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Media Release

Glencoe Student Nisala Kalupahana Earns Perfect Scores on ACT and SAT

Practice tests were the key to success on these college readiness exams for the high school junior

September 17, 2018, Hillsboro, OR –Glencoe High School junior Nisala Kalupahana has achieved the nearly impossible: he earned perfect scores on both the ACT and the SAT college readiness exams, and he did so on his first try.

Earning a perfect score on just one of these exams would place Kalupahana in an elite status among all test-takers, but doing so on both is extremely rare. In the U.S. high school graduating class of 2017, only 2,760 out of more than 2 million graduates who took the ACT earned a composite score of 36—approximately one-tenth of one percent. For the SAT, the percentage of those scoring a perfect 1600 is smaller yet.

Kalupahana learned of his perfect score on the ACT first and was very excited, but remained worried about the SAT. “I thought the best I could hope for was a 1550,” he expressed.

He was in his U.S. History class when he refreshed his web browser and learned of his perfect SAT score. “I dropped my phone,” he laughed. “I was in shock. I really didn’t expect that.”

His concern about the test was apparently unfounded, because while you can miss one question on the SAT and still receive a perfect score, he got none wrong.

Kalupahana credits taking multiple practice tests for his stellar performance on these curriculum-based achievement exams. He has now demonstrated, prior to his junior year even beginning, that he has the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in first-year college courses in the core subject areas of English, mathematics, reading, and science.

Though unsure about where he will apply to college or what he wants to study, Kalupahana has many interests that may guide his path. He completed computer science-related internships each of the past two summers: with the Oregon International Air Show in 2018 and with IBM in 2017. He also enjoys graphic design and has a passion for music, playing clarinet in the Westside Community Youth Orchestra and playing piano, guitar, and tenor saxophone for fun.

Superintendent Mike Scott remembers Kalupahana as a precocious 6th grader who requested an opportunity to share his research and proposal for District technology (and nutrition and idling vehicles!) to the Hillsboro School Board in May of 2014 and did so with a grace and polish far beyond his years. “We are all extremely proud of Nisala,” said Scott. “His accomplishment is incredibly impressive and unique and we are excited to see what he does next.”

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