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POWER OF THE PEN OPENS NEW 21-COUNTY REGION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL CREATIVE WRITING TOURNAMENTS

Power of the Pen forms Southeast Region to invite new schools, 7th- and 8th-grade students for competitions to write short creative stories

NORTH CANTON, OH — August 17, 2022 — Creative writing program Power of the Pen is expanding its efforts on behalf of Ohio’s middle school students by forming a new Southeast Region composed of 21 counties.

As one of Ohio’s largest educational enhancement programs, Power of the Pen seeks to positively impact academic achievement of the state’s middle schoolers by helping young people find and develop a creative voice uniquely their own.

The nonprofit organization holds creative writing tournaments throughout Ohio at the district, regional, and state levels. Schools that participate in the program register in the fall, then form creative writing clubs to practice for tournaments held in the winter and spring. Power of the Pen provides supporting materials for team meetings, enabling students to sharpen their writing skills as they prepare for tournaments.

Power of the Pen writing team practices improve students’ writing skills, confidence, and ability to collaborate with others, says Executive Director Barb Tschantz. “Writing on a team helps students become better prepared for any future endeavor,” Tschantz says. “It doesn’t have to be a career that’s creative by nature. Though we concentrate on creative writing, students learn communications and leadership skills that can apply to any field.”

The Southeast Region includes the following 2023 tournaments:

- Schools choose **one** of the district tournaments: Claymont Middle School in Uhrichsville on January 21 or Licking Heights Middle School in Pataskala on February 11.
- Qualifying students from district tournaments move on to the regional tournament at Ohio University Zanesville on March 11.
- Qualifying students from regionals advance to state, to be held at Ashland University on May 18-19.

Registration for interested schools opens September 1, 2022, with the extra motivation of an early bird discount through October 15, 2022. Only the first 20 schools can register for each of the two districts. **Information is available at powerofthepen.org/Registration.**

Each year, qualifying writers from 18 district tournaments (usually the top fifty percent) advance to the nine regional events. Approximately twenty percent of those students move on to the state tournament. Competitions consist of three extemporaneous rounds of creative writing tasks, each in response to an open-ended prompt. Judges evaluate the students’ work to identify the winners who will be recognized in an awards ceremony and advance to the next level.

The new Southeast Region includes Athens, Belmont, Coshocton, Fairfield, Gallia, Guernsey, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Knox, Lawrence, Licking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Tuscarawas, Vinton and Washington counties. The new region is funded by the Haman Family Foundation, Reeves Foundation, and Foundation for Appalachian Ohio.



Power of the Pen is Ohio's original interscholastic creative writing program for middle schools. 7th- and 8th-grade students in Ohio compete in a series of district, regional and state competitions by writing short creative responses using provided prompts. The 501(c)(3) organization was founded in 1986 by the late Lorraine B. Merrill and has since become one of the state's largest educational enhancement programs. About 3,000 students participate in tournaments each year, while in-class supporting materials are provided to about 300 middle schools in Ohio. For more information, visit powerofthepen.org.

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