

For Immediate Release
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Media Release

CCSD Students Named National Merit Scholarship Winners

Charleston, SC – Four Charleston County School District (CCSD) students were named National Merit \$2,500 Scholarship winners Wednesday, May 8, 2019 by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC).

**Office of Strategy and
Communications**

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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Students include Paul T. Puckette Jr., Abigail C. Keating, and Steven A. Schlosser of Academic Magnet High School, and Allison L. Fister of Wando High School.

The 2,500 Merit Scholar designees were chosen from a talent pool of more than 15,000 outstanding Finalists in the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Program.

National Merit \$2500 Scholarship winners are the Finalists in each state judged to have the strongest combination of accomplishments, skills, and potential for success in rigorous college studies. The number of winners named in each state is proportional to the state's percentage of the nation's graduating high school seniors.

"We are proud that Wando's Allison Fister has been recognized as a National Merit Scholar," said Wando Principal Sherry M. Eppelsheimer. "Her commitment to such a rigorous course of study throughout her entire high school career is a testament of her dedication to her academic achievement. I am confident that she will continue to pursue excellence in her future college career."

These scholars were selected by a committee of college admissions officers and high school counselors, who appraised a substantial amount of information submitted by both the Finalists and their high schools: the academic record, including difficulty level of subjects, studied and grades earned, scores from two standardized tests; contributions, and leadership in school and community activities, an essay written by the Finalist, and a recommendation written by a high school official.

"These three highly-deserving Academic Magnet students join a growing list of Raptors recognized as Merit Scholars for 2019," added Catherine Spencer, Academic Magnet Principal. "Each of these students has unique talents and

abilities of which we are very proud, and we look forward to their future accomplishments.”

This year’s National Merit Scholarship Program began in October 2017 when over 1.6 million juniors in approximately 22,000 high schools took the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), which served as an initial screen of program entrants. Last fall, the highest-scoring participants in each state, representing less than one percent of the nation’s high school seniors, were named Semifinalists on a state-representational basis. Only these 16,000 Semifinalists had an opportunity to continue in the competition.

From the Semifinalist group, some 15,000 students met the very high academic standards and other requirements to advance to the Finalist level of the competition. By the conclusion of the 2019 program, about 7,600 Finalists will have earned the “Merit Scholar” title and received a total of over \$31 million in college scholarships.

For more information about the National Merit Scholarship Program email Public Information at mediainfo@nmerit.net . For more information about the CCSD students named as scholarship winners, 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 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 86 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.

About the National Merit Scholarship Program

On April 17, more than 1,000 recipients of corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards were named, and on June 5 and July 15, some 4,100 college-sponsored Merit Scholarship winners will be announced. By the conclusion of this year’s competition, about 7,600 academic champions will have won National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$31 million.

NMSC, a not-for-profit corporation that operates without government assistance, was founded in 1955 specifically to conduct the National Merit Scholarship Program. The majority of scholarships offered each year are underwritten by approximately 400 independent corporate and college sponsors that share NMSC’s goals of honoring scholastically talented youth and encouraging academic excellence at all levels of education.

The National Merit Scholarship Program honors individual students who show exceptional academic ability and potential for success in rigorous college studies. The program does not measure the quality or effectiveness of education within a school, system, or state.