WITF'S CENTRAL PA SPELLING BEE

2021 GRAND CHAMPIONSHIP

FEBRUARY 27, 2021 PUBLIC MEDIA CENTER

SEE IT ON WITF TV:

- **Sunday, March 7 6pm**
- **Friday, March 12 3pm**
- **Sunday, March 14 8am**

witf
Live inspired®

Live inspired®

Teachers, families and students explore!
WITF IS HERE FOR YOU

WITF recognizes that children, families and teachers are eager to continue learning together during these uncertain times. Using a wealth of resources, WITF connects you to educational activities, engaging experiences and learning opportunities whether you are in a classroom or learning at home.

We are in this #TogetherPennsylvania.

witf Live inspired®

Learning at HOME

For more information visit
witf.org/learningathome

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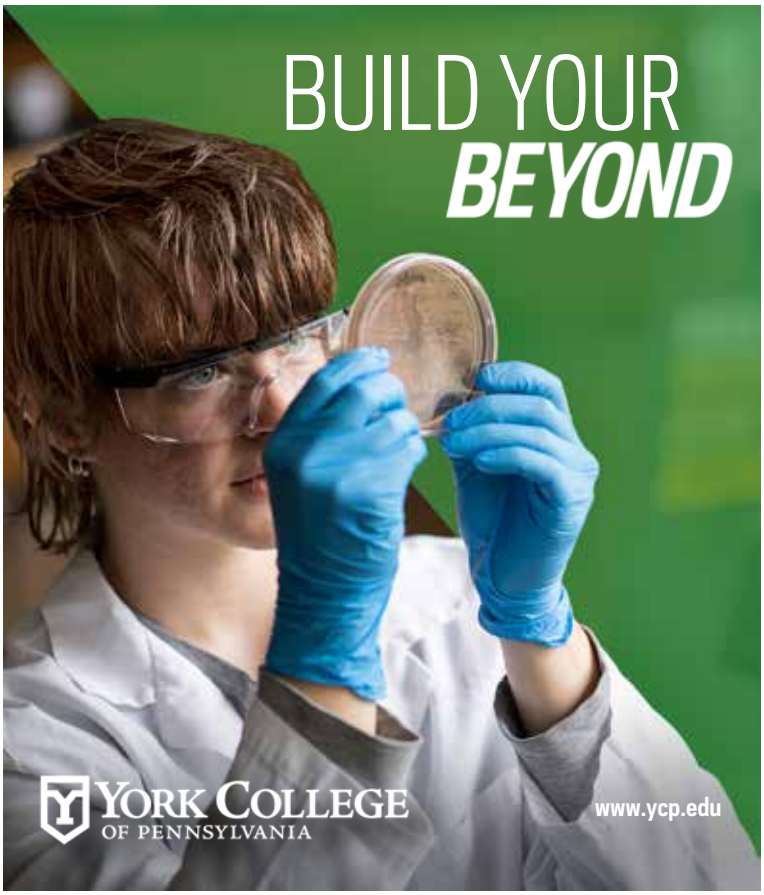


the heart warming project.

we're on a mission
–to heartwarm our families, our schools, and our communities.

In an era where face-to-face conversations and contact are declining, building connections, resilience and empathy can make all the difference for kids' well being. We are partnering with leading organizations to help kids, parents and teachers build more meaningful connections and create a more inclusive and empathetic community.

HERSHEY | For more information visit **heartwarmingproject.com**

Ron Hetrick, *WITF President and CEO*

Congratulations to all the spellers participating in this year's *Grand Championship of WITF's Central PA Spelling Bee*! We are so proud of their talent, enthusiasm and their persistence, especially considering the many challenges presented by the pandemic. Our sincerest appreciation goes to our spellers' families and schools, who have impressed us with their support and flexibility during this very uncommon year. The advocates who cheered and coached them to success are critical to our program. Thank you and well done, everyone!

Bringing opportunities for lifelong learning to our community is central to the mission of WITF. As we proudly host the *Spelling Bee* we hope our spellers develop a love for learning words and a love for learning more about the world.

