FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 20, 2010

News Media Contact: Communication and Media Relations, 678-301-6020

National Merit names 51 from Gwinnett

As Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) seniors begin the college application process, more than 50 members of the Class of 2011 are in the running for some of the nation’s most prestigious scholarships. The National Merit Scholarship Corporation announced this week that 51 GCPS high school seniors have been named semifinalists. The students represent 10 different GCPS high schools with Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology leading the group with 17 students. These 17 students are part of what will be the school’s first graduating class.

The 2010 National Merit Semifinalists from Gwinnett are:

**Brookwood High**
- Sokrat A. Bufi
- Stephanie Johnson
- Conner A. Jones
- Pan Su Kim
- Akshaya Suresh

**Collins Hill High**
- Conner A. Bryan
- James T. Eccles
- Andres Gonzalez
- Peter K. Schnaak
- Lauren E. Spence

**Dacula High**
- Cristina V. Azcoitia
- Shelby C. Bentley
- Melinda K. Johnson
- Grace Liu

**Duluth High**
- Ronald J. Kurtz
- Calvin Q. Li
- Nihar M. Madhavan

**Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology**
- Yoonji Ahn
- Stanley R. Ayzenberg
- Joshua Chang
- Elliott S. Chung
- Daniel A. Guzman
- Daniel Keyes
- Steven R. Keyes
- Jacob C. Ladd
- Brian J. Lagoda
- Sampurna Mandal
- Maximilian A. Moore
- Seong J. Park
- Marcus A. Raimondi
- Nikhil Ramesh
- Luke T. Richerson
- Rina C. So
- Silvia D. Vaca

**Mountain View High**
- Jessica A. Bristor

**Norcross High**
- Walker Z. Argendeli
- Adam D. Greenstein
- Laura E. Hooper
- Andrea R. Howard

**North Gwinnett High**
- Jennifer C. Pitt
- Ankur R. Shah

--more--
These 51 students were chosen for this competitive process based on their college entrance exam scores. They are among 16,000 semifinalists nationwide competing for some 8,200 National Merit scholarships, worth more than $36 million. The scholarships will be awarded next spring.

These academically talented students will now compete to become finalists. That level is determined by looking at the student’s academic record throughout high school, an endorsement/recommendation by the school principal, and SAT scores that confirm the student’s earlier qualifying test performance. The semifinalist must submit a detailed scholarship application, which includes a self-descriptive essay and information about the semifinalist’s participation and leadership in school and community activities.

More than 1.5 million students in over 22,000 high schools entered the competition last school year as juniors by taking the 2009 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which served as the initial screening for program entrants. The semifinalists named in the 2011 National Merit Scholarship Program are the highest scoring entrants in each state.

--30--