



For Immediate Release:
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Four Richmond County Students Recognized in 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program

(AUGUSTA, GEORGIA) – Four students from John S. Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School earned recognition in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program for outstanding academic performance on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®). One student will advance to the next stage of the national competition.

Annie Zhang was named a National Merit Semifinalist, placing among the top one percent of high school seniors nationwide. Colette Kriegal, Luka Armstrong, and Anna Harwood earned recognition as National Merit Commended Scholars for demonstrating exceptional academic promise.

Shawnda Stovall, president of the Richmond County Board of Education, says, "Taking the PSAT is an important step for our students to prepare for college applications. It takes several hours of focused study, practice tests, and dedication to master the skills tested, and for our students to advance to semifinalist status or to earn commendation means they not only rose to that rigor but proved they can stand with the top students in the nation."

To qualify as a semifinalist, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation screens PSAT scores from more than 1.3 million 11th-grade students in about 20,000 high schools to identify the highest-scoring entrants. Commended students do not advance in the competition but are recognized for placing among the top 50,000 students nationwide.

The National Merit Scholarship Program honors academically talented U.S. high school seniors based on their PSAT/NMSQT® performance. Each year, about 16,000 students advance as semifinalists and 34,000 earn commended recognition.

Semifinalists will continue in the competition for \$28 million in National Merit Scholarships to be awarded next spring.

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MEDIA ADVISORY

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS



Media Note: A photo of Annie Zhang, National Merit Semifinalist, is attached courtesy of the Richmond County School System

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and lead in an ever-changing world.