

Prince George's school board honors students, teachers

Officials recognize those who received scholarships and board certifications

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by Megan McKeever | Staff Writer

Eighteen-year-old Abdul Dopson's excitement was evident Tuesday night as he stood smiling before his peers.

Dopson was one of 11 Prince George's County high school students recognized Tuesday by the school board for receiving a full scholarship to Lafayette College in Easton, Pa., from the Posse Foundation, a New York-based nonprofit organization that works to send groups, or "posses," of academic scholars to the same college.

The awards ceremony, held Tuesday at Central High School in Capitol Heights, is held by the school board every three months during the school year to recognize achievements of students and teachers.

"When I was told about how many students apply, I didn't think I had a chance," Dopson said of the estimated 8,000 students that apply for scholarships from the Posse Foundation each year.

Receiving \$100,000 each from the Posse Foundation for their academic achievements and recognition at the event were: Passion Artis of Largo High School; Daniel Bonilla and Demisse Habteselasie, both of High Point High School in Beltsville; Gabriel Parker of Potomac High School in Oxon Hill; Gleanza Industrious of Eleanor Roosevelt High School in Greenbelt; Raffaello Sampang and Kristopher Hibler-Smith of Friendly High School in Fort Washington; and Brandon Cruise, Demi McCoy and Karl Simpson of Dr. Henry A Wise Jr. High School in Upper Marlboro.

The Washington, D.C., branch of the Posse Foundation works with six national universities, including Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pa.; Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa; Lafayette College; Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif.; Sewanee in Sewanee, Tenn.; and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The foundation allows students to pick a college from that pool.

Dopson recalled the interview process for the scholarship, saying students had to do their best to stand out. He vividly remembers the night he learned he was one of the recipients.

"I started crying, and my family was cheering," he said.

The board also recognized students selected by the school system as scholars of the week and more than 30 additional students for their academic and artistic achievements.

Along with students who excelled, the school board also honored 51 teachers who earned National Board Certification, a 12-month learning and review process that is recognized as the most prestigious credential a teacher can earn.

"This is kind of like boot camp for teachers," award ceremony host Dave Zahren said Tuesday.

National Board certified teachers were also honored at a pinning ceremony March 3 at Charles H. Flowers High School in Springdale.