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## **NEWS RELEASE**

Jan. 22, 2019

### **Escambia County High School Students Selected for Military Academy Nominations Congressman Matt Gaetz's Selections for Florida's District 1**

Congressman Matt Gaetz, representing the 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District of Florida, hosted a ceremony today, Jan. 22, at Pace High School to announce the names of the students in Santa Rosa and Escambia County who will be receiving nominations from him to the Air Force, Army (West Point) and Navy's military academies this year.

"This is the best part of the year for me to be the Congressman from the 1st Congressional District. There is no part of my job I like better than today. Before the day is over, I will nominate 30 of North West Florida's best patriots for service in our military academies. At times like these where it is easy to be discouraged about government, we're in the middle of a shut-down, it's nice to be able to see the applications of people in northwest Florida who see the value in serving our country and who want to express their own love of country through service in our military academies."

Congressman Gaetz also explained that this is a highly competitive process. Students had to show academic excellence, strong citizenship, and they were interviewed by a committee of local leaders. He also stressed that today's news is NOT a guarantee of admission. It is a key step in the highly competitive application process, but not the final step.

"These are the ones who stayed after class and did the extra homework, they are the ones who maybe didn't have as much fun on the weekends because they were doubling down on that school project," Congressman Gaetz said. "They are the ones who their peers look to for leadership in organizations whether it's athletics or service clubs. We see a tremendous wealth of leadership in the people we have selected to advance from our community."

Thirteen students were introduced during the ceremony at Pace High School and they were each given a paper bag with an academy hat in it. Everyone waited and opened the bags together to find out which military academy they were being nominated to attend. From here, Congressman Gaetz will serve as their advocate as they navigate the rest of the selection process.

Today's Escambia County students and the military academy they will be nominated to attend were:

Mr. Connor Stibolt - Attends Pensacola Christian Academy – Air Force

Mr. Clint Hinrichs- Attends Pensacola High School – Air Force

Mr. Jeffrey Sutherland- Attends Pensacola High School – Air Force

Miss Allison McGaugh- Attends Pensacola High School - Navy

Mr. Malcolm Rivers - Attends Pensacola High School - Navy

Miss Noelle Matzinger - Attends Pine Forest High School - Navy

Mr. MacKenzie "Max" Schmidt- Attends West Florida High School – West Point

“I am certain that you are looking at future leaders of the country. They are already leaders in their community and in their schools. I just can't wait to be the biggest cheerleader possible for each and every one,” concluded Congressman Gaetz.

A video of the event will be available on Facebook on the page, Escambia Schools Public Relations.

For more information, including the names of the students nominated from other NW Florida counties, the point of contact for Congressman Matt Gaetz is Laura Rakas, Event Coordinator, [Laura.rakas@mail.house.gov](mailto:Laura.rakas@mail.house.gov), 850-503-0246.

Media queries about Escambia County School District topics should be directed to Kim Stefansson, at 850-393-0539 or 469-6219, or [kstefansson@escambia.k12.fl.us](mailto:kstefansson@escambia.k12.fl.us). Like ECSD on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ecsdf](https://www.facebook.com/ecsdf) Go to the Escambia Schools Public Relations page on [www.facebook.com/ecsd.public](https://www.facebook.com/ecsd.public) to see pictures of recent events. Visit ECSD's web page at [www.escambiaschools.org](http://www.escambiaschools.org)  
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