

School District 54 Board of Education Recognition

6 p.m. April 17, 2025 in the District 54 Professional Learning Center

Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision

Hoover student Anisha Neklikar is part of a team of students who qualified for the 2025 Toshiba/National Science Teachers Association ExploraVision national competition this spring (the other team members are not District 54 students and were not available this evening). They were challenged to use their critical thinking, leadership and collaboration skills to conceptualize and create innovative systems or technologies to solve pressing real-world issues. Anisha's team developed a watch that would help children with ADHD by monitoring activity in their frontal lobe and encouraging them to take a break when needed. National winners will be announced on May 5. Best of luck Anisha.

Infinitec Award

Aldrin student Abai Erkinbekov will receive an Outstanding Student Technology Award from the Infinitec North Assistive Technology Coalition on April 24. Abai received this award due to his exceptional use of technology, which includes an application called TouchChat on an iPad, as well as typing, to advocate his wants and needs, and communicate his thoughts and ideas with others.

Abai was nominated for this award by some of the individuals who support him, including assistive technology facilitator McKayla Greco, special education teacher Ana Pineda, speech language pathologist Lijia Varghese, social worker Marni Sherman, and occupational therapist Melanie Hostman. Other team members who support Abai include Maha Boopathyraj, Brenda Kim, Agnes Koltas, James Lynch, and Magda Mularczyk.

National History Day

Several Mead Junior High School students qualified for the Illinois History Day competition, which will take place on May 1 in Springfield. Each year more than half a million students participate in this nationwide contest. Students choose a historical topic related to the theme. This year's theme is Rights &

Responsibilities in History. Students can present their work as a research paper, an exhibit, a performance, a documentary or a website.

Sponsors of the Mead History Fair are Julie Morrison and Megan Tamulis.

These are the students that are moving onto the state competition on May 1st:

- Moksh Ashwin, Rishaan Lillaney and Zeus Blumberg for their documentary – *The PLATO Computer System: Transformation and Equity in the Classroom*
- Gabe Dybczak and Prisha Vajpayee for their documentary – *The Equal Pay Act of 1963: An Evolution of Promises*
- Aoto Horiguchi, Filip Tabaczynski and Vihaan Seth for their documentary – *The Right of the Government – The Release of the Pentagon Papers*
- Betselot Mussie for his exhibit – *The Double V Campaign: African-Americans Fighting for Freedom on All Fronts*
- Shreya Hingmire & Florence Xu for their exhibit – *The Matchgirls' Strike of 1888: The Spark that Started a Flame*
- Hamsa Gupta & Isabelle McBurrows for their exhibit – *The Stewart B. McKinney Act: Transforming Struggle into Success*
- Neil Yash for his website – *Going for Broke: How a Regiment Fought for their Rights*
- Audrey Wimmer for her documentary – *Solidarity Forever: The Legacy of the Haymarket Martyrs*. Audrey also received the Josephine Baskin Minow Award at regionals for this documentary.

Another Mead group also received a special award at the regional competition.

- Chase Reabe & Koyo Nielsen received the Gerber Hart LGBTQ Award for their exhibit – *The Life and Legacy of Alan Turning*.

Geography Bee

The following students earned the top three spots in the District 54 Geography Bee on March 14. The top four students from each junior high school geography bee qualified to compete at the district bee.

The winning question in the championship round was: Timbuktu, a center of caravan trade for almost a thousand years, is located north of the Niger River in which landlocked country? The answer was: Mali

- 1st place: Chloe Davis from Addams
- 2nd place: Jason Sanchir from Frost
- 3rd place: Junque Lee from Frost

Michelle LeDeaux and Gerritt Snyder are the Geography Bee Club Sponsors from Frost and Nathan Glesne is the Geography Bee Club Sponsor from Addams.

Chain Reaction Bee

The following teams won the 2025 Chain Reaction Competition. Students were challenged to design a device that will perform a simple task in an indirect and incredibly overly complicated way. This year's task was wrapping a present. Teams were judged on things like design, teamwork, alignment to theme, and successful attempts.

Elementary Division

- 1st Place: Collins, sponsored by Kristen Martin & Rebecca Carvell
 - Suvd Batmunkh
 - Nora Albiola
 - Melody Emeson
 - Branden Hong
 - Ashvika Garga
 - Arjun Thakore
 - Stefan Stoyanov
 - Habib Ahmad
 - Jonny Szwaja
 - Arth Patel
- 2nd Place: Hoover, sponsored by Kyle Sustich
 - Ryan Enkhbat
 - Ali Syed
 - Wilder McGargill
 - Rachel Varghese
 - Waseem Jabari

- Ella Nelson
- Krishiv Patel
- Dino Vlahopoulos
- Vidit Athwani
- 3rd Place: Blackwell sponsored by Kelly Kolton & Amanda Sorge
 - Santi Abreu-Pousa
 - Daniel George
 - Simeon Kisyov
 - Spencer Gunsteen
 - Rayyan Durrani
 - Griffin Dowd
 - Zainab Baseer
 - Sarah Cudzik
 - Gia Pravin
 - Gavin Goebel

