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Student wins record scholarship offers

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Kimberly Bowman didn't want to limit her college options, so she applied for as many scholarships as she could find.

The Burke High School senior's hard work has paid off to the tune of nearly \$630,000 in scholarship offers. She shattered the school's previous record for most scholarships earned by an individual student, and she became the school's second student in as many years to earn more than a half-million dollars in scholarships.

The offers are based mostly on her academics. Bowman has a 4.45 GPA and is projected to be her school's valedictorian. She also graduated at the top of her elementary and middle school classes.



Alan Hawes / Kimberly Bowman sits for her senior portrait as photographer Alicia Corum sets up her camera Tuesday at Burke High School. Bowman has been accepted to 29 schools and has received nearly \$630,000 in scholarship offers.

"People always ask me, 'What's your secret?'" she said. "It's not like something you can buy at a store. It's just common sense. I don't know what to tell you. Just learn right from wrong and live life in a positive way and don't go around looking for a problem. Make things better for yourself."

The state releases a report each fall that shows the scholarship totals for every school district, and the state counts the value of scholarships awarded as opposed to those accepted by students. The total also includes the multiple-year value of the scholarship offers.

Lowcountry school officials said they have not started collecting scholarship information yet because most students will not know how much they earned until the end of the school year. But Berkeley County officials say they already know Berkeley High School Senior Bruce Ellington has earned about half a million dollars in scholarship offers for football and basketball.

Debra Woods, guidance director at Burke High, described Bowman as ambitious and a scholar who takes on more than the average student. Bowman enrolled in six dual credit courses this spring, and she's maintaining A's and B's in those courses. When she's not studying, Bowman stays busy by serving as president of her school's National Honor Society chapter and a senior representative for the Jefferson Awards program.

Woods said Burke High has strong students who are encouraged to apply to colleges and compete for scholarship packages.

Bowman hasn't decided yet where she will go. Her top two schools are Duke University and Harvard University, and she should know whether she's been accepted by April. If neither pans out, she said she's considering Marymount University in Virginia, which offered her \$40,000, and Susquehanna University in Pennsylvania, which offered her \$80,000.

Both are small schools with strong programs, and that appeals to Bowman. She plans to double-major in art and journalism and hopes to start her own magazine or newspaper.

"I'm a colorful person," the bubbly 17-year-old said. "It's going to be about self-expression and individualism. I like to stand out."

Bowman is the daughter of Harvey Jones and Eileen Bowman.