



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION NAMES 2023-24 ILLINOIS STATE SCHOLARS  
More than 16,770 Students from 690 Schools Recognized for their Academic Excellence**

DEERFIELD, ILLINOIS – The [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) (ISAC), the state’s college access and financial aid agency, is pleased to announce the 2023-24\* Illinois State Scholars. These high-achieving students are selected annually based on their ACT or SAT exams and sixth semester class rank and are recognized for their exceptional academic achievement. The scholars rank in approximately the top ten percent of graduates from Illinois high schools. More than 16,770 students from 690 high schools were selected for this prestigious honor.

“On behalf of ISAC, congratulations to all of the outstanding students selected as 2023-24 Illinois State Scholars,” said ISAC Executive Director Eric Zarnikow. “Students and families faced numerous challenges over the last two years with remote learning, among other financial and personal difficulties. As we continue to recover from the pandemic, these academic achievements are a credit to the hard work and dedication of the student scholars and their families, and to the support provided by teachers, mentors, counselors, and communities in helping students meet their goals and find success as they advance on their education and career paths.”

The Illinois State Scholar designation is a non-monetary award. Each State Scholar will receive a congratulatory letter and a Certificate of Achievement from ISAC. Additionally, awardees can download an official Illinois State Scholar Program badge to display on their online profiles, social media platforms, and share with their high school counselors, colleges, employers, family members and others. In deference to the variability of policies among high schools regarding publishing student information online, ISAC will not post the names of the Illinois State Scholar finalists on its website. **\*Note that the Illinois State Scholar Program announces honorees based on the year they would begin any postsecondary education, not based on the year they graduate from high school.**

ISAC encourages all high school students to complete the 2023-24 [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#), or for eligible undocumented students, the [Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid \(Alternative Application\)](#). The FAFSA is the application used by students and families to apply for federal and most state and institutional financial aid for any type of postsecondary education, including career

and technical education, certificates, and two- or four-year degree programs. The Alternative Application offers a pathway to state financial aid for eligible Illinois undocumented students who are not eligible for federal student aid.

Students and families can get assistance with the higher education planning and financial aid process by attending a [free college application, financial aid, financial aid application completion, or related workshop](#) held by ISAC and/or our partners, or by connecting with an ISACorps member in their area. The ISACorps are recent college graduates who are trained to serve as near peer mentors to middle and high school students and families in Illinois, helping them navigate the postsecondary planning and financial aid process. A new program, called the [First Generation Scholars Network](#), offers support and assistance to students transitioning to and in their first year of college who will be the first in their family to earn a degree. Bilingual assistance is available. For more information or to find your local ISACorps member, visit [studentportal.isac.org/isacorps](http://studentportal.isac.org/isacorps).

Students can also utilize the [ISAC Student Portal](#) for free tools and resources to search for colleges and scholarships, explore careers, find internships and summer jobs, apply for ISAC financial aid programs, get quick tips about college planning and financial aid from [ISAC College Minute™ videos](#), connect with First Generation Scholars Network mentors, and more. The [ISAC College Q&A](#) free text messaging service allows students and families to get answers to their college and financial aid questions sent directly via text from ISAC experts. ISAC also offers free assistance through the agency's call center, 800-899-4722 (ISAC), and its Online Chat service.

#### About ISAC

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to provide Illinois students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information about higher education and financial aid for students and their families—giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. Find us at [isac.org](http://isac.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) @ILStudentAssistance, [Twitter](#), on [Instagram](#) @ISACfinaid and on [YouTube](#).

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