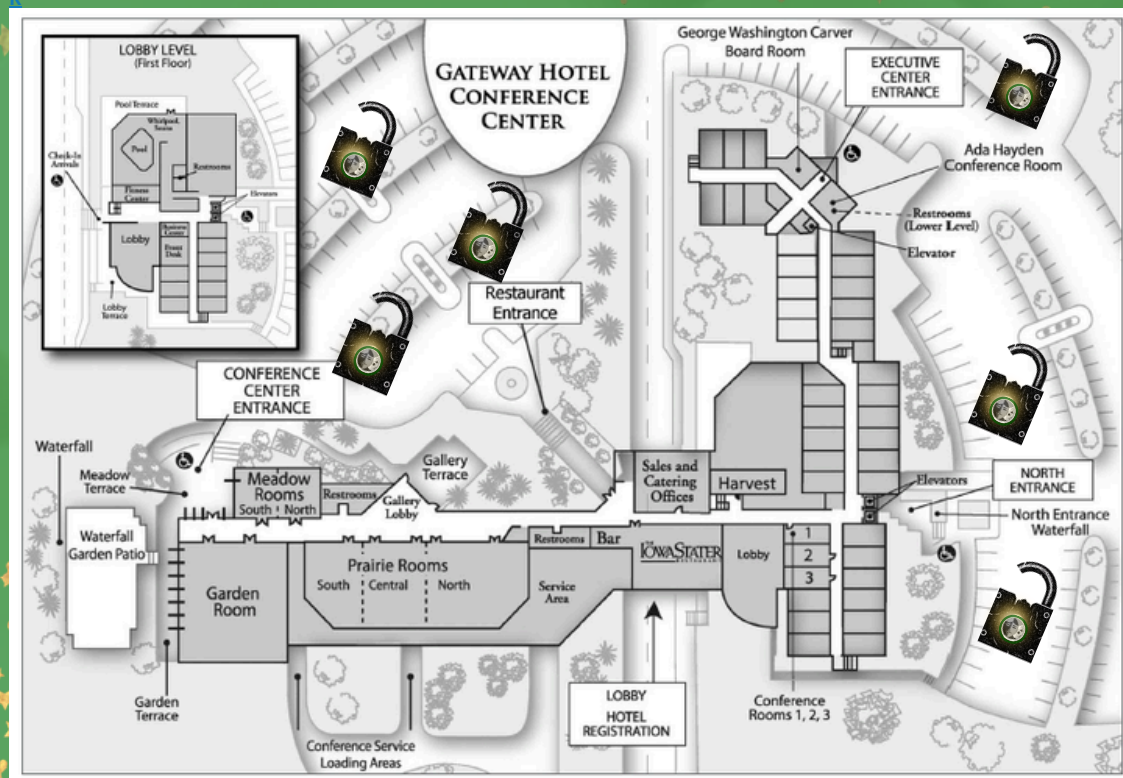
Please send via email to the State Office. If your name is chosen, we will either refund your registration fee to the school (if they paid the registration) or refund the registration fee to you (if you paid) for the Convention fee or apply to Convention 2027.

Due DATE: October 1!

Send to: Stacy@ihssa.org

BREAK A LEG!

**FREE
CONVENTION
REGISTRATION
DRAWING!**



PARKING

is
FREE all
around the
hotel. Park in
the NORTH lot
for hotel or the
WEST lot for
Convention.



**Richard Riggleman
Young Speech Coach
AWARD**

**APPLY
TODAY!**

**IHSSA Fine Arts
Administrator
AWARD**

The Richard Riggleman Speech Coach Award was established to recognize young IHSSA Speech Coaches. The award consists of 1,000 per year, renewable for two consecutive years, for a total of \$3,000.

The recipient must be a second/third year teacher as of the start of the 2026-2026 school year and active in IHSSA activities. The award will be presented at the annual IHSSA Speech Coaches Convention. *Those interested may contact the IHSSA State Office for an application.*

[Here is the RICHARD RIGGLEMEN APPLICATION LINK.](#)

The profile of the recipient should reflect the following disciplines: (1) must be in a 2nd/3rd year residence of teaching at an Iowa School participating in the IHSSA; (2) show a commitment to coaching speech, large group events, individual events, and/or debate; (3) demonstrate excellence in the coaching of speech; (4) have past experience competing in high school or college speech; and (5) present a scholastic record with an emphasis in speech courses. DUE: Wednesday, September 24.

The Riggleman Award is the first of its kind that has been established with the IHSSA. Mr. Riggleman was an active IHSSA coach for over 30 years as a judge, State Debate Tournament manager, and manager for numerous State and District contests. Richard Riggleman was inducted into the IHSSA Hall of Fame in 1994.

The IHSSA is extremely grateful to Mr. Riggleman for his generous and continued support of the Iowa High School Speech Association.

This award will be given to one Administrator at the Fall Convention. The award was developed by the IHSSA Executive Committee to recognize those administrators in Iowa who go above and beyond the call of duty for IHSSA.

To receive this award an administrator must be nominated by their IHSSA coach. This nomination should be in letter form no longer than 2 pages and not less than 1. In the letter, each coach should state the reasons why this administrator should be recognized as the IHSSA Fine Arts Administrator of the year.

This person can be any administrator in your district. For example, Supt., Principal, AD, Assistant Principal, etc. They also must be an active administrator at this time. Be sure to include details such as their position in your school district and examples of their work to make the IHSSA better in your school district.

Deadline for application is Tuesday, September 23. Letters of recommendation can be sent at this time to the IHSSA State Office.

Please indicate on the outside of the envelope that it is a nomination for IHSSA Fine Arts Administrator of the year. Be sure to honor those who have made your life better through their support!

**APPLY
TODAY!**