

“2017 Northside Open”

-Foundation towards Literacy Spelling Challenge-

Speller Registration Eligibility Requirements: Parents please carefully read through all eligibility requirements before filling out the registration packet with your child. Participants must meet the following eligibility requirements. Proof of certain eligibility requirements such as report cards and attendance reports can be requested as spellers advance throughout different levels of the competition.

Important Dates:

*Saturday, April 15, 2017 **“Mandatory Spellers Training”**, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

*Saturday, April 29, 2017 **“Semi-Finals”**, Registration 8:30 a.m., Testing 9:00 a.m.

*Saturday, May 20, 2017 **“Championship Finals”** Registration 9:30 a.m., Challenge starts 10:00 a.m.

***Note: Please pay close attention to date and times below**

Registration requirements:

1. Spellers must be a resident in the city of Pittsburgh.
2. Spellers must be enrolled and have proof of regular attendance at a city public, public cyber, charter school, or private school, and must maintain regular attendance throughout the challenge.
3. Spellers must be currently enrolled in grades 3 through 8 and will compete in categories grouped as follows: Elementary School grades 3, 4 & 5 and Middle School grades 6, 7 & 8.
4. Spellers must have and maintain a ‘C’ average or a 2.0 GPA.
5. Spellers must submit their most recent report card.
6. Spellers must have one letter of recommendation from an English, reading, or language arts teacher.
7. Spellers must have a school principal or school official complete the approval form regarding behavior and school attendance.
8. Spellers must return a completed registration packet to the Open’s Director (Doreen L. Upshaw, Director of Youth Development at The Pittsburgh Project, 2801 North Charles Street, Pittsburgh, PA. 15214) before the **Deadline: 6:00 p.m. Friday, March 24, 2017. As of 6:01 p.m., we will no longer accept registration packets. No exceptions!** Please check the list of required items at the bottom your registration form before turning in your packet. **Parents are welcomed to mail the packet to us, however; deadline rules still apply. We are not responsible for mail that arrives after the deadline.**
9. **Notification to spellers eligible to compete in the Open’s semi final rounds will be mailed immediately after the registration packet is returned.**

Other requirements:

10. Speller must maintain appropriate behavioral standards for the entire school year (i.e., no out of school or in school suspensions, excessive poor behavior comments on report cards, etc).
11. Spellers must present their most current report cards and agree to follow up with all school year report cards to remain in the competition. The **Open** officials are aware that the final report card period closes after the competition has ended. Challenge finalist must present a final report card in order to maintain the championship title, to receive certain prizes, and for future participation in the challenge.
12. Spellers must not have repeated any grade for the purpose of extending the spelling challenge. If the speller has repeated any grade, the speller must notify the **Open's** Director of the circumstances of grade repetition by **Friday, March 31, 2017**; and, the **Northside Open** will, in its sole discretion, determine the speller's eligibility status on or before **Monday, April 3, 2017**.
13. Spellers must not have been declared a champion of a state, or local spelling challenge, Bee, or championship for a one-year period prior to participation.
14. The speller must not have been disqualified at any level of a sponsored spelling challenge, Bee or championship for a one-year period prior to the start of enrollment.
15. The speller must not have first-, second-, or third-degree relatives (**i.e., siblings**, child, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, half sibling, first cousin or great grandchild) who are currently holding an official position for the **Northside Open** (i.e., interviewer, tester, scorers, head judge, recording judge, dictionary judge, on stage monitor, observer, etc).
16. Spellers are expected to maintain a 'C' average or 2.0 GPA throughout the competition. If a speller drops below a 2.0, the speller must request from a school official proof regarding tutoring or other remedial support, in which case the speller's GPA is expected to reach the standard by the following report. In the event of a medical illness that causes a speller to miss school in ways that could reduce the speller's GPA, the speller is advised to have both a physician's written report and school principal's report informing the **Open's** Director.
17. The speller will notify the **Open** 24 hours prior to the first day of the challenge if any of the statements made on the registration, Preliminaries, or Semifinals Profile forms are no longer true and require updating.
18. **Special needs:** The **Northside Open** strives to provide accommodations for spellers who have diagnosed medical conditions. All requests for accommodations of special needs should be made in writing to the **Open's** director with your registration packet by **6:00 p.m. Friday, April 7, 2017**. The **Open's** Director and or officials have discretionary power to amend spelling requirements on a case-by-case basis for spellers with diagnosed medical conditions. **Open** officials will act in accordance to accommodate spellers with medical conditions in ways that are reasonable and fair to all participants.
19. Spellers and family members are encouraged to read the **Disqualification Policy** below before entering the Northside Open Spelling Challenge.

Disqualification Policy: The **Northside Open** may disqualify prior to or during the **Open** any speller who is not in compliance with any of the above eligibility requirements; and it may – at any time between the conclusion of the current year’s **Northside Open Finals** and one full year following – require any speller who is found to **have not** been in compliance with any of the Eligibility Requirements to forfeit any prizes, rank, and other benefits accorded to the speller as a result of participation in the **Northside Open** for the champion title year. Once a speller is disqualified for falsifying information, the speller cannot participate in a future Challenge.

For reasons other than clear misspelling, the judges will disqualify a speller **(1)** who does not approach the microphone when it is the speller’s time to receive the word unless there are extenuating circumstances that, in the judges’ sole discretion, merit holding the speller’s word in reserve and offering it to the speller after the other spellers in the round have spelled and before the close of the round; **(2)** who engages in unsportsmanlike conduct; **(3)** who, in the process of retracing a spelling, alters the letters or sequence of the letters from those first uttered; **(4)** who, in the process of spelling, utters a unintelligible or nonsense sound; or **(5)** who, receive verbal help, hand cues or gestures from a person in the audience. Both the speller and the violating person will be removed from the competition and the **Open** arena. As part of our participation packet, parents and supports are informed that The **Open** seeks to be fair to all participating spellers. Parents and supporters are asked to be quiet, orderly and abide by the rules for the **Open**. In the event a violation occurs by a family member or supporter, the speller will be disqualified even if the speller is not at fault; And, **(6)** who uses a hand held devise of any kind during the competition in written testing areas or on stage portions of the competition.

Speller activities that **do not** merit disqualification: The judge may not disqualify a speller **(1)** for failing to pronounce the word either before or after spelling it, **(2)** for asking a question; or, **(3)** for noting or failing to note the capitalization of a word, the presence of a diacritical mark, or the presence of a hyphen or other form or punctuation.