

July 18, 2018

For Immediate Release

Sylacauga, AL...More than 9,200 of America's best and brightest high school students traveled to Maryland to Elevate Their Futures as they competed for the opportunity to win more than \$175,000 in cash awards. Twenty students and three advisers from Sylacauga High School were in attendance. The Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) National Leadership Conference was held June 28–July 1 in Baltimore. Participants from across the United States and abroad attended the conference to enhance their business skills, expand networks, and participate in more than 70 business and business-related competitive events.

Alex Claire Hodges from Sylacauga High School received national recognition at the FBLA Awards of Excellence program on July 1. Hodges placed second in the Local Chapter Annual Business Report competitive event, which is a fifteen-page business report detailing all chapter activities for the 2017-2018 membership year.

In addition to placing second in Local Chapter Annual Business Report, Hodges and partner Nathaniel Baker advanced as a top fifteen finalist in the Website Design competitive event. In Website Design, Hodges and Baker created a website for Clear Eye Careers, a website built to provide tips for job searches.

"Being involved in Sylacauga High School FBLA has helped me build not only my confidence but many skills for which I am utterly grateful. As an outgoing senior, I have attended three National Leadership Conferences. Finally hearing my event called as a top ten finalist was a dream come true. I am incredibly blessed by the people who have supported me and helped me become who I am today," said Claire Hodges, Executive Vice President of Sylacauga FBLA.

The 2018 National Leadership Conference is the twelfth consecutive year where at least one Sylacauga FBLA member has placed in the top ten of a competitive event.

The award was part of a comprehensive national competitive events program sponsored by FBLA-PBL that recognizes and rewards excellence in a broad range of business and career-related areas. For many students, the competitive events are the capstone activity of their academic careers. In addition to competitions, students immersed themselves in interactive workshops, visited an information-packed exhibit hall, and heard from motivational speakers on a broad range of business topics.

Hodges and Baker were joined by the following Sylacauga High School FBLA members: Grace Abernathy, Elizabeth Arnold, Ella Brooks, Ashleigh Davis, Ibbey Dickson, McKenzie Hosey, Riley Keith, Rachel Kidd, Grier Marlowe, Kaitlin McKelvey, Zach Miller, Ariana Prichard, Anna Rice, Keziah Sanders, Kaleigh Smith, Luke Tyler, Shaun Wadhwa, and Lauryn Wood. These students competed in events ranging from Sports and Entertainment Management to E-Business. Advisers Pamela McTier, Allyson Craddock, and Jacob Elliff accompanied the students.

Ibbey Dickson was one of eight Alabama students leading the entire Alabama FBLA delegation in Baltimore, serving as the state secretary