

Mayfield's Presidential Scholars

Don Spector	Class of 1977
Ilya Kofman	Class of 1989
Sasha Gribov	Class of 2006

About the Program

The United States Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964, by [Executive Order of the President](#), to recognize and honor some of our Nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the Program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. Each year, up to 141 students are named U.S. Presidential Scholars, one of the Nation's highest honors for high school students. The Scholars represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in young people. In honoring the U.S. Presidential Scholars, the President of the United States symbolically honors all graduating high school seniors of high potential.

Students have the opportunity to become Presidential Scholars based on [two paths of accomplishment](#). The majority of the Scholars are selected on the basis of broad academic achievement. Approximately twenty additional students are selected on the basis of their academic and artistic scholarship in the visual arts, the performing arts, or creative writing.

For the arts component of the Program, students are initially selected based on their artistic ability. Students must participate in [YoungArts™](#), a national program identifying and recognizing young people demonstrating excellence in the arts. YoungArts™, the core program of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts, nominates approximately 60 students who meet the U.S. Presidential Scholars candidacy requirements. Candidacy materials are mailed to the selected students, and they are invited to apply to the program. To confirm their interest, academic and arts candidates complete and submit candidacy materials, including essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports and transcripts for review.

The selection of approximately 3,000 academic candidates is made based on SAT and ACT scores. Test scores in each of the states/jurisdictions are reviewed, and the total SAT score is compared to the ACT Sum of Scores. Each student's highest test score (in a single test administration) is identified; duplicates and/or lower scores are dropped. In each state, scores are ranked from high to low. Approximately twenty females and twenty males are selected as candidates from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and from families of U.S. citizens living abroad. Students are considered in their states of legal residence, unless they have lived abroad for two years or more. Candidacy materials are mailed to students for participation in the program. Application is by invitation only; therefore, students may not apply individually to the Program, nor may their schools nominate them.

A review committee of qualified individuals experienced in secondary and post-secondary education evaluates candidates on their academic achievement, personal characteristics, leadership and service activities, and an analysis of their essay. Approximately 560 candidates are named semifinalists and forwarded to the Commission for further review. All arts nominees submitting candidacy materials are automatically advanced to the semifinalist stage.

In April, the [Commission on Presidential Scholars](#) reviews the applications of all semifinalists based on the same criteria used by the review committee. The Commission selects up to 121 academic scholars and up to 20 arts scholars. All scholars are honored for their accomplishments during National Recognition Week, held in June in Washington, D.C.

U.S. Presidential Scholars are guests of the Commission during National Recognition Weekend and enjoy an expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., to meet with government officials, educators, authors, musicians, scientists and other accomplished people. During the weekend, scholars have the opportunity to visit museums and monuments, and to attend recitals, receptions and ceremonies. To commemorate their achievement, the Scholars are awarded the U.S. Presidential Scholars medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House.

All U.S. Presidential Scholars are asked to identify those educators who have most influenced them. The selected educators are also invited to attend National Recognition Weekend. There, they are honored at a special reception to recognize and thank them for their efforts, and they are presented with the Teacher Recognition Award.

For over 45 years, this unique federal program has honored over 6,000 U.S. Presidential Scholars, who have demonstrated leadership, scholarship, and contribution to school and community. The work of the Commission on Presidential Scholars reaffirms, on behalf of the President, the Nation's commitment to education.