

VARSIY  BRANDS

SCHOOL SPIRIT AWARDS

2017 AWARD CATEGORIES

The search is on for America's best high schools, with awards totaling \$100,000 from Varsity Brands. The grand prize winner will be named America's Most Spirited High School and will receive \$25,000 for their school.

Applications for the 2016-17 Varsity Brands School Spirit Awards open in December. Application deadlines vary. See below for more information.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Nominees must be affiliated with a high school in the United States (students, faculty, coach, staff, etc.). Entrants must be nominated by a student, colleague or community member. You may nominate yourself.

All Entries Must Include:*

- One 500-word essay demonstrating why the nominee is deserving of this award
- One letter of recommendation from a school principal, administrator or community leader
- Two photos of the nominee and his/her/their work
- Optional: Up to three links to additional media (including but not limited to press releases, videos, photos, articles, etc.)

*See category descriptions for exceptions

STUDENT AWARDS

Varsity MVP Award

We're looking for student-athletes who exemplify sportsmanship, leadership and teamwork. The Varsity MVP should be the "glue" of the team – someone who helps maintain morale no matter the circumstance. This student has as many teambuilding skills as athletic skills – he or she knows how to motivate, inspire and encourage teammates to work together, push harder and achieve the utmost success.

- Nominee must be a high school student
- Nominee must participate in at least one school sport
- Essay should identify specific examples of leadership, sportsmanship, and teamwork

Magnificent Manager Award

We're looking for one dedicated student who loyally and eagerly assists athletic teams. This team manager keeps practices and games running smoothly so that the athletes can focus on bringing their best to the game. Teammates consider this person an invaluable and irreplaceable member of the team.

- Nominee must be a high school student
- Essay should include specific examples or anecdotes detailing this student's commitment to team manager role

Student to Celebrate Award

We're looking for one student who has a deep and genuine love for his/her school. This student is driven, kind and well-rounded. He or she cares deeply about representing the school in the best possible light. He/she consistently attends school events and displays the utmost sportsmanship and school pride. This student also takes academics seriously, and challenges him or herself in the classroom.

- Nominee must be a high school student
- Nominee must participate in at least one school club or sport
- Nominee must hold at least one leadership position within the school

Superior Sportsmanship Award

We're looking for one athletic team that shows respect and graciousness to opposing teams, referees and school groups. Even when the chips are down, this team roots for their players until the end. This team goes out of its way to welcome visiting opponents and maintains a positive attitude during all events.

- Nominee must be an athletic team
- Essay must identify specific examples or anecdotes demonstrating sportsmanship

STUDENT AWARDS CONTINUED

Outstanding Student Section Award

We're looking for a unified, organized and creative group of students who promote their school's clubs and athletics with sportsmanship and style. This group recognizes that there's power in numbers and brings a large group of supporters to home and away games. This group brings passion, enthusiasm and creativity to a variety of school events throughout the year.

- Nominee must be a high school student organization

"Sound of Spirit" Marching Band Award

The marching band has become an All-American staple for school sporting events. This award will honor one marching band who brings talent, innovation and dedication to school events. Most importantly – this band lives for game night and eagerly takes on the responsibility of providing weekly entertainment to school fans.

Finalists for this award will be invited to Walt Disney World® Resort to perform before a live audience.

*EARLY DEADLINE

- Nominee must be a high school band
- Nominee must have a school fight song
- Nominee should perform at least one halftime performance each year
- Nominee must have a presence at multiple events throughout the year

NEW! The Spirit Leader Awards

The American School Spirit Awards, the premier award for cheerleading and dance teams, has officially joined the Varsity Brands School Spirit Awards family as The Spirit Leader Awards. The Spirit Leader Awards will honor one cheer team and one dance team with an ongoing commitment to community service, outstanding school athletic support, creative spirit raising activities and strong academics.

The overall winning teams will receive a trip to the 2017 UCA National High School Cheerleading Championship or 2017 UDA National Dance Team Championship for 2 coaches and 4 captains/squad members along with:

- A feature spot on ESPN
- Awards for spring banquet
- A feature spot on Varsity.com
- Gift certificate for a Varsity Spirit camp
- A feature in American Cheerleader Magazine

*EARLY DEADLINE

- Nominee must be a high school cheer or dance team
- Entry must include:
 - One 700-word essay, divided as follows:
 - Team mission statement (a brief description of team goals, objectives and activities) – 100 words
 - Description of team's community service projects and initiatives, and the impact they've had on the community – 250 words

- Description of team's most successful spirit raising activities and the impact they've had on the school – 250 words
- Description of team's commitment to academic excellence and the measures taken to reach team academic standards – 100 words
 - Photos
 - Two letters of recommendation
 - Principal or Athletic Director
 - Community Leader
 - Optional: 3 links to press clippings or video footage of the team

NEW! Chorale Achievement Award

School chorale programs have the potential to add immense value to the high school experience. This award is for a chorale program that contributes to overall school atmosphere by providing quality performances to a variety of school and community events. Most importantly, this chorale program should be a source of pride for students and the community alike.

Finalists for this award will be invited to Walt Disney World® Resort to perform before a live audience.

*EARLY DEADLINE

- Nominee must be a school chorale group

NEW! The Mighty Mascot Award

The school mascot is the quintessential symbol of community, tradition and school pride. The most dedicated mascots create a fun and uplifting atmosphere, keeping crowds in the spirit of the game. We're looking for a school mascot that understands and appreciates that success is about the person in the suit and the story behind the suit – a student dedicated to serving as a role model and spirited supporter of their school.

