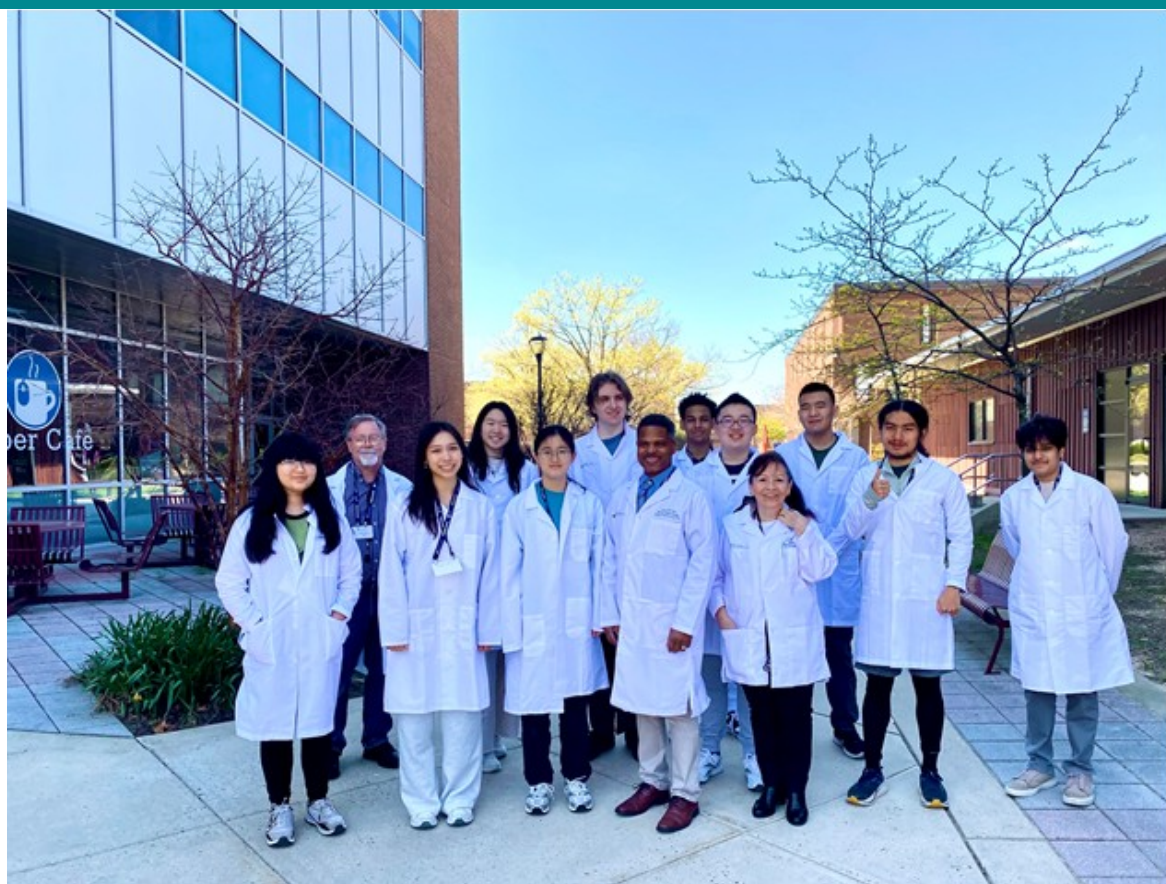


2026 | By: Beatrice Salazar, USNCO Chair



Report USNCO 2026

US NATIONAL CHEMISTRY OLYMPIAD

The US National Chemistry Olympiad is a multitiered program for high school students. The American Chemical Society has sponsored this program since 1984. As the Maryland USNCO Chair, I have had the pleasure of coordinating our local section's program since 2010.

Coordinators of each of the 186 Local Sections of the American Chemical Society (ACS) nominate students for the National Exam based on the results of the Local Competitions. We have nominated 13 students to participate in the 2026 National Exam. This number is determined by our 1,350 ACS members, with a limit of two students per school.

The official announcement has been shared with the community via a press release along with an invitation to join us in celebrating these students' achievements.

