



# SHAWNEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Shawnee High School Students Earn Prestigious AP Scholar Awards

**Shawnee, OK – September 10, 2026** — Shawnee Public Schools is proud to announce that Kimberly Albers, Cooper Dunn, and Anthony Newsom, seniors at Shawnee High School, have been named 2027 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists, placing all three students among the nation's highest-achieving high school seniors.

More than 1.3 million students entered the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the PSAT/NMSQT. Only approximately 16,000 students nationwide, about the top 1% of test-takers, were selected as Semifinalists.

"This is an exceptional achievement, and having three Shawnee High School students recognized at this level is something our entire district can celebrate," Superintendent Dr. Jason James said. "Kimberly, Cooper and Anthony represent the kind of students we want to see graduate from Shawnee Public Schools, students who pursue excellence in the classroom while also making meaningful contributions to their school and community."

The National Merit Scholarship Program recognizes academically talented students and provides them with an opportunity to continue competing for approximately 6,930 scholarships worth nearly \$26 million. About 95% of Semifinalists are expected to advance to Finalist standing.

While their academic accomplishments have earned national recognition, these students also make their mark at Shawnee High School through their involvement in a variety of activities. Albers is a member of the Pride of the Pack band and Shawnee High School swim team. Dunn participates in the Pride of the Pack band, choir, and golf. Newsom is a member of the Pride of the Pack band and Shawnee High School tennis team. Together, their involvement showcases the range of activities available to Shawnee High School students and the many ways they contribute to the broader school community beyond the classroom.

"We are so proud of Kimberly, Cooper and Anthony," Shawnee High School Principal Bobby Cook said. "They have demonstrated outstanding academic ability, but they also bring their talents and leadership to the activities they are involved in. This recognition is a reflection of the hard work they have put in, and we are excited to see where their accomplishments take them next."

Semifinalists must complete additional requirements to advance to Finalist standing, including meeting

academic requirements, submitting a scholarship application, and receiving a recommendation from their school. Approximately 95% of Semifinalists are expected to become Finalists. About half of Finalists are expected to earn National Merit Scholarships and receive the title of National Merit Scholar.

Shawnee Public Schools congratulates Albers, Dunn, and Newsom on this outstanding national achievement and wishes them continued success as they advance through the National Merit Scholarship competition.

***About Shawnee Public Schools***

*Shawnee Public Schools is dedicated to providing exceptional educational opportunities for students in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Our district encompasses a diverse community of learners and is committed to academic achievement, student support, people focus, and community engagement. With a focus on creating a supportive and inclusive environment, Shawnee Public Schools strives to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Through innovative teaching methods, community partnerships, and a commitment to student success, we aim to prepare our students to be thoughtful, engaged, and successful individuals both in their future and as active members of their community.*

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