



Greater Albany Public School District 8J

718 Seventh Avenue SW
Albany, Oregon 97321-2399
www.albany.k12.or.us

Phone (541) 967-4501
Business Fax (541) 967-4587

South Albany High School seniors Tyler Tuner and Ryan McMinds, students in Carla Streng's AP Biology class, qualified as national semifinalists in the 2008 USA Biology Olympiad. This is the second year the students have qualified as semi-finalists.

The USA Biology Olympiad (USABO) is a prestigious national competition sponsored by the Center for Excellence in Education. Each year, 20 finalists gather in Virginia for a two-week training camp. At the end of the camp, four people are selected as the American team to compete in the International Biology Olympiad.

USABO finalists are selected in two rounds of tests. The open exam is a short, multiple-choice exam open to all high school students. Competitors in roughly the top 10 percent move on to a semifinal exam. This second exam consists of another short multiple-choice section, followed by a short answer/matching section. The 20 highest scorers move on to the USABO finals. After the two-week training camp, the finalists undergo a day of practical examinations and a day of theoretical testing similar, in some respects, to the semifinal examination; however, the finals exam is far more comprehensive.

In 2007, the USABO had more participants than ever before, with 8,798 students from 247 schools (including some overseas) registering for the open exam. Of these participants, 574 were named semifinalists; they hailed from 161 schools, spanning 35 states (as well as Hong Kong). Now only in its fifth year (a very young age among USA Olympiads), the USABO enjoys rising popularity with American students as each annual competition at the IBO brings more recognition to the USABO program's successes

The USA Biology Olympiad is a first: the U.S. participates in Olympiads in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Computer Science but this is the first time that Biology has entered this level of competition. The top twenty winners of the U.S. Olympiad will compete for a position on the four-member team that will represent the U.S. at the International Biology Olympiad in Belarus. They will train at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, a supporter of the USA Biology Olympiad.

"The mission of the USABO is to help American High School Students reach the gold standard in biology through participation in the International Biology Olympiad," says Joann P. DiGennaro, President of the Center for Excellence in Education. According to Ms. DiGennaro, the competition "encourages excellence in biology education throughout the United States." All high school students in the U.S. are eligible to participate in the competition.

Funding sources for the USA Biology Olympiad include corporations, individuals, and private foundations. Supporters of the USA Biology Olympiad include many of the top companies in the nation, such as Bristol Myers Squibb, Eli Lilly & Company Foundation, Pfizer, Pharmacia, General Motors, Baxter International, Exponent Failure Analysis, LSU Health Science Foundation, Psychomedics Corporation, Maximus International, LLC and BioGen.