

news galleryweek

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Poetry & Prose On-Stage boasts 1,500 students participating



TCOE's 38th annual Poetry & Prose On-Stage event began Tuesday with a record-breaking 1,500 students from 100 Tulare County schools slated to participate in the seven-day oral interpretation program. The event is scheduled for March 14-17 and March 21-23 at the TCOE administration building. The public is welcome to attend the event.

Poetry & Prose was created to bolster students' confidence, creativity, performance, and language skills. Students, grades K-8, prepare poems or dramatic readings and perform either individually or in small groups. The poems can be from poets, such as popular children's writers Shel Silverstein or Jack Prelutsky, or written by the students themselves. Some students also recite their selections in [Spanish](#).

Judges provide positive and instructional critiques as they evaluate each performance. There are 10 areas which students are judged on, which include posture and presence, meaningful gestures, eye contact, sincerity



and poise, and more. The judges' sheets are later given to teachers so they can be reviewed with their students. Personalized achievement certificates honoring the students' performances are also handed out.

This year was Christopher Castro's first year participating in Poetry & Prose. He was chosen as one of the students that performed in front of the entire crowd at the end of his session. The eighth-grader from Los Tules Middle School in Tulare performed a poem titled *What Is It That I Search For* written by Tupac Shakur.

"The reason I chose one of his poems, was because I like poetry," Castro said. "It inspires me to listen to more music and do what I love. I found out that he (wrote) poems so then I chose to do one of his poems."

In his final performance, Castro said he felt a lot more comfortable performing than he had before.

"In the beginning, I really was nervous," he said. "But now that I'm more comfortable talking, I really don't mind talking. I'm more comfortable. I feel more open."

Castro added that he writes his own poems and hopes to perform in other poetry events like TCOE's Poetry Live!

"I really liked it," Castro said.

For more information about Poetry & Prose, visit tcoe.org/pnp.

For more information about Poetry Live!, visit tcoe.org/PoetryLive.

Photos above:

~ Christopher Castro, a student from Los Tules Middle School, performed What Is It That I Search For by Tupac Shakur at Poetry & Prose on Tuesday.

~ Sarah Diaz from Columbine Elementary School in Delano also performed a poem for the audience at the end of a session on Tuesday.

Universal PreKindergarten offers new trainings to support districts in developing, strengthening their programs

To support districts developing their transitional kindergarten programs, the Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) program is hosting two important trainings next month.

The first training will be held virtually April 19. Entitled “**Transitional Kindergarten Assessment,**” the

training will be conducted by assessment trainer and coach Tamarra Osborne, a project manager with WestEd. Osborne has designed a presentation for school site and district leadership to help in developing formative assessments, collecting observations that inform teaching and show individual student growth, and organizing their district’s observation systems. To register for Transitional Kindergarten Assessment, visit tulare.k12oms.org/147-231300.

Tamarra Osborne is a trainer, technical coach, and author with a knack for seeing the heart of problems and providing sensible solutions. She has trained at national and state conferences on topics including formative assessment, curriculum development, presentation skills, implicit bias, and educational technology. She has also been published in the National Association for the Education of Young Children magazine and in ASCD’s *The Instructional Coaching Handbook*.

On Saturday, April 29, TCOE’s UPK will host a full-day conference entitled “**Reimagining Early Learning.**” The free conference will feature speakers from Get Your Teach On, a national organization providing professional development and encouragement for transitional kindergarten educators and administrators in the form of conferences, workshops and events.

The UPK conference will feature LaNesha Tabb, Amelia Capotosta, and Katie Hovell providing keynote and breakout sessions. The presentations will cover topics such as engagement, guided play, social studies, writing, and story time. To register for the conference – which will be held at Ridgeview Middle School in Visalia from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m – visit tulare.k12oms.org/147-230820.



Sarvadnya Kadam is the 2023 Spelling Champion



O-R-M-O-L-U

The gold-colored alloy of copper, zinc, and tin used in decorating furniture and making ornaments was the winning word in last week's 2023 Tulare County Spelling Championship. Ormolu was the 15th word spelled correctly by champion Sarvadnya Kadam, a sixth-grade student at Oak Grove Elementary School in Visalia. Kadam will represent Tulare County at the Scripps National Spelling Bee in May.

Students, grades 4-8, from 104 schools throughout the county competed at the TCOE administration building in Visalia. "We are thankful for the continued support and partnership from the Visalia Times-Delta in helping us put on this event for students, coaches, and families," said Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire.

Placing second was Madison Hutchinson, an eighth-grade student from Valley Life Charter School in Visalia.

In third place was last year's champion, Bryce Melgar, an eighth-grade student from Ridgeview Middle School in Visalia. Last year, Melgar, became the county's first-ever semifinalist after advancing to the Scripps National Spelling Bee semifinal round.

Photos above:

~ The Spelling Championship winners (l-r) Bryce Melgar (3rd), Sarvadnya Kadam (1st), and Madison Hutchinson (2nd) pose with judges (l-r) Tim Hire, spelling master Scot Hillman, Carlyn Lambert, and Pete Vander Poel III.

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