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## NEWS RELEASE

### 15 WSD Sisler High School CREATE students to receive full scholarships to Vancouver Film School

**Feb. 23, 2021 (Winnipeg, MB)** – Today 15 students from Winnipeg School Division Sisler High School’s CREATE post-grad program received full scholarships to Vancouver Film School (VFS) this year. The scholarships are made possible by unprecedented contributions from VFS and the Walter and Maria Schroeder Foundation.

“Thanks to the incredible generosity of The Schroeder Foundation and VFS, these talented students have a bright future ahead of them,” said Jamie Leduc, CREATE department head. “It was initially going to be 10 scholarships, but when VFS and foundation heard we had 15 students interested and qualified, they just made it happen. All applicants are receiving the full scholarship.”

The students will pursue studies in Classical Animation, Game Design, and Animation Concept Art. Their program begins through distanced learning while living in Winnipeg. VFS is covering 40 percent of each scholarship, and the remaining 60 percent is covered by The Walter and Maria Schroeder Foundation. Together they are providing around \$500,000 in support.

“We are thrilled to invest in these talented students and help them achieve their full potential,” said Walter Schroeder. “These hardworking young animators, many of them new Canadians or first generation, deserve the opportunity to pursue their dreams. At the Walter and Maria Schroeder Foundation, we believe in removing barriers to education.”

The Walter and Maria Schroeder Foundation has supported the WSD Sisler CREATE program since 2019, having provided nearly \$500,000 in scholarships, and an additional \$900,000 in equipment to the high school and post-grad program. The foundation also funds an industry liaison and communications manager to help provide education pathways and job opportunities for students. Part of the foundation’s mandate is to support youth empowerment and Indigenous Reconciliation in Canada.

The VFS contribution to the scholarships is the latest offer in the school’s long-standing relationship with the WSD Sisler CREATE program. Including these 15 students, a total of 70 WSD Sisler CREATE students have received scholarships to study at VFS in the past five years alone. This year’s group will be the largest yet.

“VFS is very proud of its long standing and continually growing relationship with Sisler CREATE,” said Colin Giles, Head of Animation and VFX at Vancouver Film School. “What Jamie Leduc and the staff at Sisler High School have created is a progressive and special program. Having had the privilege of visiting a number of times in person, working with Sisler grads at VFS, and hiring numerous Sisler CREATE Grads as Teaching Assistants in my own staff, I am personally invested in the special relationship we have. The students that arrive in Vancouver from Sisler are special people filled with passion, wonder and drive that has been instilled by the amazing program there.”

Sisler High School is one of the largest high schools in the province and boasts an incredibly diverse student body. This year’s scholarship recipients reflect this rich diversity. Recipients are:

#### Classical Animation

Jireh Laririt  
Mae Lestones  
Kaylise Rose  
Andrew Dilag  
Dairyl Mabunga

Jemimah Suba  
Noah Ascano  
Allen Miranda  
Ethan Reyes  
Rance Dee

#### Game Design

Meadow Chaput  
Josh Estillore  
Justin Choy

#### Animation Concept Art

Nya Langit  
Jose Gabriel Reyes

Sisler High School’s CREATE post-grad initiative is supported through Winnipeg School Division and Manitoba Education. It is a free, eight credit hour program focused on job readiness and post-secondary pathways. Piloted last year, the program is seeing incredible results. Of their 26 graduates, 11 are already employed in the industry, while 10 received full-ride scholarships to VFS – supplied by the Schroeder Foundation and VFS. The students begin their post-secondary studies in Winnipeg, with a focus on finding employment in the local industry.

Registration is now open for the 2021/2022 WSD Sisler CREATE post-grad program. Winnipeg School Division High School graduates under the age of 21 are invited to apply. More information can be found at [www.sislercreate.com](http://www.sislercreate.com).

WSD is celebrating 150 years of learning this year and has 79 schools, 32,752 students and 4,587 full-time employees. Its purpose is to provide a learning environment that fosters the growth of each student’s potential and provide equitable opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary for meaningful participation in a global and diverse society.

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