

**For Immediate Release**

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# Media Release

## **NMSC honors additional CCSD students with college-sponsored National Merit Scholarships**

Office of Strategy and  
Communications

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**Charleston, SC** – Charleston County School District (CCSD) is proud to announce that three additional graduating seniors from Academic Magnet High School are receiving college-sponsored National Merit Scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) this year. This gives the District a total of 23 NMSC winners in the 65<sup>th</sup> annual National Merit Scholarship Program.

The following CCSD students earned 2020 college-sponsored National Merit Scholarships as part of the fourth and final group of NMSC winners in 2020:

### **Academic Magnet High School**

Gabrielle A. Gagnon, University of South Carolina Scholarship  
Jennifer Hsu, National Merit Clemson University Scholarship  
Michelle Sun, Clemson University Scholarship

"Academic Magnet High School is especially proud of these three young women of exceptional promise, and we congratulate them on joining the growing list of NMSC scholars from our school," said Principal Catherine Spencer. "All three students have elected to attend South Carolina universities, and our state will surely benefit from their future contributions!"

This final group of winners brings the number of 2020 National Merit Scholars to about 7,600. These distinguished high school graduates will receive scholarships for undergraduate study worth a total of over \$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 more than 1,000 corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards for Finalists who met criteria specified by their grantor organizations.

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 15,000 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 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.