Churchill & Woodinville Win Ninth Annual Pacific Northwest Japan Bowl



March 2, 2026 – PORTLAND, OR

Over one hundred high school students from across Oregon and Southwest Washington gathered at Clark College in Vancouver, WA, on Saturday, February 28th, for the ninth annual Pacific Northwest Japan Bowl, a regional Japanese language and culture quiz competition owned and operated by the Japan-America Society of Oregon. This year marks a record number of participants since the creation of Pacific Northwest Japan Bowl in 2017.

Students Evan Lopez, Ember Maricle, and Oliver Munsell of Churchill High School (OR) crushed the competition against International School of Beaverton (OR) and Kamiak High School (WA) in the senior division Level Four finals, winning a trip to represent our region in the National Japan Bowl championships in Washington, D.C. on April 17-18.

Thirty-seven teams from thirteen schools in Oregon and Washington competed for top prizes in three different levels over the day. Woodinville High School (WA) students Se-hun Kim and Alex Ko were the Level Three champions, beating teams from International School of Beaverton (OR) and Roosevelt High School (OR) in a close competition, winning the other spot in the National Championships in Washington, D.C. Emma Chang, Owen Jin, and Natalie Flores of International School of Beaverton

Team 1 (OR) won the Level Two competition, with the secondary International School of Beaverton team and Woodinville High School (WA) taking second and third place.

Along with the competition, students enjoyed authentic bento and a cultural performance by Takohachi, a Japanese music group. After lunch, students had time to network with college-level Japanese students and learn more about local college and university Japanese language programs.

“I’m at Japan Bowl because Japanese is such an interesting language and I meet so many different people here, which is a fun experience,” said a Level Two student. “Also, there are so many yummy snacks.”

Over 55 partners, from local businesses and universities to cultural and educational organizations, came together to encourage students to learn and connect with Japanese culture, making this program possible with financial and in-kind support. From technology companies like SEH America, Hitachi High-Tech, and JAE, to Temple University and WaniKani in the education sector, and even those in finance like Perkins — Japan Bowl brings together all kinds of groups to support the next generation.

Joining these local businesses were 25 educational institutions, including 13 competing high schools, 10 colleges with booths showcasing their language programs, two statewide teacher associations, and student volunteers from other college and high school programs, including some visiting from Japan. On the day of the program, over 50 volunteers worked together to make the day a success.

“I love Japanese culture. It’s great to dip your toes into something new and try something,” reflected a Level Two student.

The Pacific Northwest Japan Bowl is owned and operated by the Japan-America Society of Oregon, a non-profit dedicated to supporting business and developing community between Japan, Oregon, and Southwest Washington. Details about their programs are available at https://jaso.org/.

Additional photos from this competition are available on JASO’s Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1354841810007742&type=3

Full Results

Level 2

1st International School of Beaverton Team 1 (OR)

2nd International School of Beaverton Team 2 (OR)

3rd Woodinville High School Team 2 (WA)

Level 3

1st Woodinville High School Team 2 (WA)

2nd International School of Beaverton Team 2 (OR)

3rd Roosevelt High School (OR)

Level 4

1st Churchill High School (OR)

2nd International School of Beaverton Team 2 (OR)

3rd Kamiak High School (WA)