



Winners of 'If I Were Mayor' state essay contest announced

For Immediate Release: March 1, 2018

Contact: Rob Bullington, rbullington@vml.org

The Virginia Municipal League announced today the statewide winner and seven regional winners of the "If I Were Mayor" Essay Contest. The contest, hosted by VML, drew more than 1,000 entries from seventh graders throughout the state. The challenge to the students was to describe what they would do if they were mayor of their hometown. The winners are:

- Statewide winner: Jalia Hardy of Binford Middle School in Richmond (also Region 7 winner)
- Region 1: Bryleigh Middleton of Pennington Middle School in Pennington Gap
- Region 2: Kaydence Addison of Dalton Intermediate School in Radford
- Region 3: Will Schwantes of Daniel Morgan Middle School in Winchester
- Region 4: Catherine Selfridge of Buckingham Middle School in Buckingham
- Region 5: Gideon DeMarco of Lanier Middle School in Fairfax
- Region 6: Maeve Myers of Louisa County Middle School in Mineral
- Region 8: Tina Li of the Academy for Discovery at Lakewood in Norfolk

As one of the judges for the contest said: "All of the regional winners demonstrated a remarkable level of maturity in their essays! I was very impressed with their concerns for their communities and how thoughtful they are in developing well organized, considerate solutions."

Of the winning entry from Jalia Hardy of Binford Middle School, Richmond, a judge said: "Her concern for her community came through her essay with her focus on youth empowerment, education and care for the homeless. I was also impressed with her expression to listen to others and her reference to helping 'our city'.

"The regional winners and statewide winner make up a very impressive group of young people – our teachers and parents should be proud! Our state is in good hands with our young people!"

In addition to a framed certificate, each regional winner will receive a check for \$150. The statewide winner will receive a certificate and \$250.

Plans for presentation of the plaques and checks are forthcoming.

All winning essays can be read at <https://vml.org/education/essay-contest/>

About VML's "If I Were Mayor" Essay Contest

The annual "If I were Mayor Contest" invites seventh graders from throughout Virginia to submit essays describing what they would do if they were mayor of their hometown. Entries are due around December 1 each year. The essay contest is a key component of VML's civic education programming, which seeks to teach schoolchildren and adults how local government works and how they can become involved in making their communities better places to live, work and play.