

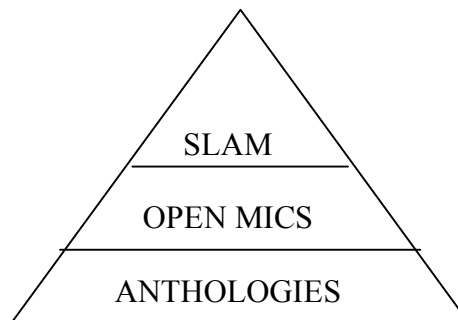
For Educators and Parents

1. Texas Youth Word Collective Poetry Project (TYWC) Mission Statement:

The Texas Youth Word Collective seeks to stimulate in young people an interest in writing, reading, public speaking, and community building; skill sets that are essential as a means of combating illiteracy, encouraging expression, and enhancing the foundation for success in the new millenia.

2. Target of efforts: The broad objective is to get young people involved in writing. Poetry slam is the primary vehicle due to its competitive performance aspect. The growth of hip hop, rap, and spoken word has created a strong audience in the youth culture for slam. Not only does it encourage creative writing, the three-minute time limit forces the young writer to edit for time. Editing is an essential tool of writing and requires development of vocabulary, spelling, and grammar skills.

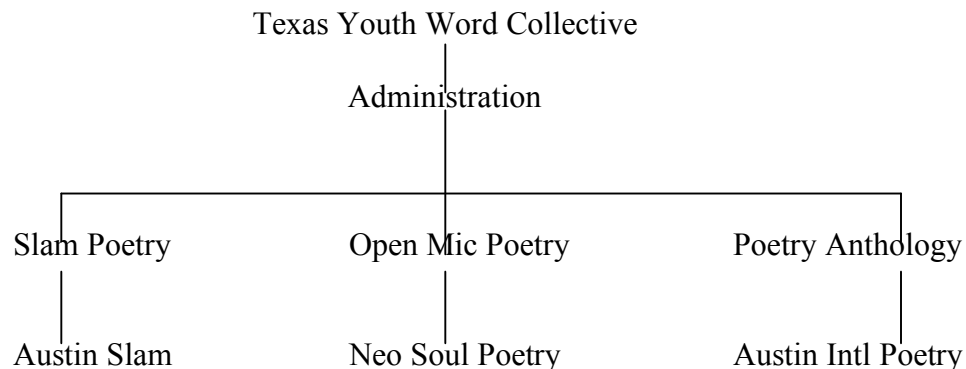
However, many people who like poetry and want to write do not necessarily want to compete or even perform. This is where we see open mics and anthologies playing a part in the encouragement and development of writers. Most people experienced in slam will tell you that slam is not where they started. Rather, they started writing in their journals and worked up the nerve to recite their poems in public at open mics before taking on the challenge of slam. We see our effort as trying to meet the needs of each of these groups, understanding that the participatory population will break down as follows:



As more young people see, hear, and read the works of their peers, they are more likely to join their ranks. For this to happen there needs to be comprehensive participation by the community in this effort. Teachers, administrators, parents, business, political, and community leaders, artists, technology experts, and young people all have a role to play in this endeavor by providing resources, expertise, mentoring, education, networking, passion, and support for our young people.

We believe that the frontline in this effort, however, are poets. Poets are needed to show teachers, administrators and students what the new face of poetry is. That means slam

poets demonstrating slam poetry, spoken word artists demonstrating open mic poetry, and printed poets demonstrating how to edit and get poetry printed and out to the community. Texas Youth Word Collective believes that the Austin Poetry Slam, Neo Soul Poetry Lounge, and the Austin International Poetry Festival, the three major local poetry communities, are perfectly suited to help mentor our youth. Each group either has or seeks to create a youth component to their organization. We see the contribution of their particular strengths, under the auspices of the Texas Youth Word Collective, as follows:



Slam is a conversation between the poet and the audience. This aspect of Slam provides students an environment that teaches them to:

- a. Actively listen to the words, thoughts and ideas of others
- b. Respect the expression of others and consider how that expression relates to their own views of the world
- c. Respond in a civil and intellectual way to issues and opinions with which they may or may not agree.

Objectives of the Texas Youth Word Collective:

- Provide an opportunity for young people who are interested in writing but not performance to print/publish their works
- Hold city-wide monthly slams and open mics for kids to work towards (incentive to write)
- Have a diverse membership on the Austin Under 21 Poetry Slam Team to go to the Brave New Voices National Youth Poetry Slam
- Develop an on-line poetry anthology for students in the Greater Austin area.

Timetable to accomplish the objectives and implement the programs:

- **Once per month:** Hold a city-wide Austin Under 21 Slams, Nov. – Feb.
- **January, 2006:** Submit student poems to Scribez Magazine

- **March, 2006**: Austin Under 21 Poetry Slam Off
- **April 26-30, 2006**: Brave New Voices Youth Poetry Festival in San Francisco
- **April, 2006**: Brave New Voices Youth Poetry Festival in New York
- **June & July 2006**: Workshops. Have poets perform and answer questions during the two sessions of Capital City Writes held Monday through Thursday from 8:30am – 4:30pm (Session I - June 9-26; Session II – July 7-24)
- **August, 2006**: AISD Teacher Back to School Day Austin Slam demonstration
- **September, 2006**: AISD campus Austin Slam demonstrations
- **Once per month**: Hold a city-wide Austin Under 21 Slam starting in October
- **Once per month**: Hold a city-wide open mic starting in October
- **April, 2007**: Brave New Voices Youth Poetry Festival in Austin

