

# Five Washington Students Named 2024 U.S. Presidential Scholars

*One of the nation's highest honors for high school students is awarded to five high school seniors across Washington state*

OLYMPIA, WA, USA, May 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Every year since 1964, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) selects high school seniors from across the country for recognition as U.S. Presidential Scholars, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students.

U.S. Presidential Scholars demonstrate exceptional talent in career and technical education (CTE) fields, in the visual, creative, and performing arts, or on academic assessments. Today, ED announced that five Washington students have earned the distinction.

The Scholars are:

- Ashwin Joshi, Southridge High School, Kennewick School District
- Lexi J. Molnar, Goldendale High School, Goldendale School District (Presidential Scholar in CTE)
- Siddhartha Dylan Pant, Lakes High School, Clover Park School District (Presidential Scholar in CTE)
- Jacob J. Scrupps, Odessa High School, Odessa School District (Presidential Scholar in CTE)
- Kosha Upadhyay, Bellevue Senior High School, Bellevue School District

"While most states had three scholars earn the recognition, Washington has five from across our diverse state--and we couldn't be prouder," said State Superintendent Chris Reykdal.

"Washington's students have worked hard and their accomplishments in academics, leadership, and service speak for themselves. I look forward to their success in the careers and pathways that they choose."

Up to 161 students are selected for the honor each year. As directed by Presidential Executive



Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Order, the 2024 U.S. Presidential Scholars are comprised of two students from each state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, as well as U.S. students living abroad. The recognition is also extended to 15 scholars chosen at-large, 20 scholars in the arts, and 20 scholars in CTE.

Of the more than 3.7 million students expected to graduate from high school this year, more than 5,700 qualified for the 2024 awards. There are three paths for selection as a candidate for the award:

- General program: Candidates are selected based on outstanding performance on the SAT or ACT exams.
- Arts program: Candidates must participate in YoungArts, a national program identifying and recognizing young people demonstrating excellence in visual arts, performing arts, and creative writing. YoungArts nominates students who meet the U.S. Presidential Scholars candidacy requirements.
- CTE program: Candidates are selected based on their accomplishments in CTE fields. Chief state school officers nominate students who meet the candidacy requirements.

Once selected as candidates, students complete essays and self-assessments, as well as submit school evaluations and transcripts. A review committee, comprised of experts in secondary and postsecondary education, evaluates candidates on their academic achievement, personal characteristics, leadership and service activities, and an analysis of their essay. The White House Commission on Presidential Scholars then selects the students who will receive the award.

Scholars are invited to name a teacher they consider to be the most influential in their knowledge, skills, and impact on the school community. These teachers are recognized as Distinguished Teachers as part of the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. The teachers that Washington's awarded students selected are:

- Valentina Craciunoiu, Bellevue Senior High School, Bellevue School District (Nominating Scholar: Kosha Upadhyay)
- Heather Gallagher, Goldendale High School, Goldendale School District (Nominating Scholar: Lexi J. Molnar)
- Terri King, Odessa High School, Odessa School District (Nominating Scholar: Jacob J. Scrupps)
- Jannette Salisbury, Southridge High School, Kennewick School District (Nominating Scholar: Ashwin Joshi)
- Randall Wilson, Lakes High School, Clover Park School District (Nominating Scholar: Siddhartha Dylan Pant)

Since the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was created in 1964, more than 8,200 of the nation's students have received the honor. The program was expanded in 1979 to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the arts. The program was expanded again in 2015 to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in CTE fields.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. The 2024 Scholars will be recognized for their outstanding achievement this summer with a U.S.

Presidential Scholars medallion and an online recognition program.

For More Information

- [U.S. Presidential Scholars Program \(ED\)](#)

- [The Commission on Presidential Scholars \(ED\)](#)

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

+1 360-725-6000

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