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## VI Middle School Students Win National MATHCOUNTS Video Challenge

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ST. THOMAS — Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School's (BCB) Full Force Engineers team is the 2019-2020 winner of the national MATHCOUNTS Video Challenge, which required students to select and solve a problem in a visually creative way while displaying the students' mathematical skills, the Dept. of Education has announced.

The announcement was made by MATHCOUNTS on May 13 during the annual celebration of MATHCOUNTS Week. The student group topped a record number of 480 videos submitted for the challenge this year, D.O.E. said.

According to the release, Full Force Engineers is comprised of BCB eighth graders Ciara Rodney, Teniesha Alcendor, Gia Tuckett, and L'Rynzo Abraham. Their five-minute video entry into the

competition depicts the students as engineers struggling to fill a budget shortfall as they try to complete the flooring at one of the new schools being built following Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The Full Force Engineers find the area of a seven-sided room so that their community benefactor, Madam Ciara, can do the appropriate accounting to cover the flooring costs.

Aside from strengthening their mathematical skills, the annual challenge allows for students to enhance their capabilities in animation and video production/editing, according to Alcendor. In a finalist interview produced by MATHCOUNTS, students shared their story.

“Creating the animations were difficult because the timing of everything really has to be perfect,” Rodney told Christin Chandler of MATHCOUNTS.

“My favorite part of the process was seeing the whole video come together, piece by piece. Having the chance to inspire children, and maybe even adults in the United States and internationally, is an amazing opportunity,” Abraham said.

Participation in MATHCOUNTS has greatly increased at BCB Middle School over the last several years as more students opt to deepen and challenge their understanding of math concepts, according to D.O.E. With two teams participating in the 2020 competition, the winning Full Force Engineers and semi-finalist Let’s Go Engineers, it’s hard to overlook the passion for math that has been ignited in the BCB community.

“I treat my students as my family,” said math teacher and MATHCOUNTS coach, Mark Sy. “My energy and passion for teaching comes from my students. I want to help make math fun, exciting, engaging and challenging.”

Sy is also responsible for selecting the captain of each team, and the captain, in turn, selects team members.

The Full Force Engineers also offered up a bit of advice for students interested in participating in next year’s MATHCOUNTS Video Challenge.

“Never give up because making the video was not easy,” Alcendor said. “There will be bumps in the road, but we made it to the end so don’t give up. Just keep trying.”