WITF's Central PA Spelling Bee features 4th through 8th graders from 11 Central Pennsylvania counties. Approximately 150 spellers from 63 public, parochial, independent, cyber and charter schools qualified as semi-finalists. In January, the semi-finalists took an online written test consisting of 25 spelling words and 25 vocabulary words.

The 33 spellers listed in this program are the finalists, ready to compete in the *Grand Championship of WITF's Central PA Spelling Bee*. As the only televised spell down in Pennsylvania, WITF proudly offers our winner an advantage when participating in the next competition, the nationally televised *Scripps National Spelling Bee*. Being "camera-ready" – whether at home or in a studio – won't be new to our winner!!

The first-place winner of the spell down, accompanied by a caregiver and WITF's Spelling Bee Coordinator, will travel all expenses paid to National Harbor, Maryland to participate in the *Scripps National Spelling Bee*. Look for the national broadcast of the *Scripps National Spelling Bee* June 1 – 3, 2021.

If you seek a humbling experience, test your spelling skills against our talented spellers–it is so much harder than it looks!

The Bee wouldn't be possible without the careful and diligent work of our Spelling Bee Coordinator, Ruth J. Keim, and her dedicated committee and volunteers. Our thanks to the planning team who orchestrates this spelling competition for the region!

Recognition and gratitude also go to our event sponsors: The Hershey Company and York College of Pennsylvania, whose generous financial support makes the Bee possible. Many organizations have contributed prizes for our finalists, so please see the list of these thoughtful sponsors on the back cover.

Spell with me when *WITF's Central PA Spelling Bee* airs on WITF TV Sunday, March 7, at 6pm, with additional broadcasts on Friday, March 12, at 3:00pm and Sunday, March 14, at 8am. You will also be able to livestream or watch the program on-demand at video.witf.org.

Publicly supported and locally owned, WITF empowers us all to live inspired!

Ron Hetrick
President and CEO, WITF

2021 WITF Central PA Grand Championship Numerical Order of Spellers:

1. **Kendrina Keller**
2. **Nestor Nguyen**
3. **Nandhini Jayendrasankar**
4. **Nehemiah Miller**
5. **Carter Guengerich**
6. **Sibi Shanmugam**
7. **Owen Wagner**
8. **Jhayce Hawley**
9. **Sameeha Gaind**
10. **Narain Hari**
11. **Rory Gannon**
12. **Maria Maureen J. Arguelles**
13. **Harrison Mabon**
14. **Abigail Nop**
15. **Sydney Skopp**
16. **Bianca Vang**
17. **Ananya S. Kannan**
18. **Ameliya Zaynitdinova**
19. **Elijah Colon**
20. **Bryan J. Martinez-Nevarez**
21. **Rohan Kakaria**
22. **Nahla Owens**
23. **Fiona Chisholm**
24. **Viseth Meng**
25. **Abigail Gorgo**
26. **Anna Sponaugle**
27. **Kevin Azubike**
28. **Elliana Rymarenko**
29. **Owen Underkoffler**
30. **Saaketh Vemuri**
31. **Harper Menegat**
32. **Aryan Sai**
33. **Kellen Palisin**

Maria Maureen J. Arguelles
Grade: 8
Saint Joseph School, Mechanicsburg
Favorite food: anything rice
Favorite book: From Blood and Ash series, Jennifer L. Armentrout
Pets: hamster - Milky
Career aspirations: dermatologist
Interests: Tang Soo Do
I admire: BTS, band who works very hard and they inspire me.
Honors: straight A's, county band, Karate black belt

Kevin Azubike
Grade: 6
Saint Joseph School, Mechanicsburg
Favorite food: pizza
Favorite book: *Wonder, R.J. Palacio*
Pets: dog - Kingston; guinea pig - Doppio
Career aspirations: car designer
Interests: cars
I admire: Parents, because of how well they teach me about life.
Honors: good grades

Fiona Chisholm
Grade: 7
Cocalico MS/SD
Favorite food: macaroni and cheese
Favorite book: *James and the Giant Peach,* Roald Dahl
Pets: Dutch rabbit - Henry
Career aspirations: doctor
Interests: art, music, forensics
I admire: Ruth Bader Ginsburg, she was a strong female role model.
Honors: PMEA District Band Festival

Elijah Colon
Grade: 6
Mountville ES, Hempfield SD
Favorite food: gummies
Favorite book: author-Scott Cawthon
Pets: dog - Fuzzy; cat - Onyx
Interests: building things
I admire: Dad, he's his own boss.

