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News Release

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BELL SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL WINS ACADEMIC DECATHLON



and Andrew Vargas.

The Bell Senior High School team soared their way to victory. The student champs won the Los Angeles Unified 39th Annual Academic Decathlon, the first title for the school since the competition was introduced in 1981.

The theme for this year was, “In Sickness and in Health: An Exploration of Illness and Wellness.” Students competed in 10 events: Speech, prepared and impromptu, Interview, Essay, Art, Economics, Literature, Mathematics, Music, Social Science and Science. The fast-paced “Super Quiz,” an oral relay covering all subjects, was the only public event.

The Bell High School decathletes are: Gilbert Castro, Rubi Espinoza, Cindy Soto, Armando Aguilar, Danny Arteaga, Emanuel Perez, Diego Mora, Isabelle Torres

The team took first place with 49,952.8 out of a possible score of 65,880.0. Ulysses S. Grant High School again earned second-place honors with 49,864.5 points. Rounding out the top five spots were John Marshall Senior High School with 48,421.3 points, James A. Garfield Senior High School with 47,805.2 points and last year’s winner, Benjamin Franklin High School with 45,045.1 points.

The winners were announced Saturday during a ceremony at Hollywood High School. Hundreds of decathletes from 55 high schools celebrated with supporters, relatives, friends, teachers, and principals.

“Congratulations to all of our students and coaches for their outstanding performances today,” Superintendent Austin Beutner said. “And a very special congratulations to our Bell High School champions! Your hard work and determination have paid off. We’ll be rooting for you in the state championships.”

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"I want to offer a huge congratulations to the Bell High School Academic Decathlon team," Board Vice President Jackie Goldberg said. "Students, you are among our best and brightest. Your hard work, dedication, and diligent preparation have paid off spectacularly. We are so very proud of you, and we know this is only the beginning of your academic accomplishments. To the teachers who worked with this team and to Principal Balderas, we congratulate you as well for helping your students reach such dazzling heights."

"I am proud to congratulate the Bell Academic Decathlon team," Board President Dr. Richard Vladovic said. "You are continuing the legacy of excellence in our District. Thank you to the dedication of our students, teachers and the principal."

"I take pride in congratulating the Bell High School team, the winners of the Academic Decathlon, and all of the talented, hard-working students who took part in this very challenging competition," Board Member Dr. George J. McKenna III said. "You demonstrated brain power, perseverance and commitment. You developed good habits that will help you succeed throughout life."

"Fantastic job to our students, coaches, staff and everyone involved in the 39th Annual Academic Decathlon," Board Member Mónica García said. "What a performance by Bell High School! You make your families and community proud. Keep up energy and the hard work with everything you do in life!"

"Congratulations to Bell High School for winning the championship in the 39th Annual Academic Decathlon and to all the schools that competed this year," Board Member Scott M. Schmerelson said. "I am especially proud of Board District 3 schools, Grant High School, Northridge Academy and Valley Academy of Arts and Sciences for their efforts and outstanding performance. I thank our administrators, coaches, parents and families for their strong support and commitment to our students. Kudos to all and let's keep up the good work."

"Congratulations to Bell High School's victorious Academic Decathlon team," Board Member Nick Melvoin said. "Los Angeles Unified is proud to have so many talented student competitors in this annual tradition – a great representation of the academic success our kids can achieve."

"Congratulations to the students of Bell Senior High," Board Member Kelly Gonez said. "You have dedication, teamwork, and your persistence has not only led to your victory in the Decathlon, but will help you throughout your academic career and beyond."

Bell High School now heads to Sacramento to compete in the California Academic Decathlon, scheduled for March 26-29. Seven additional Los Angeles Unified teams will also make the trip. Marshall, Garfield, Franklin and the competitors are Northridge Academy with 44010.8 points, Valley Academy of Arts and Sciences with 43,854 points and Van Nuys High School with 43583.6 points.

Los Angeles Unified holds the record with 23 state titles and 19 national championships.

Below are the top students who earned the highest scores and were honored with scholarships, individual medals and trophies for academic achievement:

Ben Bryant from Marshall High School took home the top trophy with a total of 8,686.4 points.

Ameera Mulla from Valley Academy of Arts and Sciences took second place with 8,671.4 points.

Vivian Le from Grant High School took third place with 8,640.9 points.

Patricia Prokopidis from Westchester Enriched Sciences Magnet is Coach of the Year.

The final official score of the Super Quiz was 4900 earned by Bell High School.