

CRCSD Celebrates Five National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA - Five Cedar Rapids Community School District students have been named Semifinalists in the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program, earning recognition among some of the nation's most academically talented high school seniors.

The CR Schools students recognized are:

Thomas Jefferson High School

- Brandon J. Gass

John F. Kennedy High School

- Jacob E. Copeland
- Austin J. Guck
- Katherine P. Hubbs
- Ann James

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) announced more than 16,000 Semifinalists nationwide as part of the 72nd annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Semifinalists now have the opportunity to continue in the competition for approximately 6,700 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$24 million that will be awarded next spring.

"We are incredibly proud of Brandon, Jacob, Austin, Katherine and Ann for earning this prestigious recognition," said Superintendent Dr. Tawana Lannin. "Their achievement reflects years of hard work, curiosity and commitment to learning. We celebrate each of them, along with the families, teachers and staff members who have encouraged and supported them throughout their educational journeys."

More than 1.2 million high school juniors from approximately 20,000 high schools entered the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2025 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). The nationwide pool of Semifinalists represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors.

To advance to Finalist standing, Semifinalists and a high school official must submit a detailed scholarship application that includes information about the student's academic record, participation in school and community activities, leadership, employment, and honors and awards. Students must also have an outstanding academic record, receive a recommendation from a high school official, write an essay, and earn SAT or ACT scores that confirm their performance on the qualifying test.

More than 15,000 Semifinalists are expected to advance to the Finalist level and will be notified in February. National Merit Scholarship winners will be selected from the Finalist group, with scholarship announcements beginning in April 2027.

Congratulations to Brandon, Jacob, Austin, Katherine and Ann on this outstanding achievement and for representing CR Schools!

Attached image includes photos of the five students.

About the National Merit Scholarship Program

National Merit Scholarship Corporation is a not-for-profit organization established in 1955 to conduct the annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Scholarships are funded by NMSC, businesses, higher education institutions and individual donors committed to recognizing academic excellence.

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