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Belfry High School Water Research Team to Travel to India to Present Research

A team of students from Belfry High School will travel to Kolkata, India in June to present their research on groundwater quality in Pike County. The team is led by their teacher, Dr. Haridas Chandran, and includes Aryn Adkins, Austin Dillon, Carlie McCoy, and Hannah McCoy. Their research is part of a project sponsored by the U.S. State Department's Mission to India that links schools in Kentucky with schools in eastern India to do community-based water quality research. They were recruited to work on the project by the University of Kentucky (UK) project management team, Dr. Carol Hanley from UK's College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, and Drs. Alan Fryar and Dr. Rebecca Freeman from UK's Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences. The project is promoting inquiry-based learning about water quality and the effects of human activities, while simultaneously learning each other's cultures. Teams have posted materials and contributed wikis to an online portal developed by a Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences graduate student, Ms. Amanda Sherman.

The Belfry team was one of twelve from around the Commonwealth to receive water-testing equipment, in addition to ten schools in the Indian states of West Bengal, Assam, and Jharkhand. Other Kentucky schools included Bryan Station High School, The Learning Center, and the STEAM Academy in Lexington; duPont Manual High School and Central High School in Louisville; Muhlenberg County High School; Southwestern High School in Somerset; and Woodford County High School. After learning about water issues online with their colleagues in India and Kentucky, each team designed their own project, and the Belfry team decided to test water from drinking wells in their community. Each India and Kentucky team wrote research proposals, and the team with the highest-rated proposal from each country—Belfry High School, for Kentucky, and DAV Model School in Durgapur, West Bengal, for India—will travel to the others' country to present their research this upcoming spring.