Endorsements:

We are honored to include the following people and organizations as Texas Youth Word Collective supporters:

Terry Ross, Austin Independent School District
 Angela Gatto, English Teacher, Reagan High School
 Wendy Goodwin, Dean of Instruction, Reagan High School
 Zell Miller III, Poet Mentor, Reagan High School
 Pam Wade, Vice President, Austin Chapter, NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)
 Ann Elizabeth Winn, First Lady of the City of Austin
 Austin International Poetry Festival
 Austin Poetry Slam
 Neo-Soul Poetry Lounge
 Gator, Youth Poet, Reagan High School
 Shannon Leigh, Youth Poet, Co-Founder, Austin Under 21 Poetry Slam
 State Representative Mark Strama
 Texas Coalition Advocating Justice for Juveniles
 Southwest Key Programs, Inc.
 4-empowerment.com

How to Bring Slam to Your School:

The goal of TYWC is to bring spoken word poetry to every middle school and high school. Many teachers have shown interest in bringing spoken word poetry to their classrooms. While we support the energy and enthusiasm these teachers have, it is our opinion and experience that a comprehensive approach to establishing a writing program not only assures its success, it also reaches the greatest number of students, establishing a solid base for continued enthusiastic participation.

The primary components essential to having an ongoing, on-campus poetry program are:

- a. An enthusiastic and engaged teacher – At the forefront of establishing a program it takes an energetic teacher who will not only serve as the sponsor for the program on the campus but who will actively recruit students to participate. This is crucial. The teacher sees the students on a daily basis and knows which students are already engaged in poetry in the form of rap and freestyling or more traditional forms of poetry recitation and writing. Those eyes and ears in the school will determine the level of student involvement.
- b. A school-wide assembly – An assembly demonstrating spoken word and slam to the entire student body is critical to the success of the writing program in the school. First, it is important to demonstrate spoken word to the whole school because there is no telling which student will be inspired by the performances of local spoken word artists. To only demonstrate spoken word to a class here and there is to miss the vast majority of students who might be interested in participating. Second, the assembly would be a show which, because of its uniqueness, would be entertainment for the students, a diversion from routine and a shared experience that the students and teachers can discuss afterwards. Finally, the assembly serves as the focal point for stirring large scale interest and recruitment activity.
- c. A poet mentor – A poet mentor brings several things to the school writing program. First, the poet brings their own enthusiasm for writing to students, demonstrating a sincere, natural, infectious love of the craft. Second, the poet brings their experience as a writer, meaning that they can share their stories of both triumph and struggle as writers. Third, the poet brings encouragement to young writers; the poet is the ultimate cheerleader. Finally, the poet brings their critique to help young writers develop their skills in deciding on topics, expressing their thoughts, editing their work, sharpening their message and communicating with the audience.

TYWC believes these three components are essential to an on-campus poetry program and stand ready to assist in providing demonstrations, poets and materials to schools and teachers interested in bringing spoken word to their schools.

Schedule of Fees Link:

Assemblies:

Poets will be selected from the top poets in Austin to perform poetry at assemblies, demonstrating the diversity of style included in slam. TYWC schedules a diverse group

of poets, providing students with the opportunity to see different styles of poetry that they might see themselves doing.

1 Poet = \$200.00
2 Poets = \$300.00
3 Poets = \$500.00

Workshops:

Standard

Topics may include a brief history of spoken word/hip hop; in-class writing exercises; in-class reading/listening/responding assignments; in-class discussion and performance practice; in-class revision/editing/ongoing community-building, slam demonstration. Topics will be determined by the length and number of workshops scheduled.

\$125.00 per workshop

Workshop includes:

- a) 1 ½ hour of instruction or 1 class period
- b) 1 ½ hour of preparation

Saturday Workshop

Topics will include, but not be limited to, a brief history of spoken word/hip hop; in-class writing exercises; in-class reading/listening/responding assignments; in-class discussion and performance practice; in-class revision/editing/ongoing community-building, slam demonstration.

Planning Meetings = \$150.00 per meeting (teacher training)
½ Day Workshop = \$400.00

After School Program Mentors

The goal of the after-school workshops is to provide a poetry presence on the school campus and to establish community among students through an interest in self-expression. Poet mentors will lead a series of workshops teaching the same group(s) of students every week and will coordinate their work with the teachers.

TYWC will be responsible for drafting a curriculum at the start of the project. Topics may include a brief history of spoken word/hip hop; in-class writing exercises; in-class reading/listening/responding assignments; in-class discussion and performance practice; in-class revision/editing/ ongoing community-building. Topics will be determined by the length and number of workshops scheduled.

After consulting with the teacher sponsoring the after school poetry workshop, TYWC will assign a poet to work on a regular basis with students on campus. Workshops will be 1 - 1 ½ hour in length.

\$75.00 per after school session

Teacher Training Workshops:

Workshop curriculum will include ideas for stimulating student interest in poetry based on personal experiences, social issues, politics, as well as current and historical events; an overview of the works and styles of current performance poets, a brief history of spoken word/hip hop; demonstration of in-class writing exercises; demonstration of in-class reading/listening/responding assignments; in-class discussion and performance practice; demonstration of in-class revision/editing/ ongoing community-building exercises. A list of suggested reading, viewing, listening, and teaching materials will be provided.

3 Hour Workshop:

2 Adult mentors	=	\$1,300.00
1 Youth mentor	=	200.00
2 Planning meetings	=	<u>300.00</u>
Total:		\$1,800.00