Junior High Division

- 1st Place Junior High: Frost sponsored by Elizabeth Davis
 - Ping Chairat
 - Anish Chandar
 - Gargi Dagde
 - Hirdey Deepak
 - Liam Kovaka
 - Mihira Malladi
 - Jana Milinkovic
 - Erik Morales
 - Zuhayr Naqvi
 - Akanksha Raut
 - Surya Ravichandran
 - Josh Salvatore
 - Jason Sanchir
 - Agastya Sistla
 - Viviana Strynkowski
 - Malaika Valladares
 - Alexander Waidanz
 - Anina Wilson
- 2nd Place Junior High: Mead sponsored by Daniel Hirshfeld
 - Ian Saldana
 - Millie Ger
 - Preet Parmar
 - Jaival Trivedi

- Om Patel
- Sean Myagmar Ochir
- Mikey Brandon
- Saath Parikh
- Kalki Vijay

- 3rd Place Junior High: Addams sponsored by Jillian Erlenborn
 - Ryan Caldwell
 - Leon De Guzman
 - Olaf Iwanciow
 - Carter Losch
 - Jaslyn Mendez
 - George Milhim
 - Margaret O'Connor
 - Toyeebat Owolabi
 - Eeshen Patel
 - Mukta Patel
 - Hamza Pathan
 - Kyle Prouza
 - Adam Puccini
 - Kevin Sabau
 - Rohan Sharan
 - Willow Smith
 - Philip Suchocki

D54 App Challenge

This fall junior high students enrolled in STEM 2 classes participated in the 3rd annual D54 App Challenge. This challenge gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their coding skills and use of the Engineering Design Process by creating an original app from scratch. Each student applied their skills and brought their own perspectives to designing and coding. After spending weeks making sure their apps were fully functional, the students were asked to create a video presentation demonstrating their app and how their code makes the app function.

Students submitted their app as well as the video presentation of the app to the judges. Each app was scored based upon its implementation of code, design, and creativity. We are so proud of all our students who participated

and would like to congratulate our winners who scored the highest across all junior highs in District 54.

- Ivan Zmiyarov and Dimitar Donev from Mead Junior High School won first place for their app Charity Clarity
- Moksh Ashwin from Mead Junior High School won second place for his app Empower the Impoverished
- Shreya Thakkar from Mead Junior High School tied for third place for her app Coastal Cleanup.

Mead Sponsor: Tom Pfeifer

- Laila Kuta from Addams Junior High School tied for third place for her app Parent's Hub

Addams Sponsor: Jessica Reinkingh

First LEGO League

Frost student Hirdey Deepak and Keller student Diya Kolasani are teammates on the Winning Wizards team, which advanced to the international level of the FIRST LEGO League tournament, being held this June in Massachusetts. This international tournament is a prestigious event where teams from around the world come together to showcase their skills in robotics, innovation and problem-solving.

To qualify for the international tournament, they achieved the following.

- Qualifier Round (Dec. 15) – Won 2 awards (Champion Award & Robert Performance Award) and advanced to the sectional round.
- Sectional Round (Jan. 18) – Won 3 awards (Champion Award, Robert Performance Award & Alliance Round Award) and advanced to state round.
- State Round (Feb. 15) – Won 1 Award (Robot Design Award) and advanced to attend the international round.

Junior High Math Competition

All seventh- and eighth-grade students were invited to join Math Olympiad Clubs at their schools to help them prepare for this district competition. This culminated in a school competition, and the winner from each school advanced to the 3rd annual District 54 Junior High Math Competition. At the district event, teams collaborated on the 10 math problems presented and wrote their final answer on a white board.

First Place - The Warriors from Keller

- Dylan Lee
- Benjamin Regalado
- Surya Sundar
- Mann Patel
- Jayanth Yara
- Rima Venkat
- *Sponsored by Cristina Laudando*

Second Place - The Spartan Ice Giants from Frost

- Shrey Iyengar
- Abhiram Sappa
- Lucas Kim
- Ari Singh
- Rudra Travadi
- *Sponsored by Christopher Morris*

Third Place - The So We Are Geniuses from Mead

- Aayush Soni
- Kalki Vijay
- Om Patel
- Saath Parikh
- Betselot Mussie
- *Sponsored by Amy Varchmin and Jasmine Krueger*

Let N be the greatest five-digit number whose digits have a product of 120. What is the sum of the digits of N ? (Solution: 18)

Japanese Speech Contests

The following Dooley students received an award at the 9th Annual Heritage Japanese Language Speech Contest for native Japanese-speaking students, held on February 9, 2025 at the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago.

