[School logo]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: (NAME)

(DAY, DATE) (HIGH SCHOOL)

 (PHONE)

**[HIGH SCHOOL NAME] ANNOUNCES ILLINOIS STATE SCHOLARS**

**Illinois Student Assistance Commission congratulates [xx number] [HIGH SCHOOL NAME] students for their exceptional academic achievement**

(CITY or TOWN), IL – [High School name] Principal [Name] is pleased to announce that [xx number] students from the [High School name] graduating class of 2020 have been recognized as Illinois State Scholars.

The [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](http://www.isac.org/) (ISAC), the state agency committed to helping make college accessible and affordable for Illinois families, confers this prestigious recognition to top Illinois high school students annually. This year, more than 17,500 honorees join the other top students who have been honored for their academic achievements since the designation was first introduced in 1958.

The 2020-21 Illinois State Scholars represent approximately the top ten percent of high school seniors from 726 high schools across the state. Illinois State Scholars are chosen based on a combination of exemplary ACT or SAT test scores and sixth semester class rank. This year, ISAC is celebrating all State Scholars with [two videos](https://www.isac.org/students/before-college/college-career-planning/state-scholar-program.html) (<https://bit.ly/2LftKqW>) that highlight some of the state’s exceptional students.

(QUOTE FROM PRINCIPAL/SCHOOL COUNSELOR)

(OPTION: LIST ALL STUDENTS’ NAMES AND HOMETOWNS: The following [High School name] students were named 2020-21 Illinois State Scholars: [list names])

“On behalf of ISAC, we congratulate the 2020-21 Illinois States Scholars,” said Eric Zarnikow, executive director of ISAC. “I’m consistently impressed with the passion, focus, organization, and dedication of our State Scholars. It is a credit to these students--as well as to their support systems and to our schools--that so many of them are not only driven to achieve but also reflect a true love of learning and a desire to use their education to make the world a better place.”

While the State Scholar recognition does not include a monetary prize, honorees will receive a congratulatory letter from ISAC and a personalized Certificate of Achievement. Honorees can also download a digital Illinois [State Scholar badge](http://www.isac.org/studentportal/badge) that can be displayed on their online profiles and social media platforms, and shared with high school counselors, prospective colleges, employers, family members and others. A complete [list of the 2020-21 Illinois State Scholars](https://www.isac.org/students/before-college/college-career-planning/state-scholar/) (<https://bit.ly/2Reh1IY>) can be found on ISAC’s website. Note that the Program announces honorees *based on the year they would begin any postsecondary education*, not based on the year they graduate from high school.

All students, including State Scholars, are encouraged to complete their 2020-21 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) as soon as possible. The FAFSA is used to determine a student’s eligibility for federal and most state and institutional financial aid available for postsecondary education, including two- or four-year degree programs, certificates, and vocational education.

ISAC offers [free financial aid and college access events](https://studentportal.isac.org/Events) to assist students and families with the college-going process. Students can also visit the [ISAC Student Portal](http://www.isac.org/studentportal) for college planning, financial aid and financial literacy information and free tools, as well as information on how to contact the [ISACorps](https://studentportal.isac.org/isacorps), a group of recent college graduates who act as near-peer mentors and provide one-on-one assistance and mentoring. Students can also get answers to their college-going and financial aid questions sent directly to their phones by signing up for [ISAC College Q&A](http://www.isac.org/collegeqa), ISAC’s free text messaging service. In addition, ISAC offers assistance through the agency’s call center, 1-800-899-4722 (ISAC).

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