



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS

July 28, 2017

Dear Chief State School Officer:

We are writing to update you on the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program and request your continued participation in the nomination process.

Thanks to all of you who participated in providing nominations for the General and/or CTE components of the program this past year. We had 21 Scholars selected last year through the CSSO nomination process in the General component and of course all 20 Career and Technical Education Scholars were nominated through the state education agencies.

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was established by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964, and, since that time, the program has honored more than over 7,000 outstanding high school seniors. The mission of the program is to recognize and honor outstanding high school seniors, and thereby encourage high attainment among all students.

Per the original Executive Order establishing the program, students are selected on the basis of outstanding scholarship. For most of the program's existence, nominees have been invited to apply for recognition based upon SAT or ACT scores. As the program has grown, candidates have been invited to apply in other ways as well. Beginning in 1979, outstanding students who demonstrated ability and accomplishment in the visual and performing arts or creative writing were added to the program. Since 2013, Chief State School Officers have been invited to nominate candidates from their states for the General component of the program. The program is also partnering with several recognition organizations that each nominate candidates for the General component of the program. And, beginning in 2016, outstanding students who demonstrate excellence in CTE were included for recognition.

We cannot thank you enough for the assistance you have provided us as a Chief State School Officer. It is making a difference in the diversity of our nominees and Scholars. During the 2017 U.S. Presidential Scholars General component student nomination process, 67 CSSO-nominated students were named semifinalists, and 21 CSSO-nominated students were named U.S. Presidential Scholars. We also had 208 students nominated through the CSSOs as CTE candidates; 152 became semifinalists, and 20 were named as U.S. Presidential Scholars in CTE.

GENERAL COMPONENT NOMINATION REQUEST

We are asking each of you to nominate students from your jurisdiction as candidates for the 2018 Scholars program. Like last year, we ask you to nominate up to 10 males and 10 females for a total of 20 students for the General component of the program.

In this general category, we encourage you to nominate students who demonstrate outstanding scholarship, but who might not otherwise be nominated through the current SAT/ACT, Arts, or CTE recognition processes. All high school seniors graduating between January and June of

2018, 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 2018 U.S. Presidential Scholars will be selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars and receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion at a ceremony in their honor in Washington, DC.

It may be helpful to consider the following questions as you contemplate the selection of your nominees:

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?

In addition, 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
- Writing samples
- Academic achievements
- Discretionary points for extraordinary achievement, heavy workload, family responsibilities, or obstacles overcome.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) NOMINATION REQUEST

In addition to the general nominations, we are also asking each of you to nominate additional students from your jurisdiction to be included as candidates for recognition for excellence in CTE. This year, we request your nomination of up to five students in CTE. Please see the attachment for suggested criteria.

We are proud this still new component of the program will honor students “on the basis of outstanding scholarship and demonstrated ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields.”

All high school seniors who are participants of a CTE program graduating between January and June of 2018, 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 Commission on Presidential Scholars has decided to change the CTE selection process slightly this year. Candidates who are nominated and choose to apply, and whose applications are complete, will be reviewed by a committee of qualified individuals experienced in career and technical education. The committee will choose 60 applicants to be named as semifinalists. The 60 CTE semifinalist applications will then be reviewed by the Commission on Presidential Scholars. All 2018 U.S. Presidential Scholars will be selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars and will receive the Presidential Scholars Medallion at a ceremony in their honor in Washington, DC.

To learn more about the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program and the Commission on Presidential Scholars, please visit our Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/psp>.

NEXT STEPS

In order for students to be considered for recognition in 2018, we need all nominations from CSSOs by November 22, 2017. Please have your program contact or other designee connect with the U.S. Presidential Scholar program staff in late September as we will have follow-up instructions for submissions. All nominees will be announced and invited to apply in mid-January 2018 by the U.S. Presidential Scholars program office; therefore, you do not need to contact the candidate. Completed applications will be due in February 2018, and Scholars will be announced at the beginning of May 2018.

Once our program office has connected with your program contact, we will need the following information concerning your nominees:

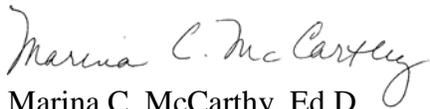
- Name
- Home mailing address
- High school name and mailing address
- High School CEEB code
- Gender
- Email address

However, due to privacy concerns, we will need to work with your point of contact so that the information can be submitted securely. We plan to have all nominations submitted through our secure online application system.

In summary, we would welcome your nomination of up to 10 males and 10 females AND up to five additional students for the CTE recognition component. Please have your program contact reach out to Executive Director Simone Olson at (202) 205-8719 or Simone.Olson@ed.gov for further instructions. Simone is also available to answer any questions.

We look forward to recognizing another remarkable class of U.S. Presidential Scholars with you.

Sincerely,



Marina C. McCarthy, Ed.D.
Chair
Commission on Presidential Scholars



Simone Miranda Olson
Executive Director
U.S. Presidential Scholar Program

Attachment