

For Immediate Release

February 20, 2024

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Career Tech Writers Studio Students Draft Success as Finalists in Young Playwrights Festival

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Students enrolled in the Career Tech Writers Studio program put their developing skills to good use in the 13th annual Young Playwrights Festival. Festival coordinators recently announced six area high school students selected as finalists in the playwrights competition. Of the six, five of the finalists are students in Writers Studio, one of [22 programs](#) operated by Northwest Education Services (North Ed) Career Tech.

The Young Playwrights Festival is an annual competition that requires students to write and submit an original one-act play to a panel of judges. Of the plays submitted in December 2023, 12 were selected as semifinalists. The six finalists will be paired with national theater mentors who coach them on fine-tuning their plays and script-writing skills. They also win \$100 and get to see their plays performed on stage at the City Opera House at 1:30 p.m on April 14.

The finalists were chosen from a group of 12 semifinalists made up of high school juniors and seniors in the northwestern Michigan area. (*Career Tech Writers Studio students identified below in **bold***)

Finalists

- **Minnie Bardenhagen**, Suttons Bay High School, “My Best Friend's Wedding Reception”
- Iliana Demas, Interlochen Arts Academy, “Lego Batman Keychain”
- **Dominic Montoya-Arlt**, Forest Area High School, “Mister Mirror”
- **Mason Moran**, Traverse City Central High School, “Break a Leg”
- **Madeline Rowney**, TC Central High School, “What To Do About Mara Samson”
- **Isabel Schmidt**, Suttons Bay High School, “Hitchhiking”

Semifinalists

- Ben Berman, Interlochen Arts Academy, “How to Ruin a Fairy Tale in 10 Minutes or Less”

- **Reegan Craker**, Suttons Bay High School, “Paths We Take”
- Emma Herrington, TC West Senior High School, “Time Capsule of Love”
- **Randale McCuien**, TC Central High School, “James and His Lack of Peace”
- **Ella Mullens**, Bellaire High School, “The Victim”
- **Alicia Streeter**, TC Central High School, “A Life or Death Situation”

Writers Studio is a rigorous writing program at Career Tech. During the two-year coursework, high school juniors and seniors learn to write in various creative and professional writing genres, providing a foundation for strong communications skills and extensive opportunities in college and career. Students are instructed by published poet and essayist Teresa Scollon.

“Participation in the Young Playwrights Festival is a growth experience for our students, where they gain confidence and strong technique. It is a challenging writing style and a great way to practice character development through dialogue and action,” Scollon said. “Writers Studio students have done well in this competition. We are so grateful to the City Opera House for creating this opportunity for young writers. Seeing your play come to life on the stage is a real thrill for students.”

Hosted by the City Opera House, [Young Playwrights Festival](#) is sponsored by MSU Federal Credit Union with additional support from National Writers Series, Old Town Playhouse, National Endowment for the Arts and the Michigan Arts & Culture Council.

[Northwest Education Services](#) (North Ed) is one of 56 intermediate school districts in Michigan. It serves 16 public school districts, six public school academies, and 12 private schools in Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau counties. North Ed provides services to improve student learning, serve children’s special needs, develop teachers’ expertise and maximize resources on a regional scale.

[North Ed Career Tech](#) offers more than 20 [programs](#) to juniors and seniors who attend high schools or are homeschooled in North Ed’s five-county region. Students are educated in career and technical fields, offering hands-on practical experiences, job shadowing, career exploration and early college opportunities, along with rigorous academic integration.

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