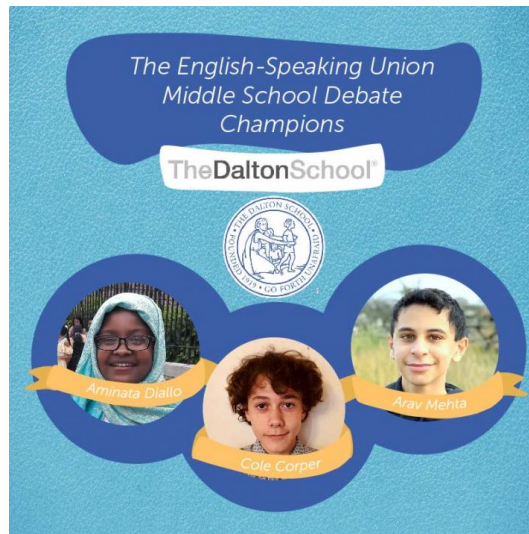


2021 Middle School Debate Championship



Students of the Dalton School in New York City Named Winners

NEW YORK - July 20, 2021 - [PRLog](#) -- In the spirit of debate, the [ESU New York Debate League](#) welcomed schools from across the country to engage in five robust virtual debate tournaments during the 2020/2021 Middle School Debate season. The championship took place on May 8th and 9th via Zoom.

After breaking past regional competitions, the remaining challengers debated "The two party system is bad for American Democracy" during the semi-final round, with both The Dalton School in NYC and Blessed Sacrament School in Washington, DC advancing to the final round.

Scrupulously debating the topic "The US should not develop or use lethal autonomous weapons" both finalist teams from The Dalton School in NYC and Blessed Sacrament School in Washington, DC thoughtfully crafted compelling arguments.

Ultimately, students from The Dalton School, Aminata Diallo, Arav Mehta, and Cole Corper were led by coach Evan Streams to victory.

Evan Streams worked closely with the students throughout the year. His passion for debate clearly sparked inspiration in the students. When asked about his experience during this year's competition, Evan said: *"Every debater has a moment where for the first time, they realize they've stopped speaking from their notes and started speaking from their heart. In that moment, they come to know that they have ideas worth hearing, and have the power to make them heard. That's when debate goes from being a hobby to a way of life."*

About this year's competition, President of the New York Debate League, Nick Smart said:

"Over 180 students represented 15 schools and four states. The excellent final round between Dalton of NYC and Blessed Sacrament of DC exemplified the high standard of competition the league achieved this year. Every round before that, and the judge's trainings and the coach's meetings, and the time spent on massive Zoom calls reciting tongue twisters and cracking jokes, showed that our camaraderie was, as it still is, pandemic proof. Close your eyes, or turn away from your screen, and listen to these people debate and you would not know these are middle schoolers who have just begun pursuing their goals and making their friends. The NYDL is so grateful to the English Speaking Union for partnership in this endeavor. And we can't wait for fall, when we can start it all up again."

Mark Schiller, the Debate Coach for Blessed Sacrament School in Washington DC coached Max Dunn, Conor O'Brien, and James Deerin through to the finals. About the Middle School Debate Competition, he said:

"Debating in the ESU NYDL was one of the highlights of my students' year. The ESU NY Debate League has been exceptionally welcoming and kind to us, and we are so appreciative of the high quality tournaments we were part of this year . . . they chose great topics, and created an environment where even in the most difficult situation imaginable, the kids were able to have high quality, spirited debates."

We are so proud of all our schools and students for participating in this year's program! Congratulations to the ESU NYDL Middle School Debate team from The Dalton School in New York City for winning the 2021 Middle School Debate Championship, and to all of this year's participants.

Founded in 1920, the [ESU](#) is a nonprofit, nonpolitical organization that promotes English as a shared language to foster global understanding and goodwill by providing educational and cultural programs for students, educators, English language learners, new immigrants, and members.

Started in 2011, as a joint venture with The Middle School Public Debate Program at Claremont McKenna College, the ESU Middle School Public Debate Program works with dedicated teachers, administrators, parents, students, and community members to form and expand debate leagues and promote classroom oral literacy initiatives.

The English-Speaking Union Middle School Debate Program is made possible, in part, by generous support from the Axe-Houghton Foundation, the Richard D. Donchian Foundation, and the Henry E. Niles Foundation.

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