

Press Release

Date: Wednesday, June 6

Release: Immediate

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Nine SMUHSD Seniors Awarded National Merit Scholarships

San Mateo, California --- Nine outstanding San Mateo Union High School District seniors have been awarded National Merit Scholarships. The monetary prizes are regarded as being among the most prestigious available to U.S. secondary students.

The nine District National Merit honorees are:

- Kaitlyn Chan, Mills
- Julia Cordero, Capuchino
- Niven Jayanthi, Capuchino
- Benjamin Liao, Hillsdale
- Frank Liu, Aragon
- Lily Sai, San Mateo
- Michael Wang, Aragon
- Hongxiao, Zhou, Mills
- Lily Zhou, Aragon

Competition for National Merit Scholarships is nationwide and rigorous. More than 1.6 million juniors from 22,000 high schools took the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test in order to begin the process to vie for the 2018 awards.

After screening those applicants, a comprehensive set of criteria had to be analyzed and met. Those criteria included, among others: a written essay, a strong academic record and a list of extra-curricular activities, honors and leadership positions held.

This year, officials of the National Merit Scholarship program have announced that about 7,500 high-achieving U.S. high school seniors have been named National Merit winners. The total value of those scholarships is estimated to be over \$31 million. The awards are funded by colleges and universities, U.S. corporations and the National Merit Scholarship Corporation itself.

The National Merit Scholarship program, based in Evanston, IL, was begun in the mid-1950s to honor, encourage and reward high-achieving American secondary scholars. It is now more than 60-years-old.

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About SMUHSD

The San Mateo Union High School District, in existence for more than 110 years, continues to be a vital community academic and cultural resource. With an annual operating budget that is funded primarily through local property taxes, it provides education to a diverse range of approximately nine thousand students attending six highly-rated comprehensive high schools, a special Middle College program in conjunction with the College of San Mateo, an alternative high school, a dependent charter school, and a robust Adult School Program. The District has graduated an estimated 132,000 young people since its founding in 1902. To learn more about the SMUHSD, visit www.smuhsd.org or find us on [Facebook](#) and Twitter [@SMUHSD](#).