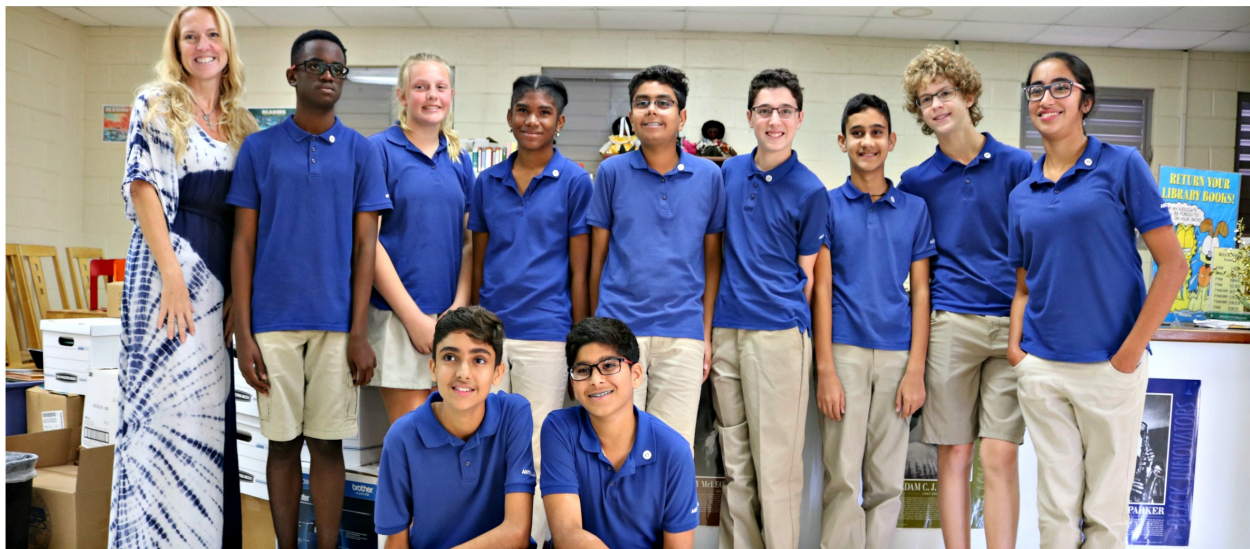


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Antilles, BCB Students Advance To State MATHCOUNTS Competition

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ST. THOMAS -- Mathletes converged over the Presidents' Day holiday to battle for the championship title at the 2019 MATHCOUNTS St. Thomas – St. John District Chapter Competition on Monday, February 18, the Department of Education has announced. Teams from the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School (BCB) and the Antilles School participated in this year's competition.

Antilles School seventh-grader Julien Loewenstein was the top scorer in the written portions of the competition, and Antilles eighth-grader Bonham Geller won the Countdown round where he went head-to-head with Loewenstein.

St. Thomas-St. John District Acting Insular Superintendent Stefan Jürgen opened the event with a warm welcome to the participants.

"I commend you for coming out and being a part of this year's MATHCOUNTS competition," Acting Superintendent Jürgen began. "It's a good thing to see that there are still young people who love math and see its value. We want to celebrate the fact that you all came out today and no matter who wins, it's about stepping up and being a part of these amazing initiatives."

Students then began the written portion of the competition which involved a 40-minute Sprint round which focuses on speed and accuracy, a 24-minute Target round that hones in on students' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills, and a 20-minute Team round which focuses on problem-solving and collaboration.

While scores from the written portion were tallied, students from the BCB team presented their video challenge submission. The video presentation featured a hypothetical situation where the students from the hurricane-damaged Addelita Cancryn Junior High School were subsequently enrolled at BCB.

"The video challenge was exciting! It got the students actively engaged with the concepts because they got the chance to be creative. The video shows the beauty and resiliency of the Virgin Islands while exploring the math concepts of fractions and percentages as the students examined population growth at their school as a result of the closure of the Addelita Cancryn Jr. High School," explained BCB Coach Mark Joseph Sy.

BCB was the only school to submit a video for the challenge, and the students and their coach urged the crowd to vote for their video which stood in the 6th spot as of the day of the competition. Community members are encouraged to visit <https://videochallenge.mathcounts.org/videos/vi-strong> and vote for the BCB team's video titled, "#VISTRONG."

Following the video presentation, the top five mathletes, Julien Loewenstein, Bonham Geller, Ronit Totwani, Aisha Khemani, and Dhruv Rupani, all from Antilles School, battled each other in the Countdown round where students had 45 seconds to buzz in and correctly answer each problem. The crowd also stepped in and solved problems that were thrown out by the judges.

"We practiced 4 hours every Saturday. We worked really hard, and we have the MATHCOUNTS practice booklets that we would use to go through practice problems. I've been to a national competition before, but this is my first time participating in the District competition," said an enthusiastic Bonham Geller.

"MATHCOUNTS provides opportunities for students to engage with mathematics concepts in a fun and competitive way," said St. Thomas – St. John District Math and MATHCOUNTS Coordinator Avon Benjamin. "You can see the excitement in these students' faces as they compete. Our goal is to extend the competition to more schools so that more students can develop a love of math. We want more students to see how fun math can be."

Ranked by most points, the top 10 mathletes for the STTJ District are:

1. Julien Loewenstein, Antilles School
2. Bonham Geller, Antilles School
3. Ronit Totwani, Antilles School
4. Aisha Khemani, Antilles School
5. Dhruv Rupani, Antilles School
6. Ashmit Bhagchandani, Antilles School
7. Ariel Paul, Antilles School
8. Elizabeth Emmanuel, Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School
9. Madelyn Avery, Antilles School
10. Cas Sandra E'Bas, Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School

The Top 10 students from the district will compete against the Top 10 of the St. Croix District on Thursday, March 21 at the State MATHCOUNTS Competition in St. Croix.

Following the state competition, four winners will be selected to represent the Territory at the 2019 Raytheon MATHCOUNTS National Championship, slated for May 11-14 in Orlando, Florida.

Local sponsors of the 2019 MATHCOUNTS STTJ District Chapter Competition include the Department of Education and the Rotary Club of St. Thomas II.

MATHCOUNTS is a nationwide mathematics program that pushes middle schoolers to test their knowledge of various math concepts in a Bee style format. Students battle individually and in teams through several written rounds topped off with an intense timed round where students work swiftly to beat their challengers and the clock. This year's competition featured a new video challenge where mathematics and creativity collided to produce fun and compelling videos teaching math concepts.