



WHEN I GROW UP ESSAY CONTEST KICKS OFF

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WEST VIRGINIA - West Virginia State Treasurer John Perdue and representatives from SMART529 gathered at Edgewood Elementary School in Charleston Jan. 10 to announce the 2019 SMART529 *When I Grow Up* student and teacher essay contest. The annual essay contest gives students around the state the chance to win up to \$5,000 in higher education expenses. Teachers have an opportunity to win a \$2,500 cash prize.

“This contest helps highlight the importance of post-secondary education,” said Treasurer Perdue. “It has grown into a tradition for many families and it is an essential tool to help stress the importance of saving early for education beyond high school.”

Celebrating its 12th year, the popular contest gives kindergarten through fifth-grade students a chance to win both SMART529 savings for higher education and cash prizes for their schools.

Entries will be judged among five regions in three age groups (K-1, 2-3, 4-5), making for a total of 15 regional winners. The 15 winners will be awarded \$500 invested into SMART529 college savings accounts. Out of the regional winners, one grand prize winner will be randomly selected to receive a total of \$5,000 in SMART529 scholarship money. Each winner’s school will also receive a \$500 cash award.

Teachers of grades K through fifth also have the opportunity to compete in the teacher portion of the essay contest. This year’s winning teacher will receive a \$2,500 cash prize.



Over the past 11 years, almost 30,000 entries have resulted in 165 student winners. That means more than \$132,000 has been invested in SMART529 scholarships for students around the state and more than \$100,000 in prize money has been awarded to teachers and schools.

The When I Grow Up essay contest allows students to submit, in 100 words or less, an essay that explains what they want to be when they grow up. Entries will be judged on originality, creativity and the importance of post-secondary education.

Entry forms for both students and teachers are available at www.SMART529.com. In addition, entry forms will be available at elementary schools throughout the state. The deadline for entry form and essay submissions is Friday, February 22, 2019.

SMART529 is a qualified tuition program issued by the West Virginia Prepaid College Tuition and Savings Program Board of Trustees and administered by Hartford Funds.

For more information on SMART529 or the When I Grow Up essay contest go to www.SMART529.com. For media inquiries, please contact Gina Joynes at 304.341.0758 or George Manahan at 304.546.6174.