



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
High School Principals

FROM: Derek Phillips
Director of Communications

DATE: September 24, 2024

RE: Nominations for 2025 U.S. Presidential Scholars Award

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was established by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964. Since that time, the program has honored more than 8,000 high school seniors on the basis of outstanding scholarship. For most of the program's existence, nominees have been recognized based upon SAT or ACT scores, but as the program evolved, candidates have been recognized in other ways. Since 2013, Chief State School Officers have been invited to nominate candidates from their states for the Academic/General Component category, and in 2016, outstanding students who demonstrated excellence in Career and Technical Education (CTE) were included for recognition.

Today we are asking that each public school district or private school administrator submit a total of three (3) applications for consideration: one (1) female and (1) male student nomination application for the Academics/General Component category, and (1) application, (male or female) for the CTE component. The application(s) are to be emailed to Derek Phillips at dphillips@ed.sc.gov. **Applications are due no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, November 1, 2024.** All applications will be date and time stamped and late applications will not be accepted. Application forms for the Academics/General Component category and the CTE category are attached.

For general category applications, we encourage you to nominate students who demonstrate outstanding scholarship, but who might not otherwise be nominated through the current SAT/ACT, or CTE recognition processes. All high school seniors graduating between January and June 2025, who are U.S. citizens, or legal permanent residents, and who attend public, parochial, or independent schools, as well as those who are home-schooled, are eligible. The candidates will go through the application process and, as in the past, the 2025 U.S. Presidential

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Scholars will be selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars. They will receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion at a ceremony in their honor in Washington, D.C in 2025.

When you contemplate your nominees, please consider the following:

- 1) What about the student makes him or her stand out as having outstanding scholarship?
- 2) Were there special challenges or hurdles this student has overcome while still achieving high academic success?
- 3) Note: High scoring SAT and ACT students whose scores are marked public will automatically be pulled by the US Department of Education. There is no need to nominate those particular students.

It may be useful for you to know that the reviewers will be considering the following categories when evaluating the nominees at the semifinalist and Scholar evaluation levels:

- Involvement and Service (in school and community);
- Leadership and Character;
- Academic Achievements; and
- Discretionary points for extraordinary achievement, heavy workload, family responsibilities, or obstacles the student has overcome.

For the CTE category, we ask that submit one (1) male or (1) female nomination application. (Please see the attachment for CTE suggested criteria).

All applications must have handwritten or electronic signatures.

After the application is typed

- 1) Print the application,
- 2) Apply the appropriate signatures, and
- 3) Scan entire, completed application and send as one PDF.

Applications must be sent to dphillips@ed.sc.gov no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, November 1, 2024. Please DO NOT include transcripts or additional documentation with the application. Applications sent directly from students and/or their parents or legal guardian of the student will not be accepted.

Ultimately, the State Superintendent of Education will only be allowed to nominate 10 males and 10 females for a total of 20 students for the Academics/General Component category, and up to 5 additional students for the CTE component category. Should you have any questions regarding the US Presidential Scholars program, you may contact dphillips@ed.sc.gov.