

Science in our Lives

Program Steers Students Toward STEM Subjects

(NAPSA)—Science teachers and the U.S. Army are on a mission. Their joint objective is to promote student achievement in STEM subjects—science, technology, engineering and math.

An online collaborative learning competition called eCYBERMISSION—is designed to inspire student interest in STEM by encouraging students in grades six through nine to develop solutions to real-world challenges in their communities.

Solutions to Real Problems

Through the program, managed by the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), teams of three to four students are asked to identify an issue in their community related to one of seven mission challenges.

According to Dr. Gerry Wheeler, interim executive director, NSTA, the competition encourages students to be resourceful and to think critically while pursuing real solutions to real-world challenges.

After selecting a mission challenge, teams—under the guidance of a team adviser—apply the scientific method/inquiry or engineering design process to propose a solution. Each team then submits a mission folder, the official write-up of its project, via the program's website.

A panel of virtual judges evaluates and scores the mission folders on the basis of several criteria to identify state winning teams. The state winning teams then move on to the regional competition, where they compete with other teams in their grade across the region for an all-expenses-paid trip to the National Judging and Educational Event, taking place June 2013.

Teams have the opportunity to win state, regional and national



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awards and the students on the four national winning teams can receive up to \$8,000 in U.S. EE Savings Bonds, valued at maturity.

Promoting Interest in STEM

Mr. Dale Ormond, the director of the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command (RDECOM), said, "Our nation relies more and more on advances in science, technology, engineering and mathematics to solve real-world problems and ensure our national security. We encourage students to take an active role in their STEM education, and we hope they will continue to find that eCYBERMISSION is a fun and effective way to do that."

The eCYBERMISSION competition is part of the Army Educational Outreach Program (AEOP). The AEOP is comprised of Army-sponsored research, education competitions, internships and practical experiences designed to engage and guide students and teachers in STEM education.

Registration for the 2012–2013 competition is now open. To learn more about the program and to register, visit www.ecybermission.com or call (866) GO-CYBER (462-9237) or send an e-mail to missioncontrol@ecybermission.com.