

REBECCA CRUSE
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SDAC



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WATERTOWN SENIOR WILL COMPETE AT NATIONAL FINALS

PIERRE, S.D. – Ashley Brage, a senior at Watertown High School, won the state Poetry Out Loud competition, Monday, in Sioux Falls. Brage will travel to Washington, D.C., to represent South Dakota at the Poetry Out Loud National Finals April 27-29.

Brage won a \$200 cash award, and her school will receive \$500 to be used for poetry books, in addition to her trip to the national finals.

Eight students from high schools across South Dakota competed for the title. Second place in the competition went to Alex Schumacher, a senior at Washington High School in Sioux Falls. Schumacher was awarded \$100 cash, and his school will receive \$200 for the purchase of poetry books.

Two teachers were also awarded for their efforts in the classroom through Poetry Out Loud. Daniel Snethen, Little Wound High School, was recognized as Poetry Out Loud Teacher of the Year and each received a \$200 cash award. Kris O'Brien, Watertown High School received a special recognition as part of South Dakota's 10th Anniversary Celebration of Poetry Out Loud. O'Brien has been dedicated to the program since its inception and has had a student compete at the state contest each year.

Poetry Out Loud is a recitation program and competition that urges the teaching of poetry as an oral art form in high schools. Schools that participate in Poetry Out Loud enter students into a preliminary round, from which the state finalists are chosen. Poetry Out Loud was created in partnership by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, with the collaboration of State Arts Agencies. Through Poetry Out Loud, students master public-speaking skills, build self-confidence and learn about their literary heritage.

In South Dakota, POL is a program administered by the South Dakota Arts Council, an office of the state Department of Tourism, in partnership with the Aberdeen Area Arts Council and South Dakota Public Broadcasting.