

PVSS sweeps math honors in its zone

Pleasant Valley Secondary School in Armstrong made a clean sweep of top honors for Grades 9, 10 and 11 in math contests sponsored by the University of Waterloo, for their zone, which includes Kamloops, Salmon Arm and South Cariboo districts.

Grade 11 student Farran Sloan finished fifth in B.C., and 27th in Canada, in the Fermat Math Contest. He received a medal of distinction for achieving a mark within the top 10 per cent nationally.

Other Grade 11 math students receiving merit certificates for finishing within the top Canadian 25 per cent, were Brade Steinke, Tom Smith, Nicole Richoux and Gerri McCord.

Eight Grade 10 students wrote the Cayley Math Contest, and medals of distinction were awarded to Stephen Sulz, James Ager, Jason Waechter and Troy Berg. Merit certificates went to Glenda Kohn, Chris Pavle, Sion Romaine and Tony Klassen.

In the Pascal, Grade 9 math contest, Brian Wells, Krista Steinke, and Majken Cook scored within the top 10 per cent, while Tina Laursen, Debbie Bartell, Kara Whitlock and Ryan Waechter were within the top Canadian 25 per cent.

Pleasant Valley Secondary ranked as the top Interior high school in the Pascal and Cayley math contests, and ranked in second place, close behind Fernie Secondary, in the grade 11 Fermat competition. Principal Nick Watkins said all the rest of B.C.'s top-ranking high schools were in the Lower Mainland, with larger student bodies, and several were private college prep schools.

"I feel very proud for our school — the good results help improve the way people perceive of our school. I'm very proud of all the students who took part, and their instructor, Morris Vardabasso," Watkins said.

He said emphasis is on problem-solving, at an "enriched learning" level, well above the standard for each grade. "It's not the type of math you can work out by copying down the equations and working with a calculator." Some of it, he pointed out, is too tough for most teachers.

"So as you can see, we're very pleased when our students do so well in these exams. They're the contests we want to see our students compete in because they are the top achievement standard across Canada."

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