

Executive Summary: Illinois State Scholar Program

Introduction

The Illinois State Scholar Program is a prestigious, honorary recognition awarded annually by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC). The program identifies and honors high school seniors who demonstrate superior academic potential. Approximately the top ten percent of graduates from approved high schools typically qualify for this designation.

Student Eligibility Requirements

To be considered for the State Scholar designation, a student must meet the following criteria:

- Residency: Be a U.S. citizen, eligible non-citizen, or meet the “undocumented student” criteria of the RISE Act, and be a resident of Illinois.
- School Attendance: Attend an approved high school (including all Illinois public high schools).
- Academic Benchmarks:
 - Take the ACT or SAT between August 1 and June 30 of their junior year.
 - Perform in the top one-half of their high school class at the end of the sixth semester (junior year) AND/OR score at or above the 95th percentile on the ACT or SAT.
 - Graduate during the academic year in which they were selected.

Selection Methodology

The selection process is formula-driven and requires no direct application from the student. Eligibility is determined based on a weighted formula that considers:

1. Standardized Test Scores: ACT or SAT scores sent directly to ISAC.
2. Academic Performance: Sixth-semester class rank (or unweighted GPA for schools that do not rank), as reported by the high school.

District Role & Notification

Our district plays a vital role in this process. High school counselors are responsible for submitting the necessary academic data to ISAC. Once the selection formula is applied:

- Student Notification: ISAC notifies the students directly if they have been named State Scholars.
- District Recognition: The high school receives access to Certificates of Achievement to distribute to the recognized students, allowing the Board and District to formally celebrate these scholars' success.

Honorees

Meridian CUSD 223's 2026-27 Illinois State Scholars are:

- ★ Gage Broski
- ★ Abigail Dennis

- ★ Josephine Gibson
- ★ Grace Jacobson
- ★ Dawson Johannsen
- ★ Evan Jones
- ★ Cale Kleinschmidt
- ★ Connor O’Sullivan
- ★ Audrey Payne
- ★ Zaiah Reed
- ★ Brandon Reisinger
- ★ Jack Sparrow
- ★ Charles Steele
- ★ Brady Stewart
- ★ Isabella Sugden

Recommendation

This summary is information only, and I look forward to recognizing our 2026-27 Illinois State Scholars with the Board of Education on January 7th.