



**2019-2020  
ALABAMA**

## **Regional Coordinator's Handbook**

### **Statewide Coordinators**

The official state agency coordinating Alabama's Poetry Out Loud Program is the Alabama State Council on the Arts. The Alabama Arts Alliance, in partnership with the Council, facilitates and supports statewide coordination while maintaining fiscal responsibility for day to day program expenses. For rules of operation, logistics, and determinations of policy and eligibility please contact Diana Green. Questions concerning budget and expenses, please contact Donna Russell. When in doubt, copy both coordinators and we will get back to you as soon as we can.



Diana F. Green, AIE Program Manager  
Alabama State Council on the Arts  
201 Monroe Street, Suite 110  
Montgomery, AL 36130-1800  
334-242-5148  
[diana.green@arts.alabama.gov](mailto:diana.green@arts.alabama.gov)



Donna Russell, Executive Director  
Alabama Arts Alliance  
4131 Carmichael Road, Suite 24  
Montgomery, AL 36106  
334-269-1435  
[donnarussell@alaae.org](mailto:donnarussell@alaae.org)

## ALABAMA POETRY OUT LOUD REGIONS

### Region 1

Baldwin, Butler, Clarke, Choctaw, Conecuh, Conecuh,  
Covington, Escambia, Marengo, Mobile, Monroe,  
Washington & Wilcox Counties

### Region 2

Autauga, Barbour, Bullock, Chambers, Chilton, Coffee,  
Coosa, Crenshaw, Dale, Elmore, Geneva, Henry, Houston,  
Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Montgomery, Pike Russell &  
Tallapoosa Counties.

### Region 3

Bibb, Dallas, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Marion,  
Pickens, Perry, Sumter, Tuscaloosa, Walker & Winston  
Counties

### Region 4

Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne, Jefferson, Randolph, Shelby,  
St. Clair, & Talladega Counties.

### Region 5

Blount, Cherokee, Colbert, Cullman, DeKalb, Etowah, Franklin, Jackson,  
Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marshall & Morgan Counties.

## 2019-2020 CALENDAR

Teacher /School Applications Open	February 19, 2019
Classroom activities & class competitions	August – September, 2019
<b>School-wide Competition</b>	TBD by school: <b>No later than Oct. 14, 2019</b>
<b>Student Entry Forms due for Regional Competition</b>	<b>October 21, 2019</b>
<i>Finding Your Voice</i> , Poetry Day	TBA by Region: No later than November 22, 2019
Regional competitions	TBA by Region: No later than December 19, 2019
<b>Student Entry Forms due for State Final</b>	<b>January 10, 2020</b>
Intensive Coaching for Regional Winners	TBD by Region: December/January
<b>State Finals:</b> Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Montgomery, AL	<b>March 2, 2020</b>
<b>National Finals:</b> Washington D.C	TBD

## BASIC RULES FOR POETRY OUT LOUD

The following is a list of basic rules that apply to Poetry Out Loud. These rules are included in the Teacher's Guide and publicized at [poetryoutloud.org](http://poetryoutloud.org). If you are not certain how a rule will fit within your Poetry Out Loud program structure, please contact Diana Green at [diana.green@arts.alabama.gov](mailto:diana.green@arts.alabama.gov).

Note: Only schools registered with the Alabama State Council on the Arts are eligible for the official competition.

### STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

- **Grade Level:** Only currently enrolled high school students in grades 9-12 are eligible, with an exception made for 8th-grade students participating in a 9th- through 12th-grade class. (See New Rules and FAQ's for exceptions)
- **Regional Competition:** A student may not advance to the regional competition without competing in a lower-level school competition.
- **Homeschooled Students:** Homeschooled students may participate by competing in a contest at a local school (at the school's discretion) or with other local homeschooled students. Contact your state Poetry Out Loud coordinator for specific guidelines.
- **School Not Participating?** Students unable to participate at a local school should contact their state Poetry Out Loud coordinator to discuss other opportunities for inclusion in the state's official competition.
- **Repeat Champions:** Only National Champions are not eligible to compete in subsequent years. The exception in Alabama is that State Champions in the Original Poetry Competition may not compete in subsequent years.

### POEM ELIGIBILITY for the National Anthology Competition:

- **Poem Anthology:** All poems must be selected from the Poetry Out Loud print or online anthology, which is updated every summer. Check the website after September 1, 2018, to view the official Poetry Out Loud anthology for the current school year. **Only versions of poems from the official anthology may be used in the contest.**
- **Can't Find a Poem?** Poems may be removed from the online anthology before September 1, 2018. These poems are no longer eligible for competition. However, any poem in the print anthology is eligible even if it is not online.
- **Poem Criteria:** At the state and national finals, students must have three poems prepared. One must be 25 lines or fewer, and one must be written before the 20th century. The same poem may be used to meet both criteria, and may be the student's third poem.

