



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 9, 1991

CONTACT: STEVE SPINA

PHONE: (202) 225-3452

**RAHALL ENCOURAGES PARTICIPATION IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ACADEMIC
FITNESS AWARD PROGRAM**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Recognizing the need for better educating our young people, U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) today called on West Virginia school principals to take advantage of the Presidential Academic Fitness Awards (PAFA) program as an opportunity to motivate students to achieve their full academic potential.

Honoring more than 1.5 million students last year, the PAFA program gave awards to students graduating from elementary, middle or junior, and senior high school, who had a cumulative grade point average of at least B+ and scored in the top 20 percent on standardized achievement tests. In the spring of 1990, a total of 11,774 West Virginia students received the award.

"I believe in the PAFA program and I am looking forward to participation by every school," stated Rahall. "Not only does the PAFA program offer students the chance to be honored," Rahall continued, "but by recognizing students at three grade levels, it provides young people the opportunities to demonstrate marked improvement."

By mid-March, all schools should have received an order form from the U.S. Department of Education. Principals seeking further information about the program may contact the PAFA office at 1-800-438-PAFA.

--30--



FACT SHEET PRESIDENTIAL ACADEMIC FITNESS AWARDS (PAFA) PROGRAM

The PAFA program was initiated in 1983 to honor students for their outstanding academic achievement. Awards are presented at three levels to students graduating from elementary, middle or junior high, and senior high school who meet the following criteria:

B+ grade average: The overall B+ average is composed of all years at that level including the fall semester of the graduating grade. It is equivalent to a 3.3 on a 4 point scale or an 85 on a 100 point scale. Elementary schools should not include grades K-3 in the average.

Standardized achievement test battery score at the 80th percentile: The battery should be from the current or preceding year and include both verbal and math skills. Nationally standardized college admissions examinations, such as the SAT or ACT, may be used for the high school award.

For seniors only, twelve credits in Basic Courses during grades 9-12: The Basic Courses include: English, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign languages, and computer science. Credits are not required in each of these areas.

Extraordinary Effort Award: These awards are optional and given at the principal's discretion to a limited number of students who do not meet all the academic criteria, but whom the principal wishes to recognize for extraordinary effort. These special awards may be presented to no more than 10 percent of the number of students who meet all of the academic criteria for the award.

****Grade averages:** Administrators should use a cumulative grade point average at that level (elementary, middle or junior high, or senior high) to qualify students for the award.

****Standardized test scores:** Schools should utilize the composite or total battery score.

****ACT scores:** Composite score of 24

****SAT scores:** College Bound - 1100/National Group - 950

****PSAT scores:** College Bound - 103/National Group - 91

FOR RELEASE
date

Contact: press secretary
(a/c) number

_____ URGES SCHOOLS TO JOIN IN
PRESIDENTIAL ACADEMIC FITNESS AWARDS PROGRAM

Recognizing that we must do a better job of educating all our young people, (Sen./Rep.) _____ today called on (state) school principals to take advantage of the Presidential Academic Fitness Awards (PAFA) program as an opportunity to motivate students to achieve their full academic potential.

"I hope every school in the (district/state) will participate in the program," (Sen./Rep.) _____ said. "It is a significant way for principals to send a clear message to students that excellence matters and will be recognized at the highest levels."

The PAFA program, started in 1983, honors students graduating from elementary, middle or junior, and senior high school who have a cumulative grade point average of at least B+ and score in the top 20 percent on standardized achievement tests. Senior high students must also complete a solid core of academic courses. A select number of awards may be presented to students who do not meet all the criteria but have demonstrated extraordinary effort.

Last year, more than 51,000 schools presented PAFA certificates to more than 1.5 million students nationwide. The award is signed by the President, the Secretary of Education, and the school principal.

-MORE-

In (state), some _____ students received the award in the spring of 1990. _____ out of _____ public and private schools in the state participated.*

According to (Sen./Rep.) _____, the PAFA program is effective for several reasons: First, by recognizing students at three grade levels, young people have repeated opportunities to improve and excel. Second, since the award is based on cumulative grades and composite test scores, students are encouraged to perform well all through school. And third, in setting high, but attainable, standards, success is a realistic goal for many students.

By mid-March, all schools should have received an order form from the U.S. Department of Education. Schools have until June 30 to determine the number of students who qualify for PAFA awards and to order the appropriate number of certificates. Principals seeking further information about the program may contact the PAFA office at 1-800-438-PAFA (7232).

###

* see attachment for state figures



Stool

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND INTERAGENCY AFFAIRS

Honorable Nick Joe Rahall, II
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Rahall:

The U.S. Department of Education offers an awards program that is of great interest to the parents and students in your State. The purpose of the Presidential **ACADEMIC** Fitness Awards (PAFA) program is to focus attention on the importance of academic achievement, to honor those students who meet the program criteria, and to motivate more young people to aspire to obtain the award.

I have enclosed information about the PAFA program, including a model press release that your press secretary may wish to use or modify. Your recognition of the program will encourage more schools to participate with excitement and enthusiasm.

We announced the 1990-91 program to all elementary and secondary schools in early March. At that time principals received an order form to request award certificates for qualifying students. These certificates will be available to schools from mid-April through June 30.

We want to thank those of you who helped to expand an awareness of the program within your districts last spring. As a result of your efforts--press releases, radio announcements, newsletters, and articles--5,000 additional schools participated in the PAFA program last year.

Thank you in advance for your support. If you have questions, please call the PAFA Director, Susan Shelby, on (202) 401-3005.

Sincerely,

Michelle Easton

Michelle Easton
Deputy Under Secretary

Enclosures

SOUTH DAKOTA	5,408	321	679
TENNESSEE	21,028	840	1,915
TEXAS	119,217	3,034	6,637
UTAH	16,769	406	744
VERMONT	2,982	166	433
VIRGIN ISLANDS	363	17	37
VIRGINIA	42,166	1,294	2,244
WASHINGTON	30,019	960	2,179
WEST VIRGINIA	11,774	585	1,146
WISCONSIN	33,502	1,560	2,870
WYOMING	5,173	225	412
TOTALS	1,496,936	51,449	106,456