

## *News from the Stamford Public Schools*

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For immediate release

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### **National Student Honors Announced for 2008-2009**

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation has announced that **Maxwell Lesser** of **Westhill High School** has been named a National Merit Semifinalist. Additionally, a total of 22 students from Westhill, Stamford High, and the Academy of Information Technology & Engineering have been named Commended Students.

In becoming a Semifinalist, Lesser is among the less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors who were top scorers on the 2007 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). Approximately 15,000 students qualified as Semifinalists out of more than 1.5 million students who took the 2007 PSAT/NMSQT nationwide. In order to advance to Finalist standing, students must submit a detailed application and essay, have an outstanding academic record, be endorsed and recommended by his/her principal, and earn SAT scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test. Approximately half the Finalists win National Merit Scholarship awards. Finalists are announced in the spring of 2009.

The 17 Stamford Public School students who were named Commended Students scored in the top five percent of the 1.5 million students who took the PSAT/NMSQT in 2007. They include **Norman Ho, Elize Huang, and Melanie Lopez** from **Stamford High School; Michael Pinkert and Dylan Sodaro** from the **Academy of Information Technology & Engineering; and Benjamin Barnett, Bradley Benjamin, Julia Cluceru, Catherine Costanzo, Michael Cycon, Andrew Erskine, Joshua Esses, Dana Katz, Claire Lyons, Ariana Mygatt, Kathryn Outlaw, and Elizabeth Schlessinger** from **Westhill**. Commended students do not continue in the competition for National Merit Scholarships. They do, however receive a Letter of Commendation from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

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**Sarah McLaughlin Tapper** of **Westhill High School** has been named a National Achievement Semifinalist. This award is given to academically promising black students throughout the nation. Sarah is one of 1,600 students across the country to earn this honor.

The National Hispanic Recognition Program identifies outstanding Hispanic/Latino students. This year, National Hispanic Recognition scholars include **David Chodosh** and **Justin Avellar** from **Westhill High School**, and **Melanie Lopez** from **Stamford High School**. **Andrew Berisha** from **Stamford High School** received an Honorable Mention from the National Hispanic Recognition Program.