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## Campolindo Returns as Champions in the National Academic Decathlon

*Submitted by Jonathan Lance*



Campolindo's Academic Decathlon team, from left: Uma Gaffney, Vikram Bhaduri, Christoph Steefel, Sarada Symonds, Graham Wade, Zach Scherer, Tristan Caro, Samuel MacAdam, Marina Han, and Coach Paul Verbanszky. Photo provided

State-Academic-Decathlon.html). U.S. Congressman George Miller came to the Campolindo campus last week to present the team with Congressional Recognition.

"I am really proud of how far our school's Academic Decathlon has come in the three years I have been in it, and how successful it has become," says Campolindo Academic Decathlon member Christoph Steefel. Team member Graham Wade added, "I did not believe it at first, but I was really excited and happy that all of our hard work had paid off."

Directed by the Contra Costa County Office of Education and with the assistance of community volunteers, the East Bay Regional Academic Decathlon provides an opportunity for high school students to compete as individuals and teams in a series of 10 academic tests and demonstrations. The curriculum includes art, economics, language and literature, mathematics, music, science, social science, essay, interview, speech (prepared and impromptu), and the Super Quiz(tm).

For the second year in a row, Campolindo High School's Academic Decathlon team, representing the entire state of California, recently earned National Champion status for medium-sized schools.

"When I found out we won Nationals for the second year in a row, I was incredibly excited," says Campolindo's Academic Decathlon coach Paul Verbanszky, who teaches AP psychology and government/economics, and has been Campolindo's Academic Decathlon coach since 2005. "The team has worked very hard to accomplish this. An opportunity like this does not come often in a lifetime. These are some of the finest students I have ever worked with in my 13 years of education!"

Although Campolindo is a medium sized school, it placed 10th overall at the 2014 State Competition, held in Sacramento this past March, competing against schools several times its size (see the March 26 Lamorinda Weekly story at <https://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0802/Campo-Finishes-on-Top-at-California->

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[back](#)

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