



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Diamond Fork Junior High School Students Named National Finalists in the Bright Schools Competition

“Are Stars in Danger?” is One of 50 National Finalists in Innovative STEM Competition for Students in Grades 6-8

Spanish Fork, Utah—**April 24, 2017**—Taylar Brittain, Cindy Elmer, Jessica Haderlie, and Kiki Conklin along with coach Julie Nance, of Diamond Fork Junior High School in Spanish Fork, Utah have been named national finalists in the 2nd annual Bright Schools Competition™. The competition is a collaborative effort of the [National Sleep Foundation](#) and the [National Science Teachers Association](#) that encourages students in grades 6-8 to explore the correlation between light and sleep and how it influences student health and performance. “Are Stars in Danger?” is one of 50 national finalist teams, chosen among 150 teams, made up of nearly 500 students from 53 schools. In early May, first-, second- and third-place national winning teams will be announced. The complete list of the national finalists can be found at <http://brightschoolscompetition.org/>.

Are Stars in Danger?’s winning project, entitled “Light Pollution,” “Even though all of us love playing on our phone’s at night this can stop your brain from releasing melatonin, the hormone which helps you to become sleepy. Even a little bit of blue light can stop melatonin. There have been many studies that have proven that extra amount of blue light are links to things like having different health effects on the human body such as stress, anxiety, depression, and many others. Light pollution makes sure that there is no real darkness that you experience, making it harder to sleep. By using our phones we are adding blue light to the economy and adding to the blanket of light pollution.

We are spreading awareness by talking to classes, and handing out magnets that tell people about the light pollution problem. We hope that we can decrease light pollution by letting people know that night lights and brighter lamps (LED lights) can become a greater problem if used unwisely. It’s not just big cities that need to decrease the amount of light used at night, it can be the small towns or cities that can make the big difference. By having some smaller cities turn off unneeded lights it can have a huge outcome in the big picture and have a chain reaction. We can also put shades over street lamps, so the light directly lights up the area needed (TEDtalk). Another way to help get rid of light pollution would be to put some sort of shade on the top of our house lights that help point the light directly to the ground. Even our small town in Utah can affect how we see the stars today.”

“The National Sleep Foundation would like to congratulate the finalists on their innovative projects. The Bright Schools Competition™ has shined a light on the importance of sleep and



overall health, and we're encouraged to see so many students interested in how light directly affects their sleep and academic performance" said David Cloud, CEO of the National Sleep Foundation.

"The Bright Schools Competition is a celebration of the talent and ingenuity of our youth, providing students with a unique opportunity to think critically while exploring the connection between light and sleep," said NSTA Executive Director Dr. David Evans. "Congratulations to all of the national finalists for their hard work, enthusiasm, and imaginative ideas."

Under the mentorship of an adult coach/teacher, teams of two to four students identify, investigate, and research an issue related to light and sleep as it pertains to their community and/or young adolescents. Using scientific inquiry or engineering design concepts teams develop a prototype, create an awareness campaign, or write a research proposal for the competition. Each team then submits a written report detailing their project along with a three-minute video showcasing their investigation. Projects are evaluated on the basis of several criteria, including scientific accuracy, innovativeness, and potential impact.

All students who enter the competition will receive a certificate of participation. Students on the first-place national winning team will each receive a cash prize of \$5,000; second place students will receive \$2,500; and third-place students will receive \$1,500. The coach/teacher of the first place team will also receive a prize package, including Vernier Middle School Probeware, an all-expense paid trip to an [NSTA conference](#), and membership to NSTA. The second-place coach/teacher will receive an all-expense paid trip to an NSTA conference and membership to NSTA, and the third-place coach/teacher will receive membership to NSTA and a \$500 gift certificate to use in the [NSTA Science Store](#).

More information about the competition is available at <http://brightschoolscompetition.org/>.

About the National Sleep Foundation

The National Sleep Foundation is dedicated to improving health and well-being through sleep education and advocacy. Founded in 1990 by the leaders in sleep medicine, NSF is the trusted resource for sleep science, healthy sleep habits, and sleep disorders to medical professionals, patients and the public. For more information visit sleepfoundation.org or sleep.org. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About NSTA

The Arlington, VA-based [National Science Teachers Association](#) is the largest professional organization in the world promoting excellence in science teaching and learning, preschool through college. NSTA's membership includes approximately 55,000 science teachers, science supervisors, administrators, scientists, business representatives, and others involved in science education.



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