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12 Schools Selected to Participate in the Lincoln Online Oratory Project, A National Initiative from Ford's Theatre

Washington, D.C. – Twelve schools from 12 states were selected to participate in the **Lincoln Online Oratory Project (LOOP)**, a national initiative from Ford's Theatre. The Lincoln Online Oratory Project is designed to help educators introduce the fundamentals of public speaking into their classroom and provides an opportunity for students to put these skills into practice.

Classrooms taking part in the Lincoln Online Oratory Project will participate in three virtual lessons with a Ford's Theatre Teaching Artist via video conference. Students will work together to create and record a video of one of Abraham Lincoln's speeches. These videos will be shared with a national audience on the official Ford's Theatre YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/fordstheatre. Classrooms will share their experience with Ford's Theatre on Twitter during a **"Virtual Festival" on Monday, April 15, 2019.**

The 2018-2019 participating classrooms are from: **Salisbury Academy** in Salisbury, North Carolina; **Oakridge Elementary School** in Moore, Oklahoma; **Charles M. Blalack Middle School** in Carrollton, Texas; **St. Albans High School** in St. Albans, West Virginia; **Colchester High School** in Colchester, Vermont; **Lucerne Valley Middle School** in Lucerne Valley, California; **Magruder High School** in Rockville, Maryland; **Burgettstown Area Elementary School** in Burgettstown, Pennsylvania; **STEM Magnet Academy** in Chicago, Illinois; **James Morris School** in Morris, Connecticut; **Victory Academy** in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; **Monroe Township Middle School** in Monroe Township, New Jersey; and **Arbor Station Elementary School** in Douglassville, Georgia.

Through oratory education programs like LOOP, teachers are better able to address the often-overlooked speaking and listening components of the Common Core and state-specific standards in literacy. Additionally, through the study of President Lincoln's oratory, students develop the valuable life skill of confident and effective public speaking, develop their sense of civic duty, and build a broader understanding of President Lincoln's historical significance.

“The Lincoln Online Oratory Project is an exciting opportunity for Ford’s Theatre to support students no matter where they are located,” **said Ford’s Theatre Associate Director for Arts Education Cynthia Gertsen**. “LOOP allows students across the country to share their public-speaking skills and demonstrate the far-reaching and long-lasting power of President Lincoln’s oratory.”

Schools and teachers interested in learning more about the Lincoln Online Oratory Project should visit www.fords.org/for-teachers/programs/oratory/lincoln-online-oratory-project/ or reach out to education@fords.org. Videos from previous LOOP participants can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLK40ConphajsvobllT7ZjRuzKMswcfRPP>.

Ford’s Theatre education programs are supported by **Lead Education Sponsor BP America** with additional support from **Bloomberg Philanthropies, Comcast NBCUniversal, D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Institute of Museum and Library Services** and **Southern Company**.

Ford’s Theatre Society

One of the most visited sites in the nation’s capital, Ford’s Theatre reopened its doors in 1968, more than a hundred years after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Operated through a partnership between Ford’s Theatre Society and the National Park Service, Ford’s Theatre is the premier destination in the nation’s capital to explore and celebrate Abraham Lincoln’s ideals and leadership principles: courage, integrity, tolerance, equality and creative expression.

Ford’s Theatre Society was founded under the guidance of executive producer **Frankie Hewitt**, who, during her 35-year tenure, established Ford’s as a living, working theatre producing performances that highlighted the diversity of the American experience. Since the arrival of **Paul R. Tetreault** as Director, critics and the theatre-going public have recognized Ford’s for the superior quality of its artistic programming. With works from the Tony-nominated *Come From Away* and the nationally acclaimed *Big River*, to the world premieres of *Meet John Doe*, *The Heavens Are Hung In Black*, *Liberty Smith*, *Necessary Sacrifices*, *The Widow Lincoln* and *The Guard*, Ford’s Theatre is making its mark on the American theatre landscape. In the past decade, the mission of Ford’s Theatre Society expanded to include education as a central pillar. This expansion led to the creation and construction of the Center for Education and Leadership, which opened in February 2012. Under the current leadership of Board of Trustees Chairman **Phebe N. Novakovic** and through the lens of Lincoln’s leadership and legacy, Ford’s today endeavors to advance Lincoln’s “unfinished work” with programs and performances that cultivate empathy, encourage dialogue and bridge divides in our American life.

For more information on Ford’s Theatre and the Ford’s Theatre Society, please visit www.fords.org.

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