



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell *Dianna R. Wentzell*  
Commissioner of Education

DATE: September 1, 2016

SUBJECT: Seeking your Nomination for the U.S. Presidential Scholar program

Annually, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) awards the U.S. Presidential Scholarship (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/psp/index.html>) to students in each state who are selected through one of the following three components:

1. the General Component (described below);
2. the Arts Component (selected from among the participants in the YoungArts™ program [www.youngarts.org](http://www.youngarts.org)); and
3. the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Component (selected based on the merits of CTE scholarship).

Candidates for the General Component are selected in one of two ways:

1. They are among the students obtaining the highest SAT or ACT scores in the state.
2. In addition to the high scorers, each state's Commissioner may nominate up to 20 additional candidates (10 male and 10 female) who were not among the top SAT/ACT scorers in the state but have overcome hardships, made a remarkable turnaround, accomplished something unique, or are otherwise distinguished by their personal characteristics and scholastic efforts.

It is in the nomination of these 20 additional General Component candidates that I request your assistance. This can be any student (public, non-public, homeschooled) who will graduate in the spring of 2017 and who intends to engage in post-secondary education.

I'm sure you know of at least one student in the district who has a compelling story that provides a powerful backdrop to their achievements. Please consider submitting a letter of recommendation to nominate a student, after you have secured parental/guardian consent.

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To be considered, all nominations must be received by **September 30, 2016**. Please mail your letter of recommendation (not to exceed 1000 words) to:

Gilbert Andrada, Ph.D.  
State Consultant for Gifted and Talented Education  
**c/o Yvonne Dillon, Rm. 350**  
Performance Office  
PO Box 2219  
Hartford, CT 06145-2219  
**ATTN: SY 2016-2017 U.S. Presidential Scholarship Nomination**

Your letter of recommendation should include your rationale for selecting this student (e.g., what makes him/her stand out and what challenges or hurdles has this student overcome). Please also include the following information in addition your letter:

- Name
- SASID
- Home mailing address
- High school name and mailing address
- High School CEEB code
- Male or Female

All students nominated under the General Component will be invited to apply for the U.S. Presidential Scholarship. While a student's nomination will be noted publicly, the student's application for the scholarship is voluntary. Please note that during the selection process, only the application materials will be made available to the selection committee. SAT/ACT scores will not be included. Reviewers for the U.S. Presidential Scholarship will be considering the following elements when evaluating the nominees:

- Involvement and Service (in school and community);
- Leadership and Character;
- Writing samples;
- Academic achievements; and
- Discretionary points for extraordinary achievement, heavy workload, family responsibilities, or obstacles overcome.

A committee will evaluate the nominations from districts that were received by the deadline date and select up to 20 students for me to nominate to the USED.

I sincerely look forward to hearing about your extraordinary students. If you have any questions about this process, please contact Dr. Andrada by phone at 860-713-6883 or via e-mail at [gilbert.andrada@ct.gov](mailto:gilbert.andrada@ct.gov). Thank you.