Conor Baker, an 18-year-old senior at Statesboro High School and a local volunteer firefighter, qualified to represent Georgia in the 49th annual National Leadership & Skills Conference in Kansas City, Mo., June 24–28, after his first-place win at the state-level Skills USA Firefighting competition March 21–23 in Atlanta.

‘We’re extremely proud of Conor,” said Charles Fales, the Skills USA advisor at SHS.

At state, Baker faced 11 competitors. He achieved only five skills tested at state. The written test will request knowledge of topics such as water flow, construction types, building Occupancies, Safety, breathing apparatus, fire streams, fire control, ventilation, emergency medical care, rescue, and protecting fire evidence.

Baker credits his mother, who is a pediatrician, with helping to shape Baker’s future. “I have a real passion for excellence and serving others and that’s always been my mom to serve with me to establish my feelings and career readiness spectrum.”

Baker’s parents, Cheryl Perkins and Steve Sanders of Statesboro and Michael Baker of Waynesboro, have told him that school comes first since he’s a volunteer. “His grades are better than they’ve ever been,” said Perkins. “Being involved and volunteering has motivated him to succeed.”

That’s because Perkins helped guide Baker about the best way to pursue his career in firefighting and attend college.

“I went through the Firefighter Course and all skills needed to be a firefighter. It’s not unusual for Baker to respond to a 3 a.m. fire emergency and still report for classes at SHS at 9 a.m. It isn’t right when I’m class, but I have been called out before school,” he said.

It’s the second year in a row that SHS has had a state Skills USA winner. In 2012, Chandler Weaver was named as a state Skills USA winner. In 2012, Chandler Weaver was named as a state Skills USA winner.

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