

2026 Excellence in Education Week Award Distribution Policy

Background

The Excellence in Education in Week (EEW) program began in 1994 in partnership with schools and business partners to recognize outstanding students and educators. The top 5% of graduating seniors in Marquette and Alger counties receive \$2,000 scholarships while (25) educators receive \$1,000 Professional Development Awards. Grow & Lead: Community and Youth Development manages the awards program and grant administration.

An endowment was created in 1999, with a \$1 million lead gift by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, to ensure the continuation of the scholarships and awards. The Community Foundation of Marquette County and Alger Regional Community Foundations receive ongoing donations. The first year monies were drawn from the endowment to fund the awards was 2008.

After EEW each year, Grow & Lead sends each school a grant for their student scholarships and educator awards. It is the superintendent's responsibility to ensure funds are distributed in keeping with the donor and program intent.

Funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis only. Students or educators must present receipts to the school district for determining eligibility for reimbursement. If approved, the reimbursement will be made directly to the student (or parent/guardian) or educator. **Recipients have two years from the time grants are received by schools to utilize funds.** Any unused funds are not transferrable to another student or educator and must be returned to Grow & Lead. The school superintendent or Grow & Lead's CEO will have final determination of expense eligibility.

Intent – Student Scholarships

The intent of scholarship funds is to support the student's further education. Examples of eligible expenses include tuition, books or class supplies, computers, etc. Students must be enrolled in a university, college, or trade school program to receive funds.

For those students entering the Armed Forces, the award may also be used to support further education while enlisted in the military. Examples of eligible expenses listed above apply. The awards will be held at the student's respective school for the same two-year period as other scholarships. Any unspent funds will be returned to Grow & Lead where they will be held for an additional four years for the student's further education. The same expense eligibility requirements apply during this period. If funds are unused after this time, they will be returned to the EEW Endowment Fund. The student will be responsible for providing Grow & Lead with updated contact information.

For those students enrolled in the Marquette-Alger Technical Middle College, the award may be used to support education needs while enrolled in the College and any additional education needs beyond the program. Examples of eligible expenses listed above apply. The awards will be held at the student's respective school for the same two-year period as other scholarships. Any unspent funds will be returned to Grow & Lead where they will be held for an additional four years for the student's further education. The same expense eligibility requirements apply during this period. If funds are unused after this time, they will be returned to the EEW Endowment Fund. The student will be responsible for providing Grow & Lead with updated contact information.

Only one extra scholarship per school will be allotted due to a GPA tie.

Intent – Educator Professional Development Awards (PDAs)

The intent of PDAs is to support an educator's professional development or to support a unique special project as outlined in their award proposal. Examples of eligible expenses include tuition or conference fees, travel expenses, or supplies.

At the end of the grant period, narrative reports are completed by educators and financial reports are completed by the schools for all awards as requested by Grow & Lead.

1/11; Amended 5/11; Amended 2/18, Amended 1/19; Amended 1/26