

REMEMBER
LEAD VISION
ACHIEVE DISTINCTION
CELEBRATE AWESOME
INSPIRE HONOUR
PERSEVERANCE
REACH INTEGRITY
ENJOY MERIT
EXCELLENCE

2024

Michael A. Strembitsky

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Honouring Student Excellence

Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence

Honouring Student Excellence

On May 28, 2024, 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

Emily Berg Noskiye
Academy at King Edward

Kendall Li
Harry Ainlay

Taylor Aitkin
McNally

Cristina Iordache
Strathcona

Noorinder Kaur
Centre High Campus

Jules Ng
J. Percy Page

Zaedra Vollman
Millwoods Christian

Athena Annika Reyes
Victoria

Chelsea Kwon
Dr. Anne Anderson

Khadija Hasan
Jasper Place

Elizabeth Chen
Old Scona

Blair Sprague
Vimy Ridge Academy

Madi Halton
Eastglen

Essica Cheung
Lillian Osborne

Eyas Kadri
Queen Elizabeth

Naman Gautam
W.P. Wagner

Hiwot Gebremedhin
Edmonton Christian High

Clark Hunter
M.E. LaZerte

Tejaswi Bhandari
Ross Sheppard

GOLD Medal



Jules Ng
J. Percy Page

Jules Ng has been told all her life that she is a natural leader. She used to wonder what this meant, but over years of dedication to her community, school and academics, she has come to learn what leadership means to her: “a lifelong journey of improving both yourself and those around you.”

When Jules takes the lead on a project, it’s very likely something that will benefit others, such as serving on the grad celebration committee or helping to organize major fundraising events for charitable organizations. Under Jules’ leadership, J. Percy Page School’s Bike-A-Thons raised \$48,000 for Little Warriors and the Be Brave Ranch in 2022 and \$65,000 for the Edmonton Food Bank in 2023.

Jules cares deeply about inclusivity and making sure everyone can be included in school activities. She has helped make sure this year’s grad celebration has accommodations for religious and dietary restrictions, and low-stimulation zones for students with sensory difficulties.

According to Principal Martin Fechner, “Jules took it upon herself to ensure that students in minority communities knew that the student union supported their ongoing battles with discrimination and prejudice.” She helped student union members learn about different communities and offered suggestions about how they could be better allies to their peers and in the wider community. Jules also presented to the school’s leadership classes about inclusivity and worked to make sure all school events were as inclusive as possible.

She has also started to become a strong advocate for greater representation of women and gender nonconforming people in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math) by, among other things, organizing guest presentations by women in STEM.

In addition to her leadership and community involvement, Jules is, in the words of Principal Fechner, “an academic juggernaut.” Averages of 100 per cent are common for Jules, highlighting the focus and dedication she applies to her pursuit of academic excellence.

Her dedication to academics will serve her well as she begins work toward a bachelor of science, with a major in physics, at the University of Alberta this fall.

SILVER Medal



Chelsea Kwon
Dr. Anne Anderson

Chelsea Kwon has been instrumental in helping to shape the culture at Dr. Anne Anderson School. In the words of Principal Lisa Wright, Chelsea “helped our faculty come to understand the nuances of what high school might be and how integral student voice is to creating schools that listen, nurture and inspire today’s youth.”

Having taken on many leadership roles within the school, Chelsea led the newly established A-Team, which focused on creating a team of student leaders to help orient new students to the school community. She also took an active role in the Youth Focus Group, which helped to provide a student voice as a means of building a strong school culture. Chelsea continues to act as a leader and helps organize numerous school events, such as “Anderson’s Got Talent.”

Leadership seems to come naturally to Chelsea, and she has taken a keen interest in governance. She is currently serving as one of Dr. Anne Anderson’s school senators and was elected as one of three Student Senators representing the voice of all Division students to the Board of Trustees.

As an academically-motivated student, Chelsea wasn’t content just to succeed on her own. She wanted to lift up her fellow students. Among her achievements was creating the Peer Tutoring Club, which likely contributed to the school’s diploma exam scores increasing by 25.6 per cent.

In addition to her pursuit of academic excellence, Chelsea is a talented musician. She has dedicated her focus to piano and violin for a decade and has been a member of the violin section in the Edmonton Youth Orchestra for the past five years. She also channels her passion for music into charitable efforts, performing at events like the Ukraine Virtual Fundraising Concerts.

Chelsea will be attending the University of Waterloo to study biomedical engineering.

BRONZE Medal



Athena Annika
Reyes
Victoria

Athena Annika Reyes is devoted to the arts, academics and community. According to Principal Stacy Fysh, “Athena’s exceptional talents, leadership and commitment to academic excellence, artistic endeavours and anti-racism education are apparent at Victoria School daily.”

Athena has maintained honours with distinction in her International Baccalaureate program since Grade 7. In addition to her excellent academic performance, she is a talented musical theatre artist who gives back to her school community in many ways, including creating and instructing the elementary dance club and teaching musical theatre—singing, dancing and acting—to Victoria School’s youngest learners. Athena is also the school’s representative on the Edmonton Public Schools Student Senate, where she serves as Vice-Chair.

Outside of school, Athena is involved with the Edmonton 4-H Club, Arts of the Ave—where she has volunteered for both the Kaliedo and Deep Freeze arts festivals—and participated in the Seminar on the United Nations and International Affairs (SUNIA), a model UN summer camp. Athena is also a strong advocate for anti-racism and diversity education. She says, as an immigrant and person of colour, that the topic is close to her heart and is passionate about raising awareness and providing education about allyship and the importance of representation in the entertainment industry.

On top of it all, Athena also gives back to the community through environmentalism, including participation in a highway cleanup program that gives young people an opportunity to learn and discuss environmental issues through hands-on activities and education sessions.

Principal Stacy Fysh sums it up: “Athena’s exceptional talents, leadership qualities, and unwavering commitment to excellence make her an exemplary candidate for the Michael A. Strembitsky Award.”

Athena plans to complete a bachelor of commerce at the University of British Columbia’s Sauder School of Business. After earning her degree, she is considering starting a business to facilitate affordable and accessible arts opportunities for children.