- Nominee must be a high school student
- Nominee must serve as school mascot
- Essay should detail specific spirit-raising activities and skits
- Essay should detail how the mascot role is significant to the nominee

NEW! Standout Student Film Award

For this award, students are invited to produce a five minute film about their school. The film must be suitable for general audiences, made completely by students, and should focus on a school-spirit theme. Thematically, the film can be about anything school related, or can follow one of these prompts:

1. A day in the life at your school
 2. A school commercial (advertising the best parts of your school to new students and families)
 3. A five-minute history of your school.
- Nominee must be a student or student film group
 - Film must be 100% original and may not contain any copyrighted material
 - Film must be no longer than 5 minutes

STAFF AWARDS

Principal of Principle Award

This principal understands the essential link between school spirit and student achievement and therefore supports academics and athletics alike. This principal is personable, active in school activities, encouraging to students and faculty and innovative in his/her approach to education and engagement.

- Nominee must be a high school principal
- Essay should specify at least two examples of nominee's commitment to elevating and improving the student experience

Legacy Coaching Award

We're looking for one coach with a long-standing history of success. This coach recognizes the link between athletic involvement and student achievement, and therefore encourages both academic excellence and good character. This coach also prioritizes sportsmanship, both on and off the playing field.

- Nominee must be a high school coach
- Nominee must have held current coaching job for a minimum of four years

Outstanding Athletic Director Award

We're looking for one athletic director who supports all school teams enthusiastically and equally, regardless of success level. He/she encourages athletes to excel on the playing field and in the classroom and attends a variety of sporting events to maintain spirit and school pride.

- Nominee must be a high school athletic director

Top-Notch Teacher Award

We're looking for one teacher who understands that achievement means more than a number in a gradebook. It means helping students discover their strengths and passions. Students feel this teacher cares about them both academically and personally. This teacher has a genuine love and loyalty for his/her school and supports it in every way possible.

- Nominee must be a high school teacher
- Essay should identify at least one example of mentorship and/or teaching excellence
- Nominee must advise or take part in at least one extra-curricular activity

NEW! Top Athletic Trainer Award

No team is complete with a dedicated athletic trainer to support athletes both on and off the field. This award is for an athletic trainer with a long history of success. This athletic trainer's expertise is partnered with unwavering enthusiasm and encouragement toward all students. Students know they can count on this athletic trainer

through the ups and downs of life as a student athlete.

- Nominee must be a high school athletic trainer

NEW! Star Staff Member Award

We're looking for a school staff member who makes outstanding contributions to a school's spirit culture. This person turns their otherwise ordinary job into an extraordinary opportunity to make others happy, without expecting anything in return. This person holds an important, but sometimes underappreciated role within the school district (i.e., cafeteria staff, bus driver, crossing guard, custodians or administrative staff) but is still known and loved by students, faculty and community members alike.

- Nominee must be a high school staff member

NEW! Greatest Guidance Counselor Award

This award honors the guidance counselors who devote their careers to serving as advocates for students. The winner of the Greatest Guidance Counselor award skillfully balances the many demands of their profession. This person is well-loved by students and parents and works hard to assess the academic, social and emotional needs of students. This person also works hard to ensure that students are prepared for life after high school and assists students in finding their best post-graduate options.

- Nominee must be a high school guidance counselor
- Essay should identify at least one example of mentorship excellence

SCHOOL AWARDS

Spirit of Inclusion Award

The most spirited schools cultivate an atmosphere where all students feel welcomed and accepted. This award will honor one school that goes out of its way to welcome new students, accommodate students with diverse needs and educate students about issues related to diversity and inclusion.

- Nominee must be a school
- Essay should describe at least two school programs or initiatives to support school inclusiveness

Best School Tradition Award

This award will honor one school with a long-standing, meaningful tradition that ignites school and community pride. This tradition should include the majority of the school/student body and should have a unique and personal significance for the members of that community.

- Nominee must be a high school
- Tradition must have existed for at least four years
- Tradition must involve the majority of the student body/community
- Tradition must be positive, uplifting and uniquely significant to the school

NEW! Best Booster Club Award

This award will honor a motivated group of parents who support their school's athletic program with dedication and enthusiasm. This booster club works in cooperation with team coaches to make sure every player on the team has the resources necessary to succeed. This group can be counted on to organize teambuilding events (dinners, banquets, etc.), attend games, and serve as positive role models to the students they serve.

- Nominee must be a high school booster club

NEW! Most Spirited Yearbook Award

The most memorable school yearbooks have a theme that sets them apart from other school years – a theme that captures the specific spirit and personality of that group of students. Themes based on school pride are perennial favorites. We're looking for a pride-themed yearbook that publically celebrates achievements large and small, group and individual contributions to the school.

- Nominee must be a school yearbook staff
- Essay should include specific examples of school pride from the 2016 or 2017 yearbook
- Nominee must upload up to 5 pages from the 2016 or 2017 yearbook

NEW! Most Memorable Graduation Ceremony

This award is for a school that puts tremendous thought and effort into their annual graduation ceremony. This graduation

ceremony celebrates the achievements of graduating seniors and inspires success in the rest of the student body. Students will remember this ceremony for the rest of their lives.

- Nominee must be a school
- Essay should detail what sets nominee's graduation ceremony apart from others

GRAND PRIZE:

America's Most Spirited High School

This award honors one high school that demonstrates unparalleled school spirit and community pride.

To enter, schools must submit a 90-second video featuring footage from games, pep rallies, student activities, graduation or anywhere school spirit is on display. Submissions must also include a 500-word essay detailing the school's "Spirit Story," two letters of recommendation and two photos demonstrating school spirit.