

South Carolina Junior Scholars Program

What is it? The South Carolina Junior Scholars Program was developed by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) during the 1985–86 school year to identify eighth grade students with exceptional academic talent and to develop strategies for inclusion into special programs.

What does the program include? The program includes a process for screening a potential talent pool of students, identifying and recognizing those students with exceptionally high scholastic achievement and intellectual ability, and sponsoring summer opportunities in collaboration with participating South Carolina colleges and universities.

When does the program begin? Students are screened and identified in the eighth grade.

How will the students be recognized? Students who qualify for this special recognition will be recognized in local award ceremonies, receive an Award of Merit certificate from the local school district, and may be invited to attend summer opportunities at participating South Carolina colleges and universities.

Eligibility for testing criteria:

- Students must currently be enrolled in eighth grade in a public, private, or home school in South Carolina.
- Home-schooled students must meet home school statute eligibility (§59-65-40, §59-65-45, §59-65-47) to participate.
- For public schools, potential Junior Scholars may include those students who scored Exemplary in English language arts and mathematics on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) in the seventh grade.
- For private and home schooled students, the respective associations will determine the selection of potential Junior Scholars.
- To be eligible, all students must apply through a designated Junior Scholars School District Coordinator or a designated Junior Scholars Private or Home School Association Coordinator.

Identification criteria include:

- Eligible students who score 550 or higher on the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing or 530 or higher on the Math portion of the PSAT/NMSQT will be identified as South Carolina Junior Scholars, or
- Eligible students who participated in Duke University's Talent Identification Program (TIP) during their seventh-grade year, who met the eligibility requirements as outlined by that program, and were identified and recognized by Duke TIP at the State Recognition or Grand Recognition ceremony will be identified as South Carolina Junior Scholars.

The designated Junior Scholars District or Private School Coordinator or the designated Junior Scholars Home School Association Coordinator will report the names of the eligible recipients (PSAT/NMSQT and Duke TIPS) to the South Carolina Department of Education when requested.

Philosophy: The South Carolina Junior Scholars Program reflects the growing statewide effort to improve education in South Carolina and responds to the needs of students possessing unique abilities. The purpose of the program is to identify students and provide opportunities that will facilitate their intellectual growth, broaden their individual interests, and promote their scholastic achievement.

For more information about the South Carolina Junior Scholars Program, please contact the school's guidance counselor or Theresa Gregory at the South Carolina Department of Education at 803-734-3749 or e-mail tgregory@ed.sc.gov.