



**Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind
Office of Interim Superintendent Marv Lamer**

For Immediate Release

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**ALL THREE OF ASDB'S PHOENIX DAY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF TEAMS WIN
NATIONAL AWARDS IN "BATTLE OF THE BOOKS COMPETITION"**

NEVER BEFORE IN THE HISTORY OF THE COMPETITION HAVE ALL THREE DIVISIONAL TEAMS
FROM A SCHOOL PLACED IN THE TOP THREE AT NATIONALS

Phoenix, AZ, April 8, 2015 – Today, Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) Interim Superintendent Marv Lamer and ASDB Phoenix Day School for the Deaf Principal Courtney Fritz proudly announced that all three of the ASDB's Phoenix Day School for the Deaf (PDS) student teams won national awards in the annual Battle of the Books competition. Student teams from PDS were declared national champions in the "Buff" division and took third place in both the "Blue" and "Green" divisions.

In this year's annual challenge, over 60 teams comprised of students who are deaf or hard of hearing from across the nation had their reading proficiency and comprehension levels put to the test. Each participating school for the deaf sends teams of middle school students to compete in divisions organized by book text complexity level: buff (advanced); blue (intermediate); and green (beginner). Students had to first battle through two intense rounds of competition to determine who would compete at the national finals hosted at [Gallaudet University](#) in Washington D.C. this past March 30.

"The Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind is proud of the historic accomplishments of its national student winners in the 'Battle of the Books' competition," said superintendent Lamer. "Principal Fritz and the entire staff at PDS should be commended for their passion and commitment to improve student reading proficiency levels. Clearly their efforts are paying off in a big way for students who are deaf and hard of hearing."

The purpose of the Battle of the Books is to promote literacy amongst deaf and hard of hearing middle school students; promote a spirit of academic competition and good sportsmanship; and to encourage critical thinking skills amongst middle school students.

"I am honored to work with a dedicated team of educators and an extraordinary group of students at PDS," said principal Fritz. "Congratulations to each of our student winners who demonstrated national

award-winning reading proficiency levels. Way to believe in achievement and show the importance of literacy for Deaf students!”

Most Outstanding Buff Division Player Jack Scarboro (Peoria), and a member of the national championship PDSD team in the Buff Division, had this to say about his experience, “I went to Washington D.C. last year and we got fourth place.” “This year I wanted to go back and win!”

Gallaudet's Battle of the Books was established in 2012. Its roots can be traced to the Battle of the Books competition amongst several deaf schools across the nation. The original contest in 2007 had four participating schools: California School for the Deaf (Fremont), Metro Deaf School, New Mexico School for the Deaf, and Texas School for the Deaf. The competition's brainchild was Leslie Hussey who gained inspiration from one of her students.

The [Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind \(ASDB\)](#) was founded in 1912 – the year of Arizona’s statehood. ASDB serves over 2,000 children who are blind/visually impaired or deaf/hard of hearing from birth to grade 12. ASDB operates two schools for the deaf, one school for the blind and five regional cooperatives. ASDB is dedicated to empowering students with the educational opportunities necessary to succeed in college, career and life.

*A list of the student winners from PDSD and their cities of residence follows.



2015 Battle of the Book PDSD's National Results:

Buff Division

- 1st Place team
- Most Outstanding Player: Jack Scarboro, 7th grade
- All Stars: Xavier Herbold, 7th grade

Blue Division

- 3rd Place Team
- All Stars: Natalie Richards-Hamilton, 7th grade

Green Division

- 3rd Place Team
- All Stars: Melissa Sanchez

City of residence of all Battle of the Books Student National Winners from PDSD (featured in an attached picture)

- Zoe Ryley Abrams-Gay-Phoenix
- Willow Rose Herbold-Glendale
- Natasha Jo Richards Hamilton-Gilbert
- Xavier Thomas Herbold -Glendale
- Zander Robert Herbold-Glendale
- "John Aiden (*Jack) Scarboro-Peoria
- Melissa Sanchez-Phoenix
- Faith Ann Makarewicz-Phoenix
- Isabel Laura Ballard-Glendale

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