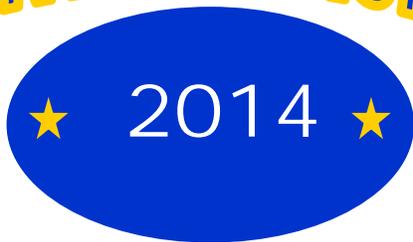


MONTANA AGATE



SAT CHALLENGE

The **intent** of the **Montana SAT Challenge** is to identify and recognize academically talented seventh and eighth grade students who reason well mathematically, read critically and express themselves well in a self-developed written essay. Through the **SAT Challenge**, 7th & 8th grade students who exhibit strong academic aptitude are eligible to take the **SAT Test** designed normally to be taken by college bound 11th and 12th graders. Performance on this test forms the basis for providing academic program counseling and offering opportunities for advanced/accelerated learning.

This year **91** Montana students entered the **SAT Challenge** competition. A total of **65** students were honored at an awards ceremony held Friday evening, April 4, 2014 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Billings, Montana. These honored students were recipients of certificates and medals.



Guest presenter at the SAT ceremony was **Dr. Brian Housand**, an assistant professor and coordinator of the Academically and Intellectually Gifted Program at East Carolina University. The topic of his presentation was “**Technology and Gifted Kids: What Parents Need to Know.**” He shared ways in which technology can enhance the learning environment as he strives to help students and parents define what it means to be creatively productive in a digital age.

[Montana AGATE - Parents and Tech](http://personal.ecu.edu/housandb/MT-AGATE-2014/PARENT.html) (<http://personal.ecu.edu/housandb/MT-AGATE-2014/PARENT.html>)

The three high scorers in each subtest section (critical reading, math, writing and composite) were presented with a \$250.00 scholarship to be used to further their summer academic/enrichment interests. In addition, the winning students who participated in the **SAT Challenge** received an **Interpretive Guide** to help explain the results of the test, so that parents and students may see how they compare to other Montana 7th and 8th graders.

The **SAT Test** is designed to be used by college bound juniors and seniors and assumes these students are currently involved in a course of study preparing them for college work. For middle school/junior high students, the **SAT** is a radically “off-level test”. For the students from communities who may have scored below the cutoff scores, this test should not cause them high concern since they are taking this test long before they might normally do so. The average depending upon the year for high school seniors is about 500 respectfully on each of the subtests. The average for this year’s **SAT Challenge** participants was **501** critical reading, **500** math, **443** writing and **1443** composite and for the **SAT Challenge** winners **534** critical reading, **535** math, **474** for writing and **1542** composite. On a side note, **22** of the students qualified for one category, **18** for two and **24** for three. **63%** of the student winners qualified in reading, **78%** of the students qualified in math and **57%** of the students qualified in writing. It is important to remember that as a SAT Challenge student, they represent the ablest 10% of the students for their age and grade.

Eight of the twelve scholarship winners attended the evening ceremony. Each gave a short synopsis about themselves, shared with the ceremony attendees about their plans to utilize their scholarship and accepted the award.



Matthew Amunrud, an eighth grade homeschooled student from Bozeman, was one of the three reading scholarship winners. Two of his favorite subjects to study are history and the Bible. Recently, he qualified for the state geography bee and the state spelling bee. He studies piano and is beginning to learn guitar. His hobbies include skiing, playing basketball and reading. He can often be found with a good book in hand, especially historical fiction. After an extended basketball season with the Gallatin Valley Homeschool Association, he's currently enjoying track in the snow! This summer, he and his family will once again head east to work on the ranch. He is still undecided on exactly how to use his scholarship, but is hoping to attend a summer camp.

Roy Rasch is the second reading winner from Bozeman. Other than reading, he loves to ski and skies three to four days a week with the Bozeman Ski Foundation Nordic program. He has been lucky enough to visit seven countries, recently through the Spring to Europe school trip and thus, discovered that he really enjoys traveling. As a Boy Scout, he has achieved the rank of Star. He hopes to one day be an Eagle Scout like his dad. He may want to be an engineer and would like to use his scholarship money to go to one of the Spectrum camps or maybe to the Gifted Institute in Helena to learn more about engineering.



Our third reading winner, **William McKinney**, more commonly known as Bridger, is an 8th grade student at Sacajawea Middle School in Bozeman. In school, Bridger's interests are as wide as his curiosity. His teachers have described him as a teacher's aide because his probing questions take lessons to a deeper level and engage his peers in seeking a deeper understanding. He loves science and math as these disciplines give him insights into the workings of the world. But in truth, social studies, communication arts and art, also hold a fascination for him. So long as he's learning, he's engaged. Outside of school, his interests include Nordic skiing with the Bridger Ski Foundation, mountain biking on Utah's slick rock trails and rock climbing all over Montana. But, perhaps his favorite extra-curricular activity is "experimenting." Bridger is always trying to figure out how things work and developing new kitchen-counter experiments - which

often includes an element of blowing things up. Bridger was born in Alaska, and discovered a love for flying during one of his trips back to visit his friend Ernie who's an ER doctor and float plane pilot. When Bridger was just six, Ernie put a booster seat in his Cessna 185 float plane and allowed Bridger to fly the plane up the Misty Fjords. He returned from that trip declaring that he wanted to be a bush pilot when he grows up. Bridger is interested in the aviation career exploration summer program. But as he loves spending time in the outdoors, camps by the Glacier Institute or Montana Science School are also of interest.

