

2022

Community Sponsored Awards

RECOGNIZING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Recipients Guide



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Edmonton Public Schools recognizes that the path to student success does not occur in isolation. The responsibility to support over 105,000 students on their K–12 educational journey is a shared one between the Division and the broader community. We work closely with community partners to best leverage the community's interest and investment in the success and well-being of our students and their families.

We are grateful for the generous support provided by community members to sponsor awards and scholarships to recognize the learning and achievement of Division students. Each community sponsored award or scholarship has its own criteria and application requirements. Every year, adjudication teams review applications submitted by the students to determine the recipients who best exemplify the award or scholarship criteria.

Congratulations to the 2022 recipients of the community sponsored awards and scholarships on your well-deserved success!

Ben Sauv  Artstrek Bursary

This bursary allows young people, who require financial support, to experience the joy of learning while in the Theatre Alberta Artstrek program. Ben was a Grade 12 student who attended the Artstrek program and was passionate about the arts. This bursary was created by Ben’s loved ones in his memory, after he was tragically killed in a traffic accident in 1987.

Recipient



Logan Sundquist

Victoria School of the Arts

Logan is an extremely responsible and mature young artist. He understands the way theatre artists integrate their skills vocally, physically and artistically to create and build stories of the human experience. In two mainstage musical productions, *No Day But Today* and *Spamalot*, Logan showcased his ability to create memorable characters, memorize and perform choreography with confidence, and change his vocal tone to reflect the needs of the character. Logan has written many one-act plays, one of which was performed at the 2021 Take 5 Theatre Festival and two more which are part of the 2022 Nextfest Theatre Festival. Since 2018, Logan has also participated in Victoria School choral classes and is a member of the high school concert choir, an advanced auditioned choir of 65 singers from Grades 10 to 12. He is compassionate and aware of the feelings and needs of those around him. Logan’s peers welcome his insightful feedback as he is tactful in his approach and offers sincere and honest responses. This creative risk taker is excited to experience Artstrek again to continue to explore who he is as an artist while experiencing the transformations of others alongside him. Logan will complete Grade 12 at Victoria School of the Arts.

Betty Finch Scholarship

The purpose of this scholarship is to assist a student who is completing high school while receiving specialized support to accommodate a learning disability, and who also requires financial support to attend a post-secondary program. Betty worked for Edmonton Public Schools for three decades, mainly as a specialist who focused on students with learning disabilities. This scholarship was established to recognize her commitment to education.

Recipient



David Minarik

Harry Ainlay High School

David is known for his perseverance and ability to excel regardless of the challenges he may face. Through trial and error, he has built a toolbox of learning strategies to be successful. David's experiences have pushed him out of his comfort zone and led to personal and emotional growth. Over the years, David has developed an understanding of the accommodations he needs in particular circumstances and he has grown confident in being able to request these accommodations from his teachers. David understands why certain things work for him and maintains a positive attitude to press on choosing courage over complacency. David's tenacity reaches beyond his academic success. He participated in an invitation-only competitive rock-climbing club, went tree planting for a whole summer in back country Alberta and was responsible for the lives of others on ski patrol. David plans to attend the College of the Rockies to pursue the Associate of Science – Environmental Sciences program.

Catherine and Robert Povaschuk Scholarship

This scholarship recognizes a Grade 12 student who has honours in academic courses, demonstrates commitment to extracurricular and community involvement and will attend the University of Alberta. Catherine and Robert Povaschuk wish to assist scholarship recipients with expenses associated with proceeding with their studies.

Recipient



Aziza Abdurakhmanova

Old Scona Academic

Throughout her life, Aziza has strived to help those around her both at school and in the community. Aziza maintained an honour's standing and was an integral part of the Old Scona Academic community. As a member of the Students' Union, she planned and executed a variety of school events to engage the student body and foster community. Aziza was an avid member of the Life Long Learners program and the Student Engagement Team volunteering as a tutor and mentor for junior high and high school students, and promoted the importance of mental health resources as a member of Jack.org. Her other volunteer contributions included privately tutoring younger students, filing books and creating learning support materials at the McKernan library and working with students with autism in the Chatter Social Skills Program. Aziza is an executive member of the Youth Wellness Alliance, an organization dedicated to promoting the well-being of youth. She embodies the qualities of dedication and volunteerism, and all her actions reflect her desire to succeed and make a difference in the lives of others. Aziza is looking forward to attending the University of Alberta to pursue a bachelor of science honours degree in neuroscience.

