This issue of **Parent Perspectives** contains information about the importance of RESEARCH in FPS competitions The information comes from Gretchen Hundermark of the Alaska affiliate.

The Importance of RESEARCH in Future Problem Solving

Futuristic topics and concepts are a big part of what makes Future Problem Solving fun and exciting. At first glance, the topics might seem narrow or specialized and then the next thing you know, *you are seeing related articles in the media*. Sometimes the idea might not seem so exciting initially and then you find that there are more angles to the topic than you expected and it becomes surprisingly interesting.

It is amazing how many of those sci-fi movie ideas are actually reality! Choose your favorite movie concept and check it out online. Share this with your child. Talk about why the concept interested you. How do you and your student think the idea might evolve? I tried this and I was surprised and amazed that it wasn't just "Hollywood magic" (well, maybe some of it…) but some aspects were quite real.

What are the FPS topics this year? (fpspi.org/topics.html - where you will also find suggested readings for each topic)

> Practice Problem #1: **Educational Disparities**
> Practice Problem #2: **It's All in the Genes**
> Qualifying Problem: **3D Printing**
> Affiliate Competition: **Identity Theft**
> 2017 International Conference: **To be announced March 2017**

Some of these topics are very broad. Where does a researcher begin? Read topic descriptors at fpspi.org/topics.html to get some understanding of the view FPSPI is taking with the topic. These concepts are intentionally broad. The topics were chosen 3-4 years before they are presented to students. Our world of technology is changing so quickly that FPS must allow time for the trends to evolve and give FPSPI some room to later interpret the ideas.

Do you know an EXPERT who could help your student and his/her team to learn more about the topic? Can you help the teacher connect with this expert for a presentation or a field trip?

The internet is a treasure trove of research information for the critical thinker. As adults we understand that just because it is "printed online" doesn't make it true. We must provide students with tools to help them evaluate what they find. This is one of the most important tools that FPS can teach students. Some media sources are: TED Talks (my students love these), National Public Radio (some very informative stuff), newspapers (local, national and even more interesting…international).

Students only know and understand what they have experienced; they will find more insightful ideas if they can relate to the topic and storyline of the Future Scene. Don't rule out *anything* futuristic: read some fiction with your student or watch a movie. Although this may not be technically considered "research," doing this could get students excited about the topic and help them to think about "living" in the Future Scene. Help broaden their experience with stories and/or movies.

RESEARCH…

R…read all suggested readings and research articles!

E…evaluate the facts, opinions and data!

S…study all related material, vocabulary, and statistics!

E…examine your teammates' research findings!

A…always share important research facts with your team!

R…read about the topic everyday!

C…collect as many sources as possible!

H…host research sessions to collaborate with your teammates!

You and your students can SUGGEST TOPICS at: fpspi.orgTopicSubmission.html.

Creativity is always welcome!

ALL competitors use research at IC!
Pictured left is MAGIC competitor, Amrit, from Grapevine ,Texas. His MAGIC team placed second!

FPSPI has research and teaching materials at **FPSPIMart.org** that anyone can purchase. You can also purchase copies of the scenarios written by FPS champions, booklets and projects of GIPS and CmPS top place winners, as well as novelties.

CmPS teams also must research the topic of their projects. Research is key in finding the "Area of Concern" and validates the need for a CmPS project!

Pictured left are CmPS teams "LISTEN" and "NETWORK" from Grapevine-Colleyville ISD, Grapevine Texas

Science fiction is good; talk about what is realistic and what is just fantasy. Some things that seem fantastic are more real than we know at first look. For some of our social issues, history can be a good teacher; ideas and institutions evolve over time. It's interesting for students to get involved in the how and why of historical events and predict possible futures.

"How the World Works" kinds of conversations can be great to have with kids (excellent for in the car!). What are taxes? How does an idea become a law? What is an election and how can we be critical thinkers and participate in the process? What is a patent? Trends are critical to FPS because the future scene is set 30-40 years in the future. What are the future trends of "anything"?

Go to museums, not just science museums, but museums of all kinds.
History museums lead to conversations about "What were the challenges of the past" and how did those who came before us overcome those challenges? Art museums lead to discussion on symbolism, and science museums lead to all types of conversations!

Is your child interested in model airplanes, robotics, drones, or computers? Are there clubs your students can join to learn more?

Not everything is a problem or a challenge. What are some of the solutions that are being discussed? After all, we are Future PROBLEM SOLVERS. How can we make the future a better place to live? Students won't always like the Future Scene that is presented, but maybe they can develop something they like better with their solutions and ideas.

Research doesn't have to be tedious or difficult. One idea often will lead to others. The concepts just get more and more interesting. We want our teams to be competitive and do well but addition to problem solving the real tools we are teaching our students in FPS are how to find/evaluate information (memorization is obsolete), how to communicate (tools for school and the workplace), and how to be effective team members (a life skill)!