



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

Senator Lanza Announces that Staten Island students are 2 of 20 from New York nominated for consideration of the 2022 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program

ANDREW J. LANZA December 19, 2022



**STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES NOMINEES FOR  
2023 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

**Recognition is Among Nation's Highest Honors for High School Students**

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*"I am excited to learn that two students selected by me, Cayden Auyeung and Casey Boyle, both of Staten Island Technical High School are two of 25 students from New York that Commissioner Betty A. Rosa has nominated as candidates for recognition in the 2023 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Since 1964 over 8,000 high school seniors have been named as Presidential Scholars. Through strength of character, leadership, hard work, and academic success they have earned my recommendation for this prestigious honor. I am confident that they will continue to bring great pride to Staten Island. I applaud NYSED Commissioner Rosa for selecting a great group of students from throughout New York State to advance to the next round of review with the Commission on Presidential Scholars. As both a Staten Islander and Senator, I am proud to continue to support Cayden and Casey through their candidacy."*

The State Education Department nominated 25 New York State high school seniors for the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, Commissioner Betty A. Rosa announced today. Presidential Scholar recognition is one of the nation's highest honors for high school students who represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in young people.

Board of Regents Chancellor Lester W. Young, Jr. said, "A Presidential Scholars nomination is recognition of the pinnacle of academic attainment, artistic talent, or career and technical program accomplishments. I am deeply impressed by the effort and dedication shown by these young people who exemplify what our students can achieve with hard work and opportunities to thrive."

Commissioner Rosa said, "It is my privilege to submit these fine students to represent New York as Presidential Scholar candidates. Each has shown excellence in their pursuits in school and has made their mark in their community, building on their education through

service to others. Each of these students deserves this honor, and I wish them well in the selection process.”

The White House Commission on Presidential Scholars selects scholars annually based on their academic success, artistic excellence, essays, school evaluations, and transcripts, as well as evidence of community service, leadership, and demonstrated commitment to high ideals.

Application is by invitation only. Students chosen as U.S. Presidential Scholars receive a U.S. Presidential Scholars medallion in June. For more information on the Presidential Scholars Program, visit the [U.S. Department of Education’s website](#).

Below are comments from the legislators who recommended the students.

#### **General Component Nominees for the 2023 Presidential Scholars Program**

<b>Student Nominee</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School District</b>
Akkhil Morkonda	Columbia High School	East Greenbush Central School District
Alexa DeSanctis	Fairport High School	Fairport Central School District
Neyferson Solis Usme	Harrison High School	Harrison Central School District
Lily Glazier	Franklin Academy High School	Malone Central School District

Sampson Moyik	The Clinton School	NYC Geographic District #2
Olivia Dartley	The Clinton School	NYC Geographic District #2
Muhammad Naqvi	Francis Lewis High School	NYC Geographic District #26
Jena Kim	Francis Lewis High School	NYC Geographic District #26
Niamh Smyth	Academy of American Studies	NYC Geographic District #30
Jordan Sewell	Academy of American Studies	NYC Geographic District #30
Cayden Auyeung	Staten Island Technical High School	NYC Geographic District #31
Casey Boyle	Staten Island Technical High School	NYC Geographic District #31
Luke Dickhuth	Earl L. Vandermeulen High School	Port Jefferson Union Free School District
Jasmyne Floyd	World of Inquiry High School No. 58	Rochester City School District
Shaan Sekhon	Saugerties High School	Saugerties Central School District

Nicole Zhou	Scarsdale High School	Scarsdale Union Free School District
Sabrina Guo	Syosset High School	Syosset Central School District
Bohdan Centore	Westhill High School	Westhill Central School District
Succhay Sreenivas Gadhar	Williamsville East High School	Williamsville Central School District
Julia Young	Clayton A. Bouton High School	Voorheesville Central School District

**Career and Technical Education Nominees for the 2023 Presidential Scholars Program**

<b>Student Nominee</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School District</b>
Alex Wejko	Altmar-Parish-Williamstown Junior-Senior High School	Altmar-Parish-Williamstown Central School District
Cody Cardinal	Depew High School	Depew Union Free School District
Ashly Duarte-Calderon	Ramapo High School	East Ramapo Central School District

Nicholas Milau	General Douglas MacArthur High School	Levittown Public Schools
Chloe Phillips	Southampton High School	Southampton Union Free School District

**Quotes by New York State Legislators on the Presidential Scholars Nominees:**

**Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins:** "I am delighted that one of my nominees, Nicole Zhou of Scarsdale High School, was selected for the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program by Commissioner Rosa. Nicole's academic record is extraordinary, as is her dedication to her many extracurriculars, which include training puppies to be service animals for individuals who have been incarcerated and teaching young children to play piano. Nicole often had to balance the values and traditions of her parents, two Chinese immigrants, with the American customs she experienced at school, navigating between cultures while pursuing her studies and extracurricular activities. It was my pleasure to recommend Nicole for this honor, of which she is very deserving."

**Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris:** "These nominees are impressive young people whose commitment to academic excellence, extracurricular activities, and involvement in their communities shine bright across our state. I am thrilled Jordan Sewell and Niamh Smyth were nominated as Presidential Scholars and congratulate them and the Academy of American Studies on this impressive honor."

**Assembly Minority Leader Will Barclay:** “I’m extremely proud of Alex Wejko and his achievements at Altmar-Parish-Williamstown High School. He continues to successfully blend an incredible academic résumé with impressive work ethic, compassion, and strong leadership skills. His skill set has grown tremendously since he began his advanced manufacturing studies, and he has quickly become an example to his peers and others interested in the field. I was happy to nominate Alex for consideration of this prestigious honor, and I look forward to seeing him thrive in whatever role he takes on in the coming months and years. I have no doubt he will find great success as his academic career advances.”

**Senator Shelley B. Mayer:** “Congratulations to Neyferson Solis Usme, a senior at Harrison High School, on being nominated by Commissioner Betty A. Rosa for the prestigious Presidential Scholars Program. Neyferson is a gifted, resilient student who has remained positive and committed to his education in the face of many challenges. He has excelled in advanced courses ranging from world history and physics to Spanish language and culture and is a dedicated and talented musician, composer, and video editor. In school, he is engaged and insightful, and demonstrates leadership skills. Outside of school, he volunteers with his church to distribute donated food to those in need in his community. I have no doubt that Neyferson will accomplish amazing things in his lifetime. I congratulate all of this year’s nominees for their achievements, and I thank the community members, teachers, administrators, and families who supported them along the way.”

**Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick:** “I am deeply proud that Commissioner Rosa has nominated two of our most accomplished young local students, Olivia Dartley, who has led

many initiatives, including a fundraiser for the Ukrainian Red Cross Society and the creation of a Mental Health Awareness Week; and Sampson Moyik, a dedicated student of aviation and mentor in his church. Both students have excelled academically and engage in a wide range of activities as leaders in their communities. I congratulate Olivia and Sampson and their families on these esteemed nominations and wish them the best as they continue in the application process.”

**Assemblymember Fred W. Thiele, Jr.:** “I am delighted that Commissioner Rosa has nominated Ms. Chloe Phillips, a student at Southampton High School, for the Career and Technical Education (CTE) portion of the 2023 Presidential Scholars Program. Chloe Phillips is a compassionate young woman who excels academically and has made contributions to both her school and our community. Being selected as one of twenty-five students from New York to be considered for this honor is a noteworthy achievement, and I am honored to represent this fine student in the 1<sup>st</sup> Assembly District. I wish Chloe luck as she moves to the next level in this notable competition!”

**Senator John W. Mannion:** “Westhill High School Senior Bohdan ‘Bodie’ Centore is a shining example of the hard work and dedication that can lead to success in the classroom and in life. As one of the 25 students from New York nominated for the 2023 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, he is a true polymath who serves as class president, earned a gold medal in the Academic Decathlon, and excels in music and athletics. This well-rounded young man is a testament to the power of a quality education and the vital role teachers have in shaping the minds of future leaders like Bodie.”



**Assemblymember Karen McMahon:** "I was thrilled to learn that Succhay Sreenivas Gadhar of Williamsville East High School is one of 25 students from across NYS selected as a candidate for the 2023 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Succhay is a remarkable student, excelling in a very challenging and competitive academic environment. His passion for learning motivated him to start a nonprofit organization with the goal of providing resources to students in underprivileged communities around the world who do not have access to STEM programs or seminars. Recognizing the importance of STEM education, Succhay seeks to help others find a path to success in that field, and it was an honor to nominate him for this recognition."

**Assemblymember Jen Lunsford:** "Alexa DeSanctis embodies a spirit and determination that sets her apart from her peers, not just here in the 135th District, but across the state. Through her schoolwork and her community involvement, Alexa exhibits tremendous intelligence, leadership, and character. She has overcome adversity with grit and grace, making herself a role model and a point of pride for the Fairport Raiders community. It is a tremendous honor to see her chosen as a presidential scholar nominee by State Education Commissioner Betty A. Rosa. We can't wait to see what she does next!"

**Senator Andrew J. Lanza:** "I am excited to learn that two students selected by me, Cayden Auyeung and Casey Boyle, both of Staten Island Technical High School are two of 25 students from New York that Commissioner Betty A. Rosa has nominated as candidates for recognition in the 2023 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Since 1964 over 8,000 high school seniors have been named as Presidential Scholars. Through strength of character, leadership, hard work, and academic success they have earned my recommendation for this prestigious honor. I am confident that they will continue to bring great pride to Staten Island. I applaud

NYSED Commissioner Rosa for selecting a great group of students from throughout New York State to advance to the next round of review with the Commission on Presidential Scholars. As both a Staten Islander and Senator, I am proud to continue to support Cayden and Casey through their candidacy."

