

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

Five CCSD students earn corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarships

Division of Strategy and
Communications

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Charleston, SC – Nearly half of the 2021 corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarship winners in South Carolina are from Charleston County School District (CCSD). The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) announced the first group of recipients in the 66th annual National Merit Scholarship Program this week.

The following CCSD students earned corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarships this year:

Academic Magnet High School

Adam S. Frye, National Merit State Farm Companies Foundation Scholarship
Lily A. Lassiter, National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center Scholarship
Simon Y. Li, National Merit Boeing Scholarship

Wando High School

Bo P. Suthon, National Merit Boeing Scholarship
Audrey C. Wessinger, National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center Scholarship

“We are so proud of Bo Suthon and Audrey Wessinger,” said Wando’s principal, Dr. Sherry Eppelsheimer. “Each of them embodies the true meaning of our motto ‘Walk the Warrior Way.’ Their receipts of these scholarships are a direct result of their dedication and commitment to their academics and all endeavors they undertake. They are both certainly worthy of this recognition.”

Approximately 1,000 distinguished high school seniors (including 11 from South Carolina) earned scholarships financed by 140 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.

“Following in the tradition of recent years, our 2021 graduates are distinguishing themselves in true Raptor fashion,” said Academic Magnet Principal Catherine Spencer. “As National Merit Scholarship winners, Lily, Adam, and Simon are setting the pace for what will be another record-breaking scholarship year for our AMHS graduates. We are tremendously proud of these three students, their accomplishments, and their future promise.”

According to the NMSC, more than 1.5 million juniors in approximately 21,000 high schools entered the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program when they took the 2019 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which served as an initial screen of program entrants.

Semifinalists first had to advance to the next round by fulfilling additional requirements. Each semifinalist had to submit 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, some 16,000 students met finalist requirements.

By the conclusion of the 2021 competition, about 7,500 Finalists will receive National Merit Scholarships totaling over \$30 million. According to evaluators, 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. 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 Division of Strategy and Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally-accredited school district that is 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 more than 50,000 students in 87 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.