

3M Young Scientist Challenge Announces 2020 National Finalists and State Merit Winners



3M and Discovery Education congratulate finalists and winners; announce 2020 shift to a virtual competition in response to COVID-19

ST. PAUL, Minn. & SILVER SPRING, Md.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- 3M and Discovery Education today announced the top 10 finalists and 27 State Merit Winners in the 2020 [3M Young Scientist Challenge](https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200623005248/en/). As the nation's premier middle school science competition, these young scientists submitted outstanding projects utilizing the power of STEM to improve the world.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200623005248/en/>

This year's finalists, four girls and six boys ranging in age from 12-14, identified an everyday problem they're passionate about and submitted a one- to two-minute video communicating the science behind their solution to solve the problem. An esteemed group of judges, including 3M scientists and leaders in education from across the country, evaluated entries based on creativity, scientific knowledge, and communication effectiveness. These young inventors won the top ten spots in this year's challenge with their innovative thinking, scientific acumen, and display of exceptional communication skills.

In response to COVID-19, the 2020 3M Young Scientist Challenge is pivoting the final event from 3M headquarters in St. Paul, Minn. to an interactive virtual competition to be held on October 12-13, where finalists will be evaluated on a series of challenges and the presentation of their completed innovation.

"Inspirational moments of community are all around us and the need for action is clearly strong -- now more than ever, we are looking to the next generation to help improve the world we live in, and the 3M Young Scientist Challenge is a great platform for them to express what and how they want to see change," said Denise Rutherford, senior vice president of Corporate Affairs at 3M. "The 2020 finalists and state merit winners prove once again that young minds can combine STEM skills with imagination and creativity to identify and solve a real-world problem using science. They will undoubtedly build on their knowledge and experience with science

to impact the future, and that is something for us all to embrace. We are proud of this year's competitors and remain committed to supporting STEM-for-all and building a path to a better life for everyone."

The top 10 2020 *3M Young Scientist Challenge* finalists include students from public and private schools across America. Each finalist will receive \$1,000 and the opportunity to work virtually with a 3M scientist who will mentor them as they evolve their invention from idea to prototype. The grand prize winner will receive \$25,000 and the prestigious title of America's Top Young Scientist.

The top 10 2020 *3M Young Scientist Challenge* finalists are as follows in alphabetical order by last name:

Laasya Acharya, Mason, Ohio, Mason Middle School, Mason City School District
Xavier Baquero-Iglesias, Naples, Fla., Community School of Naples, Collier County Public Schools
Anika Chebrolu, Frisco, Tex., Nelson Middle School, Frisco Independent School District
Rithvik Ijju, Englewood, Colo., Challenge School, Cherry Creek School District
Ekansh Mittal, Beaverton, Ore., Meadow Park Middle School, Beaverton School District
Harsha Pillariseti, San Ramon, Calif., Windemere Ranch Middle School, San Ramon Valley Unified School District
Samhita Pokkunuri, Old Bridge, N.J., Carl Sandburg Middle School, Old Bridge Township School District
Samvrit Rao, Ashburn, Va., Stone Hill Middle School, Loudoun
Kyle Tianshi, San Diego, Calif., The Cambridge School, Private
Sophia Weiner, Rockledge, Fla., Holy Trinity Episcopal Academy, Private School

In addition to the top ten finalists, there are 27 State Merit Winners, selected for their passion, innovation, and superb communication skills. Each State Merit Winner receives special recognition on the challenge website, along with a special technology prize pack.

The 2020 *3M Young Scientist Challenge* State Merit Winners are listed below in alphabetical order by state:

