

PRESS RELEASE

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Students From Across Vermont to Compete in Statewide Poetry Out Loud Events

#POLVT, #POL20

BARRE – Students from twenty-seven Vermont high schools representing ten counties will travel to the Barre Opera House on March 5 to recite poems on stage in the Vermont Poetry Out Loud 2020 Semifinals. They will vie for the state championship in this prestigious poetry recitation competition administered by the Vermont Arts Council under the auspices of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. The state winner will advance to the National Finals in April.

“Integrating art into public school education is at the heart of the Council’s mission. Poetry Out Loud offers an imaginative and effective way to engage young people with great works of poetry, build self-confidence, and impart transferable skills,” said Troy Hickman, Vermont Arts Council education programs manager.

This year, thirty-five high schools registered to bring poetry recitation into their schools through Poetry Out Loud. Nearly five thousand students memorized and recited at least one poem and nearly one hundred and twenty teachers supported students in classrooms and in student clubs across the state. Beyond the demonstrated impact on students, Poetry Out Loud also provides excellent instructional tools for high school teachers. The Arts Council provided funds to bring skilled teaching artists to classrooms across the state. The winners of twenty-seven school competitions will recite at the Semifinals in Barre. From there, ten students will be selected to compete in the statewide finals on March 16 at the Vermont PBS studio in Colchester. The finals will be streamed live on the [Vermont Poetry Out Loud Facebook page](#). The winner of the Vermont State Competition then goes to the National Finals in Washington, D.C., to compete against champions from every state in the country.

At its core, Poetry Out Loud is a recitation contest. For the first time this year, Vermont schools had the option to support students in creating their own personal works of poetry. The Council partnered with the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center’s Scholastic Writing Awards. Twelve schools participated; nearly twenty students submitted poems; three poems from three students across the state will be recognized with a \$100 cash award. Those students and poems are:

- Samantha Aikman from Mt Mansfield Union High School for *The Way the Flood Rises*
- Aaron Brown from Vermont Academy for *Freckles*
- Sophie Leggett from Woodstock Union High School for *Heartstrings (In Short)*

Poetry Out Loud is supported in part by a generous grant from the George W. Mergens Foundation and funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. Local sponsors include Northfield Savings Bank and Fothergill Segale & Valley, CPAs.

More about [Poetry Out Loud in Vermont](#).

The [Poetry Out Loud program](#) was created by the National Endowment for the Arts and [the Poetry Foundation](#). Now in its fifteenth year, Poetry Out Loud has inspired hundreds of thousands of American high school students to discover and commit to memory classic and contemporary poetry.

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a Vermont where all people have access to the arts and creativity in their lives, education, and communities. Engagement with the arts transforms individuals, connects us more deeply to each other, energizes the economy, and sustains the vibrant cultural landscape that makes Vermont a great place to live. Since 1965, the Council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts in Vermont.

www.vermontartscouncil.org.

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School and Student Names

School Name	School Champion Name
Peoples Academy	Madeline Moffet
Spaulding High School	Theresa Hoar
White River Valley High School	Ryan Smith
Lyndon Institute	Sadie Chamberlain
Bellows Free Academy-Fairfax	Owen Senesac
Burlington High School	Boniface Ndikumwenayo
Harwood Union High School	Amber Babcock
South Burlington High School	Mollie Allen
Thetford Academy	Eloise Silver Van Meter
Williamstown Middle High School	Brooke Premont
St. Johnsbury Academy	Kathleen Mayhew
Mt. Abraham Union High School	Jade Edwards
Hazen Union School	Bruce Fortmann
Mount Mansfield Union High School	Abby Elder
Brattleboro Union High School	Ada Melton-Houghton
Poultney High School	Iris O'Brien
Bellows Free Academy	Adsel Sparrow
Woodstock Union High School	Sam Powers
Milton High School	Aiden Coli
Burr and Burton Academy	Erin Norton
Arlington Memorial High School	Arianna Barrios

Stratton Mountain School	Elliot Deleger
Rice Memorial High School	Fred Pohlen
Champlain Valley Union High School	Ethan Lisle
U-32	Elijah Hankins
Green Mountain Union High School	Raleigh Thomas
Vermont Academy	Eliza Asante