

Merit Award Bursary Program

EDUCATOR HAND B O O K
F O R 2025-2026



Funding . Mentoring . Networking . Volunteering

Creating Opportunity for GTHA Students



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Brilliance is
evenly
distributed,
Opportunity
is not.

Educators know the significant obstacles to opportunity, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Merit helps create opportunity.

Merit is committed to increasing support to more students so that they can pursue apprenticeships, trade school programs, colleges and universities.

We want to help you, help students. Please encourage your students to apply.

Your support is important.

Thank you,
Brian Smeenk





ABOUT MERIT

A Bold Vision

To be a leading contributor in recognition and financial awards to grade 11 and grade 12 students in high-needs GTHA schools.

To provide incentives to youth of all abilities to pursue advancement through education and to contribute to their communities.

To establish an alumni program that provides mentoring and networking opportunities for all alumni.

Expand this powerful motivational tool for both students and educators.

**A solution
that rewards more
than just marks.**

- Engaged learner
- Resilience
- Work ethic
- Contribution to school
- Contribution to community and family





MERIT IMPACT

Over 29 years of
opening
doors.

12,286 Applications
4,265 Bursaries granted
\$3.5M Awarded
3 School boards
95 High schools

A diverse pool of applicants
75% visible minorities

Low-income relief
66.4% of 2023 recipients with
household income of less than \$60,000

Graduation rates of 98%
Above the provincial average

Volunteerism amplified
Recipients play a major role on
our committees

Motivational inspiration
Recipient survey indicates positive
impact on pursuing post-secondary
education





BURSARY AMOUNTS

4 Levels of Bursaries

\$5,000
Leaders
of Tomorrow
Grade 12

\$2,000
Very
Deserving
Grade 12

\$1,000
Deserving
Grade 12

\$500
Deserving
Grade 11

One Application





STUDENT APPLICATION

Who can apply

Grade 11 and 12 students with a minimum of 16 credits

Returning to school full-time (secondary or post-secondary)

Attending a participating school from TDSB, TCDSB, PDSB (see meritaward.ca)

Application Steps



CREATE an account on the [application website](#)



COMPLETE the 3-part application

1. Secure academic references by March 23, 2026
2. Secure extracurricular references
3. Personal information



SUBMIT the application with references no later than March 26, 2026



TEACHER / ADMIN STEPS

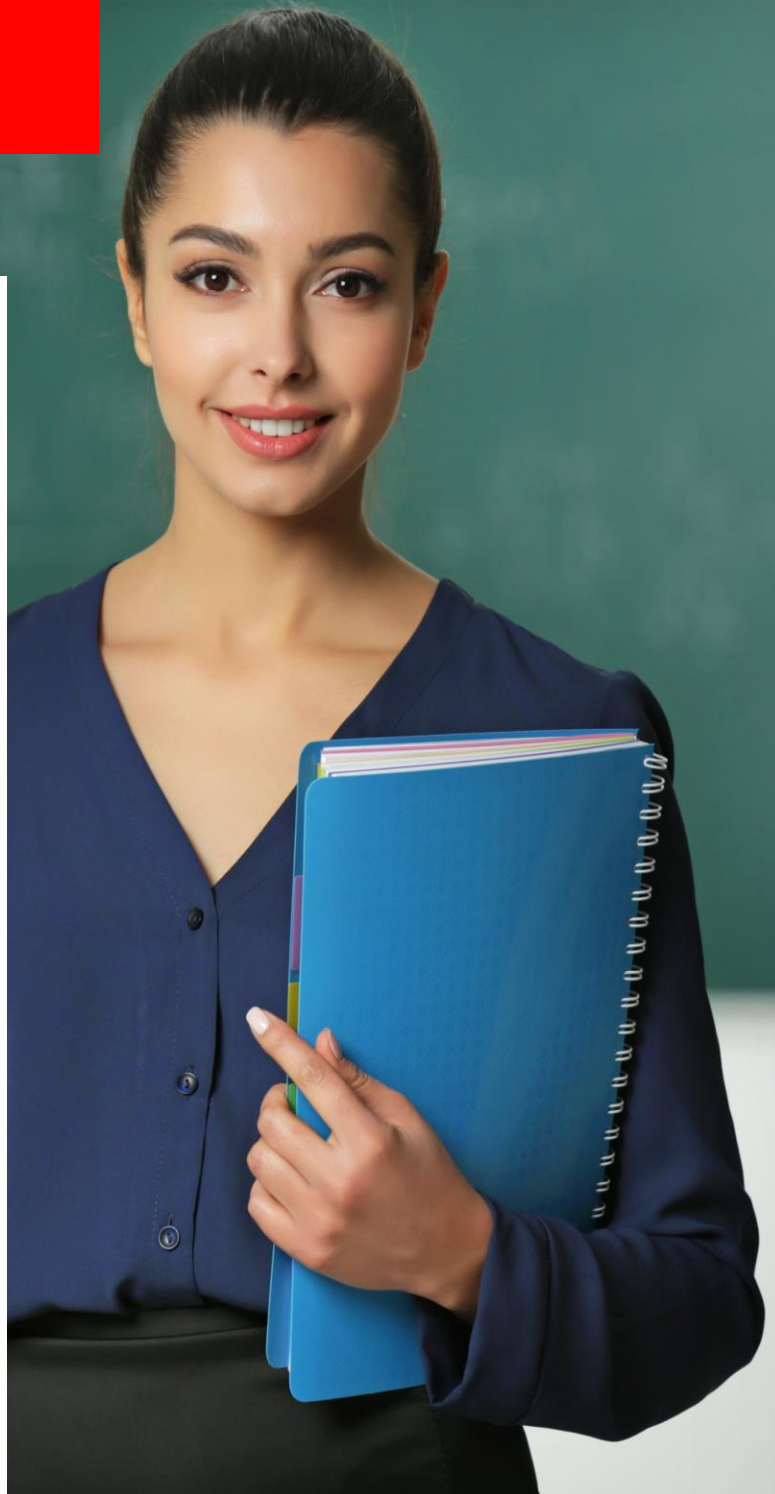
Teacher Review Consists of:

1. Completing the recommendation form on the SM Apply portal
2. Complete references by March 25

Admin Review Consists of:

1. Uploading a student status sheet / student graduation summary
2. Providing a student rating - most deserving, very deserving, deserving, not nominated
3. Comments (if any)
4. Review submitted applications by March 30, 2026

You can contact the Merit Award team any time with questions at info@meritaward.ca





KEY DATES

● APPLICATION DATES

Monday, December 1, 2025
Applications Open

Monday, March 23, 2026
Student Deadline to Request References

Wednesday, March 25, 2026
Reference Submission Deadline by Referee

Thursday, March 26, 2026
Student Application Submission Deadline

Monday, March 30, 2026
School Admin Review and Submission
Deadline

● AWARD DATES

June 2026
Award Notification

June 2026
Award Ceremony

Fall 2026
Bursary Funds Distributed
following proof of school
enrollment



QUESTIONS?

Please email info@meritaward.ca



MERIT AWARD BURSARY PROGRAM



THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
SUPPORT

