



The Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission
Regional MLK Oratorical Contest
Greater Cleveland Area

Dear Student, Parent and Community Member,

The purpose of this correspondence is to share information about the upcoming Cleveland Regional Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratorical Contest. The Ohio MLK Statewide Oratorical Contest is of inestimable value in enhancing the development and communication skills of our youth. Winners of this regional competition move forward to compete at the statewide level in April 2025.

To provide you with some history, the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission (Commission) was established in 1985 by Executive Order. The Commission is committed to educating children about Dr. King's legacy of brotherhood among all people. The Commission is a statewide advocate of Dr. King's principles of nonviolence and annually honors Ohio's citizens who work to promote diversity and eliminate discrimination through nonviolent methods.

Former commissioner Mildred Clark founded an oratorical contest in her hometown of Toledo in 1985 to recognize Dr. King and involve children in that city's annual MLK celebration. In 1998, the first-place winners from Toledo spoke at the annual state Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Celebration in Columbus.

The theme for the 2025 MLK Statewide Oratorical Contest is, “**Honoring the Legacy, Uniting the Future.**”

The Cleveland Regional Competition will take place on **Saturday, March 1, 2025** at **Lee Heights Community Church, 4612 Lee Road**. *The contest will begin 10:00 a.m. Registration will begin at 9:00 a.m.* I have included the registration forms and rules/regulations for the Cleveland competition. The registration deadline for the contest is **February 24, 2025**. The winners of this competition move forward to the Commission's statewide competition in April 2025.

If you have any questions regarding the Greater Cleveland Regional Competition, please contact me at **216-581-2448** or via email at mlkcuyahoga@gmail.com

Best wishes,

Vikki Pruitte-Sorrells

Rev. Vikki Pruitte-Sorrells
Coordinator, Greater Cleveland Regional Competition



OHIO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY COMMISSION REGIONAL ORATORICAL CONTEST

Commemorating the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Honoring the Legacy, Uniting the Future.”

RULES & REGULATIONS –

RULES:

I. Time Limitations

A. PRIMARY DIVISION (Grades kindergarten to 2nd)

- A time limit of two minutes will be permitted for orations.

B. INTERMEDIATE DIVISION (Grades 3rd to 5th)

- A time limit of three minutes will be permitted for orations.

C. JUNIOR DIVISION (Grades 6th to 8th)

- A time limit of four minutes will be permitted for orations.

D. SENIOR DIVISION (Grades 9th to 12th)

- A time limit of five minutes will be permitted for orations.

II. Presentation of Oration

A. Contestant will deliver oration from memory (notes on 3 x 5 index cards optional).

B. Contestant will introduce himself/herself by stating in complete sentences:
“Judges, Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is...”

1. Name (first and last names)
2. Age and grade
3. City
4. Topic (Time begins when topic is stated.)

III. Summary of Oration

Timekeeper will indicate wrap-up time one minute before time expires.

**OHIO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY COMMISSION
REGIONAL ORATORICAL CONTEST**

– RULES & REGULATIONS –

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REGULATIONS:

I. Contestant must provide a typewritten, double-spaced composition of oration on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, which must be submitted via mail, email or by fax to Lee Heights Community Church. **Entries must be received/postmarked by February 24, 2025:**

**Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission
c/o Lee Heights Community Church
Attention: Rev. Vikki Pruitte-Sorrells
4612 Lee Road
Cleveland, Ohio 44128
FAX (216) 581-0530
PHONE: 216-581-2448 or EMAIL
mlkcuyahoga@gmail.com**

In the subject area: **MLK 2025 (Student's name)**

A. Cover sheet for composition should include the following information:

1. Contestant's name
2. Age and grade
3. City
4. Date
5. Topic
6. Statewide Oratorical Contest
7. Ambition
8. Coach/parent's name

Note: All requests to return compositions must be submitted with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

B. Notes on 3 x 5 index cards may be used in contest (optional).

II. The coach/parent is permitted to assist the contestant during the composition of the speech and is requested to accompany the contestant at the contest. The absence of the coach/parent will not affect the status of the contestant; however, coaches/parents must remain a part of the audience. He/she may remain in view of contestant but must refrain from offering prompts and assistance in the delivery of the speech.

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**– RULES & REGULATIONS –
(3)**

III. Contestants will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- A. Aplomb (poise, self-confidence, audience appeal)
- B. Voice quality (audibility, articulation, inflection of voice, moderation of pitch)
- C. Physical dynamics (proper use of gestures)
- D. Observance of time limit
- E. Creativity and relevant content (poetic and/or musical interpretation is welcome)
- F. Posture
- G. Accuracy of content
- H. Composition (punctuation, spelling, grammar, logic, appearance)

IV. Each regional oratorical contest will send **ONLY** the first, second and third place winners to the statewide level competition.

V. The decision of the judges is final.

VI. All contest materials are the property of the MLK Holiday Commission

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– RULES & REGULATIONS –
(4)

Any student who competed in any previous Statewide Oratorical Contest **must** prepare a new oration. All orations must be an original piece.

Creativity in selecting topics is encouraged. Below is a list of suggested topics. However, contestants' choice of topic is not limited to the following:

– SUGGESTED TOPICS –

- Share the meaning and relevance of the Statewide Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratorical Contest Theme: **“Honoring the Legacy, Uniting the Future.”**

- The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Relate one's own commitment to Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence, peaceful acceptance and respect.

- “What Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life means to me...” (Expound on what this means to you.)

- “The 21st century depends upon me...” (Expound on what this means to you.)

- Research major events in Dr. King's life:
 - A. March from Selma, Ala., to Montgomery
 - B. Letter from Birmingham Jail
 - C. March on Washington, D.C.
 - D. Nobel Peace Prize

**Winners must be available to speak at the Statewide Oratorical Contest in the
April of 2025. In the past, this has been an all-day event. Please plan
accordingly.**

The Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission
Regional MLK Oratorical Contest
- Registration Form -

Contestant Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

STREET

CITY

STATE

ZIP

Phone: (____) _____ Grade: _____

Email: _____

Career Goal: _____

School/Organization Represented: _____

School/Org. Address:

STREET

CITY

STATE

ZIP

Phone

Coach/Sponsor*: _____ (____) _____

NAME

PHONE

***If applicable**

Principal/Pastor: _____

Please submit this form and a copy of your essay to the attention of Rev. Vikki Pruitte-Sorrells at the address/email address below. **Entries must be received/postmarked by**

February 24, 2025

Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission

c/o Lee Heights Community Church

Attention: Rev. Vikki Pruitte-Sorrells

4612 Lee Road

Cleveland, Ohio 44128

FAX (216) 581-0530

PHONE: 216-581-2448 or EMAIL tchprch@yahoo.com

In the subject area: MLK 2025 (Student's name)