Sameeha Gaind
Grade: 7
Mountain View MS, Cumberland Valley SD
Favorite food: ravioli
Favorite book: The Forbidden Library series, Django Wexler
Career aspirations: successful business owener
Interests: drawing, painting, reading, playing the piano, singing
I admire: J.K. Rowling, she never gave up to get her first Harry Potter novel published.
Honors: honor roll, advanced math and reading in Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth, Kumon Reading Program

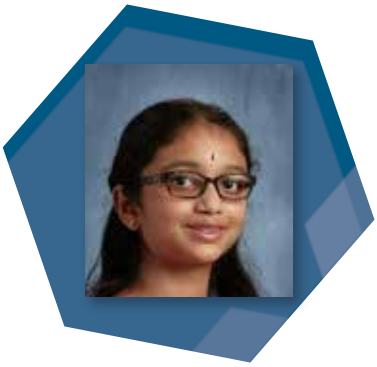
Rory Gannon
Grade: 8
New Cumberland MS, West Shore SD
Favorite food: burritos
Favorite book: *A Woman of Independent Means,* Elizabeth Forsythe Hailey
Pets: border collie - Juno; great white pyrenees - Gryffin
Career aspirations: behavioral/psychological profiling or counter-terrorism
Interests: soccer, politics, foreigh countries, activism, old books
I admire: Fadela Amara, she had advocated for women, Muslims and students.
Honors: school record for fastest mile, distinguished honor roll, Hershey Memorial Day Cup, Fusion soccer team, Student Advisory Committee, 2019-2020 WITF Central PA Grand Championship Spelling Bee

Abigail Gorgo
Grade: 8
Swift MS, Solanco SD
Favorite food: sushi
Favorite book: author-Lynette Eason
Career aspirations: FBI Special Agent
Interests: criminal justice, reading, baking, hanging with friends
I admire: Debbie Ryan, she isn't moved by someone else.
Honors: distinguished honor roll

Carter Guengerich
Grade: 8
Centerville MS, Hempfield SD
Favorite food: sweet & sour chicken
Favorite book: authors-Erin Hunter, Rick Riordan
Pets: cats - Bailey and Rilian
Career aspirations: GIS specialist, astronomer, mathematician
Interests: music, geography, history, learning, self-improvement, organization, technology, books
I admire: Bill Gates, pretty smart and rich, but uses these things respectably.
Honors: National Geographic GeoBee, marching band, LLMEA County Band South, President's Award for Academic Excellence

Narain Hari
Grade: 6
Central Dauphin MS/SD
Favorite food: nasi goreng, sushi, spahetti, Chinese beef
Favorite book: authors-Brandon Mull, Rick Riordan
Pets: fish - Midnight, Oreo, Pablo, Sarah, Puddles, Emperor Finnivus, Takiza
Career aspirations: robotics, multimedia designing
Interests: coding-I love video games and how to make them
I admire: Mahatma Gandhi, he freed his entire country through peaceful ways.
Honors: Continental Math League, black belt Taekwondo

Jhayce Hawley
Grade: 7
Palmyra Area MS/SD
Favorite food: tacos
Favorite book: author-Theodore Grey
Career aspirations: physical sciences
Interests: physics, chemistry, math, 3D printing, computers, geology, music
I admire: Benjamin Franklin, his many inventions.
Honors: Spotlight Strings, jazz band, Cougar Noise, Envirothon, Math Counts, 2019-2020 WITF Central PA Grand Championship Spelling Bee



