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Staten Island Advance (NY)

EGBERT, PAULO TEAMS ARE DEBATE WINNERS STUDENTS WILL GO ON TO CHALLENGE BROOKLYN SQUADS NEXT

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About 100 intermediate school students went head-to-head yesterday in the district-wide Lincoln-Douglas debate at the Petrides Educational Complex, Sunnyside.

The winning teams were from the Egbert Intermediate School, Midland Beach, and the Paulo Intermediate School, Huguenot. They will go on to compete against teams from Brooklyn sometime next month or in May, according to Anita Verdiglione, District 31 debate liaison. The competition will be hosted by Brooklyn's District 13.

Each round of debates lasted about 20 minutes, in which teams debated whether adopting English as the official national language is consistent with American values. The topic was selected by the Board of Education.

On the affirmative side, students argued that too much money is being spent on bilingual and English-as-a-Second Language programs with little results. On the negative side, students argued that adopting English would contradict some amendments of the Constitution, such as freedom of speech and freedom of choice, steer immigrants away and promote prejudice.

Students were judged for their poise and presentation, the quality of their evidence, and their ability to rebut the opposing team.

A panel of 20 judges, including several retired principals and members of the Island's businesses and educational communities, rated each team by points.

Team members from Egbert Intermediate School said they've been preparing for the debate since November.

"We did a lot of research, by visiting the library," said Egbert student Sarita Gokarn. "We also used the Internet."

The rotation process at yesterday's debate went smoothly. Teams from



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Paulo Intermediate School, Huguenot, and the Petrides School, Sunnyside, performed their first round of debates in Room B104.

Ms. Verdiglione praised the students for the skills they had developed for the debates. Those skills included language arts and research.

"You are thinking on your feet as you speak and make decisions," she said to the participants.

Teams from all 11 schools will be presented with trophies and certificates of participation donated by Brooklyn Union and Chase Manhattan Bank.

The winning affirmative team from Egbert was made up of Sarita Gokarn, Nicole Caccamo, Junho Yang and Christine O'Neil.

Students from Paulo's winning negative team were Jennifer Tabeek, Pamela Janairo, Jacqueline Pezzillo and Shari Abrams.

The teams were coached by Lew Goldring for Egbert and Loretta McMillen for Paulo.

Advance Photos by Jan Somma: From left, Jennifer Tabeek and Pamela Janairo listen as Jacqueline Pezzillo presents an argument during the district-wide Lincoln-Douglas debate at the Petrides Educational Complex, Sunnyside.

Caption: Michael Maggiore, a debate team member of Prall Intermediate School, West Brighton, presents his argument as fellow teammate William Rogers looks on.

Caption: Mapping a debate strategy are, from left, Eric Hoff, Adam McCauley, Jeffrey Orlowski and **Joshua Blackman**, all members of the debate team at Bernstein Intermediate School, Huguenot.

Caption: From left, William Schlissel, Steven Troise, Brian Goldstein and Nikki Onyedika, members of the debate team at Laurie Intermediate School, New Springville, discuss debating tactics.

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