



The Office Of State Treasurer
Denise L. Nappier

News

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CHET LAUNCHES 2017 DREAM BIG! COMPETITION

Art and Essay Contest to Award \$30,000 to Connecticut Students and Schools

HARTFORD, CT – Since it started 10 years ago, the CHET Dream Big! Competition has encouraged thousands of Connecticut students to aspire to become doctors, police officers, teachers, scientists, social workers, astronauts, entrepreneurs, musicians, artists, writers and more.



Today, State Treasurer Denise L. Nappier is launching the 2017 Dream Big! Competition, a statewide drawing and essay contest for Connecticut students in kindergarten through eighth grade. This year, the competition will award a total of \$26,000 in CHET contributions to 48 students.

Four students will receive a \$1,000 grand prize; the others will receive \$500. Winners will receive their prize as a contribution to a new or existing CHET account. The Connecticut Higher Education Trust (CHET) is Connecticut's 529 college savings program.

"Just this month, the Economic Policy Institute released data showing that the earnings gap between college graduates and those with only a high school diploma has reached its widest point on record – 56 percent in 2015. What better indication of the importance of college than this news," Treasurer Nappier, Trustee of CHET, said.

"But one of the barriers to closing the earnings gap is college affordability, which is causing an increasing number of students to drop out. It has become an important issue for families across the state and the country, as evidenced by its spotlight in last year's presidential campaign," Treasurer Nappier said. "CHET is proud to play a part in making college education more accessible for Connecticut families despite the headwinds of our time. Dream Big!, along with our other CHET programs, inspires families to start talking about the importance of saving for college early and reminds them to get started now."

To enter the Dream Big! competition, kindergarten through third graders are asked to share artwork depicting what they want to do after they go to college. Fourth through eighth grade students are asked to answer in a 250 word essay how they will change the world after college.

The grand prize winners will be chosen from all entries; one winner each will be chosen from grades K and 1; grades 2 and 3; grades 4 and 5; and grades 6, 7 and 8. Thirty-two winners (four per county) will each win a \$500 CHET account. Twelve statewide winners representing Connecticut's turnaround schools or judges' picks also will each be awarded a \$500 CHET account.

"I am continually amazed at the creativity of each year's entries. It is truly rewarding to see the reaction of proud parents to their children's images and dreams for their bright futures," said Treasurer Nappier.

Besides the student winners, eight schools statewide, one in each county, will be awarded a \$500 cash prize and recognized as the top Dream Big! school in that county. To be eligible the winning school in each county must submit a minimum of 100 student entries and have the highest number of submissions in that county. School winners in prior years have used the money to purchase library books, classroom material and other items to enrich their students learning experience.

The Dream Big! Competition is sponsored by the State Treasurer's Office, TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. and CHET. Entry deadline is March 31, 2017. Printable entry forms, official rules and additional details can be found at www.CHETDreamBig.com. No purchase is necessary to enter or win.

Dream Big! entries are judged within four grade groups -- K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8 -- based on theme, originality and creativity. Drawings will also be evaluated based on artistic design and attractiveness with essays also judged on overall grammar, spelling and punctuation.

About CHET

The State of Connecticut offers CHET to help families save for future college costs. Funds saved in a CHET account can be used at accredited colleges, universities, and vocational trade schools across the country for qualified higher education expenses. Some colleges abroad are also eligible.

Since CHET was established in 1997, more than 42,400 students have used \$1.49 billion in CHET funds to pay for college costs through the CHET Direct and CHET Advisor programs, as of December 31, 2016. Currently, CHET has more than \$3 billion in assets and over 136,000 accounts.

The CHET direct-sold plan is administered by the State Treasurer's Office, and managed by TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. For more information about CHET, visit www.aboutchet.com or call the customer service center at (866) 314-3939. Find CHET on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CHETcollegesavings) (facebook.com/CHETcollegesavings) or follow it on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/CHET529) (@CHET529).

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