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**Council of the Great City Schools**

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**FOR RELEASE**

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## **Four Urban Students Named 2023 Math and Science Scholars**

WASHINGTON, June 15 – Four graduating high school seniors have been selected by the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) to receive the 2023 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 exceptional academic ability and achievement, leadership qualities, and community involvement.

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

The awards were given to two African American and two Hispanic seniors from high schools in three of the 78 urban school districts represented by the Council.

“It is an honor for me to invest in the lives of our nation’s next generation of STEM leaders through this scholarship,” said Harris. “Each of these young men and women have demonstrated intelligence, leadership, and determination, and I look forward to seeing how the next steps in their educational journeys unfold.”

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

- Zion Duplechain, who attended Energy Institute High School in Houston, TX
- Fabiana Mastantuono, who attended Lake Nona High School in Orlando, FL
- Emmanuel Vasquez, who attended Sam Houston Math, Science and Technology Center in Houston, TX
- Reauna Walker, who attended East Technical High School in Cleveland, OH

In the fall, Duplechain plans to attend Columbia University to major in electrical engineering. Mastantuono will pursue a degree in biomedical engineering at the University of Florida. Vasquez plans to study electrical engineering at Texas A&M University, and Walker will major in biology at Morgan State University.

“One of the most worthy and impactful investments which one can make is in a young person’s education, and we greatly appreciate Dr. Harris’ generosity,” said Council Executive Director Ray Hart. “We also thank the educators in urban school districts who have contributed to the development of these distinguished students, and we wish each of them a bright future.”

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 78 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)