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Futures Academy true to its name as kids create model metropolis that's in the Top 5

BY DEIDRE WILLIAMS

NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Despite its name, many students at Futures Academy have a hard time imagining a future for themselves.

But when a team of three eighth-graders was challenged to develop a city 100 years from now, they created an award-winning model metropolis that was streamlined, sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Located on Carlton Street between Lemon and Grape streets in the city's Fruit Belt section, the school could be a model for the district's Science Week effort this week, illustrating what can happen when students are exposed to such fields in creative ways.

The school is overwhelmingly minority – 85 percent African-American and 7 percent Hispanic; 92 percent of its students qualify for free lunch; and the performance on standardized tests is much worse than the district as a whole.

Yet the young techies from Futures held their own against 15 other teams from 12 Western New York schools in the recent 2014 National Engineers Week Future City Competition. The only Buf-

See **Students** on Page D2



Charles Lewis/Buffalo News

Futures Academy team – from left, Zwanie Wright, 14; Johnathen Nelson, 14; Karion Carter, 13; and Monsonna Schief, 15 – displays entry that earned regional honors among 15 WNY rival teams in the 2014 National Engineers Week Future City Competition.

INSIDE: Lotteries / Page D2 •