



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Harford nets hundreds of state and national scholars** *HCPS students earn recognition for achievements*

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) recently announced the finalists for the 2009-10 Maryland Distinguished Scholar Award, which include three students from Harford County Public Schools (HCPS).

The finalists from HCPS are Alex Hutcheson, senior at C. Milton Wright High School; Drew Thatcher, senior at C. Milton Wright High School; and Jacob Silverman, senior at Patterson Mill High School. Both Mr. Hutcheson and Mr. Thatcher were recognized for the achievement category, while Mr. Silverman earned his award in the talent category for instrumental music.

Furthermore, 17 Harford students were selected as semi-finalists this year for the Distinguished Scholar award in the achievement category, three were named semi-finalists in the talent category and 201 students and 22 students earned an honorable mention for the achievement and talent categories, respectively.

In addition, the National Merit Scholarship Program announced the nation's 2010 semi-finalists, including three students from HCPS. These three students are Carlos Arguero, senior at Aberdeen High School; Conner Morrison, senior at Aberdeen High School; and Alex Hutcheson, senior at C. Milton Wright High School, who was also a finalist for the Maryland Distinguished Scholar Program as previously noted. Twenty-three additional students achieved commendation in the National Merit Program.

Similarly, three Harford students were recognized as outstanding participants referred to colleges in the National Achievement Scholarship Program.

"We are extremely pleased with the recognition our students have earned through the Maryland Distinguished Scholar Program and the National Merit/Achievement Scholarship Program this year," said Roger Plunkett, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. "The hard work of each one of these students, as well as their teachers and parents, is exemplified through these awards."

All five of Harford County's Maryland Distinguished Scholar Program finalists and National Merit Scholarship Program semi-finalists will be recognized at a Board of Education meeting on Monday, November 23rd for their achievements. [Click here for the full list of National Merit/Achievement Program semi-finalists and commended students.](#) [Click here for the full list of Maryland Distinguished Scholar Program finalists and semi-finalists.](#)

The Maryland Distinguished Scholar Program honors Maryland high school juniors for superior academic achievement, for exceptional talent in the arts, or for achieving finalist status in the National Merit/National Achievement Scholarship Program. Students earning Distinguished Scholar Program Scholarships are those

# Press Release

## *Harford County Public Schools*

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-2-

who are attending Maryland colleges or universities. The award amount is \$3,000 per year and is renewable three times for a total value of \$12,000. Three hundred fifty new scholarships are awarded annually to Maryland residents.

Students are selected for the Distinguished Scholar award after meeting several criteria. High school guidance offices distribute applications/nomination forms for the Maryland Distinguished Scholar Program to Maryland juniors in their fifth semester of high school. Completed forms and documentation of academic credentials are sent to MHEC's Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) by the March deadline.

In the academic achievement category, students are evaluated on two scales: by their cumulative unweighted grade point average (GPA) in academic courses and by their SAT, PSAT or ACT scores. Students are then selected in rank order and identified as Maryland Distinguished Scholar finalists, semifinalists or honorable mention students. Students considered for the talent in the arts category for areas in visual art, instrumental or vocal music, dance or drama must audition or undergo a portfolio review before a panel of professional judges. For more information on the Maryland Distinguished Scholars Program, visit [www.mhec.state.md.us](http://www.mhec.state.md.us).

The National Merit® Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. High school students enter the National Merit Program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) – a test which serves as an initial screen of approximately 1.5 million entrants each year – and by meeting published program entry/participation requirements. The nationwide pool of semifinalists, which represents less than one percent of U. S. high school seniors, includes the highest entrants in each state. Mr. Arguero, Mr. Morrison and Mr. Hutcheson will move on to compete for the title of finalist in this program. The finalists for this year's National Merit Scholarship Program will be announced in February 2010. For details, visit [www.nationalmerit.org](http://www.nationalmerit.org).

The National Achievement® Scholarship Program is an academic competition established in 1964 to provide recognition for outstanding Black American high school students. Black students may enter both the National Achievement Program and the National Merit® Program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) and meeting other published requirements for participation.

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