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Paulding high school science students conduct 'groundbreaking' research

by Mary Cosgrove

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Staff / Jeff Stanton

From left, Paulding County High School students Chayton Pabich, Kaleigh McCausland and Brandon Lucas.



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From left, Brandon Lucas, Raleigh McCausland and Chayton Pabich, students in Marc Peterson's biotechnology class, are pipetting samples on to gel electrophoresis, or using droppers to insert samples as part of the DNA identification process of the bristle worm.

Gone are the science fair days of baking-soda volcanoes and potato-powered batteries.

The Paulding County High School team that just won first place at the Cobb-Paulding Regional Science Fair is conducting groundbreaking research at the high school level.

The Academy of Science, Research and Medicine magnet program at Paulding County High has a team of students studying biotechnology led by chemistry, biology and biotechnology teacher Marc Pedersen.

This year, those students have been working on studying the reproduction of bristle worms, which are saltwater creatures that thrive in the multiple saltwater tanks in the classroom.

A bristle worm can reproduce two ways, either through sexual reproduction or by cloning itself. Pedersen said the students wanted to study the worms to see which percentage is cloning and which reproducing.

"Students were extracting the DNA from these bristle worms and using a technique known as the polymerase chain reaction," he said.