Catherine and Robert Povaschuk Scholarship *(continued)*

Recipient



Danna Hristova

Old Scona Academic

As captain of the Old Scona swim team, it was evident Danna was a natural leader with strong communication skills and the ability to lead through example and explanation. Danna successfully completed full IB and maintained many extra-curricular leadership commitments. She led an Ignite-a-thon team that helped raise \$1,000 for the Stollery Children’s Hospital. Other school leadership roles included helping to integrate the Grade 10 students into the school, serving as a Speech and Debate Teaching Assistant, and as a TEDx talk speaker influencing other high school students to neurologically bounce back from the pandemic. Danna’s passion for leadership has her as a chair of the CASA Youth Council, president of the Brain Care Awareness club, president of the Brain Bee Society branch and team lead in the New York Academy of Sciences junior academy. She co-founded Paint 4 Change, a non-profit organization that looks to bring awareness to environmental issues such as pollution or climate change through cohesive street murals. Danna plans to attend the University of Alberta to pursue a bachelor of science honours degree in neuroscience.

Catherine and Robert Povaschuk Scholarship *(continued)*

Recipient



Sarah Woodbridge

McNally High School

As a full IB student, Sarah found that her Creativity, Activity, Service class in particular encouraged her to pursue leadership in her school and community, and reflect on her personal growth. Her involvement in the school's Relay for Life Cancer fundraiser taught her the importance of planning ahead, active listening, strategic thinking skills and how to designate work for collaboration. Additionally, the IB program extended Sarah's ability to research and communicate—she enjoyed writing scientific articles and poetry in the school newspaper and being involved in mentorship programs like peer tutoring, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and CLS Best Buddies. One achievement which stands out for Sarah was to interview for, and be selected by the Assistant Principal to be the school's Communications Director responsible for the morning announcement broadcasting, script writing and public engagement. Her work in social justice was varied and immersive, ranging from support during Anti-Bullying week to her participation in the ABEEL Shaping the Future Sponsorship Program. Her submission considered the role of allyship in moving forward to an anti-racist future and put her group into contending for the national contest, placing as regional finalists. Sarah plans to attend the University of Alberta to pursue a bachelor of science honours degree in physiology.

Esther and Peter Cunliffe Scholarship

This scholarship recognizes a Grade 12 student who demonstrates excellent academic performance, outstanding personal and leadership qualities and who requires financial support to attend one of the following post-secondary institutions: University of Alberta, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology or MacEwan University. In the spring of 2000, Esther and Peter Cunliffe made a commitment for a portion of their estate to be made available for scholarships for students graduating from Edmonton Public Schools.

Recipient



Angelina Raina

McNally High School

Angelina's quiet leadership contributed to a healthy and welcoming school culture and created opportunities for future student leaders from diverse backgrounds and perspectives to engage with high school. She co-founded a school magazine to give students an opportunity to voice their opinions, created a speaker series for community experts to share how they combated racism, held the role of Student Trustee, and worked as a Page at the Alberta Legislature. She demonstrated a nuanced approach to community leadership, understanding the differences and benefits of top down and grassroots approaches, participating in both. Angelina is exceptionally mature and pairs persistence with empathy. She is able to look at problems from multiple perspectives and accepts setbacks and disappointments with a grace well beyond her years. This young leader plans to attend the University of Alberta to pursue a bachelor of arts degree majoring in political science. Angelina has the eventual goal of applying to the Canadian Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, to be a diplomat and dedicate her life to breaking down systems of oppression that pit groups of people against one another.

French Bilingual Awards

The purpose of the French Bilingual Award is to recognize one Grade 6 and one Grade 9 French Immersion student, and one Grade 12 student enrolled in French programming. These students demonstrate overall performance in French and have positive attitudes towards learning French. This award was made possible by the Edmonton French Bilingual Education Society (EFBES).

Note: There was no Grade 9 applicants this year.

Grade 6 Recipient



Reese Oviatt

Holyrood School

Reese is truly an ambassador for French in Edmonton Public Schools. She has a strong appreciation for the advantages and benefits of being able to speak both official languages. She loves participating in the French cultural activities of her community and enjoys borrowing French novels from her local public library. In class, she is quick to help others with their French. Reese perseveres to find the right words to express her thoughts. She self-reflects on her learning and acts on feedback to improve and expand her French. Her sense of humour shines through even when speaking French. She intends to continue in the French Immersion program through to Grade 12.

French Bilingual Awards *(continued)*

Grade 12 Recipient



Gordon Li

Old Scona Academic

Gordon is an enthusiastic learner who has deeply immersed himself in the French language, both in school and in the community. He has been passionate about learning French since the age of seven and has excelled in his French as a Second Language IB classes. He contributes to creating an environment in which his classmates can benefit from his knowledge and consistently offers support to his peers. Gordon has been part of his school's French Club executive team for the last two years and in that role, organized a variety of activities to inspire students at his high school to pursue their French-language education. He also organized IB exam prep sessions to support his peers before their oral exams. Gordon was one of only 25 students across Canada chosen to be a French for the Future Youth Ambassador for the 2021–22 school year. He took the initiative to take international French language proficiency exams on his own time, where he has been very successful. Gordon plans on continuing French in university as he hopes to work in French speaking countries as an engineer.

