

PRESS RELEASE

WordMasters Challenge
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A team of students representing St. Cloud's Westwood Elementary School recently won highest honors in the WordMasters Challenge – a national language arts competition entered by over 230,000 students annually, which consists of three separate meets held at intervals during the school year.

Competing in the difficult Blue Division of the Challenge and coached by Nancy Diedrich, the school's fifth graders placed **fourth in the nation** in the year's first meet, held in December, among 725 school teams participating at this grade level and in this division.

Eight of the school's students won highest honors for individual achievement as well: Fifth graders Amanda Vasek, Hannah Staska, Caysi Simpson, Kelsey Ann Reed, Becca O'Neil, Morgan Finn, Megan Brennan, and Aaron Bible all earned perfect scores in the meet, where nationwide only 189 fifth graders did so.

The WordMasters Challenge is an exercise in critical thinking that first encourages students to become familiar with a set of interesting new words (considerably harder than grade level), and then challenges them to use those words to complete analogies expressing various kinds of relationships. Working to solve the Challenge analogies helps students learn to think both analytically and metaphorically.