[Alabama] Jordan Jennings, Homeschool – Key Destiny, Madison County
[Arkansas] Lajwanthi Saravanakumar, Washington Junior High School, Bentonville Public School District
[Arizona] Prisha Shroff, Accelerated Middle School, Chandler Unified School District
[California] Audrey Luu, Sam H. Lawson Middle School, Cupertino Union School District
[Connecticut] Xander Shavers, Beecher Road School, Woodbridge School District
[Delaware] Neehal Pathak, Brandywine Springs School, Red Clay Consolidated School District
[Florida] Siddharth Kini, Seminole Science Charter School, Seminole County
[Georgia] Roshan Kolachina, J.C. Booth Middle School, Fayette County Public Schools
[Iowa] Sujan Vijayraj Shadrak, Oak Ridge Middle School, Linn-Mar Community School District
[Indiana] Mira Nuthakki, Creekside Middle School, Carmel Clay Schools
[Kentucky] Kar, Meyzeek Middle School, Jefferson County Public Schools
[Massachusetts] Sva Kassev, Sharon Middle School, Sharon Public Schools
[Maryland] Sudhish Swain, Takoma Park Middle School, Montgomery County Public Schools
[Minnesota] Rohan Dham, Wayzata Central Middle School, Wayzata Public Schools
[North Carolina] Lydia Denton, Sallie B. Howard School of the Arts, Wilson County Schools
[New Jersey] Arnesh Kundu, Homeschool
[Nevada] Akshansh Chauhan, Davidson Academy of Nevada, Washoe County School District
[New York] Jayden Tarife, Lakewood Elementary School, Clarkstown Central School District
[Ohio] Haasini Mendu, Mason Middle School, Mason City School District
[Oregon] Ishan Ahluwalia, Stroller Middle School, Beaverston School District
[Pennsylvania] Pooja Menon, J.R. Fugett Middle School, West Chester Area School District
[South Carolina] Vishnu Abboy, GREEN Charter School, Greenville County Schools
[Tennessee] Adithya Sastry, Farragut Middle School, Knox County Schools
[Texas] Ella Schreiter, Brookside Intermediate School, Clear Creek Independent School District
[Virginia] Aashka Shah, George H. Moody Middle School, Henrico County Public Schools

[Washington] Kosha Upadhyay, Odle Middle School, Bellevue School District
[Wisconsin] Keira Block, Golda Meir School, Milwaukee Public Schools

“3M has long committed to inspiring and challenging students to invent out-of-the-box solutions that solve some of the world’s most pressing problems. Discovery Education is proud to partner with 3M and congratulates each winner and finalist for their innovation, imagination, and fearlessness,” said Lori McFarling, president of Corporate & Community Education Partnerships at Discovery Education. “Young minds fueled by STEM thinking prepare us all for the future ahead and inspire a continued cycle of passionate young scientists dedicated to improving the planet.”

In its 13th year, the *3M Young Scientist Challenge* continues to inspire and challenge middle school students to think creatively and apply the power of STEM to discovering real-world solutions. America’s Top Young Scientists have gone on to give TED Talks, file patents, found nonprofits, make the Forbes 30 Under 30 list, ring the bell at the New York Stock Exchange, and exhibit at the White House Science Fair. These young innovators have also been featured in Good Morning America, The Ellen DeGeneres Show, The New York Times Magazine, Forbes, Business Insider, and more.

The award-winning *3M Young Scientist Challenge* supplements the 3M and Discovery Education program – Young Scientist Lab – which provides no-cost dynamic digital resources for students, teachers, and families to explore, transform, and innovate the world around them. All the resources are also available through the 3M Channel and Community Partnerships Channel on [Discovery Education Experience](#), the digital service whose high-quality resources and instructional supports for educators are enriching student learning and extending it to the real world.

To learn more about the *3M Young Scientist Challenge* and meet this year’s finalists, visit youngscientistlab.com.

About 3M

At 3M, we apply science in collaborative ways to improve lives daily. With \$32 billion in sales, our 96,000 employees connect with customers all around the world. Learn more about 3M’s creative solutions to the world’s problems at www.3M.com or on Twitter @3M or @3MNews.

About Discovery Education

Discovery Education is the global leader in standards-aligned digital curriculum resources, engaging content, and professional learning for K-12 classrooms. Through its award-winning digital textbooks, multimedia resources, immersive STEM experiences and the largest professional learning network of its kind, Discovery Education is transforming teaching and learning and improving academic achievement around the globe. Discovery Education’s services are available in approximately half of U.S. classrooms and primary schools in the U.K. and reach over 5 million educators and 51 million students in more than 90 countries. Inspired by the global media company Discovery, Inc., Discovery Education partners with districts, states, and like-minded organizations to empower teachers with customized solutions that support the success of all learners. Explore the future of education at DiscoveryEducation.com.

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