

the torch



Medal Award recipient and five are Silver Medal Award winners.

The 2021 School Board Medal Award winners (pictured) are graduating in a world that is unexpectedly different compared to how it was when they began their school life. Like their peers, these students went through over a year of uncertainties created by the COVID-19 pandemic and they rose above the challenges. The board subcommittee who interviewed the medallists was impressed by the way each of them was able to remain dedicated to academic excellence and to make a difference in the lives of those around them.

The medallists showed their compassion and commitment to others in many different ways, including supporting fellow students at risk, being role models for others, and volunteering for organizations such as Students Without Borders and the Winnipeg United Nations Assembly.

The board is confident our world will be a better place thanks to the compassion shown by these students during their school years and that will continue throughout their lives.



Emma Harris
Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate
GOLD MEDALLIST



Sarah Rohleder
River East Collegiate
SILVER MEDALLIST



Audry Fayette Fortunato
Murdoch MacKay Collegiate
SILVER MEDALLIST



Riley Kotzer
Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau
SILVER MEDALLIST



Thomas Hepworth
Transcona Collegiate
SILVER MEDALLIST



Anne Ikhile
Kildonan-East Collegiate
SILVER MEDALLIST

Congratulations to the 2021 award winners

The board of trustees congratulates the winners of the 2021 School Board Medal Awards.

Every year, the trustees bestow six School Board Medal Awards

on graduates who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership, contributions to their school and community, and positive relationships with school staff.

The six senior years schools each nominate a student and a subcommittee of the board interviews the six students. One student is chosen as the Gold

The RETSD board of trustees would like to congratulate the graduating class of 2021. You achieved your academic goals while successfully meeting the unexpected challenges of the pandemic. We wish all graduates the best in the next stage of their lives.

We would also like to thank everyone in our school division who helped these students reach this milestone. Well done, everyone!



And the winners are...

The board congratulates the 2021 winners of the following annual awards presented by the board. Three are named after former long-serving trustees. These awards recognize different strengths and contributions of the winners and, in each case, the student must have a good academic record and provide school and/or community references. The winners are nominated by their respective schools. This year's winners are:

The Mary Andree Humanitarian Award

Aida Mesgar Zadeh, Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate

Emily Hiebert, Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau

Boluwarin Ojo, Kildonan-East Collegiate

Kaydon Laurin, Murdoch MacKay Collegiate

Amanda LeBlanc, River East Collegiate

Larissa O'Neil, Transcona Collegiate

The Robert Fraser Leadership Award

Tarjani Patel, Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate

Riley Kotzer, Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau

Manvir Kooner, Kildonan-East Collegiate

Kaleigh Mardynalka, Murdoch MacKay Collegiate

Joshua Penner, River East Collegiate

Ara Santos, Transcona Collegiate

The George Marshall Citizenship Award

Jaden Jenson, Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate

Brenna Shaw, Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau

Anne Ikhile, Kildonan-East Collegiate

Anne Olorunfemi, Murdoch MacKay Collegiate

Luke Steski, River East Collegiate

Holly Drysdale, Transcona Collegiate

Most Improved Student Award

Ulrich Mbakop, Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate

Keanan Boyce-Gaudreau, Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau

Ryan Frick, Kildonan-East Collegiate

Jenna Goren, Murdoch MacKay Collegiate

Courtney McFarlane, River East Collegiate

Erika Munnik, Transcona Collegiate

The board also extends its congratulations to the following winners of the **Governor General's Academic Award**:

Braden Godlein-Bercier, Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate

Myah Richard, Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau

Laura Conde Nuñez, Kildonan-East Collegiate

Augustus Stearns, Murdoch MacKay Collegiate

Emily Pokrant, River East Collegiate

Ernest Gonzales, Transcona Collegiate



Celebrating Indigenous Youth

RETSD hosted the prestigious 2021 Manitoba Indigenous Youth Achievement Awards (MIYAA), including its selection committee and five virtual ceremonies.

The annual awards are presented to 18 outstanding Indigenous youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who excel in categories from cultural to academic. MIYAA winners are chosen by a committee of Indigenous youth from the community, this year including Indigenous youth from across RETSD.

Leanne Smith, RETSD inclusion specialist for Indigenous education initiatives, led the awards team with the IT department and planned the virtual events for five ceremonies.

"The board of trustees congratulates this year's MIYAA winners," said trustee Colleen Carswell. "We are committed to providing safe and respectful educational opportunities for Indigenous students and to raise awareness among all students and staff about Indigenous cultures and issues."

