

**For Immediate Release**

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## Media Release

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### **AMHS valedictorian will forever be an ambassador for his alma mater**

**Charleston, SC** – It is a huge honor to be named valedictorian at any high school in Charleston County School District (CCSD) but an outstanding accomplishment when you're [the top student at Academic Magnet High School](#) – named [U.S. News & World Report](#) second best high school in America.

"It means an awful lot, particularly when you consider who you're competing against," said Principal Jacob Perlmutter. "The students here are some of the most talented in the state and as a result, we do not rank students by grade point average, except the valedictorian and salutatorian."

The motto at Academic Magnet is "Scholarship and Honor." [Senior Huiwen Wang](#) took those two values very seriously from the time he entered the school as a freshman until June 1, 2022 when he learned he was the class of 2022's valedictorian.

Wang said he purposely took the hardest classes available. He excelled in every one of those classes and when he goes out into the world, well beyond his college days at Duke University, he plans to always serve as an ambassador for Academic Magnet.

Associate Principal Lucy Pinckney has known Wang since his freshman year and followed his success with pride.

"I remember that nervous young man coming here with his mom to register," said Pinckney. "He's since grown into a confident, funny young man, with great potential. He took the hardest classes we offered here and aced them with ease, all while finding a balance in his life to serve his community."

Wang, who moved from China to America when he was one year old, has attended CCSD schools since kindergarten. He came to Academic Magnet by way of Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA), which shares the same campus.

"My friends were planning to attend and naturally I wanted to be with them," said Wang. "The school's reputation speaks for itself and I wanted to be a part of that."

There is some pressure put on incoming freshmen to join the clubs offered at Academic Magnet. Wang did not want to overextend himself, so he chose a few he loved and valued. The Chess Club, National Honor Society, French National Society, Gaming Club, Asian Awareness, Quiz Bowl, and Ultimate Frisbee are all clubs that he feels will make him a better person and leader.

"Some of the clubs I participated in were for entertainment and fun, while others were more formal and of a serious note," said Wang. "They all taught me how to better communicate, plan, and collaborate. Those are valuable traits that we can never stop working on."

His doting mother, Qing Zhao could not be more proud.

"I am really happy for him," said Zhao. "He worked hard, he listened to his teachers, and he earned and deserves this honor."

Wang will be attending Duke with a handful of friends from Academic Magnet. He is glad he will know some other students.

"I am excited and nervous because it will be a new environment," said Wang. "I've lived in South Carolina most of my life. It is also intimidating because of how super, super smart the other students attending Duke are. I hope to use that to my advantage to learn from them so I can excel academically and continue to better serve my community."

Wang plans to double major in computer science and math. He credits some of his closest friends and teacher John Phillips for introducing him to coding and programming.

"I have always liked math and I was fortunate enough to learn under the best teachers here at Magnet and at SOA," said Wang.

Principal Perlmutter is confident Wang will be successful at Duke.

"It is one thing to be smart, but to be driven and devoted to your craft is really impressive," said Perlmutter. "He should be really proud as the valedictorian at one of the top high schools in the country. Huiwen was devoted to this school and many things in this community, and it shows in his accomplishment."

### **Magnet is a special place**

"My son grew up a lot here at Magnet," said Zhao. "He was a shy child and did not talk much, but now he is active in school and his community. This school brought out the best in him because it is about so much more than academics. The teachers and coaches are mentors, friendly faces, and companions."

Principal Perlmutter is a graduate of Academic Magnet and reflects on his time as a student there, with fondness.

"A career path is not always straight," said Perlmutter. "Mine was actually circular. I am now back at the school I graduated from and the school has the same values, the same quirky energy, and the same student drive. After all these years, the uniqueness of the school has not changed."

Wang credits the school's environment for some of his success.

"I am very happy to be at the top of my class," said Wang. "My hard work paid off but the culture at the school is a testament to how much you can learn and grow as a person. Academic Magnet is a tough school and students have to form bonds to collaborate and rely on each other – and we do."

Wang said a lot has changed since he started ninth grade, but the dynamic energy of Academic Magnet has not. He is appreciative of Perlmutter for keeping it that way.

"Academic Magnet is accepting to all and that hasn't changed in 30 years," said Perlmutter.

Wang was a Junior Marshall at the Class of 2021's graduation and was the pianist during the ceremony. It was an honor for Wang to be chosen to help celebrate those seniors. This year as he took his place at center-stage he was not only addressing the next unknowing valedictorian but an auditorium full of classmates that will forever admire his well-deserved accomplishment.

"Wang representing Academic Magnet High School is better than any national award," added Perlmutter. "That's the caliber of people we're producing."

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 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 49,000 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.