

13 among Presidential Scholars candidates

Thirteen FCPS seniors are among this year's Presidential Scholars candidates. This is not a scholarship program, but is one of the nation's greatest honors for high school students. The winners will be announced in May.

Fayette County's candidates include:

- From Henry Clay High School: Timothy M. Dodson and Aaron C. Moscow.
- Tate Creek High School: Laura A. Hench and Katharine M. Sagan.
- Paul Laurence Dunbar High School: Elizabeth A. Byers, Papa R. Chakravarthy, Michael P. Cole, Kathleen M. Harrington, David C. Parell, Javid N. Pour-Ghasemi, Aubrey K. Vaughan, Victor W. Yang and Mehran B. Yusuf.

A student from Lexington Catholic (Timothy P. Gilbert) also made the list, for a total of 14 students from Lexington. By comparison, Louisville has 10 candidates. Kentucky has 49 altogether; two of them ultimately will be named Presidential Scholars.

The Presidential Scholars Program is a nonpartisan, public-private partnership designed to recognize and provide leadership development experiences for as many as 141 students annually. The scholars travel to Washington, D.C., in June for five days of educational, celebratory and fellowship activities. They participate in seminars, lectures and workshops with government officials, elected representatives, educators, authors, musicians, scientists and other accomplished people; perform community service; and attend cultural events and ceremonies held in their honor. The week culminates with the awarding of presidential medallions.

All graduating high school seniors who are U.S. citizens and have scored exceptionally well on either the SAT or the ACT are automatically considered for participation.

The U.S. Department of Education looks at test records for the top 30 males and top 30 females in each of the states and U.S. jurisdictions. The combined files of scores then are ranked, with the top 20 males and top 20 females named as Presidential Scholars candidates.

To be considered further, students must submit candidacy materials including essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports and transcripts. Candidates are evaluated on their academic achievement, personal characteristics, leadership and service activities, and an analysis of their essay.

In late March, about 500 semifinalists are chosen by an independent, national committee of educators. In April, the Commission on Presidential Scholars makes the final selection of 121 students. One young man and one young woman are chosen from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and from families of U.S. citizens living abroad. In addition, as many as 15 students are selected at large.

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