

**For Immediate Release**

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## Media Release

### **NMSC awards three CCSD students with \$2,500 scholarships**

**Division of Strategy and Communications**

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**Charleston, SC** – Three Charleston County School District (CCSD) students earned \$2,500 National Merit Scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). All three recipients of the NMSC's 2021 \$2,500 scholarships are from Academic Magnet High School: Lydia R. Cox, Brendan P. Elliott, and Ethan A. Ouellette. They are part of the second wave of winners in the 66th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. [Five students](#) from the district learned last month they are receiving corporate-sponsored scholarships.

The 2,500 Merit Scholar designees were chosen from a talent pool of more than 16,000 outstanding finalists in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program.

National Merit \$2,500 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.

"Brendan, Lydia, and Ethan continue the AMHS tradition of a strong showing in National Merit Scholarship winners," said Academic Magnet's principal, Catherine Spencer. "They exemplify the best of the Class of 2021 and will surely have significant impact in their university settings, as well as their chosen career paths."

NMSC finances most of these single-payment National Merit \$2,500 Scholarships. Corporations and company foundations that sponsor awards through NMSC also help underwrite these scholarships with grants they provide in lieu of paying administrative fees. Scholars may use their awards at any regionally accredited U.S. college or university.

According to the NMSC, over 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 was asked 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 have been selected to receive National Merit Scholarships totaling over \$30 million. Winners are finalists who have, according to evaluators, 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.