**Six HISD students win National Merit College-Sponsored Scholarships**

*June 1, 2016* – Six Houston Independent School District students from four schools were announced this week as winners of National Merit Scholarships financed by U.S. colleges and universities.

The students — from Bellaire, Carnegie Vanguard, DeBakey, and Lee high schools — received college-sponsored National Merit Scholarships from the University of Houston, University of Oklahoma, University Texas at Dallas, Texas Tech University, and Vanderbilt University.

The scholarships provide between $500 and $2,000 annually for up to four years of undergraduate study. Many post-secondary institutions also award additional scholarships to students who are recognized as National Merit scholars.

“Our students fare very well against top performing students in Texas, the nation, and the world,” said HISD Interim Superintendent Ken Huewitt. “We wish them the very best as they continue their education in college.”

The National Merit Scholarship Program rewards academically talented U.S. high school students who score well on the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) with free money for college. Scholarships are provided to National Merit Finalists who have the strongest combination of accomplishments, skills and potential for college success.

This year, 184 higher education institutions are underwriting scholarships through the National Merit Scholarship Program. The college-sponsored scholarship winners are among about 7,500 high school seniors receiving $33 million in National Merit Scholarships this year. Additional college-sponsored scholarship winners are expected to be announced in July.

Earlier this spring, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation announced winners of corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards and National Merit Scholarships. An HISD student won a corporate-sponsored scholarship, while 16 more were awarded $2,500 National Merit Scholarships.

HISD’s National Merit College-Sponsored Scholarship winners are:

**Bellaire High School**

* Elijah M. Defferari, University of Oklahoma
* Chijindu M. Iheanacho, University of Texas at Dallas

**Carnegie Vanguard High School**

* Jonah R. Levine, Vanderbilt University

**DeBakey High School for Health Professions**

* Nishaa Iqbal, University of Houston
* Sachindra N. Sanam Venkata, Vanderbilt University

**Lee High School**

* Oscar Wu, Texas Tech University

