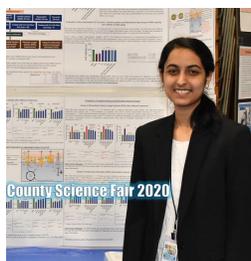
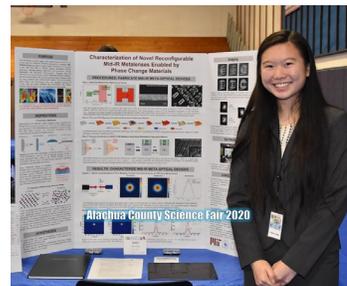


Local student qualifies for international science fair; more than 30 headed to state contest

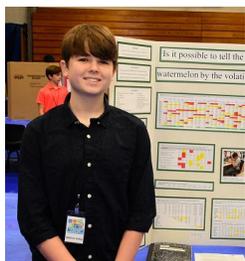
Buchholz High School student Helena Jiang has qualified for the prestigious Intel International Science and Engineering Fair after winning top honors at the regional fair.

Jiang won Best in Show and had the highest overall score in the Senior Division (high school) of the Alachua Regional Science and Engineering Fair, which automatically earns her a spot in the international competition. She also won first place in the Chemistry Division with her project 'Characterization of novel reconfigurable mid-IR metalenses enabled by phase change materials' and won special awards from the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Air Force and the Florida Association of Science Teachers.

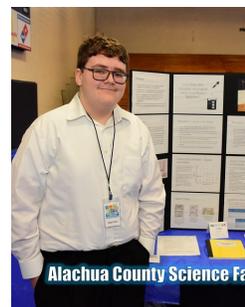


Himanshi Verma of Eastside High School also won Best in Show honors at the regional fair in the Senior Division. Verma's project 'Exploring the efficacy of a novel ocular drug formulation in alleviating neurodegenerative diseases' also took first place in the Biomedical and Health Sciences Division and won special awards from Altrusa and the United States Air Force.

This is the third straight year that Jiang has won Best of Show honors in the regional competition. She also took the Grand Award at the 2019 State Science and Engineering Competition and a first place award in Chemistry in the 2019 international fair. Verma took Best of Show in the 2018 regionals, first place in that year's state competition and 4th place in her division at the International Fair.



In the Junior (middle school) division, two students shared Best in Show honors at this year's regional fair. They were Westwood Middle School student Matthew Settles with a Life Science project called 'Is it possible to tell the ripeness of a watermelon by the volatiles in its rind?' and fellow Westwood student Isaac Savin with his project "How does viscosity of a liquid determine how it splashes.' Settles won a special



Broadcom award, while Savin earned additional awards from the U.S. Navy, Broadcom and the Florida Association of Science Teachers,

All four students are among 31 local middle and high school students who have qualified to represent Alachua County in the State Science and Engineering Fair, which will be held in Lakeland in late March. High school students can also qualify for the international fair with a top performance at the state contest. Middle school students are not eligible for the international competition.

(more)

The students who will be representing Alachua County in the State Science and Engineering Fair include:

Senior Division

Anjana Balachandar, Buchholz High School
Angela Gao, Buchholz High School
Helena Jiang, Buchholz High School
Aditi Shukla, Buchholz High School
Jeffrey Xue, Buchholz High School
Brindha Rathinasabapathi, Eastside High School
Himanshi Verma, Eastside High School
Akash Verma, Eastside High School
Jad Helmy, Gainesville High School

Junior Division

Connor Ely, Ft. Clarke Middle School
Nathaniel James, Ft. Clarke Middle School
Grace Yoon, Ft. Clark Middle School
Daniel Tapia-Ruano and Damien Bell, High Springs Community School
Kathryn Law, Howard Bishop Middle School
Quinn Vaughn, Howard Bishop Middle School
Jackson Collins, Oak View Middle School
Aubrey Fournier, Oak View Middle School
Elizabeth Nowicki, Oak View Middle School
Alex Wynn, Oak View Middle School
Jasper Anderson, Westwood Middle School
Emlyn Arner, Westwood Middle School
Kayleigh Denton, Westwood Middle School
Flora Jane Freer, Westwood Middle School
Finn McDermott, Westwood Middle School
Clara Milosevic, Westwood Middle School
Logan Rockwell, Westwood Middle School
Isaac Savin, Westwood Middle School
Matthew Settles, Westwood Middle School
Kiera Shepherd and Lukas Scott, Westwood Middle School

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