

GRANADA HILLS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

PRESS RELEASE

GRANADA HILLS CHARTER WINS AGAIN! FOUR-TIME STATE CHAMPIONS HEAD TO NATIONALS

March 22, 2015, Sacramento, CA - Granada Hills Charter High School has won its fourth California State Academic Decathlon championship in five years. The two-day competition in Sacramento concluded Saturday, March 21st. It was a tight contest between two cross-town rivals in the San Fernando Valley in Sacramento's Memorial Auditorium. The results were announced Sunday giving Granada its fifth State Championship. Granada's top-performing students garnered a winning score of 59,040.3 to El Camino Real Charter High School's 58,371.2 points. Fernando Sanchez, GHCHS Class of



Granada's Academic Decathlon championship team

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2015, secured the highest individual score with 9,449.1. Granada Hills Charter will now advance to the national competition for the fifth time. The United States Academic Decathlon will be held next month in Garden Grove, California.

“The key was ignoring all distractions and maintaining a passion for Decathlon. That focus and desire to never let my team down really pushed me every day and helped achieve this success,” says Irene Lee, Class of 2015, who won the second highest individual score with 9,387.4.



GHCHS team practices 25-30 hours per week to prepare for competition

The GHCHS Academic Decathlon team conducts rigorous training leading up to each competition. To prepare for each of the 10 events in the areas of math, economics, music, art, literature and speech, each team members has a partner that specializes in different topics. They work together to gain an overview of each subject, then fine-tune their understanding to incorporate the small details. They repeat this process over the course of the competition season, which runs from June through April. As the year progresses, the decathletes become more aware of their weaknesses in each subject and they set about addressing those weaknesses and transforming them into strengths.

“The secret to Granada’s three-time national decathlon championship success is school-wide support. Administration, faculty, and support staff ensure the team has what it needs to compete at a high level,” states Mathew Arnold, Academic Decathlon coach and six year veteran GHCHS English teacher. “Our school culture promotes the kind of intellectual vitality necessary for success in Academic Decathlon. But, really it comes down to the willingness of the team to see the value of Academic Decathlon and to work as hard as they can to help their teammates succeed.”

This year, only one winning team from the California competition advances to Nationals. Securing this win in the highly-competitive statewide sector helps prepare the team for the next level of competition. In the recent Los Angeles city competition, Granada Hills Charter team recorded the highest team score in the competition’s 47 year history with 59,167.10 points. GHCHS won the city, state and national championships for three consecutive



GHCHS Academic Decathlon team members celebrate their joyous victory

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years beginning in 2011 and came in second place in nationals in 2014. This year, the team of winning students is Irene Lee, Peter Cho, Fernando Sanchez, Jenean Docter, Jasmin Kim, and Natalie Gonzalez from the Class of 2015. Jorge Zepeda, Tanthai Pongstien, Joshua Lin and Jihee Han are from the Class 2016, and Aishah Mahmud is from the Class of 2017.

GHCHS Team displays their championship medals

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About Granada Hills Charter High School: Granada Hills Charter High School, the largest charter school in the nation, is an independent public school in the San Fernando Valley. As a fiscally independent conversion charter school, Granada Hills Charter has a current student enrollment of approximately 4,400 and an annual student wait list of almost 3,000. The School's student body is considered one of the most diverse, with more than 40 languages other than English spoken at home and over 60 nationalities represented. Over 2,200 students are eligible for the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program. As a 501c3 non-profit benefit corporation, the School's Governing Board is the legal entity overseeing all school policy and its \$42 million operating budget. In 2014, BusinessInsider.com and Niche recognized GHCHS as the # 1 public high school in California and #10 public high school in the United States of America.

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