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### **Poetry projects forefront of city art initiatives**

By [Andrea Choi](#)

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The Madison Arts Commission took steps to increase Madison youth and students' access to poetry and other art forms with projects including the nomination of the next poet laureate and the poetry on Madison Metro Transit buses project at its meeting Tuesday.

Fabu Carter Brisco, the city's current poet laureate, said applicants for the next poet laureate have been received. This year, a team who co-applied together as a package deal was among the applicants.

She said the goal of the poet laureate position is to encourage youth creativity and provide opportunities for young people and students to gain experience as poets and writers.

Carter Brisco added having teams of co-applicants could expand the laureate's ability to reach youth.

"The good thing about having co-applicants is that it expands the opportunities of creativity," Carter Brisco said. "A poet laureate is asked to travel all over the state. The position comes with obligation; you really do want to promote poetry and respond to invitations."

Leslee Nelson, a professor in the art and liberal studies departments at the University of Wisconsin, said having a team promoting poetry to youth could be an asset to the community and a "brilliant idea."

Members of the commission agreed to vote on the applications in the next meeting after going over each applicant's evaluations and poetry.

The commission also reviewed Bus Lines, a program that displays poetry by high school students on Madison Metro Transit buses. Carter Brisco said response from students was very positive, but problems with insufficient funding persisted.

"The only downside was that we realized there wasn't any money. The Metro line budget was frozen, and we had already chosen our poems," Carter Brisco said.

She added the project has received an enormous amount of submissions and emphasized the importance of high school poets having a place to show off their poetry.

"We have come up with nine poems by area youth. We partnered with the Wisconsin Book Festival, and it turned out really, really well," she said.

Celia Klehr, the commission's chair, said advertising spaces on buses had been donated, but the expense of printing and adhering the poems to the spaces was problematic.

Despite the financial setbacks, Klehr said she felt excited that poetry is growing as an art form in the Madison community.

The commission also looked at the applications received for the Signature Grant. Klehr said a \$5,000 grant would be made to individual artists to support creation of new works.

Klehr said applicants should be residents of Madison and should be showcasing their artwork in the city, but the content of their artwork did not have to be directly related to Madison

Samples of the applicants' artworks were evaluated by the commission members. Results will be revealed at the commission's next meeting.

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