



## Optimist International Oratorical Contest

### Dakotas-Minnesota-Manitoba (DMM) District

### “How Optimism Has Guided Me Through Trying Times”

**Who:** The contest is open to contestants **under the age of 19** as of **October 1st** of the current Optimist International contest year (10/01/24-9/30/25) and who have not yet completed secondary school or its equivalent, including CEGEP students in Québec, CA. **There is no minimum age.**

**What:** The Optimist Oratorical Contest gives youngsters the chance to speak to the world. More than \$150,000 in college scholarships funded by the OI Foundations is awarded annually from this program. This year’s Oratorical topic is: **“How Optimism Has Guided Me Through Trying Times”**

#### Why is this important?

The Oratorical Contest is a simple but spectacular way to get younger students involved in public speaking and prepare them for higher level Oratorical competitions. These contests encourage students to develop speaking skills and prepare them for the future.

#### Dates/Deadlines:

All **requirements** must be submitted to the DMM Oratorical Chair via email by the **deadline** for consideration. The details are:

- **Deadline:** **Friday, April 25, 2025** (extensions must be prearranged)
- **District Chair:** Ryan Affolter (Eden Prairie, MN Club) | email: [ryanaffolter.optimist@gmail.com](mailto:ryanaffolter.optimist@gmail.com) | phone: **612-432-2827**
- **Questions:** Email, Text or Call Ryan, for quicker replies text is best!
- **Important:** Please review all **deadline requirements** for your delegates below

#### District Contest Entry Requirements:

Please send by the deadline for your qualifying District Contestants. Please send via email, with the subject line **DMM Oratorical Entry - Your Club Name**. Please attach all required materials in a drive (.zip, Google, Dropbox etc.) and please ensure all inclusions are clearly labeled.

1. Copy of Contest Application
2. Copy of District Entry Form
3. Copy of Speech (**Important: MS Word, please no PDF**)
4. Copy of ID: **Birth Certificate** or **Passport**
5. Headshot: High-resolution school photo or headshot (300 dpi, 1500x2100 pixels)

#### Details: What you need to know

Below are step by step details for the 2024-25 DMM Oratorical Contest. Please contact DMM Chairman **Ryan Affolter** (contact info above) with any questions or support needed.



### Step #1: How to get started:

A [Program Package](#) is online with useful materials to help get started. The package includes all materials, including jobs broken down by position and project timelines. You'll find sample letters and press releases for before and after the event. The responsibility breakdowns and timelines are suggested and can be modified. **If you're new, Ryan Affolter is available to coach you!**

### Step #2: Club Contest:

Plan your Club Contest to maximize participation. The best practice is to avoid Spring Break (do your homework) and aim for after school, early evening or Saturday morning when students are most available. **Club Contests should allow 1-2 weeks to prepare for a Zone Contest. Should your region have no Zone, you have more flexibility. For those with Zone Contests, Target 3/28/25 or 4/04/25 as a deadline (but avoid your Spring Break!)**

### Step #3: Zone Contest:

Should your region have 3+ Clubs competing, a Zone Contest will be needed to determine your two District Contest delegates. If your Zone had 2 or less, you may fast track two contestants directly to the District Contest. **Zone Contest dates should allow 1-2 weeks to collect Contestant requirements before 4/25/25 District Deadline. Target 4/11/25 or 4/18/25 as a deadline.**

**Should your Contestant(s) qualify for the DMM District Contest you'll need to submit all requirements by Friday, April 25, 2025 (extensions must be prearranged).**

### Step #4: District Contest:

The District Contest will be a **LIVE** contest at the DMM Q3 Convention on **May 2-3, 2025**, in Watertown, SD at the Ramkota Hotel / Watertown Event Center. Accommodations will be made for **Canadian** students who are not able to obtain passport requirements ahead of time. For any **virtual contestants**, accommodation will include judges viewing all speeches from a separate room (e.g., Zoom) to ensure full contest parity.

- Date: May 2-3, 2025
- Location: [Ramkota Hotel & Watertown Event Center](#)
- Address: 1901 9th Ave SW, Watertown, SD 57201 | P: 605-866-8011
- Rooms: \$109.99/night + tax (DMM Optimist Room Block) until **4/01/25**
- Some Clubs choose to subsidize hotel and gas mileage for Contestants

### Questions:

Send **Ryan Affolter** your comments, questions or concerns promptly. I'll start a **FAQ** list and share updates to the DMM Facebook. I appreciate you all, cheers to a great Oratorical Contest!

*Ryan D. Affolter*

Ryan Affolter

DMM Oratorical Chair



Eden Prairie Optimist Club

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