

# QuEd up for Education

*People and programs impacting our QCSD community*

February 18, 2019

## 2 from QCHS among nation's best

*Principal Dr. Finnerty suggests more students take advantage of Khan Academy to boost their test scores.*

**By Gary Weckselblatt**

**T**wo Quakertown Community High School seniors are being considered for National Merit Scholarships.

Mikayla Fuentes and Adria Retter, who were named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists last fall, have advanced to Finalist standing, according to the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. With more than 1.6 million entrants, Adria and Mikayla are among 15,000 Finalists. About half of the Finalists will be awarded National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$31 million this spring. Their academic accomplishments represent the top 0.5 percent of Pennsylvania's seniors.

"These two students are a great example of what hard work and passion can accomplish," said Principal Dr. David Finnerty, who believes this is the first time QCHS has had two students advance this far in one year.

The Quakertown students produced outstanding scores on the Preliminary SAT, which serves as the qualifying test for the program entrants. Mikayla scored 1490 and Adria 1480 out of a maximum 1520. Each student aced the ACT exam, scoring 35 out of a possible 36. On the SAT's, Adria notched 1560 and Mikayla 1510 out of 1600.

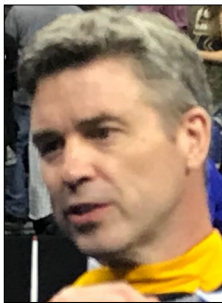
Dr. Finnerty said there's been an uptick in the school's PSAT scores. He encourages students who want to improve their scores to explore

Khan Academy. Data suggests that 20 hours of personalized official SAT practice on Khan Academy leads to, on average, a 115-point increase. Information about Khan can be found on the district website's high school page.

In addition to Adria and Mikayla, two other QCHS students have been recognized for their exceptional academic promise by the 2019

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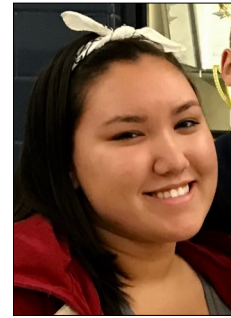
**Dr. David Finnerty,  
QCHS principal**



National Merit Scholarship Program. Nam Le and Hailey Reiss each received a Letter of Commendation for their outstanding performance on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying test in 2017.

"I expect these numbers to grow incrementally over the next couple of years as more and more students are challenging themselves to our curriculum," Superintendent Dr. Bill Harner said. "These accomplishments are a testament to the hard work of our students, and the outstanding job our teachers are doing in the classroom."

While Adria and Mikayla are superior students academically, they also excel in other areas. Mikayla, who



**Mikayla Fuentes**



**Adria Retter**

has a wonderful voice, is a member of the high school's elite Varsity Singers. Adria will be competing in the state track and field championships this weekend at Penn State. Both students have been applying for scholarships to help with college costs.

Adria recently won a \$1,500 Bucks County Roadrunners scholarship for explaining how track has impacted her life. Neither student has chosen a college yet, however Adria said she is strongly considering both Messiah College and Swarthmore.

Both scholars await the selection of some 7,500 Merit Scholarship winners from the group of more than 15,000 Finalists. In March, NMSC will begin mailing scholarship offers to winners at their home addresses and confidential notices to their high school principals.

Here's hoping the mail carrier drops a couple of those notices in two Quakertown mailboxes!

*Gary Weckselblatt, QCSD Director of Communications, writes about the people and the programs that impact the Quakertown Community School District. He can be reached at 215-529-2028 or [gweckselblatt@qcsd.org](mailto:gweckselblatt@qcsd.org).*