

**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2012

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## **SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S TOP STEM SCHOLARS TO BE HONORED IN ORLANDO**

Southwest 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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 Southwest Florida is below.

<b>SOUTHWEST FLORIDA</b>		
<b>District</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>School</b>
Charlotte	Kade Cicchella	Lemon Bay High School
Citrus	Harrison King	Lecanto High School
Collier	Alexander Robau	Lely High School
DeSoto	Jacob Dewey	DeSoto High School
Glades	Maria Toledo	Moore Haven Jr./Sr. High School
Hardee	Alex Pierstorff	Hardee Senior High School
Hendry	Derek Bass	LaBelle High School
Hernando	Stephanie Wert	Central High School
Highlands	Kevin Colley	Lake Placid High School
Hillsborough	Ian Ludden	Bloomington High School
Hillsborough	Jacob Bernier	Durant High School
Lee	Michael D’Angelo	Fort Myers High School
Lee	Cory French	Fort Myers High School
Manatee	Mackenzie Yaryura	South East High School
Pasco	Nikita Shah	Wiregrass Ranch High School
Pinellas	Joseph Sinibaldi	Seminole High School
Pinellas	Jessee Faylo	East Lake High School
Polk	Dominic Chiampi	Bartow International Baccalaureate
Polk	Aubrey Presnell	George Jenkins High School
Sarasota	Robert Ranier	Venice High School
Sumter	Angela Danielle Cole	Wildwood Middle High School

For more information about the Sunshine State Scholars program, visit [www.floridaeducationfoundation.org](http://www.floridaeducationfoundation.org).

