

# News Release

## Dobbs Ferry High School Senior Blake Hord Named Finalist in Prestigious Siemens Science Competition

**Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., October 20, 2016--** Dobbs Ferry High School senior Blake Hord has been named a regional finalist in the 2016 Siemens Competition, the nation's premier research competition in math, science and technology for high school students. More than 1,600 projects were submitted this year with 498 being selected as semifinalists. Of those, 96 were named regional finalists. Hord was one of Westchester's six semifinalists, and subsequently the only finalist in Westchester.

The finalists have been invited to advance to the next round of the competition where they will vie for college scholarships ranging from \$1,000 up to \$100,000. Regional finalists will compete in one of six regional competitions, virtually hosted by select colleges across the country, over three consecutive weekends in November. Winners will advance to the final phase of the competition, the National Finals at The George Washington University in Washington D.C., on December 5-6.

Hord's research focused on spiral features that Scientists have observed around nearby stars. It is thought that these features may be caused by the early formation of planets generating a wake in the dust surrounding the stars, much like a motorboat doing donuts in the water would form spiral waves. To test this theory, he developed a pipeline between a code that simulated a high-mass planet and another code that replicated the sources of heat around the star. The results demonstrated a match with patterns around different stars, suggesting that those spirals may indeed be created by planets forming in those regions. His research is entitled "High Mass Planet Spiral Shocks as a Source of Infrared Emission in Protoplanetary Disks."

Hord is an IB Diploma candidate and member of the National Honor Society and French Honor Society. He was recently named a National Merit Semifinalist. He is active in the High School's Wilderness Club and has earned the Eagle Scout designation, the Boy Scout's highest award. Hord is also a member of the school's Legislative Branch of Student Government and is in the Boys Volleyball Club. He has been involved in the Destination ImagiNation program since 4<sup>th</sup> grade and his team made it to the Global Finals multiple times. Hord has been in the science research program since sophomore year and is thinking about majoring in physics or computer science in college.

"Blake is one of the most unassuming and hardest working students I have in the program," said Dobbs Ferry High School Science Research Program Coordinator Erica Curran. "He truly enjoyed researching and exploring his topic and this is an amazing acknowledgement of his achievement. Congratulations to Blake on this outstanding accomplishment."

Becoming a Siemens finalist is a first for Dobbs Ferry High School's Science Research Program, which continues to grow and garner awards. Former Dobbs Ferry student Yiorgos Argyros was named a semifinalist in the 2014 Siemens Competition teaming up with Mamaroneck High School senior Emily McCarthy to study the effect that a specific gene has on a person's susceptibility to epilepsy and seizures. This collaboration was a first for the two Westchester schools, which each have their own award-winning science research programs.

The Siemens Competition, launched in 1999 by the Siemens Foundation, seeks to recognize and build a strong pipeline for the nation's most promising scientists, engineers and mathematicians. The Siemens Competition honors the best and brightest students for their STEM accomplishments—students who are changing the world for the better.

A complete list of finalists and their projects will be available at [www.siemens-foundation.org](http://www.siemens-foundation.org) preceding each regional event held in November.

**For more information, please contact:**

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