**Bellaire High School debate team to compete in**

**global public policy forum**

*School is one of two Texas teams advancing to ‘Elite 8’ round of competition in New York City*

*March 30, 2016 —* The Bellaire High School debate team will travel to New York City on Friday, April 1 to compete in the 2015-2016 International Public Policy Forum (IPPF), which gives high school students from around the world the opportunity to engage in written and oral debates on issues of public policy.

The Bellaire debate team, made up of four seniors, is one of two Texas teams to advance to the “Elite 8” round of the competition. The team defeated hundreds of other high school debate teams and earned an all-expenses-paid trip to compete against debaters from across the country.

Bellaire, which won the competition in 2008 and 2009, will face East Ridge High School of Woodbury, Minn., on Saturday, April 2 in the Elite 8 round and compete to move on to the semifinal and final rounds. The competition will consist of oral debates in front of judges who are experts in the fields of law, politics, debate, and business. If a team loses an oral debate, the team will be eliminated. The winning team will be announced that evening and will take home the title of IPPF World Champion and $10,000 in scholarship money. The competition started with teams from 28 states and 29 countries.

“This is an academic sport. These students spend hours researching and writing their papers,” said Bellaire Debate Coach Jay Stubbs. “They are incredibly bright.”

Debaters will affirm and negate the IPPF topic “Resolved: Genetically modified organisms are essential to global food security.” Students submitted 2,800-word essays, which were reviewed by a committee to determine the top 64 teams. Debaters submitted their first qualifying round of essays in October, and throughout the academic school year, they continued to advance in the competition with written debates revolving around the issue.

“We are incredibly proud of these students to have made it this far. This is a year-long competition with a very difficult topic to debate,” said HISD Interim Superintendent Ken Huewitt. “They’ve earned their spot in the ’Elite 8,’ and I am extremely confident that they will do well.”

