



SAN GABRIEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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San Gabriel Unified Boasts Five National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists

SAN GABRIEL, CA – Five Gabrielino High School seniors were recently named 2018 National Merit Scholarship semifinalists, placing them in the running for the prestigious award and financial aid thanks to their exemplary test scores.

National Merit Scholarship participants are selected based on how they score on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), taken during their junior year. Of the 1.6 million students who took the exam, 16,000 top scorers were selected as semifinalists.

Gabrielino High's National Merit Scholarship semifinalists are Janelle Dang, Ya Chi "Angelina" Liang, Christopher Lung, Hugo So and Benjamin Vuong – all of whom received a score of 1490 or higher on their PSAT/NMSQTs.

"I was pretty excited when I found out I was a semifinalist because I wasn't expecting it," Liang said. "I know that the National Merit Scholarship is a prestigious one, so I would be honored to be selected for it."

The National Merit Scholarship, beyond its national prestige, offers financial aid to finalists – which can range from a one-time \$2,500 scholarship to annual stipends through college and corporate sponsorships.

"Being considered for this scholarship and all of its benefits is an amazing opportunity," Vuong said. "I'm especially excited since being a finalist could lead me to partial or full scholarship – which would be a major financial help, especially to my parents."

The National Merit Scholarship Corp. will announce the 2,500 recipients of the scholarships starting in March.

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Janelle Dang: Dang scored a near perfect 1510 on her PSAT, holds a 4.54 GPA and plans to attend UCLA, UC Berkeley or Pomona College. Dang draws inspiration from her mother, an elementary school teacher, as she plans to study English in college and become an educator. Dang tutors English Learner students and volunteers with the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

Ya Chi “Angelina” Liang: Liang is team captain of the speech and debate team, president of the Gabrielino High School Red Cross Club, opinion editor of the school newspaper and social media chair and activities coordinator of the Home Economics Club. She plans to apply to UC Berkley, UCLA, UC San Diego, Northwestern University and Johns Hopkins University to pursue a degree in science. Liang holds a 4.54 GPA and scored a 1490 on her PSAT.

Christopher Lung: Lung also scored a near perfect 1510 on his PSAT and has his sights set on attending Stanford University or UC Berkeley, hoping to become a biomedical engineer and create prosthetics for amputees. Lung has been interested in medicine since he was 7, when doctors saved his life after he suffered a head wound from a biking accident. Lung holds a 4.58 GPA, participates on Gabrielino’s speech and debate team and the math club, and serves as a student ambassador for the Tournament of Roses Parade.

Hugo So: So, with a 4.8 GPA and 1500 PSAT score, aspires to attend Stanford University and study either chemical engineering, mechanical engineering or material science. He is founder and captain of the Tech Challenge robotics team, where members build and program robots and promote STEM concepts to the community by teaching K-8 students about basic electrical engineering concepts. He is also an Eagle Scout and a member of Future Business Leaders of America.

Benjamin Vuong: Vuong said winning a National Merit Scholarship would go a long way toward his goal of living on the East Coast while studying finance at the University of Pennsylvania. Vuong is president of his school’s Future Business Leaders of America chapter. He holds a 4.5 GPA and scored a 1500 on his PSAT.

“Congratulations to our five Gabrielino students on their well-deserved recognition as National Merit Scholarship semifinalists,” Superintendent Dr. John Pappalardo said. “Their dedication to academic excellence and to campus and community engagement is worthy of this distinguished honor.”

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