

PURPOSE: **2022 Application Information**

The Best & Brightest Awards honor outstanding high school seniors in Leon County for excellence in a field of study, service to their schools and the community, leadership and academic success.

WHO'S ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE:

Graduating Seniors in accredited High Schools in Leon County are eligible for nomination for the Best & Brightest Awards. The principal of each public and private high school has the opportunity to nominate a student in each of the 15 categories. Schools are not required to nominate a student for every category. Leon County home-schooled students and Leon County Virtual School students can apply online at <http://www.wcsleon.com/bestandbrightest>.

A student's record of community service is the most important element of the application.

Successful applicants will have a strong history of service activities. The Best & Brightest Awards finalists represent those who have consistently contributed to their school and community throughout their high school career grades 9 through 12.

CATEGORIES: The Best & Brightest Awards will select up to three winners in each of these 15 categories:

Art	English & Language Arts	Public Speaking
Athletics	Journalism & Media Productions	Science & Health
Business	Leadership	Social Science
Career/Technical	Mathematics	Technology
Drama & Performing Arts	Music	World Languages

Judges will weigh the qualifications of each finalist for the Best & Brightest Awards in three criteria:

- School, Community Service and Leadership: A quality record in the school or community and leadership.
- Achievement in School: Exhibits academic success.
- Personal Interview: All finalists must appear for a personal interview before a panel of judges to discuss the items on their entry form and provide judges with insight into their community and school service, academics and their self-assurance, sincerity and poise.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. A student wishing to be recognized by the Best & Brightest Awards must apply through the school's Best & Brightest Awards coordinator, appointed by the principal. *NOTE: Applicants can self-nominate to be considered for selection by the Best & Brightest Coordinator by that school's internal qualifying deadline.*
2. The school's Best & Brightest Coordinator is encouraged to seek qualified applicants, with assistance from teachers, guidance counselors and parents. The coordinator should also structure a committee to recommend eligible students.
3. A student holding a distinguished record of service may apply to become a nominee in more than one category, but the school may only nominate that student in one category, if any. The student must illustrate academic achievement associated with the category, but their school and community service does not have to be specific to a category.

THE BEST & BRIGHTEST AWARDS CATEGORIES:

All finalists should have a track record and proficiency in their selected category. Expertise may be demonstrated by the finalists' participation and concentration in a category.

Art: Applicant may participate in the teaching, inspiration or encouragement of others through the use of visual arts. Applicant may demonstrate creative ability in drawing, painting, sculpture, fabrics, photography, graphic design or any other medium in the visual arts.

Athletics: Applicant may demonstrate physical education or leadership and participation in individual and team sports in the school and community. Applicant may demonstrate leadership and participation in sports not included in a school's athletic program (i.e. equestrian, crew, etc). Applicant may participate in managing recreation programs, coaching or assisting in athletic activity that contributes to the welfare of others.

Business: Applicant may demonstrate expertise in accounting, entrepreneurial initiatives, data processing, word processing, marketing and distributive education, consumer education, or basic clerical functions such as keyboarding and document processing. Applicant may participate in the application of office technology and business organization for the benefit of the community.

Career/Technical: Applicant has completed a program of study that involves a multiyear sequence of courses that integrates core academic knowledge with technical and occupational knowledge. Applicant has participated in a program that specializes in the skilled trades, applied sciences, modern technologies, and/or career preparation leading to industry recognized credentials and/or certification.

Drama & Performing Arts: Applicant may participate in acting, singing, film, video or radio, dancing in theatrical production, or staging and directing such productions. Vocalists not involved in theatrical productions are better suited for the Music category.

English & Language Arts: Applicant may demonstrate leadership in activities related to a fuller understanding of the English language, including an appreciation for reading and writing.

Journalism & Media Production: Applicant may demonstrate expertise by using writing, editing or reporting skills to benefit others in school, church or civic organizations, or through newspapers, magazines or electronic media in the community. Photographers may be better suited for the Art category, unless their photos are used in news publications. Producers and technicians for television programs should choose the Technology category unless they are involved in news writing and editing. Applicants may attach no more than one edition of the newspaper to accompany the entry form.

Leadership: Applicant may demonstrate expertise and achievement in a diverse and well-rounded range of categories, in addition to general scholastic achievement.

Mathematics: Applicant may demonstrate expertise by contributing to mathematical knowledge through individual or group research, or in mathematics or computer science. Computer programmers are included in the Mathematics category. Computer students in word processing and data processing may be better suited in Business or Career/Technical categories.

Music: Applicant may demonstrate expertise by performing vocal or instrumental music, or by fostering wider participation and appreciation for music through school, church or civic organizations. Applicant may participate in groups that share musical talents including tutoring younger students and volunteering in school music programs. An applicant does not have to participate in high school music classes or ensembles, but must document advanced study of an instrument.

Public Speaking: Applicant may demonstrate expertise by debating or publicly speaking about topics that include current events or issues that affect the community. Applicants must provide documentation noting the topic, date, audience size and any other material that provides details of events/speeches.

Science & Health: Applicant may demonstrate expertise by advancing the study of the principles of chemistry, physics, biology, botany, earth and space sciences, physiology, healthcare and medical fields and other scientific areas, or by encouraging study in these areas. Applicant may also participate in promoting the preservation of the environment or working to save an endangered species.

Social Science: Applicant may demonstrate expertise by using knowledge of American and world history, current events, political science, economics, or sociology. Applicant may participate in activities (fundraising or volunteering) related to Student Government as well as local, state and federal government.

Technology: Applicant may demonstrate expertise in computer graphics, computer animation, social media, video knowledge for school or community by using the technical means to influence or improve the community. Applicants may participate in a technological organization, such as extracurricular clubs.

World Languages: Applicant may demonstrate expertise by advancing the study of foreign language (or sign language) or using a world language (or sign language) as a writer, translator or interpreter. Applicant may participate in the study of any language other than English, even if it is the study of an applicant's native language.