

**For Immediate Release**

September 10, 2020

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# Media Release

## **Thirty-one CCSD students recognized as 2021 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists**

**Office of Strategy and  
Communications**

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Superintendent of Schools

**Erica S. Taylor**  
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**Charleston, SC** — Charleston County School District (CCSD) is proud to announce 31 students have earned the honor as Semifinalists in the 66<sup>th</sup> annual National Merit Scholarship Program; the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) released the names of approximately 16,000 Semifinalists earlier this week.

Congratulations to the following CCSD 2021 Semifinalists:

**Academic Magnet**

Justin D. Baek  
Lillian S. Bluestein  
Connor A. Burrill  
Owen C. Champman  
Lydia R. Cox  
Brendan Elliott  
Landon C. Ethredge  
Adam S. Frye  
Adam J. Gatch  
Simon Hughes  
Kyle L. Jonsson  
Lily A. Lassiter  
Simon Y. Li  
Benjamin M. Lipschutz  
Ruth M. Liu  
Charles R. Medlock  
Shreyas H. Myrti  
Ethan A. Oulette

Karoline Surdyk  
Molly C. Tippey  
Arthur M. Unger  
Sophia L. White  
Benjamin R. Whitley  
Porter D. Zach

**Wando**

Cameron J. Boni  
Claire P. Gaddy  
Montanna M. Lussier  
Hrishikesh M. Namboordiri  
Bo P. Suthon  
Adam M. Swanson  
Audrey C. Wessinger

Academic Magnet High School has the most Semifinalists (24) in the state; this is the fourth consecutive year the Raptors have had 20 or more.

“These 24 remarkable Academic Magnet Class of 2021 students have upheld our tradition of the strongest of showings for National Merit Semifinalists in

our county and state," said Principal Catherine Spencer. "Once again exceeding all other private and public schools in SC in number, these National Merit Semifinalists have unique gifts and talents which promise the brightest future for them and a positive impact on our world."

These high school seniors will continue in the competition for some 7,600 National Merit Scholarships worth a total of about \$30 million that will be offered next spring.

"We are so proud and excited that these Wando students have been named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists," stated Principal Sherry Eppelsheimer. "Their hard work, dedication, and determination show their continuous journey to achievement through academic excellence."

More than 1.5 million juniors from about 21,000 high schools entered the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2019 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of Semifinalists, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest scoring entrants in each state. The number of Semifinalists in a state is proportional to the state's percentage of the national total of graduating seniors.

To become a Finalist, the Semifinalist and a high school official must submit a detailed scholarship application that includes the Semifinalist's academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment, and honors and awards received. A Semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, write an essay, and earn SAT scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test.

2021 National Merit Scholarship finalists will be contacted by NMSC in February and winners will be announced in four nationwide news releases beginning in April and concluding in July. These scholarship recipients will join more than 353,000 other distinguished young people who have the title of Merit Scholar.

For more information, contact the Office of Strategy and Communication 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 that is 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 more than 50,000 students in 87 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.