

## District has record number of National Merit Semifinalists

A record number of Alachua County Public School students have been named Semifinalists in the 2023 National Merit Scholarship program.

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation recently released the list of semifinalists in the prestigious program. It includes 45 ACPS students, up from 41 recognized in last year's program. It's the highest number in the district's history.



"We're very proud that so many of our students have been recognized this year," said Superintendent Shane Andrew. "It's a tribute to their hard work and commitment to academic achievement, and to the support of their teachers and families."

Earning semifinalist status has long been recognized as a strong indicator of academic talent. Semifinalists represent less than one percent of high school seniors in the nation.

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

The students now have the opportunity to 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.

Buchholz High School has 26 semifinalists in this year's program. Eastside High has 11 and Gainesville High has 8.

Students will learn in early spring of 2023 if they have reached finalist status. Finalists are eligible for thousands of dollars in scholarships provided by businesses, colleges and universities and other organizations.

The ACPS semifinalists are:

**Buchholz High School:** Himel Bamzai-Wokhlu, Avery Bernstein, Hannah Ciupe, Samuel Cohen, Nicholas Dang, Rishi Gadikota, Angela Gao, Tyler Holland, Nia Jobson, Ahan Mishra, Andrey Nikitin, Aditya Vardhan Pasumarti, Abhinav Pothuri, Nicole Qian, McKayla Ro, Maximilian Schentrup, Tucker Shea, Anwyn Tanner, Isabelle Tseng, Zachary Urbine, Sophia Vernon, Zach Xiao, William Xu, Carolynn Zhao, Jonathan Zheng, Kevin Zheng

**Eastside High School:** Maryanne Armstrong, Rebekah George, Jakob Gorham, Claire Kuntz, Elizabeth Matthias, Linda Mentz, Maya O'Dell, Hirbod Sargeran, Maui Schwartz, Maggie Yan, Benjamin Zou

**Gainesville High School:** Harold Bishop, Jacob Callaway, Cormac Davis, Michelle Han, Nicholas Hirsch, Siya Patel, Jake Qiu, Charles Ye

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