



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Friday, Feb. 4, 2022

# City of San Diego Hosts Regional Poetry Competition for High School Students

## 'POETRY OUT LOUD' WINNER WILL ADVANCE TO STATE FINALS

SAN DIEGO – Next week, young poets will have the opportunity to amplify their voices for all to hear as part of [Poetry Out Loud](#), a national poetry recitation competition. Five local schools will participate in the regional division competition in San Diego, which will be live streamed on Tuesday, Feb. 8, at 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday's event is sponsored by the City of San Diego in collaboration with the National Poetry Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council and local nonprofit [Write Out Loud](#).

**"Participating in Poetry Out Loud builds student confidence in using their creativity to express themselves," said Jonathon Glus, Executive Director of the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture. "These are fundamental lifelong skills that will serve these students throughout their lives both personally and professionally."**

The competition aims to introduce high school students to poetry, build self-confidence and develop recitation skills. The finalists for this year's competition attend the following schools:

- Bayfront Charter High School, City of Chula Vista.
- Canyon Crest Academy, City of San Diego.
- Eastlake High School, City of Chula Vista.
- Patrick Henry High School, City of San Diego.
- Valley Center High School, Valley Center.

The winner from this countywide competition will advance to the state finals in Sacramento. The state champion will have an opportunity to compete for the national title in Washington, D.C.

**“We are excited to once again provide an opportunity for students to become involved with poetry by learning and reciting favorite poems for the community and their peers,” Veronica Murphy, artistic director at Write Out Loud. “This year we are especially thrilled to be able to give voice to a young Afghani poet as an opening to the regional competition.”**

The event will feature a recitation by a local high school student of a poem by a young Afghani poet whose school in Kabul, Afghanistan collaborates with one of San Diego’s Poetry Out Loud schools, Canyon Crest Academy. This special reading at the top of the Poetry Out Loud program opens the event with the idea that poetry unites us beyond geography, culture and geo-political situations.

Judges at the countywide Poetry Out Loud competition include:

- Pamela Brittain, high school English teacher and actor.
- Brandon Cesmat, poet and writing professor at California State University San Marcos.
- Gina M. Jackson, cultural arts specialist, educator and San Diego Arts and Culture commissioner.
- Mark Christopher Lawrence, actor, producer and comedian.
- Kerry Meads, associate artistic director, Lamb's Players Theatre.
- Jim Moreno, poet and teaching artist.

The virtual event is free and open to the public. Visit [Write Out Loud](#) on YouTube to watch the livestream event.

Through the Commission for Arts and Culture, the City of San Diego advances and drives an equitable and inclusive creative economy and cultural ecosystem by investing in the work of artists and creatives, and the institutions and systems that amplify creative work and experiences. To learn more, visit [sandiego.gov/arts-culture](http://sandiego.gov/arts-culture).

###