



NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT MONTH COMMITTEE

MID-YEAR COMMITTEE REPORT

Date of Report: March 15, 2026

COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

Chair (2025–2026)

Dr. Kimberly Carothers

kimberlycarothers8@gmail.com

Co-Chair (2025–2026)

Open Position

Committee Members

- Dr. Kimberly Carothers (Chair)

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES TO DATE

The National Career Development Month Committee has made significant progress advancing the NCDA Poetry & Art Contest, a signature initiative that promotes creativity, career exploration, and national engagement. Key achievements to date include:

• **Completed the state-levels review and evaluation process for the 2025–2026 Poetry & Art Contest submissions**, ensuring a comprehensive, equitable, and rigorous adjudication at the state levels. State Coordinators submitted the top three winners for NCDA national competition in each category across six divisions:

- Primary Grades K–2
- Intermediate Grades 3–5
- Middle Grades 6–8
- Senior Grades 9–12
- Adult Student 18+ (enrolled in school)
- Open Adult 18+ (teachers, parents, professionals, community members) — **Completed February 20, 2026**

- **Assembled a national review and evaluation team comprising NCDA Board Members and Committee Chairs** to rigorously evaluate the state-selected submissions for the NCDA National Poetry & Art Contest, 2025–2026, ensuring high standards, fairness, and national-level recognition of exceptional student creativity — **Completed March 2026**
- **Curated and distributed the official National Poetry & Art Contest Master Review & Evaluation Packet to National Reviewers**, providing comprehensive materials, clear guidelines, and strategic support for national reviewers to conduct thorough and consistent evaluations — **Completed March 2026**
- **Developed and launched a 50–60 second NCDA Poetry & Art Contest promotional video** featuring **2024–2025 contest winners as ambassadors**, celebrating their creativity and experiences while inspiring broad participation in the national contest cycle — Completed October 2025. The video was strategically disseminated to NCDA members, educators, community partners, industry leaders, and colleagues, featured on the NCDA website, and garnered 140+ views, contributing to growth in website subscribers to 1,230 and amplifying national awareness of the Poetry & Art Contest — **Completed October 2025**

These accomplishments demonstrate the NCDA National Career Development Month Committee’s strong leadership, strategic oversight, and national impact, ensuring that the Poetry & Art Contest continues to foster creativity, promote career development, and engage students, educators, and professionals across the country.

PROJECTED PLAN / WORK PLANNED THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30

The committee will continue to drive national engagement, expand participation, amplify recognition, and strengthen the educational and career development impact of the NCDA Poetry & Art Contest across all divisions and regions. Key initiatives planned through September 30, 2026 include:

- Notify NCDA State Coordinators, School liaisons, Contest Participants, and NCDA members of the 2025–2026 contest winners by April 2026, ensuring timely national recognition and celebration — **Complete by April 2026**
- Conduct the national review and evaluation of state-selected submissions, maintaining rigorous standards, fairness, and consistency to identify winners who exemplify creativity and excellence across all divisions — **Complete by April 2026**

- Introduce an enhanced national review process, including sharing constructive feedback from national reviewers via email with contest participants, fostering learning, encouragement, and continued artistic development — **Complete by April 2026**
- Strengthen participation tracking and outreach analytics, leveraging the national Excel tracking system to document submissions, monitor regional engagement, and capture outreach effectiveness — **Ongoing Action**
- Collect, analyze, and share comprehensive contest data for 2025-2026 Poetry & Art Contest cycle, including total Submissions & Growth Trends, Submissions by Division & Category, State/Regional Participation, Demographics, Engagement & Recognition Metrics, Impact on Stakeholders, Awards & Recognition Analytics. This reporting will support strategic decision-making, highlight achievements, and inform continuous improvements for the 2026–2027 contest cycle — **Target Completion June 2026**
- Design and implement innovative strategies to celebrate contest winners at the NCD A Conference and through expanded virtual recognition, amplifying their visibility and inspiring broader engagement nationwide — **Ongoing Action**
- Secure the 2026–2027 Poetry & Art Contest theme and redesign the official contest brochure, integrating updated guidelines, enhance visual design, and national standards to maximize clarity, accessibility, and participant engagement — **Target Completion: June 2026**
- Lead strategic planning for the 61st Anniversary of the NCD A Poetry & Art Contest, elevating national awareness, expanding engagement among schools, educators, and counselors, and cultivating community partnerships to ensure this milestone year is recognized and celebrated nationwide — **Planned – August 2026**

Through these initiatives, the National Career Development Month Committee will ensure broad national participation, enhance visibility for contest participants achievements, and reinforce the NCD A Poetry & Art Contest as a premier vehicle for promoting creativity and career development awareness nationwide.