

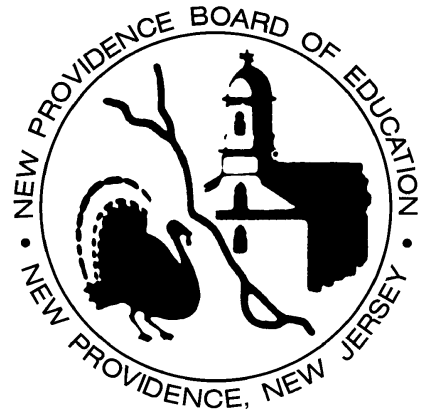
Press from:

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Subject: *New Providence School District excels at the New Jersey Technology Student Association Conference*



On May 2, 2026, **79 students** from the New Providence High School STEM club competed in **36 competitive events** at the 2026 NJTSA State Conference under the direction of their advisors: Rachel Fintz, Daniel Barletta, Jennifer Pasuit, Susan Rembetsy, and Michael Makmur. The Technology Student Association (TSA) is a national organization of more than 300,000 middle and high school students engaged in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). TSA enhances personal development, leadership, and career

opportunities in STEM, where student members apply and integrate these concepts through intracurricular activities, competitions, and related programs. Over **22,000 students** and **72 schools** throughout New Jersey participated during the 2026 NJTSA State Conference!

NPHS STEM Club brought home a **record number of 13 trophies**, with **4 first-place winners, 6 second-place winners, and 3 third-place winners!** These students are eligible to compete at the 2026 TSA National Conference in Washington, DC from June 22-26, 2026.



Lucas Lazarus, Trevor Fornuff, and Ram Panchacharam took **first place for the THIRD YEAR in a row in the Animatronics competition**, coming off of 2nd place in the Nation in 2025! They created an incredible project that met the challenge of a “Time Traveler’s Museum,” showcasing key moments in American history.

Ty Ikeda, Hannah Vaikath, Matteo Agastra, Ankit Karthik, Annie Szeto, and Nik Keller wowed the judges with their solution of Hemostatic Expansion & Microfiber Occlusion gauze, a hagfish-inspired gauze designed for rapid wound sealing of life-threatening bleeding, winning **first place in the Biomimicry event**.



Carsten Lepre, Owen Ettinger, Alex Krautheim, Shreya Rao, Karthik Mallya, and Dan Yoo’s graphic audio-inspired podcast (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFYdPp_WvOY) took **second place for this year’s “History or Mystery” theme**, highlighting the only successful escape from Alcatraz!

Matthew Chan and Abhinav Gaddam brought home **second place in Data Science & Analytics** with their analysis of the effects of social media and search engine interest on National Park Tourism. The pair analyzed online trends and predicted visitation numbers, which they used to build a model to help the National Park Service better distribute its park rangers to the parks most in need.



Sohan Saggar, Mary Rose Kells, Alexis Kern, Nate Kuo, Sejal Saggar, and Naomi Lee crushed the competition, completing a multiple-choice exam and mock meeting to earn **second place in Chapter Team**.

Zoe Lazarus led a team, including Kaitlyn Lok, Jamie Becker, Audrey Chan, Camila Cadmus, and Kate McLean, in creating an incredible die-cut board book representing the 3 branches of the U.S. government. “Birds of Government” features several interactive elements and a hand-sewn puppet



for readers to engage with, earning **second place in the Children's Stories event.**



Andre Marques **placed second in Dragster Design** with his CO₂ dragster, built under the supervision of Mr. Barletta and utilizing 3D printing to make it as light as possible. His dragster placed second in the time trials and, in combination with his design and documentation, finished second overall.

Matthew Chan led his Engineering Design team of Rian Arora, Mithul pranav Manojkumar, Benne Le, Jackson Kleinberg, and Sebastian Mercado to a **third-place finish in the competitive Engineering Design event.** Their project focused on improving the tools of scientific discovery, designing a serpentine swarm of robots to better explore the complex terrain of Mars.



Naomi Lee led her Geospatial Team of Abhinav Gaddam and Hannah Vaikath to **ANOTHER first-place finish in this event, doubling down on last year's effort!** The team created an intensive research paper evaluating the Urban Heat Island effect in Newark compared to Manhattan, proposing innovative solutions to this problem, and earned a 100% on their project documentation!!!

Achyut Vinoth Kumar, Matt Chan, Sebastian Mercado, and Hazel Chen developed and demonstrated their conversational transcription app, "Bubbl", to a **first-place finish in Software Development.** The app is designed to aid deaf and hearing-impaired individuals by transcribing conversations and overlaying them in augmented reality to show who is speaking and the tone of their speech.



Dan Yoo, Owen Ettinger, Carsten Lepre, and Luke Tomlinson built, designed, and raced their way to a **second-place finish in the Senior Solar Sprint.** The group modeled and 3D-printed a solar-powered racecar and container based on the theme: "History Jumper."



Trevor Fornuff and Sebastian Mercado created an interactive VR Museum (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09-2X6jSLsU>) that was gamified, highlighting various mysteries and discoveries in the museum, earning a **3rd-place finish in Virtual Reality (VR) Simulation**. They look forward to Nationals, hoping to again place in the top 3 at the National level.

Matt Chan, Cameron Yarnall, Kaylin Han, Ana Bankova, and Ramakrishnan Panchacharam **placed third in Webmaster** with their Union County Community Resource Hub (<https://union-county-community-hub.vercel.app/>). Judges loved their “I’m Bored” interactive element, which helps community members find new events and activities.

