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ECSD NEWS RELEASE

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Pensacola Student Scientists Face an International Challenge *Four PHS Students Travel This Week to CA*

Pensacola, FL: Los Angeles, California is hosting this year's International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) sponsored by Intel. It is the largest science fair in the world with over 67 countries and territories represented. On May 14 four students from Pensacola High School will leave to compete and represent their county, state and country. This is not the first time for this group to be heading to ISEF. The team of seniors Patricia Kay McAuley, Lauren Beall, Holley Meaney are competing for their third year and Alexander Pope went to Phoenix last year for ISEF.

History will be made during the ISEF competition the following Tuesday, as the team of high school student scientists challenge the validity of eye witness testimony in their three year study. Patricia Kay McAuley, Lauren Beall, and Holley Meaney have been diligently studying the effects of such parameters as age, gender, cross-race effect, education level, environment and stress level when giving eyewitness testimony after witnessing a crime. They even investigated whether the eyewitness testimony of the perpetrator can be accurate.

Their drive and diligence, to show the world that eyewitness testimony has many confounding variables that affect judgment, forged them on through the years of testing. They have tested over 650 test subjects in those three years and used statistical analysis to discuss their conclusions. Their experimental abstract states 3 out of 4 **misconvictions** are due to eyewitness testimony.

"For these three young women, the seed started in their Advance Placement Psychology class their sophomore year and continued developing through their IB Biology classes," explained their instructor, Cherie Stephens. "They are amazing!" The regional director of the science fair, Adam Bretschneider said, "as they prepare to move on to their post-secondary institutions, the chance to study neuroscience and biochemistry awaits them. Maybe, one day, they will unlock the mystery and create an algorithm to predict the likelihood that an eyewitness will provide a credible testimony." Alexander Pope, has demonstrated his love and knowledge of science, electricity, engineering, and mathematics in a remarkable display of ingenuity. His project not only demonstrates his mastery of mathematics, but also his intelligence in creating and demonstrating the scientific process.

"Alex is an amazing student who has been challenging his instructors for years," said Cherie Stephens. "The fact that he is able to be so relatable while thinking on a plane

higher than most of the people he encounters, makes us proud to be part of his teaching team.”

Alex’s project, entailed separating wave patterns from noise through algorithms utilizing his own brainwave EEG sensor. He also is a historic scientist for Escambia County, since this will be his second time to earn the privilege of competing at Intel International Science and Engineering Fair.

“We look forward to seeing where all of these young scientists go with their knowledge and skills,” added Stephens.

“We wish them all good luck at the largest science fair in the world, competing against the young developing scientists from many countries around the globe,” said Bretschneider. “We also look forward to hearing the many ideas they bring back from this international experience.”

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