



FOR RELEASE
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**GABRIEL SAIZ OF MADISON, WISCONSIN
NAMED 2016 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR**

U.S. Secretary of Education John King today announced the selection of Gabriel Saiz of Madison, Wisconsin, who attends West High School in Madison, as a 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholar.

Saiz is one of 160 outstanding American high school seniors who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement, artistic excellence, leadership, citizenship, service, and contribution to school and community. The U.S. Presidential Scholars will be honored for their accomplishments in Washington D.C., from June 19-21.

“This year’s class of Presidential Scholars continues a more than 50 year trend of honoring students who’ve shown excellence in their educational, artistic and civic pursuits,” King said. “Thirty years ago, the program was expanded to include students in the arts, which is critical to providing students with a well-rounded education. Now, we’ve added 20 more slots to honor our highest achieving students in career and technical education, reflecting the Department’s belief that a quality education must be a well-rounded education that prepares students for college, careers and any other civic service.”

The White House Commission on Presidential Scholars, appointed by President Obama, selects honored scholars annually based on their academic success, artistic excellence, essays, school evaluations and transcripts, as well as evidence of community service, leadership, and demonstrated commitment to high ideals. Of the three million students expected to graduate from high school this year, more than 5,600 candidates qualified for the 2016 awards determined by outstanding performance on the College Board SAT and ACT exams, and through nominations made by Chief State School Officers, other partner recognition organizations or the National YoungArts Foundation’s nationwide YoungArts™ competition.

The 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholars are comprised of one young man and one young woman from each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and from U.S. families living abroad, as well as 15 chosen at-large, 20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts, and for the first time 20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in Career and Technical Education.

Created in 1964, the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program has honored almost 7,000 of the nation’s top-performing students with the prestigious award given to honorees during the annual ceremony in D.C. The program was expanded in 1979 to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, literary and performing arts. In 2015, the program was again extended to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields.

Since 1983, each Presidential Scholar has been offered the opportunity to name his or her most influential teacher. Each distinguished teacher is honored with a personal letter from the Secretary of Education.

The teacher chosen for recognition by Saiz was Susan Gevelber of West High School in Madison, WI.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: A complete list of 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholars is available at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/psp/awards.html>.