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PRESS RELEASE

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Four Urban Students Named 2026 Math and Science Scholars

WASHINGTON, June 18 – Four graduating high school seniors who plan to major in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) have been selected by the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) to receive a \$10,000 CGCS-Peters Pharis Foundation Math and Science Scholarship.

The students were chosen from more than 200 applicants in big-city school districts across the country for their academic achievements, community involvement, and leadership qualities.

Sponsored by the Peters Pharis Foundation, the scholarship program is a partnership between the Foundation and CGCS. It is designed for outstanding urban high school students, particularly those who are the first in their family to attend college, and who plan to pursue STEM studies at a four-year college or university in the fall.

The awards were given to four students, two male and two female seniors from high schools in the 82 urban school districts represented by the Council.

This year's award winners are:

- **Mia Abreu**, Colonial High School, Orange County Public Schools (FL)
- **Jasmine Lewis**, Richmond Community High School, Richmond Public Schools (VA)
- **Jonathan McNair**, STEM Early College at NC A&T, Guilford County Schools (NC)
- **Erwing Perez Valenzuela**, Providence Career and Technical Academy, Providence Public School District (RI)

In the fall, Abreu will major in biology and neuroscience at Duke University. Lewis will pursue a degree in civil engineering at North Carolina A&T State University. McNair will major in computer and electrical engineering at Cornell University, and Valenzuela will major in mechanical engineering at The University of Rhode Island.

This is the third year the Peters Pharis Foundation has funded the math and science scholarship program. This year, the Foundation increased its donation from \$20,000 to \$40,000. As a result, the Council was able to raise the scholarship amount for each student from \$5,000 in previous years to \$10,000 this year.

“We are deeply grateful to the Peters Pharis Foundation for their generosity and commitment to expanding opportunities in STEM for students in urban public schools,” said Council Executive Director Ray Hart. “The four scholarship recipients are the first in their families to attend college, and this support will help them pursue their academic goals and career aspirations. By investing in these talented young scholars, the Peters Pharis Foundation is helping develop the next generation of STEM leaders.”

Administration of the scholarship program, including the application process, pre-selection and presentation of awards, is provided by CGCS.

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About the Council of the Great City Schools

The Council of the Great City Schools is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 82 large city school districts, its mission is to promote the cause of urban schools and to advocate for inner-city students through legislation, research, and media relations. For more information, visit www.cgcs.org

About the Peters Pharis Foundation

The Peters Pharis Foundation is a grant-making organization, which works with other nonprofit entities to assist high-performing students from low-income families to realize their full potential through higher education. For more information, visit <https://peterspharisfoundation.org/>