

For Immediate Release

July 13, 2021

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Media Release

Three more CCSD students earn college-sponsored National Merit Scholarships

Division of Strategy and
Communications

District-record 24 graduating seniors win National Merit Scholarships in 2021

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Charleston, SC – Charleston County School District (CCSD) is proud to announce that three additional graduating seniors received college-sponsored National Merit Scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) in 2021. CCSD now has a total of 24 NMSC winners in the 66th annual National Merit Scholarship Program, which is the highest single school year total recorded by the district.

The following CCSD students earned college-sponsored National Merit Scholarships as part of the fourth and final group of NMSC winners in 2021:

Academic Magnet High School

Kyle L. Jonsson, National Merit Clemson University Scholarship
Karoline K. Surdyk, National Furman Clemson University Scholarship

Wando High School

Claire P. Gaddy, National Merit Florida State University Scholarship

"It is an honor to conclude our announcements of National Merit Scholarship winners by recognizing two very deserving students," said Catherine Spencer, who recently finished her time as principal at Academic Magnet High School. "Kyle and Karoline have distinguished themselves as exceptional Raptors not only academically, but artistically and athletically as well. They now take their talents into the next chapter, and we wish them all the best as they continue to pursue excellence."

This fourth and final group of winners brings the number of 2021 National Merit Scholars to more than 7,500. These distinguished high school graduates will receive scholarships for undergraduate study worth nearly \$30 million. In addition to college-sponsored awards, two other types of National Merit Scholarships were offered - 2,500 National Merit \$2500 Scholarships, for which all Finalists competed, and about 1,000 corporate-

sponsored Merit Scholarship awards for Finalists who met criteria specified by their grantor organizations.

“We are so proud of Claire and all of our Wando seniors for receiving college-sponsored and corporate-sponsored NMSC scholarships,” added Wando High School Principal Dr. Sherry Eppelsheimer. “They will do well in their college endeavors and we are sure they will continue to strive for academic excellence.”

To become a Finalist, each Semifinalist had to complete a detailed scholarship application, which included writing an essay, describing leadership positions and contributions in school and community activities, showing an outstanding academic record, and being endorsed and recommended by a high school official. Semifinalists also had to take the SAT® or ACT® and earn scores that confirmed their performance on the initial qualifying test. From the Semifinalist group, about 16,000 attained Finalist standing, and about half of the Finalists were chosen to receive National Merit Scholarships.

NMSC, a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance, was established in 1955 to conduct the National Merit Scholarship Program. The majority of National Merit Scholarships offered each year are underwritten by some 400 independent corporate and college sponsors that support NMSC’s efforts to honor the nation’s scholastically talented youth and encourage academic excellence at all levels of education.

For more information, contact the Division of Strategy and Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 49,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.