

Cedar Hill Prep Students Dominate IAC Regional Competitions

Aaryan Shah's comeback and Samarth Dakhera's sweep highlight school's competitive academic culture

Somerset, NJ – Two Cedar Hill Preparatory School students brought home medals from International Academic Competitions (IAC) Regional tournaments this weekend, adding to a growing list of national-level achievements for the Somerset school.

A Comeback Story in Geography

Aaryan Shah (Grade 6) earned a bronze medal at the IAC Geography Regional on Saturday, his third consecutive year competing in the tournament. But the win wasn't straightforward.

In the final round with 10 competitors—many of whom have faced each other for years—Aaryan didn't answer a single question correctly until question 14. The format requires students to answer at least 5 of 30 questions correctly to finish in the top 3. On his first buzz at question 15, he answered incorrectly, dropping his score to -1 while other students had already secured gold and silver.

What happened next demonstrated the resilience Cedar Hill Prep cultivates in its students. Aaryan answered six questions correctly in a row, out-buzzing the remaining eight competitors to claim bronze.

"He answered six questions correctly in a row and won bronze," said his father, Raj Shah. "He learned that it's not over until it's over."

This marks Aaryan's third year as a finalist or medalist at IAC competitions—he was a finalist at Nationals in Orlando in 2025 and a quarter-finalist in 2024.

Dominating Science from Start to Finish

While Aaryan was staging his comeback in geography, Samarth Dakhera (Grade 7) was sweeping the IAC Science Bee Regional. Samarth finished first in all four rounds, including the regional finals, earning a gold medal.

"This achievement is a reflection of the nurturing environment and dedication offered to students every day," said his mother, Pooja Dakhera.

Building a Culture of Academic Excellence

Both students are also members of Cedar Hill Prep's NAQT quiz bowl team, which recently qualified for the Middle School National Championship Tournament in Chicago this May.

The pattern is clear: Cedar Hill Prep students aren't just participating in academic competitions—they're consistently performing at the highest levels, often against students from across the country and around the world.

International Academic Competitions, founded by 19-day Jeopardy champion David Madden in 2010, now reaches students in over 50 countries through competitions including the National History Bee, National Geography Bee, and National Science Bee. The organization's mission is to enrich children's lives by giving them the incentive to study hard and foster a lifelong love of learning.

Both students will advance to represent Cedar Hill Prep at the IAC National Championships.

Want to see what a school looks like where students compete—and win—at the national level? Join us for our Open House on February 28 at Cedar Hill Prep, 152 Cedar Grove Lane, Somerset, NJ 08873, from 10:30 AM to 1 PM.

Questions? Reach our admissions team at 732-356-5400 Ext 67 or admissions@cedarhillprep.com