



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **DoDEA Students Honored as 2006 Presidential Scholars**

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA - The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) proudly announces that two of our students have been named American Abroad Scholars in the 2006 Presidential Scholars Program. The DoDEA 2006 Presidential Scholars are:

- Brendan D. O'Callaghan, Naples American High School
- Lillian R. Pecoraro, London Central High School

The Presidential Scholars Program is a nonpartisan, public-private partnership designed to recognize and provide leadership development experiences for some of America's most outstanding graduating high-school seniors. It is not a scholarship program, but it is one of the Nation's highest honors for high school students. The 141 students named annually as Presidential Scholars represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in young people.

The scholars are chosen on the basis of their accomplishments in many areas – academic and artistic success, leadership, and involvement in school and the community. The scholars represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in America's young people.

The Scholars will travel to Washington, D.C. each June as guests of the program for National Recognition Week: five days of educational, celebratory and fellowship activities. Scholars 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. During the week they forge friendships that often last a lifetime. The week culminates in a White House-sponsored event at which the Scholars are awarded the Presidential Medallion.

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“We are so very proud of Brendan, Lillian, and John,” said Dr. Joseph Tafoya, Director of DoDEA. “Their selection underscores the commitment each of them have made to excellence in their academic and personal lives. This honor is well deserved and the opportunities they will have at the National Recognition Week will be a valuable learning experience. Educators and students across DoDEA join me in offering our sincere congratulations to each of them.”

**More on the Presidential Scholars program from the US Department of Education**  
Source: <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>

The United States Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964, by Executive Order of the President, to recognize and honor some of our Nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the Program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. Each year, up to 141 students are named as Presidential Scholars, one of the Nation's highest honors for high school students. The Scholars represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in young people. In honoring the Presidential Scholars, the President of the United States symbolically honors all graduating high school seniors of high potential.

In June, Presidential Scholars will be guests of the Commission during National Recognition Week and enjoy an expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., to meet with government officials, educators, authors, musicians, scientists and other accomplished people. During the week, scholars have the opportunity to visit museums and monuments, and to attend recitals, receptions and ceremonies. To commemorate their achievement, the Scholars are awarded the Presidential Scholars medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House.

Students have the opportunity to become Presidential Scholars based on two paths of accomplishment. The majority of the Scholars are selected on the basis of broad academic achievement. Approximately twenty additional students are selected on the basis of their academic and artistic scholarship in the visual arts, the performing arts, or creative writing.

The academic component of the program selects students who have scored exceptionally well on the College Board SAT or the ACT Assessment. Eligible students are U.S. citizens graduating or receiving a diploma between January and August of the current program year, who have taken the SAT or ACT Assessment during the two-year window that begins in October, 2003 and runs through October, 2005 (for the recognition cycle concluding in June, 2006). Students meeting these requirements are automatically considered for participation. Initial inclusion in the pool of eligible candidates is determined by the information (e.g., citizenship or graduation year) provided by the student on his/her SAT or ACT test registration.

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The selection of approximately 2,600 academic candidates is made based on SAT and ACT scores. Test scores in each of the states/jurisdictions are reviewed, and the total SAT score is compared to the ACT Sum of Scores. Each student's highest test score (in a single test administration) is identified; duplicates and/or lower scores are dropped. In each state, scores are ranked from high to low. Approximately twenty females and twenty males are selected as candidates from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and from families of U.S. citizens living abroad. Students are considered in their states of legal residence, unless they have lived abroad for two years or more. Candidacy materials are mailed to students for participation in the program. Application is by invitation only; therefore, students may not apply individually to the Program, nor may their schools nominate them.

For the arts component of the Program, students are initially selected based on their artistic ability. Students must register for the Arts Recognition and Talent Search (ARTS), a national program identifying and recognizing young people demonstrating excellence in the arts. Upon completion of the ARTS program, the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts will nominate approximately 50 students who meet the Presidential Scholars candidacy requirements. Candidacy materials are mailed to the selected students, and they are invited to apply to the program. To confirm their interest, academic and arts candidates complete and submit candidacy materials, including essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports and transcripts for review.

A review committee of qualified individuals experienced in secondary and post-secondary education evaluates candidates on their academic achievement, personal characteristics, leadership and service activities, and an analysis of their essay. Approximately 500 candidates are named semifinalists and forwarded to the Commission for further review. All arts nominees submitting candidacy materials are automatically advanced to the semifinalist stage.

In April, the Commission on Presidential Scholars reviews the applications of all semifinalists based on the same criteria used by the review committee. The Commission selects up to 121 academic scholars and up to 20 arts scholars. All scholars are honored for their accomplishments during National Recognition Week, held in June in Washington, D.C.

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All Presidential Scholars are asked to identify those educators who have most influenced them. The selected educators are also invited to attend National Recognition Week. There, they are honored at a special reception to recognize and thank them for their efforts, and they are presented with the Teacher Recognition Award.

For over 40 years, this unique federal program has honored over 5,000 Presidential Scholars, who have demonstrated leadership, scholarship, and contribution to school and community. The work of the Commission on Presidential Scholars reaffirms, on behalf of the President, the Nation's commitment to education.

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