

Franklin Co. student wins for outstanding math video

Travis Grenier "deserves huge praise for winning this competition," said Rep. Tom Perriello.

By [Jennie Tal](#)

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Jared Soares | The Roanoke Times

Travis Grenier, a Franklin County High School junior, won a math and science video competition for a Claymation video he made about calculus.

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Travis Grenier owes a lot to Gumby.

Using the classic Claymation character and hip-hop song "Crank Dat Soulja Boy" as inspiration, the Franklin County High School 11th-grader created his first Claymation video, "Crank Dat Calculus."

The music video with math-centric lyrics won Travis the grand prize of the National Math and Science Initiative's Fun is Learning Math and Science Video Competition, earning him a trip to Washington, D.C., where he received a \$3,000 scholarship.

"Travis deserves huge praise for winning this national competition," read a written statement by U.S. Rep. Tom Perriello, D-Ablemarle County, who presented Travis with his award.

"Watching his exceptional video was the first thing that had made me want to crack open a calculus book in a long, long time. I was very proud to see Travis and his parents representing our district so well on the national level," Perriello said.

Travis and his parents, Gary and Stephanie Grenier, also will be going to California on an all-expenses-paid trip to tour the DreamWorks Animation studio, which thrills the aspiring filmmaker.

"That was, I think, the best part," Travis said. "Three thousand dollars, that's wonderful, but going to DreamWorks, that's really awesome."

And Travis doesn't plan to keep his \$3,000 long -- it probably won't even make it to his freshman year at his dream school, Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia.

The high school junior wants to put the scholarship toward the school's Rising Star program.

If Travis maintains a 3.0 grade point average during the six-week program this summer, he'll have 10 college credits before he starts 12th grade -- in addition to the credit he receives from taking his three Advance Placement tests this year.

In addition to the FILMS program, a National Math and Science Initiative grant provides participating Virginia schools funding for test preparation, pays for students to take the \$80 tests and awards cash incentives to students who pass the exams.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for our students to take part in this grant," said Travis' calculus teacher, Sharon Roberts, who admitted to almost inadvertently sabotaging Travis' video in its infancy. Roberts explained that students use school-issued TI-83 graphing calculators, and games and other programs are prohibited.

Video: "Crank Dat Calculus"

Video courtesy of Travis Grenier

She said she caught Travis, one of only seven 11th-graders taking AP calculus at Franklin County High School, working on the calculator portion of his video during class, but after he explained what he was doing, Roberts let him keep the program on the calculator as long as he didn't work on it during class.

Before winning the national competition, Travis won \$500, a party during calculus class and a new TI-NSPIRE graphing calculator, but he won't be putting games on it anytime soon.

"I still use the school-issued TI-83 because I can't figure out how to use that thing," he said.

Plus, he'll be too busy creating his Savannah College of Art and Design portfolio.

Before he gets there, though, he'll visit DreamWorks, and the young filmmaker knows exactly what he's going to ask.

"Can I have a job?"