



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION ANNOUNCES 2017-18 ILLINOIS STATE SCHOLARS  
More Than 19,300 high school students recognized for outstanding academic achievement**

DEERFIELD, IL – The [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) (ISAC) is pleased to announce the names of the 2017-18 Illinois State Scholars. This year’s recipients join the ranks of other exceptional Illinois high school students honored with this prestigious designation.

First introduced in 1958, Illinois State Scholars are recognized for their superior academic achievement. State Scholars rank in approximately the top ten percent of high school seniors from 765 high schools across the state. Honorees are chosen based on a combination of exemplary ACT or SAT test scores and sixth semester class rank.

“I applaud all of the 2017-18 state scholars for their hard work and outstanding academic performance,” said Eric Zarnikow, ISAC executive director. “Students have a lot to contend with as they move through high school—from increased testing to extracurricular activities to highly competitive college admissions. Kudos to these students and also to the teachers, parents, coaches and other mentors who contributed to their success and helped them navigate a path towards college and career success.”

While this recognition does not include a monetary prize, congratulatory letters from ISAC have been sent to honorees, and the agency has provided personalized Certificates of Achievement to each high school for distribution. A list of [current Illinois State Scholars](#) can also be found on ISAC’s website.

ISAC encourages students interested in attending college next fall to complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) as soon as possible to determine eligibility for federal and state financial aid. This year marks the first year of “early FAFSA”—allowing students to file their 2017-18 FAFSA beginning on October 1, 2016, rather than having to wait until January 1, 2017, as in previous years.

ISAC offers [free financial aid and college access events](#) to assist students and families with the college-going process. Students can also visit the [ISAC Student Portal](#) for college planning, financial aid and financial literacy information and free tools, as well as information on how to contact the [ISACorps](#), a group of recent college graduates who act as near-peer mentors, for 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](#), ISAC’s free text messaging service. Visit the ISAC Student Portal for more information at [www.isac.org/studentportal](http://www.isac.org/studentportal).

About ISAC

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to help make college accessible and affordable for students throughout Illinois. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information

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on 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. [www.isac.org](http://www.isac.org)

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