



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS

THE UNITED STATES PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

FACT SHEET

The United States Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964, by Executive Order of the President, to recognize and honor some of our Nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the Program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. Each year, up to 141 students are named as U.S. Presidential Scholars, one of the Nation's highest honors for high school students. The Scholars represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in young people. In honoring the U.S. Presidential Scholars, the President of the United States symbolically honors all graduating high school seniors of high potential.

Students have the opportunity to become U.S. Presidential Scholars based on two paths of accomplishment. The majority of the Scholars are selected on the basis of broad academic achievement. Approximately twenty additional students are selected on the basis of their academic and artistic scholarship in the visual arts, the performing arts, or creative writing.

Each year some 3,000 candidates are identified for the academic component of the program, based on having scored exceptionally well on the SAT or the ACT. Eligible students are U.S. citizens and legal permanent U.S. residents graduating or receiving a diploma between January and August of the current program year, who have taken the SAT or ACT Assessment on or before the preceding October. Students meeting these requirements are automatically considered for participation. Initial inclusion in the pool of eligible candidates is determined by the information (e.g. graduation year) provided by the student on his/her SAT or ACT test registration. Test scores in each of the states/jurisdictions are reviewed, and the total SAT score is compared to the ACT Sum of Scores. Each student's highest test score (in a single test administration) is identified; duplicates and/or lower scores are dropped. In each state, scores are ranked from high to low. Approximately twenty females and twenty males are selected as candidates from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and from families of U.S. citizens living abroad. In addition, each Chief State School Officer (CSSO) may nominate three male and three female candidates, based on their outstanding scholarship, residing in the CSSO's jurisdiction. Students are considered in their states of legal residence, unless they have lived abroad for two years or more. Candidacy materials are mailed to students for participation in the program. Application is by invitation only.

For the arts component of the Program, students are initially selected based on their artistic ability. Students must register for and participate in *YoungArts*, a national program identifying and recognizing young people demonstrating excellence in the arts. Upon completion of the *YoungArts* program, the National YoungArts Foundation nominates approximately 60 students who meet the U.S. Presidential Scholars candidacy requirements. Candidacy materials are mailed to those selected students, inviting them to apply to the program.

To confirm their interest and assist in the selection process, all academic and arts candidates complete and submit candidacy materials for review, including essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports and transcripts. A review committee of qualified individuals experienced in secondary and post-secondary education evaluates candidates on their academic achievement, personal characteristics, leadership and service activities, and the quality and content of their essay.

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Approximately 560 candidates are named semifinalists, and their names and supporting materials are forwarded to the Commission for further review.

In April, the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars reviews the applications of all semifinalists, applying the same criteria used by the review committee. The Commission selects up to 121 Academic Scholars and up to 20 Arts Scholars.

All scholars are honored for their accomplishments during the National Recognition Weekend, held in June in Washington, D.C. During this trip, U.S. Presidential Scholars are guests of the Commission and enjoy an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to meet with government officials, educators, authors, musicians, scientists and other accomplished people. Scholars have the opportunity to visit museums and monuments, and to attend recitals, receptions and ceremonies. To commemorate their achievement, the Scholars are awarded the Presidential Scholars Medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House.

Each U.S. Presidential Scholar is asked to identify the one teacher who has most influenced him or her, and the selected educators are also invited to attend the recognition events. Since 1964, this unique federal program has honored more than 6,000 U.S. Presidential Scholars, who have demonstrated scholarship, leadership, artistic excellence and selfless service to others. The work of the Commission on Presidential Scholars, on behalf of the President and his Administration, reflects recognition of the immense value and potential of our Nation's youth, and a deep commitment to ensuring that every child in America receives the benefits of a world-class education.

For general information about the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, please contact 202/401-0961 or <http://www.ed.gov/programs/psp/index.html> (case sensitive). For general information on the Arts component of the program, please contact the National YoungArts Foundation at 1-800-970-ARTS or <http://www.youngarts.org>. For specific questions regarding the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program application, contact 319/341-2PSP (319/341-2777) or PSP@act.org.