Zachary Tonnerre, one of our three math scholarship winners, is an eighth grader from Missoula attending Washington Middle School. He was born in Massachusetts and raised in Switzerland, where he learned French. He moved to Missoula six years ago. He is an avid reader and plays soccer, tennis and the Double Bass. He participated in the state Math Counts competition and in the county Spelling Bee. Zachary has lived in Worcester, Massachusetts, Salt Lake City, Utah, Neuchâtel, Switzerland and Montana. He loves to travel, listen to music, reading, hiking with his two dogs, hanging out with friends, playing soccer and doing math. He speaks English, French and is learning Spanish. He plans to use the scholarship to attend the Gifted institute at Carroll College this year.



Joyce Liu is an eighth-grader from Washington Middle School in Missoula. She enjoys performing musical selections for the piano and violin and likes playing tennis, swimming, hanging out with her friends, listening to music and undertaking various hands-on projects. Joyce was one of the top four winners at the state MATH COUNTS this year and will be representing Montana at the National MATH COUNTS competition in Orlando, Florida in May. She plans to use the scholarship money for a summer camp.

Cory Emlen is an 8th grader and the third math winner from Missoula. He loves math and really enjoys computer programming. One of his favorite hobbies is making origami he especially likes to listen or watch lectures from The Great Courses (Math, History and Music). He also plays the clarinet and bassoon. He will probably use the scholarship money for a computer science programming camp at the U of M in the summer and possibly another camp as he has not officially decided.





Ayana Gray, is the first of three writing winners who hails from Great Falls and attends school at North Middle School as an 8th grader. Ayana has been a straight A student since the fourth grade, and has since been a part of several gifted programs. She was one of the first fourth graders at Agnor-Hurt Elementary School in Charlottesville, VA that participated in the World Peace Game with Mr. John Hunter. In New York, her gifted program allowed her to start Latin in sixth grade. In seventh grade, the gifted program in Pennsylvania allowed her to take Latin II in the high school where she participated in the National Latin Exam and earned the Magna Cum Laude award. Her time in Pennsylvania also gave her the opportunity to take the SAT in seventh grade through the Johns Hopkins University-Center for Talented Youth (JHU-CTY). The JHU-CTY recognized her for outstanding performance on the SAT. Ayana also participated in the Math Counts competition in both Pennsylvania as a seventh grader, as well as at North Middle School in Great Falls, where her team went on to the State competition in Bozeman. In both years, Ayana was among the top scorers in her school on the American Mathematics Contest. Ayana is currently doing Geometry at the CMR High School in Great Falls.

Fiona Lee, the second of three writing winners, is thirteen years old and an eighth grader at Headwaters Academy in Bozeman. Her favorite subjects in school are Algebra, Spanish and English, and she was a member of the Headwaters Math Counts team this year. She also loves to write poetry and is currently experimenting with writing without a rhyming scheme. Fiona aspires to become a professional ballerina one day and has played major roles in classical ballets such as Swan Lake and The Nutcracker. She received a full merit scholarship to The School of American Ballet's 2014 Summer Intensive, and she will use her SAT Scholarship money to subsidize her housing expenses in New York City.



Trevor Nelson is the last writing winner, and he is an 8th grader at St. Andrew School in Helena. He is the oldest of four kids in his family and is an incredible example to his siblings of balancing his academic responsibility at school with time spent on activities that bring him joy. He is a member of the Helena Lions Swim Team and plays soccer on the U-14 Helena Arsenal team. When Trevor is not in the pool or on the soccer field, you can find him enjoying time at youth group, listening to music, reading, creating art, watching football and hanging out with his brother and sisters. Along with his brother, Trevor is the founder of Chari-t-s, an organization that designs t-shirts and generates sales as a method of fundraising for non-profit organizations. He is looking forward to attending Legendary Lodge camp this summer and to becoming involved in the Catholic Youth Conference.

Katie Ellig, our first composite winner, is an 8th grader at Sacajawea Middle School in Bozeman. She has always loved a good challenge, academic or otherwise, and has enjoyed taking the SATs over the past few years. She love sports and is currently a competitive gymnast. Katie also enjoys art, music, (playing the cello and the piano) and most outdoor activities such as biking, hunting, fishing, hiking and camping. She plans to use the scholarship money to pay for a portion of the tuition for a summer camp like the Gifted Institute in Helena



Ben Jorgensen, second composite winner, is an 8th Grader at Monforton School west of Bozeman. He loves math and math competitions. He taught himself computer coding and animation and has created some pretty impressive codes. He plays piano, loves to read, and is active in Boy Scouts. He hiked the Grand Canyon rim to rim in one day. Ben is also a Second Degree Black Belt in Taekwondo, where he is the State Champion in forms, sparring and combat weapons, and Northwest District Champion in sparring. As District Champion, he competed at the World Championship Tournament last summer. Ben is excited to use the AGATE scholarship money to take an online coding class. This will help him meet his goal of turning his coding into a profitable business while he's still in high school.

Geneva des Lions, the last of the three composite winners, is from Polson. If someone asked her, "What interests you most?" She would be completely stumped. She likes a little bit of everything, and depending on the day, it might be difficult to introduce her to something that won't at least spark her imagination. Geneva especially enjoys the rhythmic tone of poetry, the inquisition involved in mathematics and science and the new experiences found in a book. She doesn't intend to stop learning, and even if she wanted to, she couldn't, because in life there is a lesson in everything. She plans on putting her scholarship in savings with the local Mini-Bank, where it can earn four percent interest, to put towards her college career. If all goes well, she will use it to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology or some college within the state.



Montana AGATE congratulates the remaining **26** student participants of this year's **SAT Challenge**. These risk takers should be congratulated for their academic efforts - taking the SAT Test is an accomplishment in itself. If you are interested in securing an electronic copy of the **Interpretive Guide**, please contact Joette Speake at joette.speake@colstrip.k12.mt.us or joette.speake@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted by:

Joette Speake,

SAT Challenge Administrator