You can watch any of the five awards ceremonies via links on the River East Transcona School

Division website (retsd.mb.ca). More information about the awards can be found at www.miyaa.ca.

RETSD has 2,319 self-identified Indigenous learners, about 14 per cent of the overall student population. The division offers several programs to support Indigenous students and to increase understanding among all students and staff about Indigenous cultures and issues. These include "Walk With Us," a colonization simulation for staff, Treaty learning in classrooms, Reconciliation/Treaty Residencies for early years that are being expanded to middle and senior years, and the We Matter program to senior years. This Indigenous, youth-led, and nationally registered organization is dedicated to Indigenous youth support, hope, and life promotion. Learn more about the division's Indigenous education programs at retsd.mb.ca/Programs/IAA.

Check out the 2021–23 Strategic Plan, a roadmap for achieving our goals. Learn more about our strategic directions and actions we will take to achieve our goals by going to retsd.mb.ca and clicking on the Strategic Plan under Division News.



Raija Ryyanen's award-winning cake

RETSD students take home Skills Manitoba medals

The 2021 Skills Manitoba competition awarded medals to five RETSD students, including three gold and two silver medals. The division offers 14 technical vocational programs in different areas and a comprehensive High School Apprenticeship Program. This year's Skills Manitoba winners are students in the Pastry Arts program at Kildonan-East Collegiate and Digital Multimedia program at Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate.

"The technical vocational and apprenticeship programs are such an important part of our schools, offering our community the programs they want in partnership with other local groups and businesses," said trustee Rod Giesbrecht. "The board congratulates the five winners on their well-earned awards."

The 2021 RETSD Skills Manitoba medal winners are:

Gold medals

Avery McAmmond, Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate: 3D Character Computer Animation

Abigail Yates, Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate: 3D Character Computer Animation

Michael Abellera, Kildonan-East Collegiate: Baking

Silver medals

Conner Lavineway, Kildonan-East Collegiate: 3D Digital Game Art

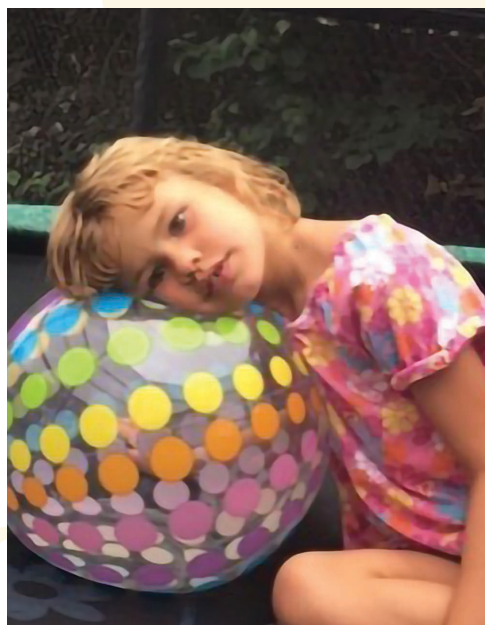
Raija Ryyanen, Kildonan-East Collegiate: Baking

RETSD's technical vocational and apprenticeship programs offer students academic and practical skills-building at three of our senior years schools and are open to all RETSD students.

The programs continue to evolve to provide the most current technical programming and to respond to how the related industry fields are changing.

The programs benefit students as well as the community through partnerships, such as the auto technology program at Kildonan-East Collegiate that partnered with our English as an Additional Language (EAL)/Newcomer programs to provide an "Intro to winterizing your car" course for new Canadians. Other examples include the metals and welding program at Murdoch MacKay Collegiate that worked with our middle years schools to provide personalized bike racks for six early and middle years schools.

Learn more about RETSD's technical vocational programs at: Murdoch MacKay Collegiate, retsd.mb.ca/school/mur; Kildonan East Collegiate, retsd.mb.ca/school/kec; and Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate, retsd.mb.ca/school/miles/Programs. Find out more about the High School Apprenticeship Program at retsd.mb.ca/Programs/HighSchoolApprenticeships.



Carlyn Renae Belot from Dr. F.W.L. Hamilton School

Yes I Can! Awards winners

Congratulations to the RETSD winners of the 2021 Yes I Can! Awards, presented by the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children (MCEC) to recognize student success, programs and educators.

"RETSD is committed to supporting everyone in understanding that they belong," commented

trustee John Toews. "We are proud of this year's winners who have shown how our students and staff can overcome barriers to be able to grow, learn, and contribute."

