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Three Jefferson City High School Students Chosen as National Merit Semifinalists

JEFFERSON CITY – **Jefferson City High School** has announced that **Nicholas Erickson, Elijah Hilty, and Katie Vogel** have been **recognized as National Merit Semifinalists**. The 16,000 semifinalists in the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Program were designated from some 1.6 million program entrants in over 22,000 high schools nationwide. Students entered into the competition by taking the 2017 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test used by NMSC as an initial screen of entrants. Representing less than one percent of each state's high school seniors, semifinalists are the highest scoring program entrants in each state, and they are the only participants to have an opportunity to continue in the competition for Merit Scholarships to be offered next spring.

Nicholas Erickson, son of Steve and Mary Erickson, is a member of the National Honor Society and the National Society of High School Scholars. Nicholas is very involved in the Scholar Bowl team at Jefferson City High School, where he has served as a leader and currently holds the varsity captain position. While participating in Scholar Bowl, he has earned over 11 top-ten individual awards, six top-five and two first place awards. As well as his participation in many clubs, outside of school, Nicholas performs with the Jefferson City Community Symphonic Band as a trumpet player. Nicholas is also an active member in Jefferson City High School's Astronomy Club, Philosophy Club, and Ethics Bowl. Nicholas has been recognized for several awards that include the American Legion, AP Scholar with Distinction, President's Education Certificate of Outstanding Academic Excellence, People to People Student Ambassador Program Nominee and Participant, as well as being awarded the highest level of a 1 at the District Middle School Music festival. With all of his involvement, Nicholas has also testified before the Missouri House of Representatives Committee on Education in support of gifted education, as well as volunteering over 600 hours as a lab assistant at Adventures in Science Camp.

Elijah Hilty, son of Daniel and Kristen Hilty, is a member of the National Honor Society and an active participant in the Jefferson City High School Scholar Bowl. In 2017, Elijah proudly represented JCHS at the Missouri Scholars Academy where he shined. Elijah is a founding member of the Jefferson City High School Technical Student Association. Elijah also placed second in a regional competition for poem writing in the Midwest during his 7th grade year at school. With all of these achievements, Elijah also placed first in coding at the TSA state championships and went on to compete nationally. Along with his dedication to his academics, Elijah is also involved in not only the Jefferson City High School Symphonic Orchestra, but also plays with the Jefferson City Symphony. Outside of school, Elijah participates in his church band where he plays the guitar and keyboard, volunteers for Habitat for Humanity and serves as a leader in his church's youth group. He also loves to play racquetball and bicycle in his free time. A very unique and interesting accomplishment of Elijah's is that he recently built and wired an electric violin.

Katie Vogel, daughter of William and Angela Vogel, is a member of National Honor Society. Katie is an active participant in Jefferson City High School's Key Club for the past two years with one year in the capacity of secretary. Katie excels

musically and has participated the past four years in the Jay Marching Band program with two years as a drum major. She is also an active participant of the Jay Symphonic and Jazz Band. Outside of school, Katie volunteers her time on youth mission trips through Wesley United Methodist Church and also actively participates in the youth group associated with that church. Katie has also been recognized for several awards. Some of those awards are the American Legion School Award, Scholar Athlete for three years, and the Council of Clubs student of the month.

A semifinalist must fulfill several requirements to become a finalist in the extremely rigorous competition for Merit Scholarship awards. Among those requirements are meeting very high academic standards in college preparatory course work, submitting SAT I scores that confirm the PSAT/NMSQT performance and being fully endorsed by the high school principal. Finalists will be announced in April or May.