2025
Michael A. Strembitsky
AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Honouring Student Excellence

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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On May 27, 2025, the Edmonton Public Schools Board of Trustees had the honour of recognizing 19 outstanding nominees for the Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence.

A gold ($2,000), silver ($1,500) and bronze ($1,000) medal and cash award was presented to three Grade 12 students who best exemplify:

• excellence in personal, social and academic endeavours

• keen interest in a broad selection of subjects and activities

• willingness to seek meaningful change

• initiative, courage, confidence and a commitment to excellence

• co-operation with other students, staff and community members

• potential to provide leadership throughout life

• responsible participation in society

Michael A. Strembitsky Award Nominees

Jordan Carroll
Academy at King Edward

Pablo Perez
Centre High Campus

Rameesha Khalid
Dr. Anne Anderson School

Jana Hamdalla
Eastglen School

Maia Visscher
Edmonton Christian High School

Charlotte Tse
Harry Ainlay School

Addison Terry
J. Percy Page School

Autumn Lavallee
Jasper Place School

Brielle Huang
Lillian Osborne School

Rvnoor Harry
M.E. LaZerte School

Ben Wirtz
McNally School

Sarah Lee
Millwoods Christian School

Ameena Taher
Old Scona School

Isabelle Virani
Queen Elizabeth School

Kade Campbell
Ross Sheppard School

Elle Djogović
Strathcona School

Jordon Ho
Victoria School

Avery Pepper
Vimy Ridge Academy

Benjamin Woodbridge
W.P. Wagner School

GOLD Medal

Brielle Huang
Lillian Osborne School

Brielle is a full International Baccalaureate student who has maintained honours standing throughout high school. Principal Mike Morison says, "She is not only an academic powerhouse but also an empathetic changemaker who uplifts her community in deeply meaningful ways."

From the age of five, she faced a speech impediment that left her nearly mute. Over time, she faced this head on by following a speech therapy regimen and engaging in public speaking opportunities. She became a valued member of Lillian Osborne's debate club, led the Reach for the Top trivia team to a first place finish at the Edmonton level, and became the first Lillian Osborne student to compete in the University of Alberta's monolingual French debate.

Brielle founded the school's crochet club, and has donated over 300 hats for premature babies in addition to donating chemo caps. She writes for the school newspaper and is also an executive member of the Student Solidarity Committee that advocates for social justice.

Brielle is also a gifted musician. On top of performing at school events, she also organizes monthly performances at a seniors residence in the community.

After experiencing a couple of neurological family illnesses, Brielle immersed herself in neuroscience research. She spent months reaching out to various researchers until she was offered a volunteer lab research position studying strokes—specifically analyzing microtomed brain tissue. Brielle then participated in a Brain Bee competition that tests knowledge of neuroscience. She placed first locally and in the top three nationally. As a result, she was invited to attend the 2024 Canadian Association for Neuroscience meeting, which gave her the chance to connect with leading scientists. Brielle also participated in the Youreka Canada's High School Research Program.

This fall, Brielle will be attending the University of Alberta where she is enrolled in honours neuroscience. She is interested in studying neurological dysfunction.

SILVER Medal

Kade Campbell
Ross Sheppard School

"Kade has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership, innovation and profound commitment to community service," says Principal Rick Stanley.

Kade has a passion for social justice. He is the co-president of the Black Students Association, is a board member on Speakup Shep, and volunteers with community services like the Edmonton Food Bank, Hope Mission, Mustard Seed, Lions Village and the Stollery Children's Hospital. He also launched "Canadians Realizing the Dream" in his school community—a program that mobilizes youth to contribute to a global goal of reaching 100 million hours of community service by 2029.

Kade serves on the Division's Student Senate, where he leads projects that promote understanding, respect and inclusivity. He was the project lead for Unity in Diversity 2025—where students seek to understand cultural differences—and contributed to the Senate Speaks podcast.

Kade founded Elevate Science which is "dedicated to empowering Edmonton minority youth to seek careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), artificial intelligence and business development." His launch event was called Innovators in Science 2025, which brought together 80 students from four Division high schools along with numerous STEM professionals for a variety of presentations and discussions. He partnered with the Elite program at the University of Alberta to create a pre-engagement program for upcoming internships. He also presented at the Division's virtual career day.

Kade consistently excels academically and has taken on challenging International Baccalaureate courses like biology and chemistry. This fall, he will begin studying engineering at the University of Alberta.

BRONZE Medal

Ameena Taher
Old Scona School

Principal Will Deys says, "Ameena demonstrates profound compassion in all her endeavours. She is dedicated to improving her community, committed to inclusivity, is a strong leader and maintains academic excellence."

Ameena maintains a 97 per cent average in the rigorous International Baccalaureate program.

She is the director of the Student Engagement Team where she created a mentorship program and led school-wide bonding events. As an executive member of the Old Scona Brain Care Awareness Club, she raises awareness about brain care and helps support students in at-risk situations. She created a series of "sitcom-style mental health videos and a school guide democratizing study resources."

Last summer, she worked to help improve the pediatric waiting room at the Stollery Children's Hospital. After conducting interviews, reading research papers and job shadowing, Ameena created a comic book to help reduce hospital anxiety and make kids feel less afraid.

In the larger community, she has secured a series of micro-grants—totalling about $9,000—for projects like planting trees, writing and printing a children's book, making an anti-racism mini-magazine and building a little library to promote community literacy. Ameena says, "I am motivated to seek a future in which I can continue to make a difference."

"As a person of colour, I know all too well the impact that exclusion can have on self-worth," Ameena reflects. She created a children's book to "provide representation for seven different cultural holidays." Ameena says that while she was reading to students, "Seeing the kids beam with pride in their identities and witnessing whisper-shouts of 'I celebrate that' was one of the most meaningful moments in my life."

Ameena is also a StopHate facilitator, where she plans and leads virtual anti-racism workshops for Grades 7 to 12 students across the province.

Ameena will be studying health sciences at McMaster University this fall.