

Dear Governors School Student,

Have you done a research project in the area of science, technology, engineering or mathematics? If so, I hope you will consider entering your project in the North Carolina Student Academy of Science (NCSAS) competitions this year to get direct feedback from research scientists and compete for some great awards.

Do you know about the Student Academy? We are not the Science Fair, Science Olympiad, or Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, all organizations that seek to foster student interest in science and mathematics. NCSAS does that, too, but is distinctive in holding competitions at the District and State levels for students who have completed research projects, requiring both a paper and an oral presentation, and providing an opportunity for them to receive personal feedback from research scientists in their field.

Awards given at the State Competition include cash, plaques, science magazine subscriptions, books, cash, and bookstore gift cards. We also award a limited number of expense-paid trips to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)/American Junior Academy of Science meetings for the most outstanding papers, plus we give a \$1,000 college scholarship each year. In addition, we offer mini-grants to student researchers to encourage their efforts. Finally, through our affiliation with the NC Academy of Science, the North Carolina's association for college level research scientists, we award two honorary memberships in the American Association for the Advancement of Science to two students each year.

This year's District and State Competitions, as always, will be judged by professional scientists. Students will receive copies of their papers with the judges' suggestions and meet informally with the judges over dinner to learn about recent advances and what it's like to pursue a career in science. We also have a mentoring program that matches interested middle school students with high school students, and this year we have arranged for student winners to attend the annual NC Academy of Science meeting as honored guests. In addition, we are proud of having been able to treat the participants in the State Competition to keynote talks by premier researchers including Dr. John Vandenberg of NC State University; Dr. Michael Paesler of NC State University; Dr. Peter Agre, Nobel Laureate from Duke University; and Dr. JoAnn Burkholder of NC State University. This year's keynote address will be delivered by another Nobel laureate, Dr. Oliver Smithies of UNC.

The District Competition is an initial opportunity to compete, but also to get feedback on your paper and presentation for the State Competition. In 2009 District Competitions are being held on Saturdays in January and February. The State Competition is at the NC School of Science and Mathematics on Friday afternoon and evening, March 27th. It is timed to allow you to participate in the Student Academy competition at NCSSM in Durham on Friday, and the State Science Fair at Meredith College in Raleigh on Saturday.

More information about the Student Academy and the District and State Competitions, including whom to contact for additional information, is available at www.ncsas.org. The form to apply for membership in the Student Academy and enter the State Competition is also available on the website. You can register online and send your paper to one of the Co-Directors for your district. The contact information for the Co-Directors is on the website.

So visit our website if you want to join us at Student Academy meetings and competitions this year. You'll find lots of opportunities to meet students with similar interests, learn from research scientists and win some special recognition and awards for your work.

If you have any questions about participating in the NC Student Academy of Science, please feel free to email me at Warshaw@ncssm.edu or call me at (919) 416-2886.

Steve Warshaw
Executive Director, NC Student Academy of Science