Nandhini Jayendrasankar
Grade: 7
Mountain View MS, Cumberland Valley SD
Favorite food: pasta
Favorite book: *Amal Unbound,* Aisha Saeed
Career aspirations: management/administration or legalwork
Interests: drawing, reading, gaming, talking to friends
I admire: Michelle Obama, she is an inspiration to young girls.
Honors: yearbook cover contest winner, school news anchor

Rohan Kakaria
Grade: 8
Mountain View MS, Cumberland Valley SD
Favorite food: pizza
Favorite book: *Animal Farm,* George Orwell
Career aspirations: medical field
Interests: math, science, spelling
I admire: Martin Luther King Jr, he stood up for what he believed in.
Honors: honor roll, Mathcounts, Math 24, swim team, honors classes, 2019-2020 WITF Central PA Grand Championship Spelling Bee

Ananya S. Kannan
Grade: 7
Central Dauphin MS/SD
Favorite food: tacos, pizza
Favorite book: authors-Percy Jackson, Rick Riordan
Career aspirations: lawyer, medical scientist
Interests: science, math, literature, music, soccer, art
I admire: Florence Nightingale, her bravery and hospitality.
Honors: honor roll, Reflections contest, honors chorus, honors orchestra, 2019 WITF Central PA Grand Championship Spelling Bee

Kendrina Keller
Grade: 8
Selinsgrove Area MS/SD
Favorite food: macaroni pudding
Favorite book: *Fever 1793*, Laurie Halse Anderson
Pets: dog - Elle; tropical fish
Career aspirations: professional dance choreographer
Interests: traveling, history, math
Honors: honors choir, distinguished honor roll, dance, gumnastics, piano, flute, violin, skiing, 2020 WITF Central PA Grand Championship Spelling Bee

Harrison Mabon
Grade: 8
Southern MS, Southern York County SD
Favorite food: Moravian chicken pie
Favorite book: *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*, J.K. Rowling
Pets: labradors - Roger, Ginger, Barclay; cat; chickens; sheep
Career aspirations: geophysics, music
Interests: math, science, music, farming, reading, hiking, running
I admire: Gandhi, his unique approach to non-violent protest.
Honors: National Junior Honor Society, OAKE National Childrens Choir, Boys Noyz, cross country, York Jr. Symphony, York County Envirothon

Bryan J. Martinez-Nevarez
Grade: 4
Farmdale ES, Hempfield SD
Favorite food: yellow rice with beans, fried pork chop, fried plantain; all on one plate
Favorite book: author-Dr. Seuss
Pets: yellow labrador - Winter
Career aspirations: computer hardware engineer
Interests: science, mathematics, basketball
I admire: Mom and Dad, they are hard workers and pay for everything.
Honors: good grades

Harper Menegat
Grade: 6
Eagle View MS, Cumberland Valley SD
Favorite food: ramen
Favorite book: *Mockingjay*, Suzanne Collins
Pets: puppy - Poe
Career aspirations: dermatologist
Interests: writing and singing songs
I admire: Taylor Swift, she can turn her feelings into music.

Viseth Meng
Grade: 8
Cedar Crest MS, Cornwall-Lebanon SD
Favorite food: chicken lime soup with rice
Favorite book: Artemis Fowl series, EoinColfer
Career aspirations: pulmononlogist/tennis player
Interests: chess, tennis, fishing, history, literature, running, human lungs
I admire: Roger Federer, he shows how it takes hard work to win.
Honors: school chess chmapion, PMEA orchestra, Lebanon Library Book Contest, Reading Olympics, Quiz Bowl, superior honor roll, tennis, 2018-2020 WITF Central PA Grand Championship Spelling Bee

Nehemiah Miller
Grade: 8
Wheatland MS, School District of Lancaster
Favorite food: beef with buttered rice
Favorite book: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, J.K. Rowling
Pets: chihauhaus - Lucky, Bella
Career aspirations: rapping
Honors: cross country

Nestor Nguyen
Grade: 8
Conestoga Valley MS/SD
Favorite food: sushi
Favorite book: *The Giver*, Lois Lowry
Pets: goldfish
Interests: cooking, animals, space
I admire: Mom, she is hard-working and kind.
Honors: distinguished honor roll, 2019 WITF Central PA Grand Championship Spelling Bee