Garth Worthington Memorial Scholarship

The Garth Worthington Memorial Scholarship recognizes a high school student with outstanding talent and skill in vocal or choral music, who is also actively pursuing vocal or choral music studies. Garth spent three decades teaching music in Edmonton Public Schools, conducting thousands of students in school bands and choirs. He was also a talented musician and singer. The Garth Worthington Memorial Scholarship fund was established to keep his passion for music alive.

Recipient



Linnea Backstrom

McNally High School

Singing and music will always be a fulfilling and integral part of Linnea's life. She has been involved in music from a very young age, taken private voice lessons since the age of five and completed a Level 8 voice exam with first class honours. Linnea is an intelligent and expressive singer with fine musical instincts. She has performed as a soloist in the Edmonton Music Festival for many years, including this spring where she won first place in a competitive classical category, and was also nominated to compete at the 2022 provincial festival for her musical theatre performance. She toured England in August 2018 and August 2022 with the Nottingham girls' and youth choirs. Linnea played the clarinet and percussion in her junior and senior high school bands. She is also a talented actor with a compelling stage presence participating in her high school drama program and performing in Edmonton International Fringe Festival musicals. Other involvements include mentoring younger musicians, raising funds for the Edmonton Food Bank and nearly completing a novel. Next on Linnea's goal list is to complete university with honours, publish a novel and receive her Grade 10 RCM in voice.

Garth Worthington Memorial Scholarship *(continued)*

Recipient



Wiktoria Jurkiewicz

Victoria School of the Arts

For as long as Wiktoria can remember, music has been a language she resorted to. From vocalizing, learning multiple instruments, composition, to audio production, her passion developed swiftly: living, sleeping and breathing music. Her mind is naturally curious about why music has such a strong effect on human beings. Countless nights, Wiktoria finds herself enthralled by a musical piece, staying up late to tackle theoretical concepts behind songs so she can determine what about them makes her emotional. She is a risk taker with a remarkable ear, musicianship, maturity, vocal prowess, breadth of experience and dedication to her craft. Wiktoria's capacity and skill to combine multiple disciplines is seamless, devoting herself to the project at hand and working tirelessly until she is satisfied. With a natural gift for songwriting, her songs have unique and interesting melodies that weave beautifully with her chordal choices and capture an emotional tone that matches her lyrics in such a personal way. Wiktoria enjoys mentoring peers with free private voice lessons and junior high band students. She looks forward to attending the University of Alberta to pursue a bachelor of music and education degree.

James P. Jones Scholarship

The purpose of this scholarship is to recognize a Grade 12 student who completes French courses to the 30 level, has a positive attitude toward learning French, a sincere interest in continuing French language studies beyond high school and who demonstrates excellent academic performance and citizenship. James (Jim) P. Jones worked for Edmonton Public Schools for nearly three decades, mainly as a supervisor of second languages. Jim’s friends and family, along with language teachers in the Division, established this scholarship to acknowledge his tremendous work and dedication.

Recipient



Emma Carver

Ross Sheppard High School

Emma is a French Immersion student who has made French an integral part of her life since she was a child. She takes initiative and pride in her studies, and is often seen as a leader in her class. Because of her superior ability in French, she is able to assist others when they encounter challenges and she consistently supports her peers. Emma also makes positive contributions to the French Immersion program at her school and the French culture by creating positive interactions outside of class and participating in extracurricular activities. She actively seeks opportunities to be involved in our city’s Francophone community and had the opportunity to sing in the Alberta Francophone Games. Emma is going to immerse herself in the French language and culture by spending a month in France. She then plans to move to France to pursue her commerce studies. She is committed to maintaining a high fluency in the language she loves.

LeRoy Warden and Associates Scholarship

This scholarship is for a Grade 12 student who is in need of financial assistance, who has clear career plans and who will attend one of the following post-secondary institutions: University of Alberta, MacEwan University, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology or University of Alberta Campus Saint-Jean. When LeRoy Warden is asked what motivated him to establish the scholarship, he replies, "I simply want to help because it resonates with my soul, and lending a helping hand may make the world of difference for one person."

