

Kaylin Schemmel **Oak Park Elementary School, Hillsborough County** **2025 Runner-Up**

Kaylin teaches science at Oak Park Elementary School in Hillsborough County.

She was chosen as a 2025 Runner-Up for using the Tampa Bay Times and NIE resources to create a dynamic, real-world learning environment in her classroom.

For example, students used the NIE publication “Coasters 101” to prepare for the Roller Coaster Science Olympiad event, in which teams design, build, and test a roller coaster track to guide a ball that uses gravitational potential energy as its sole means of propulsion.

During STEM Fair, students used NIE publications including “Lights On Tampa” and “Pinellas County Citizen Scientist STEAM” to complete research projects and design experiments on various topics.

Kaylin writes, “The Tampa Bay Times and NIE resources aren’t just tools – they are catalysts for curiosity. Students not only get to learn science but live it by engaging critically with current events, and building literacy alongside content knowledge. The newspaper has become more than a learning tool – it’s a building block of the classroom.”

Kaylin was also chosen as a Runner-Up in 2024.

Roller Coasters- During the roller coaster unit for Science Olympics students used the NIE Online Resource- “Coasters 101” as one of their resources for how to build the best coaster and identify words such as hills, loops, friction, gravity, force and mass.

