

September 16, 2019

Dear Superintendent:

Please allow me to introduce you to *Poetry Out Loud*, a national recitation contest open to all high school students and conducted in all 50 states by the National Endowment for the Arts. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Missouri Arts Council have partnered to bring this program to Missouri. Last year over 5,000 students and 200 teachers from Missouri schools participated.

The schedule and curriculum for *Poetry Out Loud* are designed to fit a teacher's busy schedule. The program may take place over two to three weeks, depending on each teacher's interest and schedule. Teachers or speech coaches often choose to run the contest as an after-school program.

Poetry Out Loud winners from each class advance to a school-wide competition. Each school identifies a finalist by Friday, January 24, 2020. That student attends the regional competition during the month of February 2020. Regional Competitions will be held in, Columbia, Kansas City-North, Kansas City-South, St. Louis, Florissant, St. Charles, St. Joseph, Springfield, West Plains, and Cape Girardeau. On the evening of March 11, 2020, the 11 Regional Champions (along with their chaperons) travel to Jefferson City for a dinner with their fellow participants, legislators and *Poetry Out Loud* partners. On March 12, 2020, these students compete for the title of Missouri State Champion at the Truman Building in Jefferson City.

Ultimately, the Missouri champion receives an all-expense-paid trip (with two parents or chaperones) to Washington, D. C. to compete in the national finals April 27-30, 2020. National finalists receive \$50,000 total in scholarships and travel stipends. The State Champion's school receives \$500 for the purchase of poetry instructional materials. The second place winner's school receives \$200.

To learn more, contact Virginia Sanders from the Missouri Arts Council at virginia.sanders@ltgov.mo.gov. She will provide you with information about the *Poetry out Loud* Program. Registration form can be found at <https://form.jotform.com/moarts/2020MACPOL>. You can find out more about our Missouri State program at <https://www.missouriartscouncil.org/poetry-out-loud/>.

School registration deadline is Monday December 16, 2019. Additional information can be found at www.poetryoutloud.org.

Sincerely,



Blaine Henningsen, Ed.D.
Assistant Commissioner