

## Three ACPS students named semifinalists in prestigious national science competition

Alachua County Public School students continue to distinguish themselves at the national level in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields.

Three local students have been named semifinalists in the 2019 Broadcom MASTERS competition, considered one of the most prestigious STEM competitions for middle school students. The competition is sponsored annually by the Broadcom Foundation and Society for Science and the Public. The semifinalists were selected from among more than 2,300 applicants.

Buchholz High School freshman Angela Gao, Eastside High School freshman Akash Verma and Gainesville High School freshman David Cagle are among Broadcom's Top 300 MASTERS from throughout the nation. The students qualified with projects they submitted during the 2017-18 school year, when Gao and Verma were enrolled at Lincoln Middle School and Cagle was enrolled at Oak Hall.

Broadcom Image 2Gao was recognized for her project 'Evaluation and Optimization of Photocatalytic Ability of Graphitic Carbon Nitride for Contaminant Renewal.' Verma was named semifinalist for a project called 'A Novel Study to Evaluate the Possible Effects of RF Radiation on Human Brain Waves and Testing Innovative Strategies to Lower RF Levels from RF-Emitting Devices.' Cagle's project was 'Bullying: Does Information Influence Perception?'

This is the second year that Verma has been named a Broadcom Top 300 MASTER.

Multiple Alachua County Public School students have been named semifinalists in the program every year since its inception in 2011.

To qualify for consideration in the Broadcom MASTERS competition, students must be top performers at science fairs across the country. They must then submit an extensive online application which is reviewed by expert judges. Besides providing information about their projects, the students must submit information about their other academic achievements, extracurricular and other activities. They must also respond to essay questions to demonstrate their creativity.

Thirty of the 300 national semifinalists will be selected as finalists later this month. Those selected will travel to Washington, DC in October to compete for more than \$100,000 in prizes.



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