

## **SOUTH BRUNSWICK: Six local students named National Merit semi-finalists**

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Six local students including four from South Brunswick High School and two from the Noor Ul-Iman School have been named semi-finalists in the National Merit Scholarship competition, according to the organization.

SBHS students Abhishek Saha, Penny Sun, Rahul K. Swaminathan, and Phoebe H. Tse join Basith A. Fahumy and Sarah B. Qari of the Noor Ul-Iman School on the list of 16,000 semi-finalists nationwide, according to a Sept. 14 press release from the organization.

According to the organization, about 1.5 million high school juniors from 22,000 schools entered the organization's 57th yearly competition this year.

Students are competing for more than 8,000 scholarships valued at \$34 million to be offered next spring, according to the organization.

Students entered the competition by taking the 2010 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (psat/nmsqt®), which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of semi-finalists, which represents less than 1 percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state, according to the organization.

The number of semi-finalists in a state is proportional to the state's percentage of the national total of graduating seniors.

To become a finalist, a Semi-finalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by the high school principal, and earn SAT scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test.

The semi-finalist and a high school official must submit a detailed scholarship application, which includes the student's essay and information about the Semifinalist's participation and leadership in school and community activities, according to the release.

From the approximately 16,000 semi-finalists, about 15,000 are expected to advance to the finalist level, and in February they will be notified of this designation.

All National Merit Scholarship winners will be selected from this Finalist group.

Merit Scholar designees are selected on the basis of their skills, accomplishments, and potential for success in rigorous college studies, without regard to gender, race, ethnic origin, or religious preference, according to the organization.

Three types of National Merit Scholarships will be offered in the spring of 2012.

Every Finalist will compete for one of 2,500 National Merit \$2500 Scholarships that will be awarded on a state representational basis, according to the organization.

About 1,000 corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards will be provided by approximately 240 corporations and business organizations for finalists who meet their specified criteria, such as children of the grantor's employees or residents of communities where sponsor plants or offices are located, according to the release.

In addition, about 200 colleges and universities are expected to finance some 4,800 college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards for finalists who will attend the sponsor institution.

National Merit Scholarship winners of 2012 will be announced in four nationwide newsreleases beginning in April and concluding in July, according to the release. These scholarship recipients will join more than 283,000 other distinguished young people who have earned the Merit Scholar title, according to the release.

South Brunswick Post:

[http://www.centraljersey.com/articles/2011/09/26/south\\_brunswick\\_post/news/doc4e7b89a70aea0791035421.txt](http://www.centraljersey.com/articles/2011/09/26/south_brunswick_post/news/doc4e7b89a70aea0791035421.txt)