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William James Wins Big at Regional Science & Engineering Fair

Students receive 15 regional awards; 6 projects advance to state

Ten William James Middle School students qualified for the Georgia Science & Engineering Fair (GSEF) in Athens, March 28-30, after their six projects received top awards at the regional GSEF competition at Savannah State University on Feb. 5-7. WJMS had 41 students compete at regionals. Their projects were part of the 174 total projects submitted by students from throughout the region. In addition, 15 WJMS students received regional awards.

These are the WJMS award winners and their projects: **Walker Saussy & Drew Yawn**, 2nd place Chemistry (State Fair Qualifier); **Erin Shen**, 1st place Chemistry (State Fair Qualifier); **Daniel Gerguis & Reece Popkin**, 2nd place Energy/Chemical (State Fair Qualifier); **Julia Basquin & Jasmine Patel**, 2nd place Energy/Physical (State Fair Qualifier); **Eli Compton**, 3rd place Material Science (State Fair Qualifier); **Mason Johns & Logan Groover**, 2nd place Material Science (State Fair Qualifier); **Landon Brooks & John Proctor**, 3rd place Physics & Astronomy; **John Parker**, 2nd place Plant Science; **Tina Piltner & Daisy Romero**, 1st place Bio-medical.

Danielle Jackson, a science teacher at WJMS, received the Dr. William T. Lipscomb Outstanding Teacher Award for exceptional support and encouragement of students' Science & Engineering Fair projects and teaching the scientific method for the pursuit of knowledge.

Jackson consistently stresses the importance of the steps in the scientific method because she aspires to train her students to think like scientists and experience what the job of a scientist entails. Participating in GSEF is a requirement for high school students in honors physical science classes, but Jackson allows students to pick a project topic they are interested in.

“I feel if students are engaged in their own research, it will increase their focus,” said Jackson. “It will motivate them to perform higher-level critical thinking skills and promote meaningful learning experiences.”

The GSEF is Georgia’s leading competition for students in grades 6-12 to feature their original research, contend for awards and collaborate with high-profile professional scientists. Georgia’s science fair system equips students to thrive as productive and influential members of their communities in today’s developing technological society by advancing their skills in problem solving, reflective thinking and critical thinking.

Each year, thousands of middle and high school students fill the Classic Center in Athens to compete in the GSEF. GSEF is hosted by Georgia Public Broadcasting’s Stephen Fowler and live streamed online at www.gpb.org.

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