

ERA students 2023 National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalists

Special to Pelahatchie News

Officials of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC®) announced the names of over 16,000 Semifinalists in the 68th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. East Rankin Academy (ERA) students Dylan Davis and Max Gainey are among those who have attained the honor. These academically talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,250 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$28 million that will be offered next spring. To be considered for a Merit Scholarship® award, Semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the Finalist level of the competition. About 95 percent of the Semifinalists are expected to attain Finalist standing, and approximately half of the Finalists will win a National Merit Scholarship, earning the Merit Scholar® title.

NMSC, a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance, was established in 1955 specifically to conduct the annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Scholarships are underwritten by NMSC with its own funds and by approximately 340 business organizations and higher edu-

cation institutions that share NMSC's goals of honoring the nation's scholastic champions and encouraging the pursuit of academic excellence.

Steps in the 2023 Competition

High school juniors entered the 2023 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2021 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of Semifinalists, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state. The number of Semifinalists in a state is proportional to the state's percentage of the national total of graduating seniors.

To become a Finalist, the Semifinalist and a high school official must submit a detailed scholarship application, in which they provide information about the Semifinalist's academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment, and honors and awards received. A Semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, write an essay, and earn SAT® or ACT® scores that confirm the student's



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ERA students Dylan Davis (left) and Max Gainey (right) have been named 2023 National Merit Semifinalists. Davis and Gainey will continue through the 2023 National Merit Scholarship Program selection process as they compete to become 2023 National Merit Finalists.

earlier performance on the qualifying test.

From over 16,000 Semifinalists, more than 15,000 are expected to advance to the Finalist level, and in February they will be notified of this designation. All National Merit Scholarship winners will

be selected from this group of Finalists. Merit Scholar designees are selected on the basis of their skills, accomplishments, and potential for success in rigorous college studies, without regard to gender, race, ethnic origin, or religious preference.



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