

Achievement Awards in Writing Advisory Committee

Charge: The NCTE [Achievement Awards in Writing](#) program makes use of an advisory committee and state coordinators.

Achievement Awards Advisory Committee: To advise staff on the nature, policies, and procedures regarding the [NCTE Achievement Awards](#), including the following issues: development of a specific plan for involving more public schools in the awards, especially those with large non-white populations; revision of the structure of the award to mitigate the negative effects of competition on student identity and learning; consideration and development of diversified awards: that recognize remarkable improvement or growth in writing; that recognize multi-modal composition (digital or non-digital); and that recognize remarkable risk-taking with the process of writing, instead of the exclusive focus on the final draft; and consideration of revising the Achievement Awards procedure, to eliminate the test-like, single-draft, timed essay as part of the award criteria, since recent developments in high-stakes assessment already privilege those who write quickly; and to consider and make recommendations for ways that your work might interface with NCTE's [National Day on Writing](#).

Major Actions:

The AAW Advisory Committee worked this year to improve promotion of the contest in response to our charge from the Executive Council. We composed an advertisement which will run in the November 2013 issue of the *English Journal*. Since the submission deadline for the contest has been moved to February, we hope this prominent placement of an ad ahead of the annual convention will encourage more participation.

At the Las Vegas convention in November 2012, the committee presented and discussed prompts of the revised writing piece. After several follow-up emails and a conference call, the 2014 prompt was submitted to NCTE. Our plan is to have the committee always working a year ahead on the prompts for this portion of the contest since the contest deadline has been moved to February. At the Boston convention in 2013, we will be working on the 2015 prompt.

In Las Vegas, we also debated the inclusion of home schooled students. The result was the addition of home schooled students to the Eligibility paragraph on the contest flyer.

At the Las Vegas convention, we welcomed a former state coordinator, Anne Weir, to our committee. After the Chicago convention in 2011, we had decided we would like a sitting member of the committee who could offer insight into the experiences of the state coordinators.

Strategic Governance and Council Initiatives:

In Las Vegas, our committee suggested several strategies to improve promotion of the contest and the transparency of the selection of judges and scoring of the writing.

While we are excited about our ad in *English Journal*, we would like to do more to communicate the benefits of the AAW contest, especially to schools which have traditionally declined or felt unable to participate. We are hoping to work with NCTE to generate more contacts with English departments, former state coordinators and judges, and students. We have watched with some interest the proliferation of electronic newsletters from NCTE. Perhaps this could be an avenue for some of this communication.

<http://www.ncte.org/volunteer/groups/aawardcom>

Tom Beach, Co-Chair

Jennifer Beach, Co-Chair