### POEM ELIGIBILITY for the State Original Poetry Recitation Competition:

- **Originality:** All poems must be written by the competing student and not copied from another poet or author. Students are required to refrain from rewriting or paraphrasing poetry or limericks from another source.
- **Poem criteria:** Students are required to recite two original poems at the regional competition. One poem must be 25 lines or less. The intent is for at least one poem to be short and focused, communicating a complete idea in fewer words. For this reason students should not attempt to stretch this requirement by allowing a single line or sentence to occupy more than one line on the page. Poems that could be questionable for length eligibility should be sent for review to Diana Green before the competition to make a policy determination. Ineligible poems that move forward to the state competition will not be accepted.
- **Note:** There is a recognition in the Original Poetry competition that two styles may emerge from students, depending on their preference and the amount of guidance given by teachers. These styles include Spoken Word and Page Poetry. Each style will be valued equally by the judges, and recognized for its strength within the specific style performed. Whether the delivery is subtle or dramatic, authenticity will be the criteria for deciding on the best recitations.

### **Suggestions to coordinators in training students for competition**

- **Hand gestures:** whereas some have discouraged the use of gesture at all, students are winning national awards while using hand gestures. Gestures, as in dramatic delivery, must be authentic and not nervous. Most literal gestures are to be discouraged (i.e. pointing to the sky for “sky,”. Gestures should add meaning to the poem, not mirror or distract.

## **Alabama’s Poetry Out Loud**

### **Regional Coordinator’s Suggested Timeline**

Goal: 20 schools competing in the Regional Competition

**Note:** Retention of schools throughout the program requires regular communication and follow up. Teachers get busy and forget deadlines. Create a listserv. Send reminders regularly. Communicate challenges to state coordinators.

#### March (Immediately following the State Finals in February)

- Begin recruiting.
- Contact schools that sign up at the finals and thank them for sustaining their commitment to the program.
- Finalize all expense requests with the Alabama Arts Alliance

#### April-May

- Ramp up recruiting efforts
- Establish a plan for Fall recruiting
- Consider the option of offering summer workshops for teachers
- Contact district offices to create a relationship and ask to attend fall start up meetings for lead teachers during in-service events

#### June/July

- Take advantage of downtime to plan (include a “marketing” plan)
- Create calendar for regional activities including specific recruiting efforts, Finding Your Voice Workshops & Regional Competition.
- Secure venues
- Solicit personnel (volunteers and workshop presenters)
- Create budget (use budgeting information from Donna Russell)
- Solicit local support for additional funding and regional prizes-IHE’s consider scholarship awards.
- Establish an on-line presence for regional activities; send links to Diana Green at ASCA and Donna Russell at the Alliance.

#### August

- Recruiting: Call or visit as many district offices and schools as possible to distribute recruiting materials (include deadline dates and activity dates and locations for your regional events)
- Collect and compile school entry forms from Diana Green (They will be sent via email attachment); send copies of any you receive directly from schools to Diana Green
- Request Education materials from Donna Russell and distribute to participating schools.
- Send dates and locations of Finding Your Voice Workshop and Regional Competition to Diana Green at ASCA.
- Contact all lead teachers at schools that are signed up. Give them information about workshop and competitions. Establish open and regular communications.

- Create Student Entry Forms for Regional Competition using template provided by Diana Green at ASCA
- Consider holding a conference call orientation meeting for teachers

### September

- Request School competition dates from participating schools. Distribute entry forms for regional competition. Remind them of deadline to complete school competitions and to send in entry forms for your regional competition. PLEASE FOLLOW dates on calendar provided.
- Answer policy and eligibility questions and forward any unanswerable questions and concerns to Diana Green at [diana.green@arts.alabama.gov](mailto:diana.green@arts.alabama.gov)

### October

- Help schools with school competitions, distribute regional entry forms
- Invite schools to Finding Your Voice Workshops
- Collect regional student entry forms and check eligibility of all poems
- Secure judges for Regional competition
- Begin Compiling judges notebooks for Regional Competition (using 5valuation forms from POL website)

### November

- Hold Finding Your Voice Workshops
- Send print out of poems to judges for pre-reading
- Collect Craft/Creativity scores from Original Poetry Judges
- Print Out Participation Certificates for School Champions to be awarded at Regional Competition

### December

- Hold Regional Competition
- Send Completed Regional Winners form to ASCA
- Instruct winners to download new entry forms and student profile forms from State website, complete forms on computer, send as required to ASCA  
<http://www.arts.alabama.gov/programs/AIE/POL.aspx>
- Schedule coaching session in January for Regional Winners
- Send press release about winners to local media

### January

- Check with Diana Green to make sure all regional winners are registered for State Finals
- Coach Regional Winners to prepare for State Finals

### March

- If possible attend state finals in Montgomery.  
Experiencing the State competition will help you prepare students in the future
- Promote any state winners from your region with press releases to local media