

## Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics

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## **Oklahoman Wins Gold at International Physics Olympiad**

**OSSM Student from Broken Arrow (Tulsa Union High School), who scored a perfect 36 on the October, 2006 ACT, performed the highest score on the US Team.**

The American Association of Physics Teachers and the American Institute of Physics announced on Monday, that “The US Physics Team has returned home triumphant today, having garnered a total of five medals; one by each of the team members.” Haofei Wei of Broken Arrow, a 2007 graduate of the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics (OSSM), was a Gold Medal winner. His win helped the US Team come in third in the world (China and Russia took first and second respectively) in medal counts in the international competition attended by 73 countries. In terms of aggregate team scores, the USA finished in fifth place behind China, Korea, Russia, and Japan.

Wei, who graduated from the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics in May, attended Tulsa Union High School before being selected to attend OSSM for his junior and senior years. Last October, Wei was one of only five Oklahomans (one of 75 nationally) to score a perfect 36 on the ACT, and he is a National Merit Scholar. His physics professor, Dr. Shayne Johnston of OSSM said of him, “Haofei is a brilliant student and an outstanding young man. As a physics teacher, I have found it very rewarding to work with such a remarkable student.”

Wei was also the captain of the OSSM Varsity TEAM+S team that achieved second place in the nation this year in the annual competition. TEAM+S is a national competition run by the Junior Engineering Technical Society (JETS), which is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia. In the competition, teams from high schools from across the United States have to solve real-life engineering problems exhibiting their knowledge of computer science, environmental engineering, physics, robotics, and design.

“We attribute much of Haofei’s success,” said Dr. Edna Manning, OSSM President, “to the strength of the physics instruction he received here at OSSM and at Union High School, and to his own hard work and extraordinary dedication to his studies.”

Earlier this year, in its *2007 Advanced Placement Report to the Nation*, the College Board named two of OSSM’s Physics courses (Electricity and Magnetism and Mechanics) as well as the school’s AP Chemistry course, the strongest of their kind in the world. Wei has taken those particular courses, as well as courses such as Physics AP,

Modern Physics, Thermal Physics Waves & Optics, General Physics, and Electronic Circuits.

Wei's parents are Xiaoguang Liang and Ming Wei of Broken Arrow. Wei is an accomplished trumpet player and was active in marching band at Union High School and participated in the OSSM Community Orchestra and in jazz band. Of his experience at OSSM he commented that he is "grateful for the opportunity offered to me by OSSM to participate in the Physics Olympiad, and also for the help and support I have received from the OSSM Physics Department faculty."

Wei plans to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology next year.

The Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics (OSSM) is a state-funded, residential high school for students with exceptional ability in science and math who plan to pursue careers in science and technology. Students from across the state apply to OSSM during their sophomore year at their home high schools, although a some have applied and been accepted during their freshman year. Admission is a highly competitive process initiated by written application. Approximately 250-300 young people apply each year for some 70-80 places. The admissions committee examines multiple criteria including standardized test scores, previous grades, academic recommendations from teachers, principals, and counselors, and special talents and accomplishments. Semifinalists are interviewed by review committees before the final selection is determined. In the school's 17-year history, students have been admitted from all of Oklahoma's 77 counties. Typically, about 50% of the students come from communities with populations of fewer than 10,000, with 30% from cities with populations of over 25,000.

All courses taught at OSSM are college level classes, taught by an ethnically diverse, accomplished, dedicated faculty – two-thirds of the faculty hold doctorates in their fields, and all have taught at the college level.

OSSM is located on a 32-acre campus in Oklahoma City, just south of the State Capitol and across from the medical and research facilities of the Oklahoma Health Center. Classes are held in the Dr. Edna McDuffie Manning Academic Center, a renovated Oklahoma City public school, and students live in the Dan Little Residence Hall that was completed in early 1998. The school's gymnasium opened in March of 1999. The Samson Science and Discovery Center houses physics and chemistry teaching and research laboratories and faculty offices. The Senator Bernice Shedrick Library will eventually hold 50,000 volumes and provides space for OSSM's administrative offices. With a planned addition to the residence hall, another 75 dormitory rooms will become available. Tuition, room and board, and books are all provided by the State of Oklahoma.

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- Photo attached: Haofei Wei, OSSM Class of 2007.