



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Northampton County Student Named 2025 ‘Poetry Out Loud’ State Champion

Harrisburg – Today, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) announced that Isavel Mendoza, a senior at Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts in Northampton County, is Pennsylvania’s 2025 *Poetry Out Loud* (POL) state champion. Mendoza will represent Pennsylvania in the national finals, which will be held in Washington, D.C., May 5 - 7, 2025.

“On behalf of the Council and staff of the PCA, I want to congratulate our 14 regional champions for their commitment, hard work and the commendable accomplishment of making it to the state competition, **said Karl Blischke, PCA Executive Director**. I extend my very best wishes to Isavel as he goes on to compete at the *Poetry Out Loud* national finals.”

As the POL state champion, Mendoza will receive \$200 from the Poetry Foundation and an all-expenses-paid trip to the national championship. In addition, Mendoza’s school will receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry materials. Each year, a total of \$50,000 in awards and school/organizational stipends is awarded at the national finals.

Runner-up in the state finals went to Eden Newman, a junior at Milton Hershey School in Dauphin County. As runner-up, Newman will receive \$100, and Newman’s school will receive \$200.

The 14 state POL competitors were among 2,250 high school students who participated in this year’s competition, with the help and support of teachers/coaches in 61 high schools and community organizations across Pennsylvania.

Created by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, *Poetry Out Loud* encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance, and competition. The contest is facilitated through the PCA, working with regional arts in education partner organizations.

Each student memorized and prepared three poems selected from print and online poetry anthologies. All 14 students performed in the first two rounds of competition, with the top five competing in the third and final round. Students were judged on voice and articulation, physical presence, dramatic appropriateness, evidence of understanding, overall performance, and accuracy.

The complete list of all 14 students who competed in the 2025 POL state competition includes:

- Esmé Ammons, B. Reed Henderson High School, Chester County

- MacKenzie Bailey, Logos Academy, York County
- Normandy Broaddus, Williamsport Area High School, Lycoming County
- Alexis Brookhouser, Iroquois Jr/Sr High School, Erie County
- Louise Burke, City Charter High School, Allegheny County
- Ty Irwin Elensky, Curwensville Area High School, Clearfield County
- Elizabeth Hoover, Newport High School, Perry County
- Sulette Lange, Hazleton Area Arts & Humanities Academy, Luzerne County
- Isavel Mendoza, Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts, Northampton County
- Eden Newman, Milton Hershey School, Dauphin County
- Alexis Pontzer, DuBois Area High School, Clearfield County
- Rowena Pruet, Ridgway Area High School, Elk County
- Jiselle Rios, Cocalico High School, Lancaster County
- Eva Sanzi, Somerset Area Senior High School, Somerset County

The PCA is a state agency that supports jobs, builds communities, inspires lifelong learning, promotes the Commonwealth, and sparks innovation through its portfolio of funding opportunities. The PCA reaches all 67 counties in Pennsylvania through its investments in arts and cultural production, creative placemaking, accessibility, capacity building, arts in education, and the growth and sustainability of creative small businesses and creative entrepreneurs. To learn more about the PCA, visit pa.gov/arts.

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