- Emmie Hampson, grade 4 – 1st prize
- Julia Kennedy, grade 5 – Japan American Society Award
- Momoka Machida, grade 4 – JIC Award
- Ryoto Yamamoto, grade 3 – JIC Award

One Dooley student also received an award at the 39th Annual Japanese Language Speech Contest for native English-speaking students who study Japanese as a second language, held on March 22, 2025 at the Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago.

- Ivy Garland, grade 4 – 1st Prize

Ikumi Boyd, Reina VandeBogart and Ayako Abe were the club sponsors at Dooley who supported these students.

PTA Reflections Winners

Tonight, we are honoring many, many students who qualified for the state level of Reflections, a PTA writing and fine arts competition. In addition, we have five students who are advancing to the national level and a few who received special awards at state. S

Advancing to the National Level

- Arin Pandey, grade 2 at Link School, in the film production category for *Twisty – the twisted tree*
- Kiara Neema, grade 4 at Campanelli School, in the literature category for *It Makes No Difference*
- Reyaansh Patra, grade 2 at Link School, in the music category for *Perfectly Imperfect*
- Lynne Whiteid, grade 6 at Campanelli School, in the photography category for *Imperfection is Beautiful*
- Nathan Jakobi, grade 7 at Keller Jr. High, in the photography category for *The Broken Rubber Wheel*

State Honorable Mention

- Manit Jain, grade 4 at Lincoln Prairie School, in the dance choreography category for *Small things mean a lot*. Manit Jain also qualified for state in the photography category for *High or Low, Still Not Imperfect*
- Lorelai Rappard, grade 5 at Link School, in the photography category for *Africa's Unicorn*
- Annabel Cho, grade 3 at Collins School, in the visual arts category for *Practice turns to dreams*

State Award of National Distinction

- Liam Seriruk, grade 4 at Aldrin School in the film production category for *The Beauty of Broken*

Advanced to State

- Rukaiya Kapadia, grade 2 at Aldrin School, in the visual arts category for *The Golden Ring*
- Leilany De la Cruz, grade 4 at Aldrin School, in the visual arts category for *Grassy Hill*
- Chloe Kim, grade 6 at Campanelli School, in the Literature category for *Freedom and Perfectionism*
- Hetvi Vyas, grade 4 at Collins School, in the photography category for *Odd Pumpkin In*
- Sanjana Manikandan, grade 7 at Eisenhower Junior High, in the music composition category for *Imperfect*
- Renaisha Chikhalia, grade 7 at Eisenhower Junior High, in the music category for *Messy Music*
- Laasyapriya Vasanth, grade 5 at Fairview School, in the literature category for *Accepting Imperfection*
- Savani Shende, grade 1 at Fairview School, in the visual arts category for *Embrace Your Flaws*
- Riya Chandrasekaran, grade 5 at Fairview Elementary, in the music composition category for *Perfectly Imperfect* and in the visual arts category for *Imperfect Human Emotion*

- Sara Synowiec, grade 8 at Frost Junior High in the literature category for *Beware*
- Rosie Bromley, grade 7 at Frost Junior High in the photography category for *No Two Imperfections Are Alike, and It's Perfect*
- Atharv Kumar, grade 5 at Hoover Elementary in the dance choreography category for *Feathers of Illumination*
- Anabel Morales, grade 5 at Hoover Elementary in the dance choreography category for *We're Imperfect*
- Quinn Meier, grade 5 at Hoover Elementary in the photography category for *Busy Bee*
- Madelyn Hanson, grade 7 at Lincoln Prairie in the dance choreography category for *Dance at Sunset*
- Trisha Rai, grade 6 at Lincoln Prairie in the literature category for *Perfect*
- Corey Copeland Jr., grade 4 at Link Elementary in the dance choreography category for *Be Who You Are: I Am the Future*
- Anusha Pandey, grade 6 at Link Elementary in the film production category for *Imperfectly Perfect*
- Samaira Chatterjee, grade 5 at Link Elementary in the literature category for *The Hunt*
- Spruha Deshmukh, grade 5 at Link Elementary in the music composition category for *Go Away*
- Dhriya Bhatt, grade 4 at Link Elementary in the visual arts category for *Racing to be Perfect vs. Accepting Imperfection*
- Reyansh Chikalia, grade 3 at Link Elementary in the dance choreography category for *Now You Know You're Beautiful*
- Devansh Jyoti, grade 7 at Mead Junior High in the music composition category for *Accepting Imperfection and Respect Yourself*
- Sonia Krzepisz, grade 8 at Mead Junior High in the photography category for *Chewbacca, Golden or Not, and Oracle Park*
- Tyler Schalberg, grade 7 at Mead Junior High in the visual arts category for *Untitled*

- Karaline Morris, grade 3 at Nerge School in the dance choreography category for *Never Give Up*
- Kira Tantuwaya, grade 5 at Nerge School in the visual arts category for *Waterfall Puzzle*