

The Monmouth Journal

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St. James student scores highest honors in WordMasters challenge



Emmett McNamara (standing, from left), 11, of Little Silver; Sarah Hough, 13, of Little Silver; and Bella Murrer, 12, of Tinton Falls, along with Catherine Escueta (seated, left) 12, of Eatontown and Lauren Cleary, 12, of Red Bank, comprise the St. James School WordMasters.

RED BANK — A student representing St. James School recently won highest honors in this year's WordMasters Challenge — a national language arts competition entered by over 220,000 students annually, which consists of three separate meets held at intervals during the school year.

Competing in the difficult Blue Division of the challenge, eighth-grader Sarah Hough earned a perfect score in this year's first meet, held in December. This is the third consecutive year that Sarah has distinguished herself by achieving a perfect score. In the entire country only 51 other eighth-grade students achieved perfect results. Others students at the school who achieved outstanding results in the meet included sixth-grader Emmett McNamara, and seventh-graders Catherine Escueta, Lauren Cleary, and Bella Murrer. The school's students were coached in preparation for the Challenge by Elizabeth Powell.

We salute all of our students on their special achievement.

The WordMasters Challenge is an exercise in critical thinking that first encourages students to become familiar with a set of interesting new words (considerably harder than grade level), and then challenges them to use words to complete analogies expressing various kinds of logical relationships. Working to solve the Challenge analogies helps students learn to think both analytically and metaphorically.

Though most vocabulary-boosting and analogy-solving activities have been created for high school students, the WordMasters materials have been specifically designed for younger students, in grade three through eight. They are particularly well suited for able and interested children, who rise to the challenge of learning new words and enjoy the logical puzzles posed by analogies.

The WordMasters Challenge has been administered for the past 25 years by a company based in Allendale, which is dedicated to inspiring high achievement in American schools.

The students will participate in two more meets in the coming months, and medals and certificates will be awarded in June to those who achieve and, or improve the most in the course of the year.