USNCO-2026

58th USNCO Chemistry Olympiad

USNCO Part I: Maryland preliminary Local Exam

The Program began with the registration and the preliminary Local Exam in November 2025 and culminated in April 19, 2026.

The competition welcomes all high students grades 9-12 from all public, home and private schools from the Maryland area. We saw participation from 260 invited schools across the Maryland area. We had 3 new schools participating this year. You can find the detailed participation report at the following link <..\Downloads\USNCO-2026 LOCAL EXAM.pdf>

USNCO Part II: Maryland National Exam

Following the Local Exam, 13 nominees and 5 alternates were selected to advance to the National Exam. The selection criteria are based on the scores obtained from part I and a maximum of two students from any participating school. The official announcement was shared with the community via a PRESS RELEASE which is accessible here: <..\Downloads\PRESS RELEASE-2026-USNCO-April 2026.pdf>

US National Chemistry Olympiad

On April 11, 2026, our 13 nominees gathered at the Baltimore County Community College, CCBC Essex, for a rigorous full day competition. The event consisted of three parts designed to test their chemistry, knowledge, their laboratory skills and their reasoning and problem-solving skills. We include here the invitation [flyer](#) and the [agenda](#) announcing the competition to parents, teachers and the community.

Part I: Multiple choice questions.

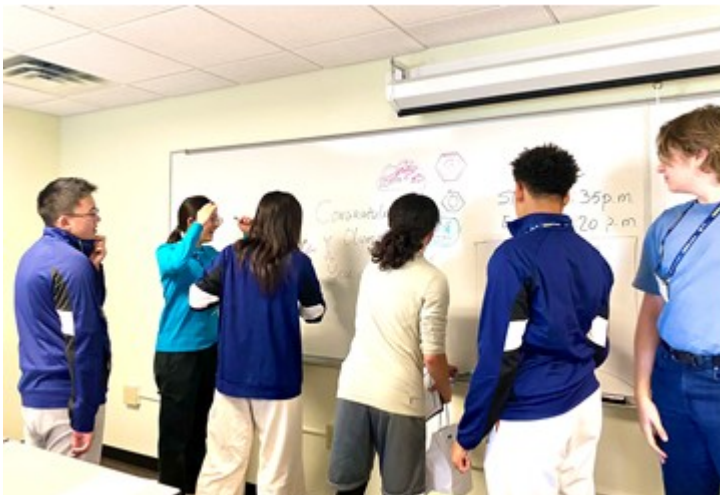
There are 60 questions covering topics: stoichiometry, thermodynamics, equilibrium, redox, periodicity, electrochemistry, Kinetics, bonding, atomic structure, molecular structure, organic chemistry and biochemistry.



US National Chemistry Olympiad cont.

Part II: Problem Solving.

Students answered eight rigorous challenging questions on chemical theories and models. Students found this part of the exam very challenging. Their enthusiasm however didn't decrease after the completion of the exam. Students were eager to discuss the questions of the exam and unanimously gathered in front the white-board to discuss structures and comment on the exam.



Part III: Laboratory practical

A student favorite part where participants have complete autonomy of the test. Students designed their own experiment to solve two laboratory practical Problems.



Connectivity, Lunch and Award Ceremony

Beyond the testing, the day provided a valuable Networking opportunity over lunch, together they shared their passion for chemistry, talked about their hobbies and discussed their career aspirations in chemistry.

They loved the pizza and refreshments and had fun in front of the white board discussing themes of interest to them, also chemistry!



Students took advantage of the warm weather and have a picture outside the mathematics building. Each student was recognized with a blue Maryland USNCO team jacket, a certificate and a traditional USNCO pin.

Acknowledgements:

We also honored the teachers and proctors who supported these talented students.

They received a certificate award and a present. Special thanks to Dr. Evon Ford for hosting us at CCBC Essex, George Owens, for his exceptional work in the laboratory preparing all the materials and chemicals needed for the competition, and Dr. Camilo Rojas, for his diligence in proctoring and logistics. It was a wonderful experience, and we are incredibly proud of all the participants and students.

On behalf of the Maryland Local Section, thank you to all the participants, parents and volunteers who contributed to the success of this year's Olympiad.

