

Board Recognition
October 13, 2026

Two Ryan High School Seniors Earn Semifinalist Standing in the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program

Rebecca M. Serna and William H. Taylor, seniors at Ryan High School, have been named Semifinalists in the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program. Fewer than one percent of the nation's graduating seniors earn this distinction. Their scores on the 2025 PSAT/NMSQT® qualified them as Semifinalists, and both now have the chance to advance to Finalist standing this spring. As Finalists, they would compete for approximately 6,700 National Merit Scholarships worth about \$24 million.

More than 1.2 million juniors at roughly 20,000 U.S. high schools entered the 2027 competition by taking the qualifying test. Each state's number of Semifinalists is proportionate to its share of the nation's graduating seniors. To reach Finalist standing, each Semifinalist and a school official submit a detailed application covering the student's academic record, school and community involvement, leadership, employment and honors. Students also write a personal essay and must earn an SAT or ACT score that confirms their qualifying performance. About 95 percent of Semifinalists are expected to become Finalists, and roughly half of those Finalists will earn the Merit Scholar® title.

Denton ISD proudly recognizes its 2027 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists:

- Rebecca M. Serna – *Senior, Ryan High School*
- William H. Taylor – *Senior, Ryan High School*

University of North Texas Welcomes the Denton ISD Community for Denton ISD Day at DATCU Stadium

The University of North Texas hosted Denton ISD Day on September 12, and invited Denton ISD students, families, staff and community members to DATCU Stadium. The event gave hundreds of families a chance to cheer on the Mean Green together, and it celebrated the strong ties between Denton's public schools and its hometown university.

The day was made possible by UNT staff members who worked closely with the district to plan a welcoming experience for our community. Denton ISD students also had a special role in the day, performing during the pre-game activities with the support of their directors and the families who cheered them on.

Denton ISD is grateful for this partnership and for the UNT staff members who helped make the day special:

- Cade Webber – *Director of Ticket Sales, Athletic Department, University of North Texas*
- Rhonda Acker – *Senior Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Enrollment, University of North Texas*

This partnership reflects Denton ISD's commitment to working with community partners to create memorable experiences for students and families beyond the classroom.