

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: Wisconsin has 15 Presidential Scholar Semifinalists

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MADISON — Fifteen Wisconsin students have been named semifinalists for the 2017 Presidential Scholars award, considered the nation's highest honor for graduating high school seniors.

“Our Presidential Scholar Semifinalists hail from across the state, a testament to the fine high schools serving our students and their communities,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “These soon-to-be graduates, with support from their families and teachers, have shown exceptional academic ability and talent in the career and technical education fields. Congratulations on your accomplishments.”

The Presidential Scholars program was established in 1964 to recognize and honor some of our nation's most distinguished high school students. The state's 15 semifinalists are among 723 semifinalists for 2017. Wisconsin's Presidential Scholar semifinalists are

- Connie T. Cai of Madison, Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, N.H.;
- Cameron G. Chyla, Waukesha West High School;
- William R. Clark, Homestead High School, Mequon;
- Colin Gray-Hoehn, Brookfield East High School;

- Anna S. Kane of Westby, Laurel High School, Viroqua;
- Alex Krueger, Joseph Craig High School, Janesville;
- Emily Y. Li, Germantown High School;
- Kelsie Lyall, Menomonie Senior High School;
- Andrea McDermott, Platteville High School;
- Dylon Pokorny, Waupun Junior and Senior High School;
- Mitchell J. Stroebel of Saukville, Cedarburg High School;
- Maria Thurow of Monticello, New Glarus High School;
- Levi Werlein, Appleton North High School;
- Emma Widmar, Washington Park High School, Racine; and
- Samuel W. Zwickel, McDonell Central Catholic High School, Chippewa Falls.

From nearly 3.5 million graduating high school seniors, more than 5,100 students were identified as candidates for the program. Most are identified based on exceptional performance on the ACT or SAT college admissions tests. About 60 were identified through their participation in the YoungARTS program, sponsored by the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts. Five of Wisconsin's semifinalists — **Krueger, Lyall, McDermott, Pokorny, and Werlein** — were nominated for their accomplishments in the career and technical education fields. Candidates were invited to complete application materials that include essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports, and transcripts. An independent, national committee of educators convened by the Commission on Presidential Scholars reviewed application materials to select semifinalists.

The Commission on Presidential Scholars will make the final selection of the nation's 121 academic Presidential Scholars — one male and one female from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and from families of U.S. citizens living abroad; and up to 15 students chosen at large. The Presidential Scholars Commission also chooses up to 20 Presidential Scholars in the Arts and 20 Presidential Scholars in Career and Technical Education for a total of up to 161 Presidential Scholars.

Students chosen as Presidential Scholars will travel to Washington, D.C., in June, where they will meet with government officials, educators, authors, musicians, scientists, and other accomplished individuals. Presidential Scholars will have opportunities to visit area museums and monuments and have a chance to exchange ideas and build friendships with their peers. They also will receive a Presidential Scholars medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House.