The 2021 RETSD winners are:

Carlyn Renae Belot—Technology Award: Carlyn is a Grade 5 student at Dr. F.W.L. Hamilton School. Carlyn, who is non-verbal, loves to listen to music and language, and mimic sounds. In Grade 3, she was given an iPad by the Open Access Resource Centre and Carlyn now expresses basic requests and comments. She is also learning to use sign language and picture communication symbols. Next year in middle school, Carlyn will keep working on her skills to build strong relationships with family and friends and participate in new social opportunities.

Kildonan-East Collegiate Culinary and Pastry Program—Certificate of Recognition: This program consistently provides meaningful opportunities for students with additional needs, helping all students to develop useful life and employment skills. The program is a model of adaption and inclusionary practices. Students graduate from the program with cooking and baking techniques and employability skills such as kitchen hygiene and safety, planning, and working as part of a team. Students in Culinary Arts can literally "taste success!"

Mary LaPage Leclerc, Student Services Unit—Certificate of Recognition: A true pioneer in supporting students and families in educational inclusion, Mary's 30-year career has spanned teaching in elementary school, in a middle school life skills program, with at-risk students, and a divisional inclusion program. She has been a student services consultant and helped RETSD launch an aquatics program, Planning, Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) facilitation, and school-to-community transitions. As an educational leader, Mary has partnered with families, divisional teams, and outside agencies to focus on students' individual goals. Throughout, Mary has emphasized students achieving their full potential and has worked tirelessly in this pursuit.

River East Transcona School Division is a leader in inclusionary education. Much of the unique and specialized programming is a result of the professional commitment to ensure success for all. Learn more about the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children and the Yes I Can! Awards at manitoba.exceptionalchildren.org/.

Initiatives like this depend on



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Sweeping changes on the horizon with Bill 64

Get informed about the impacts of proposed educational changes

Bill 64, the Education Modernization Act, proposes big changes to education in Manitoba. RETSD's board of trustees, along with many others, are concerned about how these changes will affect student learning and academic development.

"The bill seems to be less about helping students succeed and more about centralizing decision making while taking away local voices and putting unreasonable demands on parents under the guise of trying to save money," said board chair Jerry Sodomlak. "We encourage everyone to learn more about Bill 64, how it will impact you and your family, then make your views heard by the provincial government."

Two issues of concern are the dissolving of school divisions and the role of school parent councils. You are encouraged watch for more information from the board in the coming months.

Dissolving divisions?

If Bill 64 becomes law, all locally elected English boards of trustees will be abolished and Manitoba's 37 English school divisions will be reconfigured into 15 regional catchments. Despite claims this will save money, past amalgamations suggest this isn't the case. More importantly, RETSD will become part of one very large Winnipeg catchment. The board believes this will mean:

- No more democratically elected trustees leading to a loss of local voice and decision-making
- Parents will have to sift through the bureaucracy of a large region (Winnipeg) to try to have their concerns heard
- Local, unique programs, such as RETSD's heritage language, Indigenous Academic Achievement, and some of our apprenticeship programs might be replaced with generic programming without regard to local needs and interests

School community councils?

Every school in the province will have a school community council and every parent of a child in the school will be considered a council member. Several concerns about the role of the school councils as described in the bill:

- Parents will be expected to dedicate considerable time to the councils in a volunteer capacity, regardless of their existing family and work commitments, and other parents may be uncomfortable in a school setting for reasons such as language barriers or their own past experiences
- School councils will be asked to decide on issues that need educational experience,

background, and impartiality; decisions about individual issues among students, staffing recommendations, and evaluations

- Current parent council functions of supporting classrooms and school wide events and initiatives, as well as fundraising, will continue along with the many new expectations
- Community members who may have experience, expertise, and a commitment to education, but do not have a child registered in a school, will not be eligible to participate in school councils



Read up and sign up to speak out

Consider speaking up at the Standing Committee hearings about Bill 64 in the fall by calling 204.945.3636 to register.

Order a lawn sign from RETSD by calling 204.667.7130 or emailing communications@retsd.mb.ca

Learn more about Bill 64. Here are some websites to check:

- Manitoba School Boards Association: mbschoolboards.ca/localVoices.php
- Manitoba Education: edu.gov.mb.ca
- Manitoba Teachers' Society: mbteach.org/mtscms
- Read the bill at: web2.gov.mb.ca/bills/42-3/b064e.php

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For more information about the board of trustees, visit: www.retsd.mb.ca/BoardofTrustees