

Application Form

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The West Michigan Officials Student/Athlete

The student/athlete must be a graduating senior to be eligible for this award.

Student/Athlete: Bethany Behnke

School: Hamilton High School

Parent(s) or Guardian name(s) & phone number(s): _____

Resident Mailing address _____

Student Email Address: _____

Parent Email Address: _____

Parent Contact phone number: _____

(Please note that this number will be kept confidential)

Below are five suggested questions we would like you to answer. Provide your narrative answers on separate attachments to this application. **TYPE ONLY**

1. What person or event has had the most influence on your life? Please give a detailed explanation.
2. What are your goals for the next five years and what steps are you taking to accomplish them?
3. List outside activities that are important to you and why. (clubs, volunteer work, etc.). [Please specify year(s) for each]
4. List any special academic honors, awards, scholarships, or achievements. [Please specify year(s) for each]
5. List any athletic achievements or awards, plus other sports participated in during the high school years.
[Please specify what level (varsity, subvarsity) and year(s) for each]
6. GPA: Optional

Letters of recommendation may be submitted by your: Coach, Athletic Director, Principal, Guidance Counselor, Teacher or Minister.

Please return the application to the address below.

Bob Wojcik

NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DATES SHOWN BELOW.

Boys' Basketball: January 24
Girls' Basketball: January 24

1. What person or event has had the most influence on your life? Please give a detailed explanation.

I believe that the event that has shaped my life the most into what it has become today is when I had a season ending shoulder injury in 2022. I tore a muscle in my shoulder which caused me to have a shoulder surgery with a 6 month rehabilitation timeline, and the time where I was not able to participate in sports gave me a lot of time to reflect on what athletics gave me in my life and who I was without them. Up until that point in my life I had been go, go, go with every type of sport you could think of. But then it all came to a halting stop and I had to figure out where to go from here and find who I was, and what my identity was, without athletics being at the forefront of my life. I stayed close to my teams and the sports during my time of not being able to play but I found clarity in who I was. I realized that there are so many layers to myself and I should not be defined by one single thing, such as sports. I was able to discover that I loved to read, and I now spend a lot of my free time reading and I am constantly looking for new books to purchase or put on my "to be purchased" list. I also learned to value my academics a great deal more than I already had. I have always been a driven student but this gap gave me more time to put my drive into my academics and push myself to farther limits than where I had been before. I believe this event has shaped me into the person I am today and has taught me the self discipline that an athlete needs to have in order to find success in their sport. I could have sulked about my circumstances or I could have stepped up to the plate and tried to hit a home run with what I still had out in front of me. Many athletes look at their injury through a negative lens but I look at it as an opportunity to take advantage of, to become a better version of myself. I truly believe that I would not be where I am today without my injury and how I didn't let that define me as a person.

2. What are your goals for the next five years and what steps are you taking to accomplish them?

My goal for the next 5 years is to go to college starting in the fall of 2024 and then after that attain a job in a Sports Journalism position which will set me up for future success. I am planning on majoring in Sports Journalism in college, which will lead me down the path of becoming a Sports Reporter as a career. I know that in order to find the best opportunities possible in the Sports Journalism field, I would need to attend a college that has a large presence of athletics and would provide me with opportunities to cover a variety of competitions to give me exposure to this career field that I would not be able to find at other colleges. To achieve these goals I have made a myriad of decisions that all push me in the right direction for getting where I aspire to be. I applied to 8 competitive schools, all of which have large athletic programs to assist me and give me the best chance at receiving top tier first hand experience and guidance. Any of the 8 schools that I applied to would give me a phenomenal education to set me up for success in my post college years. At a few of the schools I applied to, I have possible internships and shadowship opportunities lined up that would expose me further to the Sports Journalism world and reaffirm that this is the career path that is best suited for me and

my future. These internships and shadowships would be incredibly beneficial for not only experience but also to learn the ins and the outs of the workforce before I leave the comforting walls of a college campus. I will continue to search for things I can do during my vital 4 years of college to further my education of Sports Journalism and my experience in that field of work.