Recipient



Salim Soufi

Queen Elizabeth School

Salim finds his potential as an inspiring leader in the intersection between science and volunteering. His projects and initiatives keep him constantly learning and giving back to his community. In 2018, he co-created Edmonton Brothers Basketball, a volunteer initiative to help at-risk Somali and Muslim youth choose healthy behaviours, focus on school and be proactive with their time. A tight-knit brotherhood has been built that values character development and accountability. Aside from being a Student Senator, Salim is also working on the Canadian Space Agency's Deep Space Healthcare Challenge with Medical Makers. His work involves advanced technologies with a focus on developing novel diagnostic solutions that can support frontline healthcare workers in detecting medical conditions in remote Indigenous communities now, and eventually crews on long-duration deep space missions. Salim is a published poet who enjoys participating in poetry contests. He plans to attend the University of Alberta to pursue a bachelor of science degree in computing science.

Note: As a result of receiving another significant scholarship, Salim kindly donated the LeRoy Warden and Associates Scholarship back and asked that a second recipient be identified for this year.

LeRoy Warden and Associates Scholarship *(continued)*

Recipient



Tasmia Shahid

Jasper Place School

Tasmia's dedication and commitment to her studies resulted in Honours with Distinction throughout high school, while maintaining a mature focus and outlook on life. Over the three years, she became more driven about her educational goals and discovered how she can use these goals to impact the lives of others. Tasmia played a significant role in her school's grad council with her strong leadership and communication skills to help organize events to engage the graduating seniors. She participated in student leadership activities and initiatives that brought the school community together during the challenging times of the pandemic. Tasmia worked one-on-one in the Best Buddies program to support a student with autism. There was one common element in all the opportunities Tasmia experienced—she is passionate about a career helping individuals ease their stresses and overcome their struggles. She plans to attend the University of Alberta to pursue a bachelor of science honours degree in neuroscience. Tasmia believes the knowledge of the brain will help her understand the needs of others and help them replace their stresses and anxieties with smiling faces. She would like to pursue a career as a clinical psychologist, and join Doctors Without Borders where she can be a positive influence in people's lives.

Margaret T. Stevenson Talented Young Writer Award

The purpose of this award is to recognize a Grade 8 student who exhibits a sincere dedication to the literary arts and demonstrates personal growth as a writer. Dr. Margaret T. Stevenson served as a Language Arts supervisor with Edmonton Public Schools for 10 years. In recognition of her work, colleagues, friends and family established this award in 1994 and continue to make donations to the fund.

Recipient



Thea Blankenship

Oliver School (Nellie McClung Girls' Junior High Program)

Thea is a writer at heart and admires people who can put words on a page and have it labeled as art. This talented young writer framed her writing portfolio with deeply insightful questions, “What is an author?” and “Am I an author?” The collection of writing included stories, poems, and letters that demonstrated insight, thoughtfulness and vivid language. Thea referenced Shakespeare and his role in her comprehension, motivation and inspiration. The portfolio included her Pirate City story of 14 chapters that she published online for her Wattpad writers’ group. By the end of April, Pirate City had 326 reads, 40 comments and 39 votes! Her writing is often the talk of her friends and classmates with the depth of self-knowledge and strength of voice leaving readers wanting more. Any extra class time Thea has is dedicated to working on personal stories, editing peer work, or expanding on writing prompts that were completed previously. She is receptive to feedback, both in regards to English language conventions and stylistic choice or voice, often integrating new information into her writing immediately. Thea is passionate that there is still much to learn and even more to experience; she looks forward to seeing where writing will take her.

Opportunity Through Education

Sandra B. Woitas Scholarship

This scholarship assists a Grade 12 student who has attended Edmonton Public schools for at least four years, demonstrates a commitment to volunteering, has a positive attitude toward school and their studies, and requires financial support to attend a post-secondary institution in Edmonton. Sandra B. Woitas served as Director of the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation from 2009 to 2014. This scholarship was established by Sandra's colleagues, friends and family in recognition of her hard work and many contributions.

Recipient



Karina Banerji

Jasper Place High School

Karina is determined to stay involved in her community and not let anything hold her back, not even a global pandemic. She worked hard to maintain honour roll status with distinction. Karina was part of her school's Rebel Support Squad, working to destigmatize mental health, creating safe online spaces for students, and most notably hosting a few Humans of JP podcasts. She was a Student Senator, founded the school's social justice club and was president of the Key Club. As a member of Edmonton's Youth Council, Karina has been involved in several community initiatives. She helped to create an Environmental Awareness Webinar to enable youth to be part of conquering the issue of climate change. Karina created a webpage for local scholarships and volunteer opportunities. She led the Covid-19 survey to help amplify the voices of Edmonton youth about learning environments, and the school visits initiative, which helped students be meaningfully involved in their community. Karina is part of REACH Edmonton's Don't Click! project creating workshops for youth to tackle online hate and extremism. She participates in Girl Up Edmonton promoting gender equality. Karina truly personifies human spirit and a positive character. She plans to attend the University of Alberta to pursue a bachelor of science honours degree with a major in biological sciences and minor in economics.

