

For Immediate Release

April 30, 2024

Contact:

Andy Pruitt, 843-937-6583

Media Release

Academic Magnet leads the state in 2024 corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarship winners

Office of Communications

Anita W. Huggins, M.Ed.
Superintendent of Schools

Vanessa L. Denney, M.Ed.
Interim Executive Director of Communications

Charleston, SC – Three seniors from Academic Magnet High School earned corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarships according to last week's announcement by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). **Harry S. Ding, Jacob T. Olinger, and Emerson G. Wiseman** are part of the first group of scholarship winners in the 69th annual program.

Ding and Wiseman received National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Center Scholarships, and Olinger was awarded a National Merit Boeing Scholarship.

"These National Merit Scholarship recipients are not just winners; they are the embodiment of dedication, intellect, and promise," explained Academic Magnet's Director of School Counseling, Monica Vallejo. "Their achievement is not just a reflection of their academic prowess but also a testament to their unwavering commitment to excellence and their potential to shape the future."

Academic Magnet leads all schools in the state this year with three corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarship winners; there are a total of 11 in South Carolina in 2024.

Approximately 770 distinguished high school seniors (including 10 from South Carolina) earned scholarships financed by 94 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. Some offer a single payment ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000.

High school juniors entered the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program when they took the 2022 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which served as an initial screen of program entrants.

Once students were selected as semifinalists, they fulfilled requirements to become finalists. They submitted 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, over 15,000 students met finalist requirements.

By the conclusion of the 2024 competition, about 6,870 finalists will receive National Merit Scholarships totaling nearly \$26 million. According to NMSC, winners are finalists who have 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. Most of the National Merit Scholarships offered each year are underwritten by some 320 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 Communications at (843) 937-6303.

###

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 50,000 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.