

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools

DATE: June 25, 2024

SUBJECT: Recognition of the 2024 U.S. Presidential Scholars



Purpose

The State Board of Education, along with State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carey M. Wright, will honor Maryland's four U.S. Presidential Scholars: Maximilian P. Belyantsev and Angelina Xu, Richard Montgomery High School (Montgomery County); Mingni L. Dong, Dulaney High School (Baltimore County); and Minaal A. Khwaja, Wicomico High School (Wicomico County).

Background

The U.S. Presidential Scholars program annually honors the nation's top-performing high school students in academics, the arts, and career and technical education fields. Each year, up to 161 students are selected as U.S. Presidential Scholars. Since 1964, the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program has recognized and honored some of the nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the program was extended to students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative, and performing arts, and expanded in 2015 to honor students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields.

Executive Summary

Maximilian P. Belyantsev — Richard Montgomery High School, Montgomery County Public Schools

Max is headed to Columbia University this fall as an economics major. His extracurricular activities at Richard Montgomery included serving as editor-in-chief of the school newspaper and an online philosophy journal. He was also president of the high school DECA and Philosophy Club. Max was an executive intern for the Tacy Foundation, served as Director of Communications & Public Relations for Sami Saeed's Student Member of the Board campaign, and was a Coolidge Senator for the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation. Max is from North Potomac.

Angelina Xu — Richard Montgomery High School, Montgomery County Public Schools

Angelina will attend Harvard College this fall to study Environmental Science and Public Policy as well as Economics. She received the President's Environmental Youth Award for co-founding Compostology, a nonprofit that funds and collaborates with schools to compost and donate food. During her years at Richard Montgomery she was President of the Maryland Association of Student Councils and Advocacy Initiatives Director for the Montgomery County Regional Student Government Association; and Angelina is from Boyds.

Mingni L. Dong — Dulaney High School, Baltimore County Public Schools

Mingni is entering the University of Maryland this fall as a Computer Science major. During her years at Dulaney High, she was involved with the Science Olympiad, Debate, Future Business Leaders of America, Math Club and VEX Robotics, holding a leadership title in several of those organizations. Mingni is from Lutherville-Timonium.

Minaal A. Khwaja — Wicomico High School, Wicomico County Public Schools

Minaal Khwaja is one of only 20 CTE students recognized as a Presidential Scholar. She received her Certification in Professional Horticulture and is an FFA Plant Science Research winner. A student representative to the Wicomico Board of Education, Minaal also served as President of the Wicomico High Student Government Association, FFA, Mu Alpha Theta and Science National Honor Society in addition to a host of other leadership roles. She will attend Wesleyan University with a double major in Biochemistry and Neuroscience & Behavior on a full four-year scholarship from QuestBridge. Minaal is from Salisbury.

Action

No action is required; this information is for discussion only.