Abigail Nop
Grade: 6
Lower Dauphin MS/SD
Favorite food: raman noodles
Career aspirations: dance, social media
Interests: dance, volleyball
I admire: Family, they always support me.
Honors: volleyball

Nahla Owens
Grade: 6
Wheatland MS, School District of Lancaster
Favorite food: chicken alfredo
Favorite book: Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling
Pets: turtle - Shelly
Career aspirations: doctor
Interests: school, candles, slime
I admire: All doctors, I want to become one.
Honors: reading achievements, running

Kellen Palisin
Grade: 6
New Cumberland MS, West Shore SD
Favorite food: whipped cream, mashed potatoes
Favorite book: *Sisters*, Raina Telgemeier
Pets: dog - Lily; cats - Oliver, Sophie
Career aspirations: scientist, politician
Interests: sports, games
I admire: My Mimi, she is clean and fun.
Honors: Presidential Education Excellence Award

Elliana Rymarenko
Grade: 6
Cocalico MS/SD
Favorite food: broiled salmon
Favorite book: Wild Rescuers series, Stacy Plays
Career aspirations: architect, writer
Interests: horseback riding
I admire: Grandpa Peter, he's a good man and a man of integrity.
Honors: band, chorus, athletic achievements, competitive horseback rider

Aryan Sai
Grade: 7
Mechanicsburg MS/SD
Favorite food: pizza
Favorite book: Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling
Career aspirations: neurologist
Interests: neurology
I admire: Bill Gates, he was able to live a comfortable life.
Honors: 1st honor roll

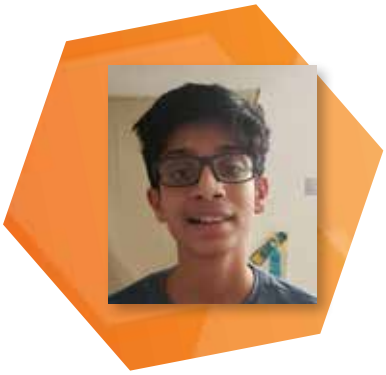
Sibi Shanmugam
Grade: 6
Eagle View MS, Cumberland Valley SD
Favorite food: oranges
Favorite book: author-Rick Riordan
Career aspirations: engineer
Interests: animals, building, coding, singing
I admire: My sister, she is really smart and hard-working.
Honors: Taekwondo, tennis, Math 24, keyboard, guitar

Sydney Skopp
Grade: 6
Mechanicsburg MS/SD
Favorite food: homemade chocolate chip cookies
Favorite book: *A Wrinkle in Time,* Madeleine L'Engle
Pets: dog - Rooney
Career aspirations: interior designer, actress
Interests: interior design, architecture, theatre
I admire: Ruth Bader Ginsburg, she worked for equal opportunities for all women.
Honors: chamber choir, art show award, CYO girls basketball

Anna Sponaugle
Grade: 6
Lancaster Country Day School
Favorite food: mac & cheese
Favorite book: Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling
Pets: cat - Mingo, chocolate labrador - Kelsey
Career aspirations: art, baking
Interests: painting, drawing, baking
I admire: Family, they are caring and always find a way to make me laugh.
Honors: basketball, band, LCDS Theatre Company

Owen Underkoffler
Grade: 8
Upper Dauphin Area MS/SD
Favorite food: pizza
Favorite book: *Stress Fracture,* D.P. Lyle
Career aspirations: computer programing
Interests: technology
I admire: Cousin Hannah, she is successful.
Honors: honor roll

Bianca Vang
Grade: 7
Cocalico MS/SD
Favorite food: sushi, seafood
Favorite book: *Number the Stars,* Lois Lowry
Pets: English bulldog - Penelope
Career aspirations: special education teacher
Interests: traveling, creativity/arts
I admire: Malla Yousaf, she is independent and brave.
Honors: Art of Storytelling Grand Prize, Club 24, musical, stuent council president, Citizenship Award, saxophone, basketball, volleyball



