



**The School District of Osceola County, FL**  
Terry Andrews, Superintendent

## **Press Release (English and Spanish)**

**September 19, 2011 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Three Osceola Students Named As Semifinalist In The 2012 National Merit Scholarship Program**

Officials of National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) have announced the names of three Osceola County students who are among approximately 16,000 Semifinalists in the 57th annual National Merit Scholarship Program:

**Richard Belleville** - *Gateway High School*

**Matthew Hayes** - *Osceola High School*

**Christopher Delgado** - *Poinciana High School (graduate)*

The National Merit Scholarship Program honors individual students who show exceptional academic ability and potential for success in rigorous college studies. These academically-talented students have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 8,300 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$34 million that will be offered next spring. To be considered for a Merit Scholarship award, Semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the Finalist level of the competition. About 90 percent of the Semifinalists are expected to attain Finalist standing, and more than half of the Finalists will win a National Merit Scholarship, earning the Merit Scholar title.

About 1.5 million juniors in some 22,000 high schools entered the 2012 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2010 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of Semifinalists, which represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state. To become a Finalist, a Semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by the high school principal, and earn SAT scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test. The Semifinalist and a high school official must submit a detailed scholarship application, which includes the student's essay and information about the Semifinalist's participation and leadership in school and community activities.

From 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. All National Merit Scholarship winners will be selected from this Finalist group. 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 2012. Every Finalist will compete for one of 2,500 National Merit \$2,500 Scholarships that will be awarded on a state representational basis. About 1,000 corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards will be provided by approximately 240 corporations and business organizations for Finalists who meet their specified criteria, such as children of the grantor's employees or residents of communities where sponsor plants or offices are located. In addition, about 200 colleges and universities are expected to finance some 4,800 college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards for Finalists who will attend the sponsor institution.

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