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**Council of the Great City Schools®**  
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**FOR RELEASE**  
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## **Four Urban Students Named 2021 Math and Science Scholars**

### ***Council of the Great City Schools Awards CGCS-Bernard Harris Scholarships***

WASHINGTON, June 30 – Four graduating high school seniors have been selected by the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) to receive the 2021 CGCS-Bernard Harris Math and Science Scholarship. The students were chosen from several hundred applicants in big-city school districts across the nation for their academic performance, leadership qualities and community involvement.

Now in its third year, the scholarship was created by former NASA astronaut Dr. Bernard Harris, the first African-American to walk in space, to encourage and assist promising students of diverse backgrounds who plan to pursue science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) studies after high school.

The awards were given to two African-American and two Hispanic seniors from high schools in four of the 75 urban school districts represented by the Council.

“These scholarships are a wonderful way to promote academic excellence in math and science and foster the next generation of STEM leaders,” said Dr. Harris. “The achievements and aspirations of these young men and women are truly inspirational and it is my hope that the scholarships they receive will propel them to a future of fulfilling their dreams.”

Each scholar will receive \$5,000 for continued education in a STEM-related field. This year’s award winners are:

- Saul Balcarcel-Salazar, John A. Ferguson Senior High School, Miami-Dade County Public Schools

- Destiny Caldwell, Scotlandville Magnet High School, East Baton Rouge Parish School System
- Natalie Martinez, Godinez Fundamental High School, Santa Ana Unified School District
- Emini Offutt, Hume-Fogg Academic Magnet High School, Metro Nashville Public Schools

In the fall, Balcarcel-Salazar will attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and major in physics. Caldwell will study mathematics at the University of California, Los Angeles. Martinez plans to study mathematics at the University of California, Irvine and Offutt will pursue a degree in computer science at Vanderbilt University.

“These competitive scholarships will provide talented minority students in big-city school districts a way to pursue STEM studies after high school and excel in their career pursuits,” said Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council. “We appreciate the generous support of the Harris Institute to help these young men and women create a brighter future for themselves and become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow.”

Administration of the scholarship program, including the application process, pre-selection and presentation of awards, is provided by CGCS. Dr. Harris makes the final selection of recipients.

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### **About The Council of the Great City Schools**

The Council of the Great City Schools is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Composed of 75 large city school districts, its mission is to promote the cause of urban schools and to advocate for inner-city students through legislation, research and media relations. The organization also provides a network for school districts sharing common problems to exchange information, and to collectively address new challenges as they emerge to deliver the best possible education for urban youth. [www.cgcs.org](http://www.cgcs.org)

### **About The Harris Institute**

The Harris Institute is a 501 (c) (3), non-profit organization founded by former NASA Astronaut Dr. Bernard A. Harris, Jr., to serve socially and economically disadvantaged communities locally and across the nation striving to reach the most underserved populations in the areas of Education, Health, and Wealth. The institute supports programs that empower individuals, in particular minorities and economically and/ or socially disadvantaged, to recognize their potential and pursue their dreams. The education mission of The Harris Institute is to enable youth to develop and achieve their full potential through the support of social, recreational and educational programs. The Harris Institute believes students can be prepared now for the careers of the future through a structured education program and the use of positive role models. More than 50,000 students have participated and benefited from THI programs. [www.theharrisinstitute.org/](http://www.theharrisinstitute.org/)