

Los Angeles Unified School District
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
333 S. Beaudry Ave., 1st floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Phone: (213) 241-6766
FAX: (213) 241-8952
www.lausd.net



News Release

February 10, 2006
#05/06-136

TAFT HIGH SCHOOL WINS 2006 LAUSD ACADEMIC DECATHLON *Second Consecutive Win for High School in Woodland Hills*

Taft High School has won the 2006 Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Academic Decathlon competition, the school's second consecutive win. The nine-member team, which led all LAUSD schools with a winning score of 51,516.2 points, will now compete in the 2006 California Academic Decathlon competition, scheduled March 17-19 in Los Angeles.

Members of Taft High School's 2006 Academic Decathlon winning team are: **Zachary Ellington, Michael Farrell, Farhan Khan, David Lopez, David Novgorodsky, Yuliya Rebrova, Atish Sawant, Dean Schaffer** and **Monica Schettler**. Their coach is **Arthur Berchin**.

In all, eight teams from the LAUSD will join Taft High School in the state competition. They are **El Camino Real High School** (49,448.9 points), **Granada Hills Charter High School** (47,311.6 points), **Los Angeles High School** (46,150.7 points), **Marshall High School** (45,855.9 points), **Garfield High School** (44,310.4 points), **North Hollywood High School** (43,970.9 points), **Reseda High School** (43,950.6 points) and **Palisades Charter High School** (43,751.4 points), which have all earned "wild card" invitations to the state competition. The state competition allows for eight wild card invitations statewide based upon the scores in the regional competition. The LAUSD earned all eight invitations.

This year's state competition is sure to include an exciting rematch between Taft High School and El Camino Real High School. Last year, Taft High School suffered a major upset when it was defeated by El Camino Real High School, which won the California State Academic Decathlon and the U.S. Academic Decathlon competition.

Winners of the 2006 Academic Decathlon competition were announced at an awards banquet held Friday night at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Hundreds of students were honored with individual medals and trophies for academic excellence.

(more)

Based on all 10 events, **Dean Schaffer**, 17, of Taft High School was declared the top scoring student overall with 9,121.4 points, in addition to being named the top scorer in the Honor Division. Schaffer won that same honor in 2005. **Ian Ynda-Hummel** of Garfield High School was the top scoring student overall with 8,935.5 points in the Scholastic Division. **Franciscus Alex Rebro** of El Camino Real High School was the highest scoring student with 8,465.0 points in the Varsity Division.

Each school team is comprised of nine students— three students from three different grade-point average (GPA) categories – Varsity (2.99 GPA and below), Scholastic (3.00-3.74 GPA), and Honor (3.74 GPA and above).

Los Angeles High School proved its academic prowess once again in the Super Quiz event. The school remains the undefeated Super Quiz champion with its ninth straight win. The team scored 5,585 points out of 6,000 points possible. Six Los Angeles High School decathletes earned perfect scores on the 10-question Super Quiz Relay competition.

Geng Tan from Los Angeles High School received the highest student score in the Super Quiz combined competition. He received a trophy and a \$500 scholarship as the recipient of the Larry McCormick Memorial Award, which is given to the student with the top score in the Super Quiz event. McCormick, the KTLA news anchor who died in 2004, served for 12 years as the LAUSD's Quiz Master at its annual Super Quiz Relay competition.

Altair Maine of North Hollywood High School and **Karyn Newbill** of Palisades Charter High School were presented the annual Coach's Award, which is given to an outstanding Academic Decathlon coach who has been coaching at least three years. Maine and Newbill were recognized for exemplifying the highest standards of achievement, dedication and teamwork.

Under the direction of Academic Decathlon Coach **James Moore**, Jordan High School was named the LAUSD's Most Improved Team districtwide for scoring 14,205 points more than the previous year.

Approximately 540 students, including some of the district's top student scholars, from 69 schools participated in the 2006 Academic Decathlon 10-quiz competition. The participants took three quizzes – Speech, Interview and Essay –January 28 at Bravo Medical Magnet High School. On February 4 at UCLA, those same students took seven more quizzes – Art, Economics, Language and Literature, Mathematics, Music, Social Science and Super Quiz Written – before embarking on the exciting and energetic challenge of the Super

(more)

Quiz Competition Relay. The scores of all 10 quizzes are then tallied together to declare the winners of the LAUSD competition. This year's topic was "The European Renaissance: Renewal and Reform."

The winner of the state competition will go on to compete in the U.S. Academic Decathlon, scheduled April 26-29, in San Antonio, TX.

The 2006 LAUSD Academic Decathlon awards banquet will be broadcast on KLCS, the district's public television station, at 11:00 a.m., Monday, February 20.

#