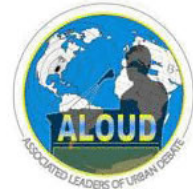




**The English-Speaking Union of the United States
& the Associated Leaders of Urban Debate
Announce New Partnership**



The English-Speaking Union of the United States and the Associated Leaders of Urban Debate are proud to announce a new national partnership to expand debate opportunities for middle school students. The ESU and ALOUD have finalized plans for a pilot program to showcase debate communities where the ESU has a presence. The ESU will lead initiatives in four Branch areas: Sandhills/Pinehurst (Moore County, North Carolina), Columbus (Ohio), Cleveland (Ohio), and Kentucky. They will also assist with existing ALOUD debate program development efforts in New York City.

This cooperative project will enhance the ESU's experience in educational programming and its language-based mission—promoting scholarship and knowledge through the effective use of English. ALOUD—the two-fold purpose of which is to promote debate as a learning tool and to foster self-expression among adolescents—has years of experience customizing debate programs for targeted communities. ALOUD has developed a model that will maximize the visibility of ESU Branches by using these events to attract new members and funding.

The format for the debates will be determined by the individual ESU Branch and ALOUD partner. Format can vary depending on a community's needs and the group's capacity. The activities can range from non-competitive demonstrations of learning to the formulation of persuasive arguments for the more complex tournaments.

Will Baker, ALOUD's Executive Director, offered his view of the future benefits of this project:

“Through the ESU Branch network, there are 72 potential, new debate communities—our two organizations are a perfect match. The ESU is comprised of a talented pool of member volunteers who recognize the importance of language and ALOUD partners help young people learn how to express themselves. We're very excited about this multi-city pilot and how it will enhance the abilities of students.”

Dr. George Ray, Chairman of the ESU's Education Committee explains:

“Over the past few years, our membership has expressed ongoing interest in expanding our work into debate because of its importance in developing not only language and critical thinking skills in young people, but also their self-esteem. ALOUD's customized approach provides an excellent strategy for our Branches, which vary in size and are located in different settings—urban, suburban, and rural. We hope the program will grow to have as great an impact as our National Shakespeare Competition.”

This pilot program was generously underwritten by the Drey Endowment of the English-Speaking Union, Central Florida Branch.

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