

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***You Be The Chemist* Challenge Announces 42 Student Finalists Competing for National Champion Title**

Middle School STEM Student Finalists Named in National Chemistry Competition

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Chemical Educational Foundation (CEF) has announced the 42 middle school students who will be competing on June 18 in the National 2018 *You Be The Chemist*® Challenge in Washington, D.C. For its 14th year, CEF, a non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring students to pursue chemistry and STEM-related learning and careers, facilitated local and state *You Be the Chemist* Challenges for approximately 46,000 students ranging from grades 5-8.

Local, state, and national *You Be The Chemist* Challenges are designed to engage middle school students in chemistry in an effort to demonstrate the importance of science in their everyday lives. In a bee-style competition, students in grades 5-8 are challenged to answer questions relating to chemistry and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) subjects.

“Engaging students in STEM at a young age is the best way to foster an understanding of, and ability to apply, scientific concepts,” says CEF Executive Director Dwayne Sattler. “Students today are the workforce of tomorrow. Business and community leaders want to nurture the capacity of those who will join the chemistry industry and keep it successful. These 42 students’ incredible success is proof of how far young learners can come when inspired by community educators.”

CEF’s *You Be The Chemist* programs inspire interest in one of the fastest-growing sectors of the U.S. economy. Educators participating in *You Be The Chemist* programs report a 40 percent increase in their confidence teaching science, and a corresponding increase in student engagement. Almost 90 percent of students say that the *You Be The Chemist* Challenge improved their understanding of chemistry and made them more aware of its role in their everyday life. By bringing educators, students, and community members together, CEF is proud to have a significant impact on the next generation of innovators.

The 42 students will congregate in Washington D.C. on Monday, June 18, to compete for educational scholarships and prizes, drawing from their knowledge and experience from local and state *You Be The Chemist* Challenges. Participants, educators, and supporters will gather at the Omni Shoreham Hotel from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EDT to watch students demonstrate their chemistry prowess as they vie for the title of National Champion.

Name, grade level, school and hometown for each of the 2018 *You Be The Chemist* student participants can be found at <https://www.chemed.org/whats-new/meet-the-2018-national-challenge-participants/>. Photos are available upon request to Rossbach@jdafrontline.com.

The Chemical Educational Foundation strives to improve the overall understanding and appreciation of chemistry and inspire future leaders to pursue science-related careers. Last year, CEF's *You Be The Chemist* programs reached more than 650,000 students nationwide. For more information, please visit www.chemed.org.

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