

Twenty-nine district high school students named National Merit semifinalists

Twenty-nine Alachua County Public School students have been named semifinalists in the prestigious 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program.

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation announced the list of semifinalists earlier today. Earning that status has long been recognized as a strong indicator of academic excellence.

To qualify, students must earn among the nation's highest scores on the Preliminary SAT/National Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). About 1.5 million students took the exam to qualify this year, and about 16,000 have been named semifinalists.

The students now have the opportunity earn finalist status. In addition to earning high scores on the SAT, they will have to submit applications highlighting their other academic achievements, awards and honors earned, leadership activities, teacher recommendations and an essay.

Eastside High School has the largest group of semifinalists this year, with 14. Buchholz High has 12, and Gainesville High has three.

Students will learn in early spring of 2021 if they have reached finalist status. Finalists are eligible for thousands of dollars in scholarships provided by businesses, colleges and universities and other organizations.

This year's semifinalists are: Hari Grand, Aditya Gupte, Betsy Harnsberger, Matthew Hershfield, Michael Hershfield, Aarti Kalamangalam, Sean Raymond LaMadrid, David Liu, Jillian Provost, Delia Savin, Sneha Sujil, Elizabeth Thomason, Anzhe Yuan and Bill Zhao from Eastside High School; Amy Cao, Nicholas Caruso, Ted Gingrich, Jeremy Griffin, Sean Han, Olivia Lee, Daniel Liu, Robert Privette, Samuel Shlafer, Amy Xing, Albert Zhang and Qingyu Zhang of Buchholz High School; and Griffin Golde, Zachary Mulligan and Patrick Schanuth of Gainesville High School;



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