**Assemblymember John T. McDonald III:** "I sincerely appreciate the nomination of Akkhil Morkonda from my Assembly District that was put forth by Commissioner Betty Rosa as part of an elite group of students for the Presidential Scholars program. This prestigious program recognizes the talent and commitment of these future leaders. Thank you to Commissioner Rosa and the Regents for their continued efforts to shine a light on these bright stars throughout New York State."

**Assemblymember Nily Rozic:** "Jena and Muhammad are two examples of the academic excellence in Assembly District 25 and are wholly deserving of the Presidential Scholars nomination. Both Muhammad and Jena have displayed remarkable scholastic achievements while also bettering the community and pursuing laudable hobbies. I look forward to seeing all they will accomplish in the years to come."

**Assemblymember Patricia Fahy:** "I am so proud that Commissioner Rosa has nominated one of our most distinguished young leaders and scholars, Julia Young of Voorheesville High School, for the highly esteemed U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Julia joins a prestigious group of students nominated for the U.S. Presidential Scholars program each year and has made her community, the 109th District, and New York State proud. Julia is involved in almost every area of her school community, and I'm delighted that she will be rightly

recognized for her outstanding and exemplary academic and extracurricular achievements.”

**Assemblymember Billy Jones:** “Congratulations to Lily Glazier and to all the students who were nominated as candidates for recognition in the 2023 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Lily is a remarkable student whose dedication to academics, dance, and her community has made the North Country proud. It was an honor to nominate Lily as a Presidential Scholar, and I wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors.”

**Senator Kevin Thomas:** "Congratulations to Nicholas Milau of MacArthur High School on his well-deserved nomination to the prestigious U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Nicholas is an extraordinary student who continues to impress those around him through his hard work and dedication in spite of personal challenges. His academic success is a testament to the drive, inner strength and intelligence he brings with him wherever he goes. I was proud to recommend Nicholas for this honor because he truly embodies the resilient spirit of Long Islanders, and I wish him the best of luck in future endeavors!"

**Assemblymember Monica P. Wallace:** "The Presidential Scholars Program is the most prestigious achievement for high school students in our nation, and Cody Cardinal has fully earned this honor. Through his exceptional performance in the classroom and his involvement in extracurricular activities, Cody exemplifies the leadership and academic excellence that the Presidential Scholars Program is intended to recognize. I was honored to recommend Cody's nomination to Commissioner Rosa, and I'm thrilled to see that Commissioner Rosa has accepted my recommendation. I commend Cody for this outstanding achievement and wish him the best in the very bright future that he has ahead

of him."

**Senator Anthony Palumbo:** "Congratulations to Luke Dickhuth, of Port Jefferson, on being nominated for the 2023 Presidential Scholars Program. Luke is one of 25 nominees for the program from New York State and this recognition speaks to his impressive accomplishments and achievements both inside the classroom and beyond. I wish Luke, and all our New York nominees the best as they compete for this prestigious award against students from around the country."

**Assemblymember Kenneth P. Zebrowski:** "I am excited to congratulate Ashly Duarte-Calderon of Ramapo High School on being named a Career and Technical Education Nominee for the 2022 Presidential Scholars Program by Commissioner Betty Rosa. Ashly is a responsible and independent student who is passionate about science and looked up to by her peers. I was proud to nominate her for this scholarship and look forward to the bright future that she has."

**Senator Michelle Hinchey:** "It was my pleasure to nominate Saugerties High School student Shaan Sekhon for the 2023 Presidential Scholars Program. Shaan has distinguished himself as an intelligent, well-rounded, and highly regarded young leader among his peers, who have recently elected him as their Senior Class President. Shaan stands out for his academic successes and passion for tutoring, his sportsmanship on the Varsity Soccer team, and shines through his community volunteerism with the Key Club and Building Leadership Team. I congratulate Shaan on this esteemed nomination and wish him all the best in the bright future he has ahead."

**Assemblyman David G. McDonough:** “I would like to congratulate Nicholas Milau of General Douglas MacArthur High School on being nominated as a candidate for recognition in the 2023 U.S. Presidential Scholars Excellence in Career and Technical Education Program. Nicholas is an extraordinary student who is committed to his academics, pursuing a career in Marine Engineering, and is a resilient and compassionate young man who taps into his inner strengths and his ability to be resourceful. Nicholas is a tremendous inspiration to all students and I wish him all the best on his future endeavors.”

**Assemblymember Demond Meeks:** “It is an honor to have a scholar from the 137th district nominated for the 2023 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Jasmyne is a young lady at World of Inquiry School #58 who has shown a tremendous amount of dedication towards her education. Congratulations Jasmyne, and thank you, Commissioner Betty A. Rosa, for the nomination.”