

SSMS advancing four teams to state DI tournament

Written by

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Four of the six Sulphur Springs Middle School Destination Imagination teams that competed at the East Texas Regional DI Tournament advanced to the state tournament.



“Approximately 350 teams from across East Texas competed in the creative problem solving event. ... About 500 teams will be competing at the state level to earn the right to represent Texas DI at the DI Global finals held each year in May at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville,” noted Johnny Wells, who serves as district DI coordinator.

Three teams qualified for state after capturing first place honors in their challenge event at the March 1 regional meet at Poteet High School. Of those, two teams also earned a special award for creativity. One team qualified for state with second place honors. Two teams were also recognized for their third place finish at the regional DI contest. Two students, Nathan Fry and Gage Penson, placed in two events at region.



The scientific team composed of eighth graders Natalee Foster, Makenna Kager, Allie Avery, Celeste Laliberte, Natalie Cruz, Chase Charlton and Hannah Dixon, and team managers Audra Latimer and Jody Leeds won first place at region.

They answered the “Going to Extremes” challenge to explore an extreme environment that exists in the universe such as inside a volcano, a hypothermal vent or the top of Mount Everest. They then had to come up with a story about characters who adapt to survive in that extreme environment, design and create extreme gear that is demonstrated by using technical methods. They also have to design and create a depiction of their chosen extreme environment.

The first place fine arts team consisted of eighth graders Hannah Smith, Gillian Thomas, Olivia Williams, Anden Hammack and Samantha Vargas; seventh graders Abby Diaz-Deleon and Elisha Sellers; and team manager Amber Nix, They also earned a coveted Da Vinci Award for outstanding creativity.



This performance team answered the “Laugh ART Loud” challenge to research works of artists who were born in a nation other than their own. They then had to theatrically present a comic strip based on a work of art created by the artist from the selected nation; create three live comic strip panels; create an “ARTifact” inspired by the work of art; and design and create a “Caption Contraption” for one of the comic strip panels.

Earning first place honors in the structural challenge and a DaVinci Award was the team made up of eighth grader Kacey Moore; seventh graders Hagan Hunt, Evan Latimer, Colten Armstrong and Charlie Maddux; and sixth graders Matthew Robinson and Lindsey McGraw.

Team managers were Michael Moore and Jamilyn Hunt.

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They answered “The Tension Builds” challenge to build a structure that was tested against two forces at the same time. They had to design a prop which fits completely inside a measured space, then assemble the prop during their presentation. This structural challenge also required them to create a story in which tension is a threat to stability and is overcome in some way.

The second place service learning team that is also advancing to state includes eighth graders Olivia Williams, Jose Munoz, Nathan Frye, Gage Penson, Kasen Price and Tyler Griffin; and team manager Michelle Blackmon.



The “Pitch and Play” service learning challenge started using the “creative process” to identify and select at least one real community need. They then had to design and carry out a project that addresses the real community need. They used play to meet the project goals, and a team-created “Elevator Pitch” to enlist at least one community partner. Finally, the team had to create a live presentation featuring their project.

The improvisational team consisting of seventh graders Cameron Zahn and Brayden Fisher; sixth graders Mattie Thurman, Allie Thurman and Alivia Walker; and team manager Christine Thomas was recognized for their third place finish at region.

The improv team answered the “Pandemonium!” challenge which required them to create a five minute improv skit that features interaction between a character from the past and a contemporary character. They had to show how the characters work, using the time period, their occupations and skills, to deal with pandemonium. Stage make-up was used to create, develop and/or enhance on skit character.



graders Chase Berry and Jacob Smith, along with eighth graders Joshua Whitten-Edwards, Nathan Frye, Gage Penson, Spencer Brewer and Leif Thomas earned third place recognition at region in the technical challenge. Managers for the team were Chip Vaughn, Clay Hansford and Johnny Wells.

The technical team answered the challenge to “Dig In” by designing and building equipment to “detect objects in their hiding places.” The equipment then had to be used to take the objects out of their hiding places and move them across a finish line. The team also had to create and present a story about a technology that detects things a human cannot sense without help.



The state tournament will be held in Pflugerville on April 12.