

## Wayzata High School Science Bowl team wins state competition

### Students will compete next in national event

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It was another successful year for the students representing Wayzata High at the Minnesota High School Science Bowl.

The results of the Jan. 28 event, which saw 26 teams from 14 schools competing at Minnetonka High School, included a first-place finish for Wayzata High School's Team 1 and a second-place showing for the Wayzata's Team 2. Taking third place was Minnetonka High School's Team 1.

Wayzata's top-placing team consists of Eric Chen, Matthew Chen, Khoi Le, Samarth Ram and Aneesh Swaminathan. The team will travel to Washington D.C. to represent Minnesota in the U.S. Department of Energy's National Science Bowl, which is set for April 27 through May 1.

Wayzata High School's Team 2 is comprised of students Ishaan Goyal, Richard Lin, Weili Lu, Aaratrika Mondal and Nitish Shirodkar.

The competition was organized by the Minnesota Academy of Science, a statewide nonprofit organization working to foster interest in STEM by sponsoring education programs and events for students in elementary school through college.

The win makes it six years in row that a Wayzata High team has taken first in the state competition and the third year in a row in which the school secured the top two spots.

Aneesh Swaminathan, a Wayzata senior who's been involved in Science Bowl since middle school, said he was first drawn to the competition for its game-show style and face-paced nature.

"Buzzing in to answer a science question was always exhilarating," he said.

Science Bowl participants compete head-to-head in five-person teams

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to solve technical problems and answer questions in various branches of science and math. The tournament uses a quick-paced, Q&A format in which students race to ring in with their answers first and then work collaboratively on multi-part follow-ups. Each team plays multiple games in a round-robin tournament, competing to advance to a double-elimination championship.

Swaminathan, whose competition focus is in the areas of biology and chemistry, was also part of his school's winning team in 2020. He has become good friends with his Science Bowl teammates, many of whom he's known since competing together while attending Wayzata Central Middle School.

"We've grown and strengthened as a team over the years, and the support we've built helps collaborate in a team competition like Science Bowl," the student said.



(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Wayzata High School's Team 1 took first place in this year's Minnesota High School Science Bowl. The team members, from left to right, are seniors Matthew Chen, Samarth Ram, Aneesh Swaminathan, Eric Chen, Khoi Le and coach Amanda Laden.

Swaminathan said he was happy to see the state Science Bowl event returned to an in-person format after two years of having to compete online due to the pandemic.

"The in-person experience was much more exciting and rewarding. There was more adrenaline and anticipation, something a virtual experience didn't really provide," he said.

The student also noted

that the event provided the opportunity to meet and interact with like-minded peers.

"My favorite part was definitely the people. ... I met dozens of other science-passionate students and heard from professionals of a variety of unique backgrounds - from electrical engineering to photochemistry," Swaminathan said.

That student-to-student interaction is also

appreciated by Wayzata High teacher and Science Bowl coach Amanda Laden. She applauded her students for volunteering and helping younger students who are interested in science and math.

"I just think it's really cool that this program has grown to the point where there's a lot of mentorship between the high school kids and the middle school kids," she said.

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