



Nine high schools from Bay, Midland, Saginaw, Tuscola counties represented by 18 teams in 2026-27 A.H. Nickless Innovation Award

Up to \$77.5K in scholarships for students, STEM education grants for schools at stake in 14th annual competition

UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICH., Oct. 13, 2026 – Organizers of the [A.H. Nickless Innovation Award](#) have announced that 18 teams representing nine 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 2026-27 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 – which spanned mid-August through early October – 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, 2027.

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

- **Bay City Western High School** in Auburn (Bay City Public Schools), ***one team***
- **Caro High School** (Caro Community Schools), ***two teams***
- **Herbert Henry Dow High School** in Midland (Midland Public Schools), ***one team***
- **Freeland High School** (Freeland Community School District), ***two teams***
- **John Glenn High School** in Bay City (Bangor Township Schools), ***one team***
- **Great Lakes Bay Early College** in University Center (Saginaw ISD), ***two teams***
- **Midland High School** (Midland Public Schools), ***four teams***
- **Saginaw Arts and Sciences Academy** (Saginaw Public School District), ***four teams***
- **Saginaw United High School** (Saginaw Public School District), ***one team***

The competition – which is presented by the [Nickless Family Charitable Foundation](#) – will culminate in a daylong public event on Saturday, April 24, 2027, 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 2026-27 competition marks the 14th year of the A.H. Nickless Innovation Award. Since the first competition in 2013-14, \$816,500 has been awarded to participants and their schools, including \$396,500 in student scholarships and \$420,000 in STEM education grants. In all, more than 625 students developed and presented a total of nearly 200 team projects in Phase Two of the competition during its first 13 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 \$815,000 has been awarded since the first competition in 2013-14. For more information, visit ahninnovationaward.com.