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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Lancaster High School Student Selected as Bill Gates Millennial Scholar**

**Lancaster, TX/Lancaster ISD** – The Lancaster Independent School District is excited to announce that Lancaster High School senior Darius Brown was selected as a 2016 Gates Millennium Scholarship (GMS) recipient. He is the first Lancaster ISD student in the district’s history to receive this prestigious and competitive award funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

“I have not quite grasped this yet. I am overwhelmed and so blessed,” Brown said. “It makes me feel good to know that I have started something that could inspire others to see that they can receive an award such as this—regardless of where they come from or even their academic status from previous years.”

Brown was one of 53,000 students who applied for this scholarship and one of only 1,000 recipients to be selected to join the final class of GMS recipients.

The Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program was established in 1999 to provide outstanding minority students, like Brown, a chance to attend any university or college of their choice to obtain an undergraduate degree at no additional expense. The award further allows him to continue his education at the expense of the Gates Foundation as a continuing scholar up to the master or doctorate level provided that he pursues a graduate education in one of the following fields: computer science, education, engineering, library science, mathematics, public health or science.

Currently ranked 19<sup>th</sup> out of 400 students in his graduating class, Brown plans to attend Texas A&M University in College Station, obtain a degree in political science and eventually become a politician focused on equality for all.

“This scholarship will help me to reach my goals because I will not be worried about student loans,” he said. “With that out of the way, I can go ahead and fulfill my dreams.”

Brown attributes this remarkable achievement to the many influential people in his life who motivated him to keep pushing and not give up—including his parents, teachers and mentors and the staff of the LHS College and Career Readiness Center.

Lancaster High School College Advisor, Miracle Wagner said that Brown is a stellar student who represent LHS well.

“I am really proud of Darius because is a student who is dedicated and puts in the work to receive scholarships,” she said. “It took a lot of hard work and preparation to apply for this scholarship, and he sacrificed his time from other things to do this.”

LHS Principal Joseph Showell agrees that Brown’s dedication and hard work made this acknowledgment possible.



“He completely embraces all aspects of school—academically and through extracurricular activities,” Showell said. “He’s truly an ambassador and we are proud of his hard work and of the incredible faculty who worked with him to prepare him for this opportunity.”

A complete application focuses on three major areas – the student’s personal achievement, academic record evaluation, community service and leadership activities. According to Wagner, there were about nine short essays, transcripts and other required financial documents, recommendation letters, and even an interview involved in the completion of the application.



Showell said that Brown’s efforts at LHS have paid off and have set him up for the next step in his academic career.

“Darius is not limping into college,” Showell said. “He’s got choices.”

District College and Career Readiness Director Creslond Fannin paints Brown as a great model for the More Than a Diploma initiative and has no doubt that he has a successful future ahead.

“Darius is focused and full of potential,” she said. “He exceeds the average student graduate profile and his resume shows his willingness to excel beyond the classroom from his high academic standards, to his work in Student Council and with Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, to his effort on the football field as a leader among his teammates, Darius exemplifies what it means to have More Than a Diploma.”