

For Immediate Release

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Contact:

Erica Taylor 843-937-6303

Media Release

Five CCSD students earn corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarships

Office of Strategy and
Communications

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Erica S. Taylor
Chief of Staff

Charleston, SC – Five Charleston County School District (CCSD) scholars are receiving corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) this year. They are part of the first group of winners in the 65th annual National Merit Scholarship Program.

The following CCSD students received 2020 corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarships:

Academic Magnet High School (AMHS)

Christian Blackburn, National Merit Parker Hannifin Scholarship
Brendan S. Kelleher, National Merit Boeing Scholarship

Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA)

Caroline W. Conway, National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center Scholarship
Maya J. Green, National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center Scholarship
Christina S. Lewis, National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center Scholarship

"I am so proud of these beautiful, gifted students," exclaimed SOA's principals, Dr. Shannon Cook. "They have applied themselves academically, invested time and energy into our community, and achieved success as writers. Their futures are bright, and we are thrilled to celebrate this accolade with them!"

Approximately 1,000 distinguished high school seniors (including nine from South Carolina) earned scholarships financed by 160 corporations, company foundations, and other business organizations. Most of the awards are renewable for up to four years of college undergraduate study and provide annual stipends from \$1,000 to \$10,000 annually, while some provide a single payment ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000.

“Brendan and Christian represent the best of AMHS,” said Principal Catherine Spencer. “They excel beyond academics in service and leadership in our school and community. These two young men have persevered beyond their own personal challenges to make us very proud and so hopeful for their bright futures.”

According to the NMSC, over 1.5 million juniors in approximately 21,000 high schools entered the 2020 National Merit Scholarship Program when they took the 2018 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which served as an initial screen of program entrants.

Semifinalists first had to advance to the next round by fulfilling additional requirements. Each semifinalist was asked to submit a detailed scholarship application, which included writing an essay and providing information about extracurricular activities, awards, and leadership positions. Semifinalists also had to have an outstanding academic record, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, and earn SAT® scores that confirmed the qualifying test performance. From the semifinalist group, some 15,000 students met finalist requirements.

By the conclusion of the 2020 competition, about 7,600 Finalists will have been selected to receive National Merit Scholarships totaling over \$30 million. Winners are finalists who have, according to evaluators, the strongest combination of academic skills and achievements, extracurricular accomplishments, and potential for success in rigorous college studies.

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 Office of Strategy and Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD), a nationally-accredited school district, is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing 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. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.