



OREGON ARTS
COMMISSION

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22 Poetry Out Loud School Champions Prepare for State Competition

Twenty-two *Poetry Out Loud* school champions from high schools representing 14 communities across the state are now preparing for the state competition to be held:

Saturday, March 14 10 AM – 3 PM
Grand Theater
191 High St. NE, **Salem**

The champions, ranging in age from 15 to 18, are fine-tuning their presentations based on the criteria on which they will be judged: physical presence, voice and articulation, appropriateness of dramatization, accuracy, evidence of understanding, level of difficulty and overall performance. Each contestant must prepare three poems. The contestants are:

Arlington High School: **Kirsten Stephens**, age 16, grade 10
Bandon High School: **Caitlyn McLauchlin**, age 16, grade 11
Cascade Christian School, Medford: **Tori Francis**, age 16, grade 11
Centennial High School, Gresham: **Amanda Watson**, age 17, grade 11
Center for Advanced Learning, Gresham: **Natalyia Payne**, grade 11
Condon High School: **Elise Heidy**, age 18, grade 12
Crook County High School, Prineville: **Nathaniel Dunway**, grade 10
Grants Pass High School: **Jessica Petersen**, age 18, grade 12
Hidden Valley High School, Grants Pass: **McKenzie Mitchell**, age 17, grade 11
Hood River Valley High School: **Patrick Sadil**, age 17, grade 11
Madison High School, Portland: **Elie Hoover**, age 16, grade 10
Metropolitan Learning Center, Portland: **Elena Hess**, age 16, grade 11
Oregon School for the Deaf, Salem: **Tiffany Hinano Hill** (from **Eugene**), age 17, grade 11
Redmond High School: **Monica Brown**, age 16, grade 11
Salem Academy: **Katharine Hormann**, age 17, grade 12
Sam Barlow High School, Gresham: **Theresa Tyree**, age 17, grade 12
Sherwood High School: **Hilary Forster**, age 17, grade 12
South Medford High School: **Sadie Burt**, age 16, grade 10
Sprague High School, Salem: **Merry Borchers**, age 17, grade 11
Veritas School, Newberg: **Jordan Enobakhare**, age 15, grade 12
West Salem High School: **Jackie Lubbers**, age 17, grade 11
Woodburn Arts & Communications Academy: **Brianna Eamons**, age 17, grade 12

The winner of the state competition will represent Oregon in the national finals, taking place in Washington, DC on April 26 – 28. April is National Poetry Month.

The Oregon champion wins an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, DC (with a chaperone); a \$200 scholarship; and \$500 for the school library to purchase poetry books. At the nationals, he or she will compete for more than \$35,000 in scholarships.

This year’s judges are **Lawson Inada**, Oregon poet laureate; **Sophia Soberon**, 2008 national *Poetry Out Loud* runner-up and Oregon state champion; **Scott Poole**, poet-in-residence, *Live Wire!*; **Mindi L. Logan**, theater professor, University of Portland; **Jeff Wildenstein**, poet and sign interpreter, Oregon Shakespeare Festival; and **Howie Seago**, a noted deaf actor.

Poetry Out Loud, now in its fourth year in Oregon, involves the memorization and recitation of classic poetry and culminates in a statewide competition. The program seeks to foster the next generation of literary readers by capitalizing on the latest trends in poetry – recitation and performance. It builds on the resurgence of poetry as an oral art form, as seen in the slam poetry movement, and brings aspects of slam poetry, spoken word and theater into the English class.

“Learning great poetry by heart develops the mind and imagination,” observes Dana Gioia, former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. “*Poetry Out Loud* isn’t just an arts program. By immersing themselves in powerful language and ideas, students develop their ability to speak well, especially in public. This is a skill they will use in the workplace and the community for the rest of their lives.”

The Oregon Arts Commission, the NEA and the Poetry Foundation partner to sponsor *Poetry Out Loud*. The Arts Commission has developed an Oregon Curriculum Guide that can be used to connect *Poetry Out Loud* classroom activities to Oregon’s Content and Performance Standards in Language Arts and the Arts. For further information on *Poetry Out Loud*, contact the Oregon Arts Commission at 503-986-0082, or visit the national website at www.poetryoutloud.org

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The Oregon Arts Commission provides leadership, funding and arts programs through its grants, special initiatives and services. Nine commissioners, appointed by the Governor, determine arts needs and establish policies for public support of the arts. The Arts Commission became part of the Economic Development Department in 1993 in recognition of the expanding role the arts play in the broader social, economic and educational arenas of Oregon communities. In 2003, the Oregon legislature moved the operations of the Oregon Cultural Trust to the Arts Commission, streamlining operations and making use of the Commission’s expertise in grantmaking, arts and cultural information and community cultural development. The Arts Commission is supported with general funds appropriated by the Oregon legislature and with federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts as well as funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust. For more information about the Oregon Arts Commission: www.oregonartscommission.org.