



# GOOSE CREEK

## CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Highlands Junior team calculates way to state tourney

Eighty "mathletes" from nine area schools participated in the Regional MATHCOUNTS competition held at Horace Mann Junior School on Feb. 25.

All Goose Creek junior schools had student representatives at the competition. In all, about 45 of the 80 students competing were Goose Creek CISD students.

Two Goose Creek CISD students placed in the top 10 overall.

Kyrie Yong, a seventh grade student at Highlands Junior earned the competition's highest individual score and won first place in the countdown round. Rachel King, an eighth grade student from Highland Junior, placed ninth in the individual round.

The team from Highlands Junior School, coached by Michelle Williams and Melissa Mansker, placed second overall, earning a berth in the state competition. The team members are Kyrie Yong, Rachel King, Janely Toledo, and Rachel Brown.

This will be the second straight trip to the state competition for Highlands Junior School. Last year, Highland Junior did not place in the state competition. However, Kyrie Yong ranked in the top 25 percent at state.

The team from Gentry Junior School, coached by Clint Halstead, placed third in the regional meet. The team members were Siavosh Zamipour, Shawyan Landi, Rolan Langalais, and Ruchir Pipalia.

The state competition will be in Austin on March 23 and March 24.

"We will be proudly taking the Goose Creek team from Highlands Junior, knowing that a national seat in Orlando, Florida is within our reach," said Brandy Woods, Secondary Math Specialist.

"Mathletes" spend countless hours calculating equations, learning formulas, and doing high school level mathematics to prepare.

During competition, students are tested on topics such as probability, statistics, linear algebra and polynomials.

The competition consists of timed written tests and a fast-paced oral match.

The junior school MATHCOUNTS competitions – in which students test their skills in a fast-paced "bee"-style competition – aim to spark an interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.



The team from Highlands Junior School, coached by Michelle Williams and Melissa Mansker, placed second overall in the Regional MATHCOUNTS competition, earning a berth in the state competition. The team members, from left, are Racheal King, Rachel Brown, Janely Toledo, and Kyrie Yong.

Started by the National Society of Professional Engineers and the National Council of Teacher of Mathematics, the MATHCOUNTS program is not about tedious math work and basic calculations. Instead, it celebrates the problem-solving, creative and applied side of math where equations and formulas can offer solutions for everyday life. Students compete both as individuals and as teams of four.

In each competition students compete in four rounds. In the sprint round, students have 40 minutes to solve 30 problems. The target round, consist of 4 rounds in which students are challenged to solve 2 problems in 6 minutes. The team round lasts 20 minutes and students collaboratively complete a 10-question exam. Depending on their individual score, finalists can advance to the Jeopardy-like countdown/final round.

Locally, ExxonMobil contributes mightily to the Goose Creek CISD MATHCOUNTS program (\$5,000 this year), as well as provides volunteers to run the competition and attend practices to help coach the students. The Texas Society of Professional Engineer Bay Area Chapter also provides volunteers, T-shirts, and lunch for the Regional competition.

The Goose Creek CISD MATHCOUNTS program is led by Brandy Woods, junior school math instructional specialist. Lee High School teacher Robert Allen is the assistant coordinator. At the campus level, there are coaches at each school: Matthew Barnett and Camille Burt, Baytown Junior; Megan Downs, Cedar Bayou Junior; Clint Halstead, Gentry Junior; Michelle Williams and Melissa Mansker, Highlands Junior; Linda "Sue" Payne, Horace Mann Junior.

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Physical Address:  
Goose Creek Consolidated  
Independent School District  
4544 Interstate 10 East  
Baytown, Texas 77521  
281.420.4800

Mailing Address:  
Goose Creek Consolidated  
Independent School District  
P.O. Box 30  
Baytown, Texas 77522  
281.420.4800

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