

Idaho Student Honored with International Award

Arlington, Va., February [XX], 2026 – Trae Schwend of Boise, Idaho, received the 2026 Yes I Can Award for Academics from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Trae will be honored this March along with other Yes I Can recipients at the CEC Convention and Expo in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Yes I Can Awards celebrate and honor the achievements of children and youth with exceptionalities while increasing public awareness of the abilities and aspirations of students with disabilities.

Trae is Deaf and on the autism spectrum and uses cochlear implants. His teacher and nominator note that in just two years, he has made incredible progress. From possessing basic alphabetic knowledge to becoming a confident reader, able to tackle complex texts, Trae's dedication to his academics also extends to mathematics. Described as a "mental math gymnast," he can solve complex equations in his head with speed and accuracy and often share his knowledge with his classmates to help them reach their potential.

Trae's academic curiosity extends to many subjects, notably geology and botany. He has earned the title of "Head Farmer" for his school's community farm. His leadership in this has allowed him to combine his knowledge and initiative to benefit his school community.

"Beyond academics and extracurricular activities, Trae's character sets him apart." shares Brandi Ellis, Trae's teacher and nominator. "He is kind, generous, and deeply invested in the success of his peers. His perseverance, empathy, and enthusiasm for learning make him a role model for our school community. Trae demonstrates every day that challenges are opportunities, and obstacles can become achievements with effort, courage, and a positive attitude."

Thank you to Einstein Advocates for sponsoring the Yes I Can Awards.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to high-quality education that is inclusive and equitable for individuals with disabilities. Learn more about CEC at <https://exceptionalchildren.org/>.

