



Kansas students, educators and schools are among the best in the nation and we want to salute their accomplishments. The Communications Office at the Kansas State Department of Education will regularly publish a list of happenings in Kansas schools. If you know of a specific award garnered by students, teachers, programs, schools, or districts, please let us know so that it may be included in our publication. Although it may not be possible to include all awards sent to us, we offer our congratulations and best wishes to the students and educators in our state.

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Salina South High School drama students performed "The Secret Garden" as the opening production of the **2009 Kansas Thespian Conference** in Wichita. Their production was one of four shows selected out of more than twenty applicants from around the state. The annual conference provides students the opportunity to take workshops and seminars conducted by nationally known theater artists, attend other productions and audition for college theater programs and scholarships. Encore!

Shawnee Mission West High School science teacher **Doug Moles**, recently received approval to place a working model wind turbine at the school, the final step in creating the school's **Green Energy Resource Lab**. The two-year-old student-initiated green project was the idea of **Moles' Science and Survival class**. The Kansas Energy Commission donated \$15,000 towards the wind turbine as well as solar panels for the school. These models will be used in the classroom as students learn the conversion of energy and how alternative energy sources will play out in the future.

Congratulations **Humboldt High** for being recognized once again as a **bronze medalist** on **U.S. News and World Reports Best High Schools list!** HHS joins the ranks of 36 other Kansas schools to make the list, two of which earning silver medals. The annual list honors schools around the country demonstrating measurable academic advancements. HHS is one of the few schools to earn the honor for two consecutive years.

Jaryn Folk, a fourth-grader at **Garfield Elementary School** was named the spelling bee champion of her school, earning her the opportunity to progress to the **Labette County Spelling Bee at Parsons Middle School**. Keep up the good work, Jaryn!

Kristy Dekat, journalism advisor at Topeka West High School recently learned of her selection for a **Rising Star award** for her dedication in revamping the equipment used by journalism students, newspaper and yearbook staff. By tirelessly filing for grants among other tactics, Dekat was able to outfit her school with new computers and new cameras, for which she was awarded one of the highest honors a scholastic journalism teacher can receive. She will be presented with the award in April at the **Journalism Educators Association and National Scholastic Press Association's spring convention.**

Bluestem High School student **Colleen Turner** has been invited to exhibit her track and field talents at a competition in **Sydney, Australia.** A fundraiser was organized by the school in order to raise the necessary funds to cover her twelve-day trip down under. She will be competing in Australia at the end of June through the first part of July. Good luck, Colleen!

Third-grader **Haley Tyler** was the Kansas winner of the **2008 Bonnie Plants Cabbage Program contest**, earning a \$1,000 savings bond. Haley's plant weighed a whopping 35 pounds, and in September she was notified that she had been selected as the state winner of the contest. **Central Elementary School** was one of the 134 Kansas schools that participated in the contest. Haley was selected as winner by Adrian Polansky, Kansas Secretary of Agriculture, from the 6,358 Kansas students who submitted entries.

Lawrence high school students dominated this year's art competition organized by the **Native Sons and Daughters of Kansas**, taking six of the eight first-place awards! The competition entitled "Kansans...As Talented as You Think," awarded **Jenny Aucott** of **Free State High School** Best of Show. Other winners included **Charika Billie** of FSHS, **Austin Noll** of FSHS, **Becca Kellerman** of **Lawrence High School**, **Ally Koppes** of LHS, and **Hanna Lodwick** of FSHS.

Savia Pettinella and **Elena Blum** of **Topeka Collegiate** earned first place in the **American Society for Civil Engineers' 2009 Egg Drop** for the second year in a row (fourth- through sixth-grade category)! The egg drop contest, held at West Ridge Mall, teaches participants about engineering by trying to create a vessel that will protect an egg from a fall of 20 feet or higher. **Brian Wenger** and **Dalton Taylor**, both of **Topeka Lutheran School**, took first place in the seventh- through ninth-grade category.

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