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2018

Michael A. Strembitsky

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

*Honouring Student Excellence*

# Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence

## *Honouring Student Excellence*

On June 19, 2018, the Edmonton Public Schools Board of Trustees had the honour of recognizing 18 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 were presented to three Grade 12 students who are completing their schooling and 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

Dutch Harajdic  
*Academy at King Edward*

Matthew Zita  
*J. Percy Page*

Ayo Akindele  
*Millwoods Christian*

Larissah Lashley  
*Victoria*

Ksenia Voronina  
*Centre High*

Aminah Attar  
*Jasper Place*

Andrew Li  
*Old Scona*

Tessa Molnar  
*Vimy Ridge*

Zachary Flynn  
*Eastglen*

Michael Zhang  
*Lillian Osborne*

Fatema Mahmood  
*Queen Elizabeth*

Jasmine Dhatt  
*W.P. Wagner*

Jake Thorsteinson  
*Edmonton Christian*

Madison Giese  
*M.E. LaZerte*

Yuyang Yan  
*Ross Sheppard*

Palehswan Chitrakar  
*Harry Ainlay*

Astrid Krueger  
*McNally*

Ryan Jacques  
*Strathcona*

# GOLD Medal



Andrew Li  
*Old Scona*

Andrew is an International Baccalaureate student who has maintained averages above 90 per cent and earned Honours with Distinction throughout high school.

Principal Dee Elder says, “Andrew is a true leader. He has used his voice, organizational skills and incredible work ethic to coordinate a variety of events, and set policy and direction not only for Old Scona, but also for the school District. He also still found time to give back to the greater Edmonton community in various ways. His passion and enthusiasm to do his best is how he approaches every day and everything he does.”

Andrew ran for Vice-President of Student’s Union so he could have direct impact on a specific area—responsibility of club structure. He created new systems and structures to support in excess of 50 clubs, many of which provide financial support and volunteers to initiatives throughout the city. He is a member the school’s Speech and Debate team where he has earned numerous awards and recognition. He also volunteers three times a week to mentor and support younger students in the area of speech and debate. Andrew is a member of the school’s swim team and is also a swim instructor with the Paralympic Sports Association. After having to step away from playing hockey due to a serious knee injury, he became a referee and uses his skills to support minor hockey. Andrew also has graduated from level 10 piano with the Royal Conservatory of Music.

Andrew has been Old Scona’s representative on Edmonton Public Schools’ Student Senate for the past two years. Recognized as a leader among his peers, in Grade 11 he was selected as one of three Student Trustees who officially represented all students and had a direct report role with the District’s Board of Trustees. In Grade 12, he was selected as Chair of the Student Senate. As Chair, Andrew played key roles in the areas of Career Pathways, student health and wellness, and Diversity Day.

Andrew says he started high school thinking, “How can I make my community a better and more inclusive place?” He believes that, “Leadership comes from the heart and is always about providing a brighter tomorrow.” Throughout his journey to achieve his goal of making a difference, he says he has had some incredible opportunities and has learned some great lessons. “His impact is felt in our building, across all of Edmonton Public Schools and in the greater Edmonton area,” says Principal Elder.

# SILVER Medal



Astrid Krueger  
**McNally**

Astrid is an International Baccalaureate student who has consistently achieved Honours with Distinction.

This year, Astrid represented McNally on Edmonton Public Schools' Student Senate. Her fellow Senate members also elected her to serve as one of the three Student Trustees to directly represent student voice to the District's Board of Trustees to help them inform decision-making and supports. On Student Senate, she was the head of the mental health awareness committee which planned a mental health conference for over 150 students in the District.

Astrid is also passionate about youth voice beyond school. She says, "I think my most significant contributions and accomplishments revolve around the notion of creating networks and communities, where students are empowered and can express their voices and take actions themselves."

She was involved with the Students Commission of Canada as a facilitator for the Canada *We Want Conference*, for over 150 students from across the nation. She facilitated conversations and activities to gather youth feedback about Canadian policies on various topics. She then worked with a team to create a feedback report to help shape Canada's first ever youth policy. This work was presented to the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister. Astrid also served as president of the Experiences Canada Youth Advisory Committee. The focus was on improving and developing youth learning programs.

At McNally, Astrid was captain of the women's volleyball team, club president of the Model United Nations team, vice-president of the Global Opportunities club, and a member of Graduation Council and the Speak Up, Write Down club. She also helped out at the school's open house, served on a committee to establish the McNally Legacy Award, and was a member of the District's High School Honour Band.

Principal Lisa Wright says, "Astrid has worked hard to balance her volunteering, academic success and social life. She is an innovative thinker across a range of areas and disciplines."

# BRONZE Medal



Zachary Flynn  
*Eastglen*

“Zachary is committed to seeking and creating meaningful change,” says Principal Darren Fox.

He strives to maximize his learning opportunities and is involved in a broad range of school activities. In Grade 10, as a member of the District’s LEGACY leadership course, Zachary was chair of the Mental Health Committee that helped develop the Mental Health 101 course. He was one of the student leaders with the Norway-Canada Assessment project, where he worked alongside students and teachers from other schools regarding assessment practices. He has also worked with Eastglen teachers on sharing the importance of student voice. In keeping with student voice, for the past two years, Zachary has represented Eastglen on the District’s Student Senate. During the first year on Senate, he served as the chairperson of the Curriculum Committee. This year, he was selected by fellow Senate members, to be one of three Student Trustees. He also served on the Time Management and Workload Committee, helping create resources for students to access.

For the past two years, Zachary has been the technical producer of the weekly televised Eastglen News Network program, and was director of the broadcast team this year. To ensure the longevity of the program, he and others have mentored other students to take over next year. He also produced five promotional videos for the school, and has been actively involved in initiatives like filming and editing footage of the annual 24-hour bike-a-thon and helping with various school musical theatre productions. He was even asked to film, edit and produce two promotional videos outside the school—one for Ribbon Rouge, using arts to reduce stigma around HIV and AIDS, and one for Waverley School to submit a video grant application to update their library content.

Zachary aspires to work in the field of media production and has applied to NAIT’s Radio and Television program. He currently has his own video production company called ZF Productions. His goal with his company is to showcase small towns and communities around Alberta. He also plans to run for Trustee with Edmonton Public Schools in 2021.

Principal Fox says, “His extensive involvement and leadership has had a significant impact within both the school and the greater community.”