

JUST WHAT IS THE YOUNG AUTHORS' CONFERENCE?

The Young Authors' Conference, held each year in May at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, is an event sponsored by the Illinois Language and Literacy Council, in conjunction with the Illinois Reading Council. Designed as a celebration to honor exceptional writing by students in grades K through 8, the conference provides an opportunity for these young writers to meet published authors and to hear how the authors themselves create the characters and stories that have become their books.

The daylong event, held on a Saturday, actually begins on Friday night for students, parents, or volunteers who wish to come early to attend a panel discussion by the authors in the Bone Center bookstore. This is an informal chance to meet all of the authors at the conference, and to ask them questions about themselves and their work.

On the actual day of the event, which will be **Saturday, May 20th, 2017**, the students register in the ballroom where they receive their room assignments and a book bag containing a pencil and gold seal, which they can later place on their own story. After hearing an introductory speaker, parents take off on their own until the afternoon, and students' head for small group sessions headed by volunteer parents and teachers. Students spend the next several hours sharing their stories, attending author workshops and listening to authors speak. The day ends with students and parents reunited in an awards ceremony where students receive certificates for participating in the Young Authors' Conference as well as copies of the books written by the author whose presentation they attended. The gifted young writers have had a full day, and often leave with stories for next year's Young Author competition starting to take shape in their heads.

WHY SHOULD MY DISTRICT GET INVOLVED?

- Common-Core Aligned
- A great way to motivate students and to recognize the talented writers in your school!
- An invaluable experience where students get to meet kids from across the state of Illinois and work with real authors

HOW CAN MY DISTRICT GET INVOLVED?

Download the conference guidelines at <http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/yac.html>. Follow the checklist provided. A suggested timeline is provided for you on the back of this form. Contact Dr. Christina Podraza at cpodraza@naperville203.org or Dr. Sue Anderson at anderbrose@aol.com for answers to specific questions.

LOGISTICS

Location: Illinois State University, Bloomington-Normal, Illinois
Date: May 20, 2017
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Cost: \$50 per student

SUGGESTED ILLINOIS YOUNG AUTHOR'S CONFERENCE TIMELINE

September/October – Create a committee of teachers that will be in charge of YAC at your school. This could be 2 teachers or more.

November 1st – Download the YAC guidelines from: <http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/yac.html>

November – Meet as a committee and decide how you would like to organize the conference. Some things to think about...

- Will you focus on all grade levels or just one?
- How many students will your school/district send? (\$50 per student; 1 volunteer for every 3 students)
- Will you have a theme that students must write about or can it be a free write?
- Will students work on this in class or is it the students' responsibility outside of school?
- What will be your process for determining a winner?
 - Rubric or checklist?
 - Will the criteria be the same for each grade level?
 - Classroom teachers select and then it goes to committee OR
 - All of the entries go straight to the committee to decide

December – Have a meeting explaining the Young Author's process to teachers

January – Teachers send home a letter explaining the Young Author's Conference to parents. They also explain the process to students.

End of February – Teachers collect manuscripts and choose one classroom winner. Teachers give this to information to the YAC Committee.

March 7-14: Committee decides on the school winner.

March 15: Download student congratulatory packet from here:

<http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/yac.html> Send home with students with forms to be returned no later than March 28th. Also included should be paperwork from the guidelines including: student registration form and medical waiver. Make sure volunteers have filled out the online volunteer form.

March 30: Mail the following paperwork to Sue Anderson

- Completed District Registration Form, page 5 (only one per district will be accepted),
- Completed Student Registration Form for each student selected to attend the Conference, page 6
- A signed Emergency Medical Treatment and Parental Waiver Form for each student registered, page 7
- Registration fee of \$50 per student (checks only) made payable to Illinois Language and Literacy Council

March 30: Make sure the volunteers have filled out the online [volunteer form](#).

- Mandatory Volunteer Form(s) (at least one volunteer per three students). (Packets are sent to volunteers in early May.)

May 20: Students will represent their school at the 2017 Illinois Young Author's Conference at Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois.