

Math Whizzes At Jefferson Score Again

By Peter Baker
Washington Post Staff Writer

As if 375 million calculations per second weren't enough.

Two years ago, four computer whizzes at the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology beat out 1,475 other high school teams in an arduous competition to win the first \$1 million supercomputer ever installed in a high school.

This year, the hometown champs won the contest again, except this time the prize is free access to another supercomputer at Cornell University in New York.

"It's a big deal, still," said Jefferson Principal Geoffrey A. Jones. "We're very proud of it."

What are 1,600 students going to do with access to two high-speed machines, each capable of performing hundreds of millions of calculations per second?

More of the same, Jones said. Lots more.

Two years after the ETA10-P was installed at the Fairfax County magnet school, 60 students now use it virtually full time. According to Jones, access to the IBM ES/3090-600J at Cornell will expose Jefferson students to a different kind of supercomputing technology as well as connections with new ideas and people.

The SuperQuest contest was adopted by IBM and Cornell after the original sponsor, ETA Systems of Minnesota, folded in 1988. Instead of awarding the supercomputer to a single school, the contest now awards access and about \$200,000 worth of related equipment to each of four winners.

The Jefferson team, led by teacher Donald W. Hyatt and consisting of students Daniel Brown, Paul H. Hargrove, Sam Rosen and Ramana Sthananda, returned recently from the two-week program at Cornell.

Jones stressed the academic benefits rather than the competitive aspects of the victory. "The emphasis isn't on winning at this point," he said. "We're certainly going to celebrate it, but it's not our goal to highlight awards and contests in