



# ***PENNRIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT***

## **DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE**

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**For Immediate Release: September 28, 2022**

### **Five PHS Students to receive commendations for Academic excellence through the National Merit Scholarship Program- the most in nearly 10 years.**

#### **Perkasia, Pennsylvania.**

Five academically-talented students in the Pennridge School District are being recognized for their academic excellence and one has been named as a Semifinalist in the 68th annual 2023 National Merit Scholarship Program and has the opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,250 National Merit Scholarships, worth more than \$28 million that will be offered in the spring:

- Ava Oliphant - National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist
- Caroline Bailey- National Merit Scholarship Commended
- Dylan Bariexca- National Merit Scholarship Commended
- Pietro Derro- National Merit Scholarship Commended
- Kaden Kwon- National Merit Scholarship Commended

These five Pennridge students represent the highest number of National Merit Scholarship accolades in Pennridge since 2012.

The NMSP determines which students qualify as Commended Students and Semifinalists. According to officials at the NMSP, “in general, students who score in the top 3-4% are named Commended Scholars, while students who score in the top 1% are deemed, Semifinalists.” Ava Oliphant and the nationwide pool of Semifinalists represent less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors. High school students enter the National Merit Program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), which serves as an initial screen of entrants each year, and by meeting published program entry and participation

requirements. Of the approximately 16,000 Semifinalists, about 15,000 are expected to advance to the Finalist level, and in February they will be notified of this designation. 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.

Three types of National Merit Scholarships will be offered in the spring of 2023. Every Finalist will compete for one of 2,500 National Merit® \$2500 Scholarships that will be awarded on a state-representational basis. About 950 corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards will be provided by approximately 180 corporations and business organizations for Finalists who meet their specified criteria. In addition, about 160 colleges and universities are expected to finance some 3,800 college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards for Finalists who will attend the sponsor institution.

[Pictures of the students can be accessed here](#)

Captions:

Picture 1 (From L-R Pietro Derro, Kaden Kwon, Ava Oliphant, Dylan Bariexca, Caroline Bailey)

Picture 2 (From L-R Kaden Kwon, Pietro Derro, Ava Oliphant, Dylan Bariexca, Caroline Bailey)

Picture 3 (From L-R Pietro Derro, Kaden Kwon, Dr. Stephen Cashman, Principal of PHS, Ava Oliphant, Caroline Bailey, Dylan Bariexca)

Picture 4 (From L-R Lori D'Angelo; PHS Guidance Counselor, Kaden Kwon, Pietro Derro, Ava Oliphant, Dylan Bariexca, Caroline Bailey, Shannon O' Sullivan; PHS Guidance Counselor)

[A video created to showcase this achievement may be viewed here.](#)

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