Saaketh Vemuri
Grade: 8
Martin Meylin MS, Lampeter-Strasburg SD
Favorite food: drunken noodles
Favorite book: *Catwad*, Jim Benton
Career aspirations: biochhemist
Interests: chemistry, games
I admire: Mom, she is very a skilled person.
Honors: Odyssey of the Mind, Reading Olympics, honor roll

Owen Wagner
Grade: 8
Elizabethtown Area MS/SD
Favorite food: tacos
Favorite book: *Hello, Universe*; Erin Entrada Kelly
Pets: dogs - Clementine, Winston
Career aspirations: audio engineer
Interests: piano, viola, writing, computer coding, hiking
I admire: My parents.
Honors: Elizabethtown Fair Talent Show, STEM Bowl, high honor roll

Ameliya Zaynitdinova
Grade: 7
Linglestown MS, Central Dauphin SD
Favorite food: pizza
Favorite book: Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling
Career aspirations: dentist
Interests: books
I admire: Teachers, they give us education.
Honors: American Citizenship Award

A glimpse on what the Spelling Bee Written Test was like at the WITF Public Media Center in 2020 before COVID 19 restrictions.

2021 FUN FACTS

GENDER

Boys 16 spellers

Girls 17 spellers

GRADES

4TH GRADE 1 speller

6TH GRADE 11 spellers

7TH GRADE 8 spellers

8TH GRADE 13 spellers

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

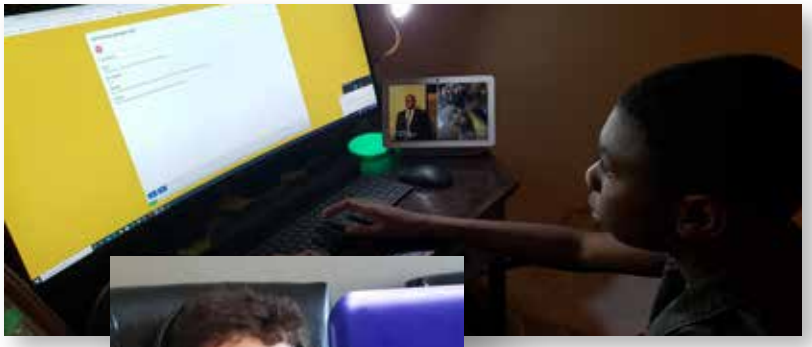
4 spellers have had siblings participate

RETURNING PARTICIPANTS

1 speller This is their 4th year of participation

3 speller This is their 3rd year of participation

2 spellers This is their 2nd year of participation



Spellers taking the online written test

WITF's Central PA Spelling Bee Advisory Committee

Ruth J. Keim, *WITF's Central PA Spelling Bee* coordinator

Kermit Leitner and Kathi Kunkel, pronouncer and assistant pronouncer

Keira McGuire, *WITF's Central PA Spelling Bee* producer

Ruth J. Keim
Spelling Bee Coordinator
WITF

Kathi Kunkel
Assistant Pronouncer
Retired Mechanicsburg SD

Kermit Leitner
Pronouncer
Retired Susquehanna Township SD

Keira McGuire
Producer and Host
WITF

Cara Williams Fry
Senior Vice President & Chief Content Officer
WITF

Patrick Dennehy
Central Dauphin SD

Charles Hartwell, Esquire
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Manheim

Debbie Riek
Education Director
WITF

Joan Suders
Retired Cumberland Valley SD

David Volkman
Executive Deputy Secretary
Department of Education/
Office of the Secretary

