

Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

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WNHS Senior named first National Merit Scholarship Finalist in school history

A Woodstock North High School senior with many talents has been named a National Merit Scholarship Finalist for the first time in Thunder history.

Jason Thurow, whose academic designation puts him under the top 1 percent of high school seniors in the nation, said he was pleasantly surprised to receive the honor and to be a pioneer in Woodstock North's relatively short history. Jason has been involved in band and theater from a young age performing in concerts and plays dating back to elementary and middle school.



WNHS Senior Jason Thurow

"I knew being named a finalist was a really hard thing to achieve, so I didn't really expect it," Jason said. He plans to study physics in college, although he's not certain where he plans to attend since COVID-19 restrictions have made it difficult to visit campuses.

Jason recently won first place in physics at the ACES Academic Challenge Regional competition, where he and his North teammates also placed first. "I plan on majoring in that. I like problem solving and figuring out things about the world and how it works," he said.

He said he wasn't able to pick one teacher from his time in District 200 to credit for his academic success, but said he was fortunate to have many excellent teachers from his time at Olson Elementary, Northwood Middle School and Woodstock North.

"All of the teachers I've had have really helped me. That's part of the reason I'm where I am, because I've had really good teachers throughout school," Jason said.

More than 1.5 million high school juniors entered the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking a qualifying test. Students who qualified as finalists represent less than one percent of high school seniors across the nation and include the highest scoring entrants in their respective states.

To be considered as finalists, students were required to submit a detailed scholarship application providing information about their academic record, honors, employment, leadership abilities, school and community participation among other criteria.

National Merit Scholarship finalists compete for about 7,600 scholarships worth more than \$30 million, which will be available this spring.