



Charleston County School District
Office of Communications
 75 Calhoun St.,
 Charleston, SC 29401
 (843) 937-6303

Media Release

CCSD Leads State with Corporate-Sponsored National Merit Scholarship Winners in 2026

Charleston, SC (April 23, 2026) – Charleston County School District (CCSD) has a long tradition of being one of the leading districts in South Carolina, with students earning National Merit Scholarships. That tradition continued this week, as the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) announced a state-best five CCSD students from a total of three schools won corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarships this year. Only 13 students in South Carolina received this honor in 2026.

“We are incredibly proud of these outstanding students and the dedication they have demonstrated throughout their academic journeys,” said Superintendent Anita Huggins. “Earning a National Merit Scholarship is a remarkable achievement that reflects the strength of our schools, educators, and families who support student success every day. These students exemplify the high level of talent and commitment found across CCSD, and we look forward to all they will accomplish in the future.”

The following representatives from CCSD’s Class of 2026 won NMSC corporate-sponsored scholarships this year:

Academic Magnet High School

Chase M. Broadway - National Merit Fluor Scholarship

Francesco Hamilton - National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Center Scholarship

Steven J. Moody - National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Center Scholarship

Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA)

Brooklyn Mayberry - National Merit Boeing Scholarship

Wando High School

Aidan George Manley - National Merit Senator S. Robb Scholarship

“I’m sure this is just the beginning of the National Merit winners for our school this year,” said Jacob Perlmutter, principal of Academic Magnet. “We can continue to expect great accomplishments from Chase, Francesco, and Steven. They have been amazing leaders at Academic Magnet, and I know they will continue to make important contributions in their fields of study.”

Approximately 700 high school seniors earned scholarships financed by approximately 115 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. Some offer a single payment ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000.

High school juniors entered the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program when they took the 2024 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) as an initial screen of program entrants.

Once students were selected as semifinalists, they fulfilled the requirements to become finalists. They submitted a detailed scholarship application, which included writing an essay and providing information about extracurricular activities, awards, and leadership positions.

"We are elated but not surprised that Brooklyn Mayberry has earned a National Merit Scholarship," stated SOA Principal Dr. Shannon Cook. "During her six years at SOA, she has brightly shone as a diligent and creative scholar who is always eager to learn and grow. We are deeply proud of all that Brooklyn has accomplished!"

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, over 15,000 students met the finalist requirements.

"We are so very proud of Aiden and all his accomplishments," explained Wando Principal Chase Coker. "This is a testament to all of the amazing work he has done throughout his high school career. We are so excited to see what he does in the future!"

By the conclusion of the 2026 competition, about 6,700 finalists will receive National Merit Scholarships totaling nearly \$24 million. According to NMSC, winners are finalists who have the strongest combination of academic skills and achievements, extracurricular accomplishments, and potential for success in rigorous college studies.

For more information, contact CCSD's Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303.

###

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 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 51,000 students in 90 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; military; dual credit; and many more.