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THE LINDALE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
EDUCATING EVERY CHILD EVERY DAY

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**LINDALE ISD MAKES HISTORY: BRINGING HOME THE 5A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP IN
UIL ACADEMICS**

For the first time since 2006, and for the first time as a 5A school, the Lindale High School UIL academic team will bring an overall State Championship home from Austin. Over the course of the spring semester's many UIL meets, the Eagles have earned 142 points beating out 5A powerhouses Highland Park (106), Prosper (98), The Colony in Lewisville (87) and A&M Consolidated (87).

"I was a member of the '04 and '05 Lindale UIL Academic state championship teams, and there is no feeling like earning one as a coach and sponsor," said Rory McKenzie, UIL coordinator and LHS speech and debate coach. "This is a marathon starting back in January and continuing all throughout May. Becoming a champion after so much hard work is the icing on a truly fantastic year."

During Tuesday's final UIL state meet, four students secured the final points for a Lindale ISD victory. LHS Junior Evan Bewersdorf won state championships in Lincoln-Douglas debate and informative speaking earning the team 30 points. LHS Sophomore Samantha Rodden placed sixth in poetry interpretation (earning four points) and junior Ronak Desai placed fourth in persuasive speaking (earning eight points). LHS Sophomore Ashlyn Ellgass also placed sixth in Lincoln-Douglas Debate (adding four additional points). When the final points were calculated, the LHS speech and debate team also secured a state championship, this marks the

Eagles' third consecutive year to win the honor at state. In total, the speech team alone earned 117 points.

"I am so proud of our high school UIL Academic team," said Lindale ISD Superintendent Stan Surratt. "Lindale high school is one of the smaller schools in the 5A division, and to win the overall UIL Academic State Championship is truly special. The 5A division schools include high schools such as Highland Park, Frisco, McKinney, Austin High, San Antonio Alamo Heights, Denton, Richardson and many more well known schools. This state championship further justifies that Lindale has the brightest students and the best educators."

"At every turn, these students have surprised me," said JP Fugler, LHS speech and debate coach. "Our year could not have gone better. This group didn't just add to our legacy, but created one of their own. This hasn't simply been a strong season for us, it's an unforgettable journey."

That journey started in early January with the Congressional Debate state meet. Bewersdorf emerged with a state championship (earning 15 points) while LHS junior Anthony Wyatt was awarded a bronze medal (earning 10 points). Furthermore, over spring break with the Cross-Examination Debate state meet, for the second year in a row, Lindale closed out the final round earning 36 points. Senior Jonas Thrasher-Evers (a three-time state champion) and his team partner Desai, also a Congressional Debate finalist, took the gold medal while LHS juniors Robert McWhorter and Anthony Wyatt claimed the silver.

"I am incredibly honored and humbled to win three gold medals at state," Bewersdorf said. "The success comes from our coaches and a plethora of people who support us tirelessly. They work countless hours to ensure we strive not for perfection, but excellence."

After spring break, the remainder of the academic contests begin competing at the district and then regional level. In April, four students competed in Austin. LHS Seniors Skylore Evans and Kelsi Jones took first and third respectively in computer applications (earning 25 points). Juniors Tyler Russell (computer science) and Adrienne Parks (headline writing) also competed.

"Mr. Surratt set a goal at the beginning of the school year for our academic team to win a state championship," said Amanda English, computer applications and science coach. "It is exciting to see that goal achieved. I am so proud of our students and the hard work they put in to win this championship."

Preparation for UIL academics begins over the summer, where teachers attend workshops and students attend summer institutes. Students compete at invitational tournaments throughout the fall and winter before most competition begins in the spring. In total there are 27 academic disciplines ranging from theatre and film, to literature and science.

The Eagles are coached by Rory McKenzie and JP Fugler in speech and debate, Amanda English in computing events, and Neda Morrow in journalism.

"I am so proud of the hard work and sacrifice that our students have given this year in their UIL events," said Neda Morrow. "Lindale is a special district, and there is an academic focus all the way from grades K-12. The teachers and students are supported by our administration and community, and that builds a culture of excellence in our schools. Winning the state championship in UIL academics is proof of the commitment our school has for the academic success of our students."

"It truly takes a village to make a UIL team run," McKenzie said. "We have an incredible group of sponsors who make working with their students a priority. None of this would be impossible without them and the support of our administration."

