



August 28, 2009

Dear teachers:

We want your school to participate in Poetry Out Loud!

Four years ago the National Endowment for the Arts in conjunction with the Poetry Foundation initiated **Poetry Out Loud** to promote the study of poetry in high school classrooms. A series of local, state, and national contests was organized, providing students the opportunity to compete in the recitation of poetry. The student representatives from South Dakota have placed in the national finals of the contest since it started. We would like to continue that tradition this year.

And you can benefit personally from your school's involvement. We will give away \$500 to two winning teachers, one from large schools and one from small schools. There is also a possibility for some runner-up monetary awards. The percentage of students involved in the school who recite poetry in the classrooms; development of teaching materials; and video entry into the state preliminary contest are considerations in determining these awards.

Building on the recent resurgence of poetry as an oral art form, *Poetry Out Loud* encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance. The program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and internalize our rich literary heritage.

On behalf of the NEA and the Poetry Foundation, the South Dakota Arts Council invites you and your school to participate in this rewarding program. Involvement is free and many materials are available for you to use in your classroom and school. These include an extensive Web site, DVDs of the national contests, teachers' guides, and activities and handouts for the classroom. Each school which makes a request can get copies. Schools that haven't participated before need to request a complete pack of materials for each teacher participating.

These materials will be available to any teacher attending the State Speech Convention in Chamberlain Sept. 11-12. Teachers who have participated in the past are asked to be prepared to contribute their ideas during the POL session. If you are not going to be attending the convention you will need to complete an online materials form.

To enter the contest you need to choose a school winner. That winner will compete in the preliminary contest from which state competitors will be selected. The winner of the state competition will go to the national finals in Washington, D.C. More information will be sent to you if you indicate interest in participating.

Please consider making an effort to get your classes involved in Poetry Out Loud. Visit www.poetryoutloud.org for more information about the program and view videos, at <http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poems/videos.html>. Consult me if you would like help planning school and classroom activities.

I'm looking forward to your participation. Please confirm you would like to be included on the contact list by e-mailing me. Additional materials will be provided at that time. I am also available to answer questions or contact Rebecca DallaGrana at the South Dakota Arts Council, 1-800-952-3625. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rosella Blunk (Rosie)
SD State Coordinator for Poetry Out Loud
rosieblunk@yahoo.com



Department of
Tourism & State
Development

Office of Tourism TravelSD.com
Governor's Office of Economic Development SDreadytowork.com
Tribal Government Relations SDtribalrelations.com
Arts Council artscouncil.sd.gov
State Historical Society SDhistory.org
Housing Development Authority SDHDA.org

2010
INITIATIVE

2010initiative.com