



Five high schools from Bay City, Freeland, Midland and Saginaw represented by 20 teams in 2025-26 A.H. Nickless Innovation Award

Up to \$77.5K in scholarships for students, STEM education grants for schools at stake in 13th annual competition

UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH., Nov. 11, 2025 – Organizers of the [A.H. Nickless Innovation Award](#) have announced that 20 teams representing five local high schools will spend the next several months conducting research and developing detailed plans to address the respective problems they identified during Phase One of the competition.

Seeking to inspire passion for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects and to challenge students to work in teams, think innovatively and develop solutions to problems impacting the world, the award is an annual competition for high school students ages 13 to 18 in Bay, Midland, Saginaw and Tuscola counties. Teams' project topics typically include – but are not limited to – alternative energy, healthcare, science, technology and life sciences.

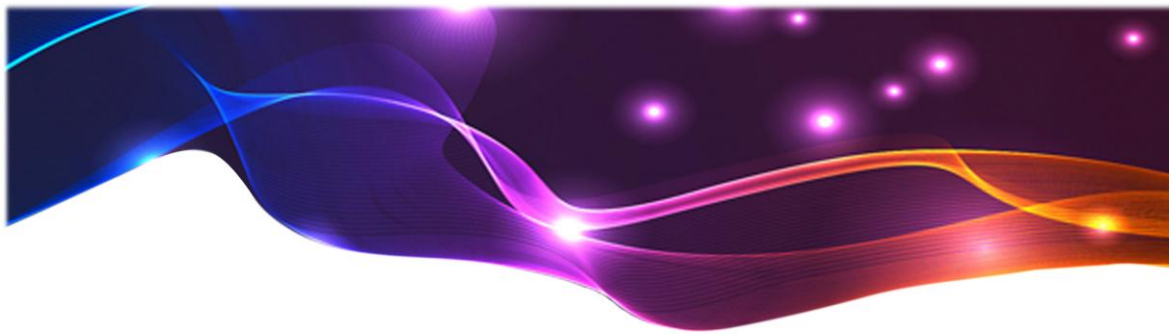
For Phase One of the competition, each registered team was required to identify a problem on which to focus and submit a two-page abstract describing its proposed project to address that problem. Each team now advancing to Phase Two of the competition receives a \$1,000 grant with which to conduct its research and develop a viable solution. The teams' project reports are due March 31, 2026.

The five schools with teams advancing to Phase Two of the competition are:

- **Herbert Henry Dow High School** in Midland (Midland Public Schools), ***two teams***
- **Freeland High School** (Freeland Community School District), ***three teams***
- **John Glenn High School** in Bay City (Bangor Township Schools), ***one team***
- **Midland High School** (Midland Public Schools), ***one team***
- **Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy** (Saginaw Public School District), ***13 teams***

The competition – which is presented by the [Nickless Family Charitable Foundation](#) – will culminate in a daylong public event on Saturday, April 25, 2026, at Saginaw Valley State University, where the Phase Two teams will present their respective projects. Three winning teams will be announced at the conclusion of the event, with each taking home a share of up to \$77,500 in scholarships for students and STEM education grants for schools.

First place will receive up to five **\$5,000 scholarships** for student team members and a **\$20,000 STEM education grant** for the school; **second place** will receive up to five **\$2,500 scholarships** for student team members and a **\$10,000 STEM education grant** for the school; and **third place** will receive up to five **\$1,000 scholarships** for student team members and a **\$5,000 STEM education grant** for the school.



Fostering student innovation for more than a decade

The 2025-26 competition marks the 13th year of the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award. Since the first competition in 2013-14, \$763,500 has been awarded to participants and their schools, including \$378,500 in student scholarships and \$385,000 in STEM education grants. In all, more than 550 students developed and presented a total of nearly 180 team projects in Phase Two of the competition during the competition's first 12 years.

About the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award

The A.H. Nickless Innovation Award was created by the Nickless Family Charitable Foundation to honor the memory of the late Arthur H. Nickless, a local innovator and owner of Wolverine Telephone Company. With a goal of inspiring passion for science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), the competition is open to high school students in Bay, Midland, Saginaw and Tuscola counties and awards up to \$77,500 per year in scholarships to students and STEM grants to schools. A total of more than \$760,000 has been awarded since the first competition in 2013-14. For more information, visit ahninnovationaward.com.