

Local students named National Merit semifinalists, six honored in National Hispanic Recognition Program

Thirty-one Alachua County Public School students have been named semifinalists in the prestigious 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program based on their high scores on a college entrance exam. The program is run by the College Board, which administers the SAT.



Semifinalist status has long been recognized as a marker of academic excellence. To achieve semifinalist status, the students had to earn among the nation's highest scores on the Preliminary SAT/National Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). This year more than 1.6 million students in more than 22,000 high schools took the college entrance exam, with only 16,000 earning semifinalist status, placing them among the top one percent of high school seniors in the nation who took the exam. National Merit semifinalists are highly recruited by the nation's colleges and universities.



Thirteen of this year's semifinalists are Eastside High School students. There were nine semifinalists from Gainesville High School and nine from Buchholz High school.

The students named semifinalists are now eligible to become National Merit Finalists. In addition to earning high SAT scores, the students will have to submit scholarship applications that include information about their academic achievements, school, community and leadership activities and any awards or honors they've earned. They must also submit teacher recommendations and write an essay to achieve finalist status.

Finalists will be announced in the spring and are eligible for thousands of dollars-worth of scholarships provided by businesses, colleges and universities and other organizations.

This year's semifinalists are: Ethan Angerhofer, Sidhika Balachandar, Caroline Chu, Grace Douglas, Joseph Hardin, Steven Li, Benjamin Nagoshi, Ena Schentrup and Sohan Subhash from Buchholz High School; Amogh Agarwal, Emily An, Dylan Barnes, Rena Cohen, Rachel Fregly, Bradley Kim, Daniel Koropecjy-Cox, Naoosha Mohammad, Hannah Nations, Catherine Sarosi, Steffi Shew, Anna Tovkach and Lawrence Zhang from Eastside High School; Ian Downey, Alexis Earley, Danielle Ivanov, Rebecca Jia, Alena Kraus, Alex Maruniak, Anousha Peters, Emma Porter and Corey Ryan from Gainesville High School.

Three GHS students, two Buchholz students and one Eastside student were also honored in the National Hispanic Recognition Program, which is also coordinated by the College Board and based on high PSAT/NMSQT scores. They are George Gonzalez, Alex Maruniak and Sydney Jimenez of GHS, Brandon Mayo and Daniela Robles-Luciano of Buchholz and Daniel Smith of Eastside High School. They are among the 5000 top scorers of the 250,000 Hispanic/Latino students who took the qualifying test.

####