3. List outside activities that are important to you and why. [*Please specify year(s) for each*]

- National Honor Society (2021-current). The National Honor Society is something that is important to me because it is something that requires me to put my own needs aside and help other people. As the leader of our high school chapter I am constantly working with other people and communicating about events and tasks that need to be completed in a timely manner. I find pride in the fact that I am able to be a part of something that helps out a community and isn't focused on personal wants.
- Community Action House Volunteer Work (2021-current). I have volunteered at the Community Action House a variety of times and I find it important because I am provided with an opportunity to help those less fortunate and be able to learn about their life stories which might be different than my own, giving me a new perspective.
- Church Volunteer Work (2018-current). Through my church I have been able to make bags of necessities for those in need and deliver them to shelters where they will be utilized to their highest ability. Doing this is important to me because it gives me a stepping stone to do greater things to help others and provides me with first hand experience in helping and knowing what it takes to help.
- My Job at a Golf Course Restaurant (2022-current). I have been working at this job since I was 16 years old and have met so many great people through it. At this job I am face to face with a lot of customers and I believe it has equipped me with social skills that I otherwise would not have been as quick to have. I also have learned a great deal about the details of running a business that I believe give me a greater look into the real world, which I believe is an experience that I am very lucky to have.
- My Job as a Barista (2022-current). I have also been working at this job since I was 16 years old. This job is important to me because it has taught me the importance of details in a work environment and communication skills that are necessary to be successful in a place of work. Because of this job my multitasking skills have improved tremendously which is one of the reasons why this job is so important to me.

4. **List any special academic honors, awards, scholarships, or achievements. [Please specify year(s) for each]**

- Academic "A" Team: 2020-21 (3 times), 2021-22, (3 times), 2022-23 (3 times), 2023-24 (1 time). You earn this award by finishing the trimester with grades of all A's, and you can earn it a maximum of 3 times per school year.
- Student of the Month (2021)
- Nominated as Senior Class President (2023-24)
- National Honor Society President (2023-24)
- Member of National Honor Society (2021-current)
- A chosen speaker at an assembly to discuss self-discipline in athletics (2024)

5. **List any athletic achievements or awards, plus other sports participated in during the high school years. [Please specify what level (varsity, subvarsity) and year(s) for each]**

- 2023 Softball District Champions
- 2x JV Softball Captain (2021 and 2022)
- Varsity Basketball Captain (2023-24)
- Varsity Softball Captain (2023-24)
- A chosen speaker at an assembly to discuss self-discipline in athletics (2024)

Other Sports Participated in:

- Freshman Volleyball (2020)
- Varsity Volleyball (2021 and 2022)
- Girls Cross Country (2023)
- Freshman Basketball (2020-21)
- JV Basketball (2021-22)
- Varsity Basketball (2022-current)
- JV Softball (2021 and 2022)
- Varsity Softball (2023-current)

6. **GPA:** 4.102

Hamilton High School
4911 136th Ave.
Hamilton, MI 49419

Mitch Bosch, Principal
David Sheppard, Assistant Principal
Eric Talsma, Athletic Director

Phone 269-751-5185
Fax 269-751-7670

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing this letter of recommendation on behalf of Bethany Behnke. I have had the pleasure to know this motivated young scholar for the last two years in which she was a student in two of my English courses, including AP Language and Composition. During Ms. Behnke's time in my classroom, she has consistently proven herself to be an exceptionally talented student academically, and even more importantly, a driven human who holds herself to the highest standards.

The most striking thing about Bethany's academic development over the time that I have had the pleasure to have her in my class was her aspiration to become the best student she can possibly be despite the fact that she was already one of the most accomplished and brightest students in my classes. Because of their many talents, it is all too common for advanced students to rest on their laurels and get into a groove of mediocrity. This is not at all the case with Bethany. Instead, she is extremely driven yet teachable. Even though she has the confidence to know that she is an immensely talented writer and thinker, she has the self-reflection necessary to know that she can still get better, as well as the humility and teachability to seek the wisdom and experience of her teachers. This tendency underscores a fundamental truth about Bethany: she is her own toughest critic, and will not settle for anything less than her best. It is this attitude that makes Ms. Behnke a perfect fit for a liberal arts education.

Additionally, Bethany has stood out amongst her peers in terms of her dedication to whatever she puts her mind to day in and day out, whether in the classroom or out of it. In addition to what I see daily in the classroom, Bethany has served with distinction in our Covering Hawkeye Sports media class as well as on the Softball field. In all of these arenas, Ms. Behnke has developed a reputation as a dependable, hard-working young person, as someone who people can count on, whether a coach, staff member, teammate or student. I know, and all of the staff in this building know beyond all doubt, that whenever Bethany is given a task or assignment, no matter how difficult, she will work with dogged yet quiet determination to see that task is done correctly and with maximum effort. Let's face it, these are qualities that are exceedingly rare in *adults* these days, let alone young people, and I can think of no better example of someone who breaks that mold of indifference and mediocrity while at the same time expecting no recognition and notoriety in return.

I am convinced that Bethany Behnke exhibits all of the character traits and academic skills that you are seeking in a scholarship applicant. I have no doubt that she will work with as much determination as anyone to make sure that your financial support is put to good use in a productive and rewarding manner as possible. She is an exceptional student and human being, and a perfect candidate for your award.

Sincerely,

Kevin Everly

AP Language and Composition
Integrated World History and Literature
Hamilton High School