Robert N. Whitmoyer
Retired Selinsgrove Area SD

2020 Bee Photos: Joanne Cassaro

2020 WITF's Central PA Spelling Bee Champion,
Viseth Meng, Cedar Crest MS,
Cornwall-Lebanon SD

2020 WITF's Central PA Spelling Bee Champion
top 10 spellers

2020 WITF's Central PA Spelling Bee Champion,
Viseth Meng and his proud family

WITF's Central PA Spelling Bee Past Champions

1957 Rita Taylor
St. Rose of Lima

1958 Terry Madeira
Elizabethtown JHS

1959 Susan Kirssin
Shippensburg JHS

1960 Ilze Jaunaemis
Camp Curtin JHS

1961 Robert Henschke
Sacred Heart ES

1962 Sharon R. Veach
St. Patrick's School

1963 Elaine C. Frantz
S. Lebanon Twp. JHS

1964 Miriam Wildeman
St. Theresa School

1965 Janet Chizeck
Camp Curtin JHS

1966 Vicki Miller
Red Lion JHS

1967 William Zack
St. Joseph's School

1968 Robert Lefkowski
Carlisle JHS

1969 Gerri Chizeck
Camp Curtin JHS

1970 Charles Morgret
CD East JHS

1971 Kellie Whittaker
Good Hope IS

1972 Hoon T. Won
Good Hope IS

1973 Hoon T. Won
Good Hope IS

1974 John J. Skovron
New Cumberland JHS

1975 Leslie Norton
Park Forest JHS

1976 Clay Jones
South Middleton MS
(Boiling Springs JSHS)

1977 Jill Pryor
New Cumberland JHS

1978 Julie Won
Cumberland Valley MS West

1979 Julie Won
Cumberland Valley MS West

1980 Cheryl Kreiser
Annville-Cleona Intermediate

1981 Laura Templeton
East Pennsboro Area MS

1982 Michele Cumberland
St. Michael the Archangel

1983 Robert Weishaar
Sacred Heart School

1984 Charles Lewis
Gettysburg JHS

1985 Charles Lewis
Gettysburg JHS

1986 Jon Pennington
Mechanicsburg Area
Intermediate

1987 Joya Dass
East Pennsboro Area MS

1988 Todd Hetrick
Bermudian Springs MS

1989 Pamela Varma
Lemoyne MS, West Shore SD

1990 Pamela Varma
Lemoyne MS, West Shore SD

1991 Anupam Dass
East Pennsboro MS

1992 Michael Sharma
Dallastown Area MS

1993 Laura Stuart
Wilson MS, Carlisle Area SD

1994 Justin Geist
Linglestown JHS,
Central Dauphin SD

1995 Maureen Hurtgen
Southern MS

1996 Bethany Zmitrovich
Hershey MS, Derry
Township SD

1997 Kathryn Spruill
Eagle View MS,
Cumberland Valley SD

1998 Karina Lopez
Sacred Heart School

1999 Michael Hartwell
Seven Sorrows of the
B.V.M. School

2000 Michael Hartwell
Seven Sorrows of the
B.V.M. School

2001 Ashley Yu
St. Joan of Arc School, Hershey

2002 Ashley Yu
St. Joan of Arc School, Hershey

2003 Zachariah Basehore
Good Hope MS,
Cumberland Valley SD

2004 Charley Allegar
Middle Paxton ES,
Central Dauphin SD

2005 Charley Allegar
Central Dauphin MS

2006 Charley Allegar
Central Dauphin MS

2007 Kafui Dzaka
Allen MS,
Cumberland Valley SD

2008 Jahnavi Iyer
Eagle View MS,
Cumberland Valley SD

2009 Daniel Allegar
Central Dauphin MS

2010 Joanna Ye
Lamberton MS,
Carlisle Area SD

2011 Joanna Ye
Lamberton MS,
Carlisle Area SD

2012 Katie Dudding
St. Joseph School,
Mechanicsburg

2013 Aparajita Rao
St. Joan of Arc School, Hershey

2014 Aparajita Rao
St. Joan of Arc School, Hershey

2015 Eugene Lee
Palmyra Area MS/SD

2016 Luke Capper
St. Joseph School,
Mechanicsburg

2017 Ria Sai
Mechanicsburg MS/SD

2018 Surabi Shanmugam
Eagle View MS,
Cumberland Valley SD

2019 Vikram Kakaria
Eagle View MS,
Cumberland Valley SD

2020 Viseth Meng
Cedar Crest MS,
Cornwall-Lebanon SD

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Spellers taking the online written test

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