

August 16, 2021

Dear Superintendent,

Please allow me to introduce you to Poetry Out Loud, a national recitation contest open to all high school students in grades 9-12 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 1,000 students and 65 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, librarians, 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. This school-wide competition may be in person or virtual depending on the COVID-19 guidelines for that particular school district. Each participating school must identify a finalist by Friday, January 21, 2022.

That school finalist will attend an in-person regional competition during the month of February 2022 through one of nine regions: Central, Kansas City, Northeast, Northwest, Saint Charles County, Saint Louis City, Saint Louis County, Southeast, and Southwest. On the evening of March 9, 2022, the regional champions will attend a meet-and-greet poetry slam followed by a dinner in Jefferson City conducted by Missouri Arts Council. On March 10, 2022, these students will compete for the title of Missouri State Champion in the Missouri State Poetry Out Loud competition in Jefferson City. In-person events may change to virtual according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for COVID-19.

Missouri's state champion will represent our state in the National Poetry Out Loud Championship April 25-27, 2022, in Washington, D. C. The event is subject to change according to the CDC guidelines for COVID-19.

To learn more, contact Virginia Sanders, Missouri Arts Council, at Virginia.Sanders@ltgov.mo.gov. She will provide you with information about the Poetry Out Loud program. The registration form is available at <https://form.jotform.com/moarts/2022MACPOL>. The deadline for school registration is Monday, December 13, 2021.

You can find out more about Missouri's program at <https://www.missouriartscouncil.org/poetry-out-loud>. Additional information is available at www.poetryoutloud.org.

Sincerely,



Barton A. Washer Ph.D.
Interim Assistant Commissioner