



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **11 BCPS students are finalists in WJZ's Black History Oratory Competition 2023**

Towson, Md. – Eleven Baltimore County Public Schools students are among the 20 finalists in WJZ's Black History Oratory Competition 2023. The 20 finalists were selected from among the 200 Maryland students who submitted essays.

The BCPS students who are finalists are:

- Tulika Ahuja, Grade 10, George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology
- Nia Bryant, Grade 11, George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology
- Lily Espinoza, Grade 12, Hereford High School
- Flematu Fofana, Grade 11, Towson High School
- Ashanti Gillis, Grade 9, Towson High School
- MacKenzie Lea, Grade 10, Catonsville High School
- Jaxson Metzbower, Grade 12, Hereford High School
- Mahlet Nigussu, Grade 11, Perry Hall High School
- Favour Ogedengbe, Grade 11, Eastern Technical High School
- Elon Raya, Grade 11, Catonsville High School
- Zariah Smithwick, Grade 10, Kenwood High School

The annual Black History Month competition is open to students in Grades 9 – 12. This year, students were asked to write 500-word essays in response to quotes from agricultural scientist and inventor George Washington Carver, entrepreneur and activist Madam C.J. Walker, and author and attorney Charles W. Chestnutt.

The finalists will record their speeches before their family and friends and the competition judges. The speeches will be [streamed online](#) on Thursday, February 23, at 8 p.m.; Friday, February 24, at 8 p.m.; and Saturday, February 25, at 3 p.m.

The winning speeches will be broadcast on WJZ-TV during its Black History Oratory Competition Special on Saturday, February 25, at 7 p.m. Winners will receive cash prizes from WJZ and Walmart.

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[Baltimore County Public Schools](#), the nation's 25th largest school system, is focused on raising the bar and closing gaps to prepare our students for the future. Thanks to innovative and talented leaders, teachers, staff, and students, BCPS celebrates [many honors](#).