

MEDIA ADVISORY
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2012

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NORTH FLORIDA'S TOP STEM SCHOLARS TO BE HONORED IN ORLANDO

North Florida's highest achieving science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) students will join their peers from around the state Thursday and Friday in Orlando to be honored during the 2012 Sunshine State Scholars program. The two-day awards and recruitment event celebrates the accomplishments of these elite students and provides a unique opportunity for Florida's colleges and universities to recruit their talents.

The Scholars event started as a simple science and math competition in 1997 and has evolved into a program designed to recognize Florida's top high school STEM students and recruit them to pursue their post secondary education in Florida – increasing the likelihood that they will join Florida's future workforce. Each school district selects and names one 11th grade scholar based on established criteria.

The program will begin on Thursday evening with a welcome reception and continues on Friday with a breakfast, recruitment fair and workshops where students can talk with officials representing more than 40 public and private higher education institutions about the opportunities that are available at Florida's colleges and universities. The event concludes with an award luncheon.

The event will take place at

Doubletree Hotel at Entrance to Universal Orlando
5780 Major Blvd.
Orlando

Thursday, Feb. 16
Welcome Reception
6:00 p.m.

Gerard Robinson, Florida Education Commissioner
Frank Brogan, Chancellor, State University System of Florida
Stacy Carlson, Vice President and Director, Helios Education Foundation

Friday, Feb. 17
Breakfast
8:00 a.m.

Jennifer Grove, Workforce Development Coordinator, Gulf Power
Dr. Jimmie L. Davis, Jr., President, *STEMflorida*

Recruitment Fair, Concurrent Exhibits and Workshops
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Awards Luncheon

12:00 p.m.

Roberto Martinez, Vice Chair, Florida State Board of Education

Pam Stewart, Chancellor, K-12 Public Schools

Rosemary Woods, Vice President-Transportation, Atkins

Stephen K. Klasko, M.D., CEO, USF Health, and Dean, Morsani College of Medicine

The Sunshine State Scholars program is a collaborative effort between the Florida Education Foundation, the Division of Florida Colleges, the State University System and the Florida Department of Education. Event sponsors of this year's program include the Helios Education Foundation, Atkins, Universal Orlando Resort, Gulf Power, Florida Trend Magazine, and the Florida Lottery.

A list of the Sunshine State Scholars from North Florida is below.

NORTH FLORIDA		
District	Student	School
Alachua	Yi Zeng	Buchholz High School
Baker	Reagan McKendree	Baker County High School
Bradford	Dustin Swain	Bradford High School
Clay	Bailey Anderson	Ridgeview High School
Columbia	Hayley Lewis	Columbia High School
Dixie	Amanda Weaver	Dixie County High School
Duval	Haya Kaseer	Atlantic Coast High School
Duval	Rashid Alrashid	Terry Parker High School
Flagler	Cheyenna Espinoza	Matanzas High School
Gilchrist	Amanda Dennis	Bell High School
Hamilton	Hetal Thakor	Hamilton County High School
Lafayette	Trevor Swafford	Lafayette High School
Levy	Quincy Cason	Williston High School
Marion	Alice Cannon	Forest High School
Nassau	Michael Pietrusiak	Yulee High School
Putnam	Martin Matthew Plumley	Palatka High School
St. Johns	Caroline Snowden	Ponte Vedra High School
Suwannee	Charles Allen Peaden	Suwannee High School
University of Florida	Eva Aranda	PK Yonge Developmental Research School
Union	Dana Seager	Union County High School
Volusia	Rumya Raghavan	Spruce Creek High School

For more information about the Sunshine State Scholars program, visit www.floridaeducationfoundation.org.

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