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THE COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS

April 2013

Principal
Thornton-Donovan School
100 Overlook Circle
New Rochelle, NY 10804

Dear Principal:

Congratulations! **Jordan Acker** was selected as one of approximately 550 semifinalists to advance to the final round of the 2013 U.S. Presidential Scholars competition.

From nearly 3.2 million graduating high school seniors, approximately 3,900 students were identified as candidates in the program, and approximately 550 semifinalists have been selected from across the country. These semifinalists form the pool from which the 2013 U.S. Presidential Scholars will be chosen. For a list of the 2013 semifinalists, please visit: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/psp/awards.html>, and click on "2013 Semifinalists."

The achievements of these outstanding students deserve acknowledgement. We very much hope that you will highlight this exceptional individual's accomplishments, and help us to increase the public's awareness and understanding of the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, by providing recognition opportunities for your semifinalist. The commendations and support you offer will help inspire other students to challenge themselves and achieve, and most importantly, will underscore the fact that the most precious resource of the United States is its talented young people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marina C. McCarthy".

Marina C. McCarthy, EdD
Chair
Commission on Presidential Scholars

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Simone M. Olson".

Simone M. Olson
Executive Director
U.S. Presidential
Scholars Program

Enclosure

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

NJ - Short Hills - Saachi K. Gupta, Millburn High School
NJ - West Windsor - Brandon G. Kaplowitz, Phillips Exeter Academy

New Mexico

NM - Albuquerque - Robert S. Chen, Albuquerque Academy
NM - Albuquerque - Robert V. Cutler, Eldorado High School
NM - Albuquerque - Lauren Li, La Cueva High School
NM - Albuquerque - Aaron So, Albuquerque Academy
NM - Carlsbad - Hellen Y. Chiou, Carlsbad High School
NM - Corrales - Allison M. Kirk, Cibola High School

New York

NY - Albany - June E. Criscione, Albany High School
NY - Bronx - Melissa R. DeLuca, Herbert H Lehman High School
NY - Brooklyn - William F. Kindschuh, Regis High School
NY - Chappaqua - Daniel I. Hoffman, Hackley School
NY - Geneva - Betty Peng, Geneva High School
NY - Guilderland Center - Lixinbei Jing, Guilderland Central High School
NY - Lancaster - Stephen R. Pasek, Lancaster Central High School
NY - Manlius - Cole W. Speidel, Christian Brothers Academy
NY - New York - [*] Lyric D. Anderson, Fiorello H. Laguardia High School of Music, Art, and Performing Arts
NY - New York - Denis Fedin, Collegiate School
NY - New York - Angelina M. Joyce-DiBart, Fiorello H. Laguardia High School of Music, Art, and Performing Arts
NY - New York - William D. Mauro, Horace Mann School
NY - Pittsford - [*] Aaron G. Bigeleisen, McQuaid Jesuit High School
NY - Pittsford - Vincent D. Criscuolo, Pittsford Mendon High School
NY - Port Washington - Ryan P. Brady, Regis High School
NY - Roslyn - Benjamin I. Pleat, Herricks High School
NY - Roslyn - Alain E. Sherman, Roslyn High School
NY - Scarsdale - Jacob S. Kirschenbaum, Scarsdale High School
NY - Sleepy Hollow - [*] Jean Kim, Sleepy Hollow High School
NY - Staten Island - Danling Chen, Staten Island Technical High School
NY - Stony Brook - Rachel E. Gutman, Ward Melville High School
NY - White Plains - Jordan L. Acker, Thornton-Donovan School
NY - Williamsville - Cindy Q. Xue, Williamsville East High School

North Carolina

NC - Apex - Jonathan M. Cookmeyer, Raleigh Charter High School