



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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Congratulations to the **Kapaun Mt. Carmel Catholic High School Quest Team** for defeating Topeka West High School in the **state Quest championship match!** The all-senior team, coached by Chris VanSickel, consisted of **Cooper Lewis, Sam Spiess, Matthew Marks and Joe McDonough.** The academic competition was sponsored by Washburn University and was televised on June 21, 2007.

Heather Knudson of Life Christian Academy in Kansas City won the **national spelling bee of the Association of Christian Schools International.** The competition, held in Washington, D.C., consisted of 46 hopefuls ranging from fifth to eighth grade. Her successful spelling of "syzygy" earned her the top prize: a laptop and a \$200 saving bond. Great job, Heather!

In a surprise ceremony this past September, **Stephanie Shephard** of Pioneer Ridge Middle School in Gardner was awarded the **American Stars of Teaching Award.** The assembly was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, and guests included U.S. Senator Pat Roberts and Representative Dennis Moore. More than 4,000 teachers were nominated nationally for the award, though only one award is given in each state.

The Siemens Foundation awarded **Baoqing Zhou** of Lawrence and **Jimmy Ma** of Overland Park **\$2,000 college scholarships** each for scoring the highest marks in Kansas on the College Board's Advanced Placement Program in science and math. More than 300,000 students take AP math and science exams each year. In addition to this scholarship, Zhou was also named a National Merit Scholar.

Wichita's East High School is ranked as one of the **top 1,200 high schools in the country,** according to Newsweek. The news magazine ranked East as 527th based on the number of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Cambridge exams taken, divided by the number of seniors. This is the fourth time East High School has been placed on Newsweek's list. Sumner Academy (118th) in Kansas City, Blue Valley North (713th) and Blue Valley West (967th) in Overland Park, and Blue Valley High (717th) in Stillwell also made the list.

Art teacher **Carolyn Berry** of Free State High School was named the **Outstanding High School Art Educator** for this school year by the Kansas Art Education Association. Berry, who started working at Free State when it opened in 1997, is in her 14th year in Lawrence schools. Berry's dedication to helping her students create excellent portfolios has not only helped her students get into college, but has also earned the students scholarship money.

The Wellness Task Force of Unified School District 418 is striving to curb childhood malnutrition with the help of the "**Sunflower Grant**." Studies have shown that children who have proper nutrition are not only healthier, but are also happier, are able to concentrate better in school and are less disruptive in class. With that in mind, a grant from the Kansas Health Foundation brought together nutritional experts and school experts in hopes that the nutritional problem within the schools could be solved. USD 418 laid out a three-year program which would not only replace current school breakfasts and lunches with healthier foods, but also incorporates nutritional education and physical activity into the daily curriculum. Though they've just begun the three-year process, some "good changes" have already been noticed! Keep up the great work!

Vocal teacher **Cathy Crispino** of Lawrence High School was given the honor of being named the **2008 Kansas Music Educators Association's High School Choral Teacher of the Year**. More than 20 of Crispino's colleagues and friends, including her husband, surprised her during one of her classes with the award which was presented by Jean Ney, President of the KMEA. Crispino has taught at Lawrence High School for 11 years and has taught music throughout Kansas for more than 20 years. Students and colleagues expressed their appreciation for Mrs. Crispino by describing her as being "just a sweetheart" who continually puts forth so much effort in order to make students the best vocalists they can be.

Kavya Shivashankar of California Trail Junior High School won the Olathe school district spelling bee for the third year in a row, securing her spot in the **Scripps National Spelling Bee** for the third time. Kavya, a seventh-grader, beat Erica Chang, a Briarwood Elementary School fifth-grader, after more than 30 rounds in the Olathe bee—one of the longest battles judge Ken Roberts could remember. The 2008 national spelling bee takes place May 29–30 in Washington, D.C. Be sure to cheer Kavya to V-I-C-T-O-R-Y!

A team of **student engineers from Gardner Edgerton High School** placed **first in the 2008 National Engineering Design Challenge** in Arlington, VA. **Alyssa Zimmerman, Alice Zhao, Paul Keithley, Jared Barton and Christian Warner**, along with their coach David Kling, received the top prize of \$3,000 for their presentation of B.A.R.T., or Bag Attachment and Replacement Technology. Their design, consisting of a cylindrical dispenser for trash bags, a clip that holds the trash bag in place on the trash can, and a tying mechanism, helps its user tie a trash bag with one hand. The design was created in order to help a fellow Gardner student who has cerebral palsy do his custodial job. The competition is held annually and is sponsored by Junior Engineering Technical Society and the AbilityOne Program.

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