

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## Rise Academy Big Winner at Local Poetry Contest

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Rise Academy students took home a total of five trophies at the first ever Literacy Through Poetry Contest presented by the African American Leadership Summit (AALS) held Saturday at Estacado High School.

Students throughout Lubbock in grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> participated in the poetry workshop event, which included contests in four grade-level categories. Rise students swept 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places in the 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade category, and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> places at the 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level.

First-place winners receive a \$500 savings bond, second-place winners a \$300 savings bond, and third-place winners a \$200 savings bond. In addition, winners will attend the February 14<sup>th</sup> AALS banquet where they will recite their poems for renowned poet Nikki Giovanni.

Rise students presented a formidable array of oratorical talent, with 8<sup>th</sup> grader CaDeidra Jones leading the team with her first-place finish in the 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade division. Brennan Carter, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader at Rise, was the first place winner in the younger division with his impressive interpretation of Langston Hughes' *Ballad of the Landlord*.

Rise students finished the event with five top placements, followed by students from Wheatley Elementary with three top placements. Rise students did not participate in the 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade division, as the Lubbock charter school does not offer high school grades.

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The poetry workshop was one of the several events being sponsored by the African American Leadership Summit, a newly formed group of Lubbock educators. AALS events will culminate with a summit on February 14 and 15 at Texas Tech University. The summit will feature lectures and panel discussions on those topics most relevant to enhancing the educational advancement of African American and other minority students. Keynote speakers included state senator Royce West of Dallas, and author Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu.

Rise Academy is an independent, public charter school with an “exemplary” rating from the Texas Education Agency. The school has open enrollment, and is unable to selectively “cherry-pick” students. Over ninety percent of Rise students are low-income minority children residing mostly in east and northeast Lubbock neighborhoods. The academy serves about 200 students in grades pre-k thru 8<sup>th</sup> in 2007/08.

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