

**72 HISD students named National Merit semifinalists***Students will have opportunity to compete for more than $32 million in scholarships*

*Sept. 29, 2017* – Seventy-two seniors from six Houston Independent School District high schools have qualified as semifinalists in the 63rdannual National Merit Scholarship Program, earning one of the top academic honors in the nation. HISD had 51 semifinalists last year.

The students are among 16,000 from across the country to earn the semifinalist designation, allowing them the opportunity to continue in the academic competition and vie for more than $32 million in scholarships that will be awarded in the spring.

The students attend Bellaire, Carnegie Vanguard, Lamar, and Westside high schools, as well as DeBakey High School for Health Professions and the High School for Performing and Visual Arts.

“Being recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Program is one of the highest academic honors that our students can receive,” HISD Superintendent Richard Carranza said.  “I am so proud to see so many of our students on this list.  It just goes to show we’re producing true Global Graduates.”

The National Merit Scholarship Program provides college scholarships to academically talented U.S. high school students who score well on the Preliminary SAT. Scholarships are provided to students from each state who have the strongest combination of accomplishments, skills, and potential for college success.

About 1.6 million juniors from more than 22,000 high schools across the country took the 2016 Preliminary SAT, which serves as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Fewer than one percent — or about 16,000 students — were named as semifinalists.

About 15,000 students are expected to advance to the finalist level in February. About half of the finalists are expected to go on to earn a National Merit Scholarship and the official National Merit Scholar designation.

National Merit Scholars are chosen based on their skills, accomplishments, and potential for success in college.

**Bellaire High School**  
Robert A. Brown  
Rachel M. Contello  
Eric J. Dai   
Daniel P. Entchev

Evan Y. Han   
Alexander J. Ho   
Jasmine L. Huant  
Wendy Jin  
Patrick M. Kelly   
Tirtha M. Kharel   
Christopher I. Levitt   
Michelle M. Lin

Ruth Ling   
Sara E. Macia   
Skylar N. McAuliffe   
Alexander K. Nguyen  
Gabrielle D. Olinger   
Emily Y. Pan   
Charlotte M. Parsons   
Mackenzie L. Parsons   
Rebecca C. Parsons   
Emily P. Richards   
Pavan A. Shukla   
Kabir Sood   
Samantha L. Su   
Elizabeth R. Szafranski  
Jacob M. Tate  
Omar Uraimov   
Sarah J. Wen  
Scott S. Williams  
Jingyi Xin   
Anna C. Xu   
Jennifer Xu  
Yuanchen Yuan  
Julia J. Zheng  
Geoffrey W. Zimmerman

**Carnegie Vanguard High School**Cassandra L. Bailey  
Kartik Devashish  
Amanda H. Feldman   
Garrett M. Holmes   
Caitlin Hsu  
Anuj K. Jajoo   
Raymond J. Jessup   
Hee Soo Jung   
Rukmini Kalamangalam

Matthew J. Karam   
Riordan K. Keneally   
Griffin R. Khosla   
Samuel W. Liu   
An K. Nguyen   
Ifeoluwani E. Omidiran  
Katherine F. Powers   
Keshav S. Srivaths

**DeBakey High School for Health Professions**Sidharth N. Belaguli   
Elif Naz Kilicarslan  
Aishwarya S. Kotha  
William T. Mo   
Vijay Nitturi   
Eric Ou   
Jacqueline D. Pham   
Vera M. Schroeder

Brian Xue

Mason A. Yeh

Larry W. Zhang

**High School for the Performing and Visual Arts**

Trevor Z. Fu   
Tuesday B. Haynes

Jonathan J. Jalbert

Caroline E. O’Connor

**Lamar High School**   
Camile R. Calabrese   
Jiayuan Han

**Westside High School**

Hsin-Wei “Derek” Chen   
Sarah G. Hudson