



## NJDOE News

**For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:**

**Tom Rosenthal  
Richard Vespucci  
Jon Zlock  
609-292-1126**

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### **Two Jersey City Students Win \$100,000 Siemens Scholarship; State Board to Welcome the Winners at the Feb. 5 Meeting in Trenton**

Two Jersey City students were recently awarded a \$100,000 scholarship for placing first in the team category for the Siemens Westinghouse Competition for Math, Science and Technology.

Juliet R. Girard and Roshan D. Prabhu, seniors at William L. Dickinson High School in Jersey City, an Abbott school district, will share the top prize in the team category for their project, entitled "Identification and High Resolution Mapping of Flowering Time Genes in Rice."

Girard, who plans to study biochemistry, molecular biology and environmental science in college, and Prabhu, who plans to study design and graphic arts, and biomedical engineering, were announced as winners in a December awards ceremony at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Washington, D.C.

"The Department of Education is thrilled to see these two students succeeding in their planned field of study," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "We are quite certain their success will continue in the future and we wish them nothing but the best in all their endeavors."

The two winners will be welcomed and honored by the State Board of Education on Wednesday, Feb. 5 in Trenton.

"These two students are wonderful examples of the excellence we have in our schools,"

said State Board President Maud Dahme. "The State Board of Education is proud to recognize their accomplishments. They deserve all the credit in the world for their success and we are more than happy to honor their achievements."

Seventeen national finalists presented their original scientific research, technological inventions and mathematical theories to a distinguished panel of scientists. Five of those students competed in the individual competition and six teams, including Girard and Prabhu, competed in the team competition. All of the students had advanced to the national competition after winning top prizes at six regional events in November.

Girard and Prabhu's winning project can potentially help increase yearly rice production to meet its growing demand. The pair identified the genes that contribute to the early flowering time in rice — a discovery that could lead to increased crop production through earlier and more frequent harvests per year, as well as allow for rice growth in regions with shorter growing seasons.

"These students are some of the most brilliant young people in America," said Albert Hoser, chairman and CEO of the Siemens Foundation, which awards more than \$1 million annually in scholarships and grants through the Siemens Westinghouse Competition and other programs.

Girard's and Prabhu's project, which combined the disciplines of experimental biology and computational biology, successfully mapped two chromosomal segments and three candidate genes that control early flowering.

"Ms. Girard and Mr. Prabhu have made a significant advance in an important area of genetic research that could have great societal importance," said Judge Victor R. Ambros, Professor of Genetics at Dartmouth Medical School. "The team has a sophisticated grasp of the scientific issues involved and they exercised excellent judgment on what to focus on in their research."

The New Jersey-based Siemens Foundation is dedicated to providing scholarships and increasing access to higher education for students in science, mathematics and technology-related disciplines.

Established in 1998 to promote and support educational activities, the Siemens Foundation recognizes and supports America's most promising science and mathematics students and teachers, as well as schools that are doing the most to promote education in their core sciences.

More than 1,000 students entered the 2002-2003 Siemens Westinghouse Competition in Math, Science and Technology, including 836 individuals and 306 teams. The competition is administered by the College Board and its partner, Educational Testing Service of Princeton, NJ. In addition to Girard and Prabhu's first-place finish, Steven J. Byrnes of Roxbury Latin School in West Roxbury, MA, took home the top award for the individual competition.

Girard and Prabhu's school, William L. Dickinson, is in the Jersey City School District, Hudson County. For more information about the school and students, call (201) 714-4400. For more information about the competition, visit [www.siemens-foundation.org](http://www.siemens-foundation.org).

The success of both Girard and Prabhu is one of the many examples of the diverse and multiple paths of success that students in New Jersey are able to take. Their award is one of the many initiatives Governor James E. McGreevey, Commissioner of Education William L. Librera and the Department of Education encourage for innovative lessons for students in the state.

Specifically, the program is an example of the DOE mission statement: "The New Jersey Department of Education will provide leadership for a superior education by utilizing multiple and diverse paths to success for all children in New Jersey.

On Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>, the Governor and Commissioner hosted an Educational Summit in Trenton, where they outlined the Administration's 21-point plan for educational reform. The 21-point plan is available on the Department of Education's website: [www.state.nj.us/education](http://www.state.nj.us/education).

For any other questions, please contact the DOE's Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.