

Ralph D. Vines, II.

2026 Public Speaking Contest

We support and encourage youth to develop critical thinking skills, leadership abilities, poise, and professionalism.

Application Deadline: Friday, March 6, 2026 at 4:30 PM

Contest Date: Sunday, April 12, 2026 at 2:00 PM

Location: Clinton Presidential Center

All applications must be typed and submitted directly via each applicant's school counselor or principal to submissions@ralphvinesendowment.com to be considered.

Presentation

Contestants should introduce themselves, their topic and begin their speech. Visual aids, props, or the assistance of a prompter are not allowed. Speeches must be original, written by the student, in good taste for a group of peers/adults, and cover topics such as Social, Economic, and Industry.

Length of Speech

Each contestant must recite speech by memory within the time guidelines. A penalty will be assessed against speakers who fail to complete the speech within the allotted time. Speech lengths for age groups are as follows:

Ages 9-12: 1.5–2 min | **Ages 13-15:** 2–2.5 min | **Ages 16-19:** 2.5–3 min

A girl and a boy will win the
Winthrop P. Rockefeller Grand Prize \$1,500

For each age category:

1st: **\$750**

2nd: **\$500**

3rd: **\$250**

All speakers receive **\$50**

While we appreciate all interest in the contest, a limited number of applications will be accepted and individuals who have previously won the Grand Prize are ineligible to receive the Grand Prize in future competitions.