[School logo]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: (NAME)

(DAY, DATE) (HIGH SCHOOL)

 (PHONE)

**[HIGH SCHOOL NAME] RECOGNIZES 2022-23 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 2022 have been designated as Illinois State Scholars.

The [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](http://www.isac.org/) (ISAC), the state’s college access and financial aid agency, presents this important recognition of academic achievement to exceptional Illinois high school students annually. This year, more than 17,340 honorees join the other outstanding students who have been honored since the designation was first introduced in 1958.

*(QUOTE FROM PRINCIPAL/SCHOOL COUNSELOR)*

*(OPTIONAL based on school policy regarding online publishing of student names: LIST ALL STUDENTS’ NAMES AND HOMETOWNS: The following [High School name] students were named 2022-23 Illinois State Scholars: [list names])*

“On behalf of ISAC, congratulations to all of the Illinois State Scholars for their hard work and commitment inside and outside of the classroom,” said ISAC Executive Director Eric Zarnikow. “In the past two years students and families have faced unprecedented difficulties as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; from financial and personal ordeals to all of the challenges of remote learning. The achievements of these students are a credit to their perseverance and resilience, and to the support and encouragement of their families, principals, teachers, mentors, counselors, and others invested in their growth and success.”

The Illinois State Scholar acknowledgement is a non-monetary award. Each State Scholar designee receives a congratulatory letter and Certificate of Achievement from ISAC, and can download an official Illinois State Scholar badge to display on their online profiles and social media platforms, as well as share with their high school counselors, colleges, employers, family members and others. \***Note that the Program designates honorees *based on the year they would begin any postsecondary education*, not based on the year they graduate from high school.**

To help ensure that every student in Illinois can make the most informed choices possible about education after high school, all high school students are encouraged to complete the 2022-23 [Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)](https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa) or, if eligible, the [Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid (Alternative Application)](https://www.isac.org/AlternativeApp). The FAFSA is used to determine a student’s eligibility for federal and most state and institutional financial aid available for any type of postsecondary education, including certificates, two- or four-year degree programs, and some vocational programs. The Alternative Application can determine eligibility for state financial aid for those students who might not be eligible for federal student aid.

ISAC supports high schools and students statewide, offering free assistance with college and career exploration, and in completing financial aid forms and college applications. Local ISACorps members, who are recent college graduates expertly trained to serve as near-peer mentors to assist high school students and their families in navigating education after high school and the financial aid process, offer free in-person and virtual workshops, as well as direct one-on-one assistance in communities statewide. Bilingual assistance is available. Find your local ISACorps member at <https://studentportal.isac.org/isacorps>. Check out free in-person or virtual financial aid workshops through ISAC’s calendar: <https://studentportal.isac.org/Events>.

*(IF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL HAS OR WILL BE OFFERING FINANCIAL AID COMPLETION WORKSHOPS FOR STUDENTS, YOU MIGHT MENTION THAT HERE)*

Visit the ISAC Student Portal, <https://studentportal.isac.org/> for free tools and resources to help with college and scholarship search, financial aid, career exploration, and more. Students can also get their college and financial aid questions answered by ISAC experts through ISAC’s free text messaging service, ISAC College Q&A, [isac.org/collegeqa](http://www.isac.org/collegeqa). ISAC also offers free assistance through the agency’s call center, 1-800-899-4722 (ISAC), and its Online Chat service.

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