



January 17, 2024

Nutana Collegiate Graduate Wins 2023 Award of Excellence

This year's recipient of the Saskatoon Board of Education's 2023 Award of Excellence is Banin Arjmand. The annual award is given to the student who best exemplifies the vision and goals of Saskatoon Public Schools.

"Banin is a truly exceptional individual who has not only embarked on a journey of personal growth and learning but also has made a mark within the greater school community," said Bernadette Laliberte, principal of Nutana Collegiate.

Banin was born in Pakistan after her family was forced to leave Afghanistan. She later returned to Afghanistan and came to Canada in the fall of 2021. In January 2022, she entered Grade 11 at Nutana Collegiate, where her unwavering commitment to academic excellence, extracurricular activities and the school community quickly became apparent. Banin's leadership qualities and profound sense of commitment to positive change have allowed her to deliver multiple presentations to Nutana students and staff, including a keynote speech at the school's 2022 Disruption Day Conference, opening remarks at Nutana's International Women's Day Conference and Celebrating Women Career Event, a speech and solo dance at the Nowruz (Persian New Year) celebration, and a presentation to the nursing student cohort about refugee experiences.

"Banin's unique perspective of the world, her willingness to challenge norms and break barriers regardless of what others may think, and her determination to help those in need have left an indelible mark on our Nutana community," said Sandra Mancusi, Newcomer Youth Engagement Program educator at Nutana Collegiate.

While studying at Nutana, Banin organized a school fundraiser in conjunction with students from Mount Royal Collegiate on behalf of Canadian Women for Women of Afghanistan, following the bombing of the Kaaj Educational Centre in Kabul in the fall of 2022. She was also a student representative at the Saskatoon Public Schools Trustees Forum and participated in Saskatoon's 2022 Speak Out event sponsored by Saskatoon Crime Stoppers. In addition, she was a member of multiple clubs, including biking, drawing, hiking, photography, skateboarding and swimming, and played bass in a rock band. Banin is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in international studies at the University of Saskatchewan. In the future, she hopes to attend law school and join an international aid organization.

Established in 1990, the Award of Excellence is presented annually to the most outstanding graduate based on academic excellence, personal qualities, leadership and participation. Staff members from each public collegiate nominate a graduate to the selection committee. The winner receives a \$5,000 cash award and a medal. Nominated students are honoured and receive a \$500 cash award.

Saskatoon Public Schools is the largest school division in Saskatchewan with more than 28,000 students and upwards of 3,300 professional and support staff in 47 elementary schools, 10 secondary schools, Whitecap Dakota partnership school and one associate school.

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