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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Thirteen Montgomery Blair High School Seniors Named as
Maryland Distinguished Scholar Finalists;
Fifteen More Chosen as Semifinalists;
Three Selected as Finalists for Talent in the Arts Category**

Silver Spring, MD—Thirteen seniors, eight of whom are from the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program, were honored as 2011 Maryland Distinguished Scholar Finalists at Coppin State University in Baltimore on October 2 at an awards ceremony hosted by the university and the Maryland Higher Education Commission. The purpose of the Distinguished Scholar program is to honor students for superior academic achievement or talent in the arts and to encourage them to attend a Maryland institution. Selection of finalists in the academic achievement category is based on their unweighted cumulative grade point average (GPA) in academic courses and their SAT (or PSAT/ACT) score. In the talent in the arts category, students auditioned before a panel of judges, each of whom is a professional in his or her field. Each finalist is awarded \$12,000 to use toward educational expenses such as tuition, room and board, books, and other educational fees and supplies, as long as he or she is a full-time undergraduate at a Maryland institution and maintains a minimum 3.0 GPA. Should a finalist not attend a Maryland institution, a semifinalist will receive the award.

In his address to the award recipients and their parents, Dr. James E. Lyons, Sr., Maryland Secretary of Higher Education, explained, "We are here to recognize you, our best and brightest, and to encourage you to attend college in our state." Finalist Lani Matthews commented, "I feel really lucky to be chosen, especially when I think of the talented and smart people I'm with, and the scholarship money will definitely help."

The Blair Magnet Class of 2011 Maryland Distinguished Scholar Finalists in the academic achievement category include Ajay Kannan,

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Shilpa Kannan, and Jed Tan of Potomac; Monica Ly of Burtonsville; Lani Matthews of Silver Spring; Robert Ullman of Bethesda; Sandra Yan of Rockville; and Thomas Zhang of Sandy Spring. Blair Seniors also named as finalists in the academic achievement category are Casey Goldvale, Noah Mason, Laura McGehee, Sarah Schwartz, and Jennifer Sholar. In the talent in the arts category, finalists are Peter Leonard, Samuel Placanica, and Nicole Turchi.

Maryland Distinguished Scholar Semifinalists in the academic achievement category from the Blair Magnet Class of 2011 include Fang Cao, Andrew Das Sarma, Winston Liu, and Sophia Seidell of Potomac; Lev Krayzman and Mengze Xu of Rockville; Qinlan Shen of Gaithersburg. In addition, Blair Seniors Laura Anthony, Adam Auerbach, Samuel Edelman, Jewel Galbraith, Samuel Placanica, Natalie Rutsch, Lila Weintraub, and Ezra Wexler were also named as semifinalists.



Dr. James E. Lyons, Sr., Maryland Secretary of Higher Education, addresses the audience at Maryland Distinguished Scholar Recognition Day as Dr. Pamela L. Manning, keynote speaker, and Dr. Reginald S. Avery, Coppin State University President, look on.

About The Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation

This organization was founded by a group of concerned students, teachers, administrators, and alumni in 2008. Its purpose is to promote science, mathematics, and computer science education by supporting the Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School in its efforts to develop resources and refine practices needed to provide a rigorous and enriched education for students, staff, and the community at large. The

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Foundation is incorporated in the state of Maryland and is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

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