



Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

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Contact: Kevin Lyons

815.337.3071

Woodstock High School student musician selected as National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist

Woodstock High School senior Ian Hansen has been selected as a National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist who plans to pursue a career in music education following in the footsteps of some of his favorite teachers.

Hansen was selected as one of 16,000 semifinalists among more than 1.3 million, or less than one percent, of high school students from across the United States.

Students are chosen based on their SAT or ACT scores, academic performance, demonstration of community service and leadership, among other criteria. Most semifinalists will move on to the finalist designation this spring, and about half of those will earn scholarship funds.

"Ian is a remarkable student with a real fervor for learning. When he couples that with his incredible intelligence, earning distinctions such as National Merit Semifinalist is the result." WHS Principal Art Vallicelli said.

Hansen, who plays several stringed and percussion instruments in band and orchestra, said he is considering either Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisc. or Illinois State University to study music education next fall.

He credited three Woodstock Community Unit School District 200 teachers and a youth symphony instructor for inspiring his passion for music.

"First, there is Ms. (Lyndra) Bastian, who has been my in-school orchestra director for six years. She always pushed and encouraged me to be the best musician and person I could be. It was Bastian who gave me the courage to join Woodstock High School's Chamber Orchestra and to join Encore Music Academy Youth Symphony," Hansen said.

Hansen also said orchestra teacher Andrew Viveros and WHS Band Director Kevin Frederick have made big impacts on his desire to further develop his skills.

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation is a not-for-profit organization funded by more than 200 businesses, organizations, universities and individual donors who share its goals to honor the nation's scholastic champions. NMSC will award nearly \$26 million in scholarships in the spring of 2025.