



The Office Of State Treasurer  
Denise L. Nappier

## News

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### **TREASURER NAPIER RECOGNIZES 48 STUDENT WINNERS OF CHET DREAM BIG! COMPETITION**

*\$26,000 in CHET College Savings Accounts Awarded to Connecticut Students*

HARTFORD, CT –The statewide 2018 CHET Dream Big! Competition, which asks students to share their dreams about life after college through drawings and essays, selected 48 winners from across the state out of more than 3,000 entries, State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier announced today.



Aspiring artists, architects, construction workers, chefs, college professors, nurses, engineers, government officials, judges, journalists, photographers, police officers, detectives, teachers, video game designers, graphic designers, and more participated in this year's competition, which drew entries from schools in 92 of the State's 169 municipalities. The topic of equality, both gender and racial equality, was prominent in the entries.

Four grand prize winners will each receive a \$1,000 contribution to a CHET college savings account, and 44 additional students in kindergarten through eighth grade will receive \$500 contributions.

The winners were honored at a special reception at the Connecticut Science Center on Friday, June 1. Treasurer Nappier, Trustee of the Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET), presented certificates to each student winner and celebrated the competition's 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a festive birthday cake.

"With such amazing, thoughtful drawings and essays I know our future is in good hands," Treasurer Nappier said.

"And here's a tip to the parents and family friends of the winners," she added. "Save early and watch the magic of compound interest! As your children grow, we encourage you to think about saving for college to enable them to reach their goals."

Since inception, the CHET Dream Big! Competition has made contributions to 772 accounts, totaling more than \$265,000. More than 34,000 Connecticut students have shared their college dreams in Dream Big! entries.

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The grand prize winners are: Eashan Sanganalmath, a 1<sup>st</sup> grade student at Derynoski Elementary School in Southington, who said he wants to be a geriatric doctor and help the elderly; Natalia Pepe, a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader at St. Bridget School in Cheshire, who said she wants to become an artist; Alejandra Reyes, a 4<sup>th</sup> grader from Davis Street Arts and Academics Intermediate Magnet School in New Haven, who wrote about wanting to become a congresswoman; and John Gerlach, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Ellington Middle School who wrote that, in addition to becoming a mechanical engineer, his dream is to eventually become a father and that contributing to the next generation is the best way he can change the world.

“Being a good father and raising good children is the best way I can change the world,” John wrote in his essay.

Alejandra wrote, “When I get out of college, I want to be a congresswoman because there is not enough female representation in Congress . . . As a congresswoman I would help to create laws so people are treated equally.”

Eashan’s drawing depicted himself as a doctor at a senior center with two senior citizens. Natalie painted herself as an artist with her artwork filling the space on both sides of her.

For the Dream Big! Competition, kindergarteners through third graders were asked to share artwork depicting what they want to do after they go to college. Fourth through eighth grade students were asked to answer in a 250 word essay how they will change the world after college.

Dream Big! entries were judged within four grade groups -- K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8 -- based on theme, originality and creativity. Drawings also were evaluated based on artistic design and attractiveness with essays judged on overall grammar, spelling and punctuation.

### ***Six \$500 School Prizes Awarded to Top Participating Schools***

Six schools won a \$500 prize for having the highest percentage of student submissions.

“We view the Dream Big! competition as a wonderful opportunity for our students to begin envisioning college as part of their future. It also provides us with a tool to give information to parents about the importance of beginning to save for this investment in their children's education,” said Jon Romeo, Principal of Gainfield Elementary School in Southbury. Gainfield is a first-time school winner having increased the number of student entries from just four in 2017 to 324 in 2018.

The other school winners include Vance Village Elementary School in New Britain; Madison Elementary School, Bridgeport; George Hersey Robertson School, Coventry; North Stonington Elementary School, North Stonington; and Brooklyn Middle School, Brooklyn, also a first-time winner.

The Dream Big! Competition is sponsored by the State Treasurer’s Office, TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. (TFI) and CHET. It is funded by TFI, the program manager; no state funds are used for awards issued through the Dream Big! Competition.

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A full list of student winners follows. Winning entries will be viewable at:  
[www.chetdreambig.com](http://www.chetdreambig.com).

