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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Thirteen Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Students Named Semifinalists in U.S. Physics Team Competition

Silver Spring, MD—Thirteen students from the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program were named as semifinalists for the 2012 U.S. Physics Team on February 23 by the American Association of Physics Teachers and the American Institute of Physics. These students (with each one's school grade level) are Alexander Bourzutschky (10) and William Cai (11) of Potomac; Andrew Hu (12), Jason Hyun (11), Arec Jamgochian (12), and Gregory Kehne (12) of Silver Spring; Diwakaran Ilangovan (11) of Gaithersburg; David Kaufman (12) of Chevy Chase; Andrew Lu (12), Jessica Shi (10), Michael Winer (9), and Samuel Zbarsky (11) of Rockville; and Wenqing Xu (9) of Takoma Park.

In January more than 3,000 high school students nationwide took a written physics test, called the $F=ma$ exam, and based on their scores, approximately 400 were named as semifinalists for the U.S. Physics Team. Later this month, based on these students' scores on a semifinal exam, the twenty members of the team will be announced. After further testing at the end of May, five of these twenty students will be named members of the 2012 U.S. Physics Team traveling team, qualifying them to represent the United States at the 43rd International Physics Olympiad to be held in Estonia in July.

Of the more than 150 high schools nationally with semifinalists this year, only two had more semifinalists than the Blair Magnet. Students from the Blair Magnet regularly earn spots on the U.S. Physics Team and even the traveling team, providing them the opportunity to earn medals in international competition. At the International Physics Olympiad in 2008, Edward Gan was awarded a gold medal, in 2010 Anand Oza brought home a silver medal, and last year Andrew Das Sarma won a silver medal. Magnet physics and mathematics teacher James Schafer serves as coach of the Blair physics team.

Coach Schafer graciously congratulates the students, "I am very proud of all the students who participated in the U.S. Physics Team selection process. Having thirteen semifinalists is a great accomplishment and a

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testament to the hard work the students put in and the passion they display for physics.” Semifinalist Jessica Shi, a sophomore, expresses her gratitude to Coach Schafer and the Blair Magnet, “I enjoyed Mr. Schafer’s physics class in my freshman year. The physics courses at the Blair Magnet program really prepared us for further studies in physics.”

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

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