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MEDIA ADVISORY
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THREE WCCUSD STUDENTS NAMED NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP SEMIFINALISTS

RICHMOND – Three West Contra Costa Unified School District seniors have been named Semifinalists in the 72nd annual National Merit Scholarship Program, the Contra Costa County Office of Education announced. They are among 103 Contra Costa County students recognized this year and join more than 16,000 students nationwide honored for their academic achievement.

The WCCUSD Semifinalists are:

- James Takano, El Cerrito High School
- Jordan Yue, Hercules High School
- Maxwell Stemmle, Middle College High School

"I am incredibly proud of James, Jordan, and Maxwell for earning this exemplary academic recognition. Being named a National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist places them among the highest-achieving students in the nation. The accomplishments of these young scholars reflect their hard work and the dedication of their teachers and families who have supported them along the way," WCCUSD Superintendent Cheryl Cotton said.

“Congratulations to James, Jordan, and Maxwell on this incredible achievement,” WCCUSD Board President Guadalupe Enllana said. “Their hard work and dedication are a true reflection of the excellence and potential of our WCCUSD students. We are incredibly proud of them and the families and educators who supported them along the way.”

Semifinalists advance in the competition for approximately 6,700 National Merit Scholarships, worth nearly $24 million, to be awarded in spring 2027. To move forward to Finalist standing, students must meet additional academic and program requirements. Historically, about 95 percent of Semifinalists advance to Finalist status, and roughly half of those go on to earn the distinction of National Merit Scholar.

More than 1.2 million high school juniors nationwide entered the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2025 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Semifinalists represent the highest-scoring participants in each state. Winners will be announced between April and July 2027.

For more information on the National Merit Scholarship Program, visit www.nationalmerit.org.

About WCCUSD:
West Contra Costa Unified School District serves more than 24,000 students across 56 schools in the cities of El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo, and unincorporated areas of Kensington, El Sobrante, Tara Hills, and Montalvin. WCCUSD is committed to excellent instruction, safe and welcoming schools, and equitable opportunities for every student. Learn more at www.wccusd.net.

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