- Rawan Adulridha, Hamden Middle School, Hamden
- Carolina Ahearn, Woodstock Elementary School, Woodstock
- Savanna Alleyne, Highville Charter School, New Haven
- Nathaniel Babcock, Birch Grove Primary School, Tolland
- Kestrel Brousseau, Woodstock Elementary School, Woodstock
- Ella Chullum, Gainfield Elementary School, Southbury
- Eva Cohen, Macdonough Elementary School, Middletown
- Charles Combest, Roxbury Elementary School, Stamford
- Aries Djangmah-Yeboah, East Hartford Middle School, East Hartford
- Jaiden Duncan, Washington Primary School, Washington
- Aidan Erive, Naramake Elementary School, Norwalk
- Aaron Garcia, Madison Elementary School, Bridgeport
- John Gerlach, Ellington Middle School, Ellington
- Aidan Gouley, Roger Ludlowe Middle School, Fairfield
- Annabella Gronbach, Sarah Noble Intermediate School, New Milford
- Evan Guilmette, Brownstone Intermediate School, Portland
- Denair Harris, Smalley Academy, New Britain
- Jeyla Hoang, George Hersey Robertson School, Coventry
- Rocio Hogan-Perez, Davis Street Arts and Academics Interdistrict Magnet School, New Haven
- Airiqa Hoheb, High Horizons Magnet School, Bridgeport
- Avni Kabra, East Lyme Middle School, Niantic
- Johnny Kazantzis, Brooklyn Middle School, Brooklyn
- Lacey Kopetz, Franklin Elementary School, North Franklin
- Molly Kulas, Brewster Elementary School, Durham
- Kyleigh Lapsis, Mansfield Middle School, Mansfield
- Jane Leamon, North Haven Middle School, North Haven
- Hailey Litwin, Lebanon Middle School, Lebanon
- Katherine Marashev, Saugatuck Elementary School, Westport
- Derek Meka, Judson Elementary School, Watertown
- Jathaniel Ortiz, Smalley Academy, New Britain
- Jozlyn Ortiz, Vance Village Elementary School, New Britain
- Natalia Pepe, St. Bridget School, Cheshire
- Alejandra Reyes, Davis Street Arts and Academics Interdistrict Magnet School, New Haven
- Diva Rivera, Rippowam Middle School, Stamford
- Maayan Rosenberg, Sarah Noble Intermediate School, New Milford
- Alexa Rouillard, George Hersey Robertson School, Coventry
- Eashan Sanganalmath, Derynoski Elementary School, Southington

- Sahana Satheesh, Broad Brook Elementary School, Broad Brook
- Sathya Satheesh, Broad Brook Elementary School, Broad Brook
- Jeffrey Savage, Derynoski Elementary School, Southington
- Khloe Scott, Oakdale Elementary School, Oakdale
- Rowan Tanner, Rowayton Elementary School, Rowayton
- Desmarie Torres, Burns Latino Studies Academy, Hartford
- Riley Villone, Thomaston High School, Thomaston
- Aiden Walsh, Valley View Elementary School, Portland
- Jasmine Wrenn, Brooklyn Middle School, Brooklyn
- Nana-Yaa Yeboah, Langford Elementary School, East Hartford
- Anna Zeeman, North Stonington Elementary School, North Stonington

## About CHET

The Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET) 529 college savings plan was established in 1997 and has enjoyed steady growth, surpassing \$3.6 billion in assets under management and more than 150,000 accounts. In addition, since CHET's inception, more than \$1.8 billion in qualified withdrawals have been taken to cover college costs for approximately 50,000 students attending nearly every public and private college in Connecticut and several out-of-state schools.

CHET offers tax advantages and some of the lowest fees in the country for a state-sponsored college savings account. Connecticut residents are allowed to deduct 529 contributions from their state income taxes – up to \$5,000 for an individual or up to \$10,000 for a married couple filing jointly. Investment earnings are exempt from state and federal taxes if used for qualified educational expenses.

CHET is administered by the Office of Connecticut State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier. The direct-sold plan, which offers the CHET Dream Big! Competition is managed by TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. For more information about CHET Direct, visit [www.aboutchet.com](http://www.aboutchet.com) or call the customer service center at (866) 314-3939.

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