

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022
www.sde.idaho.gov

Media Contact:
Kristin Rodine
Public Information Officer
208-332-6807
krodine@sde.idaho.gov

Superintendent Ybarra announces student winner of Picture My Future contest

(BOISE) – A Nampa 11th grader’s dramatic pencil sketch of outstretched hands amid the turmoil of the pandemic is the winner of this year’s Picture My Future student art contest.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra announced the winner Monday morning as she outlined her 2022-23 public schools budget request to the Legislature’s Joint Finance-Appropriations committee.

“In past years I have named runners-up in this contest as well as the overall winner. And we did receive numerous beautiful and inspiring entries again this year,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “But ultimately, I decided that this artwork stands alone as the winner.”

“It’s a singular image, at a singular moment, and it makes us think,” the superintendent said. “It captures the difficulties of this long-running pandemic and the strength and caring that help us persevere. It also drives home the importance of caring for students’ mental, emotional and behavioral health as well as their academic achievement.”

The winning drawing by Jaanai Guajardo, a junior at Idaho Arts Charter School, shows a hand reaching up from the ground toward an outstretched hand coming from above.

“The image is striking, as we see that the hand reaching up is surrounded by a swirl of words including stress, depression and social anxiety,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “When we asked Jaanai to explain the meaning within her art, her description illuminated the beauty and insight of her drawing.”

Here’s what the student wrote:

“When asked to do an art piece of what you’ll want to become in the future, I thought about becoming a psychologist. As someone that struggles with social anxiety, I want to be able to help people that go through the same things as me. I then drew what it meant to me -- what having a mental illness is like - - and then I drew how a psychologist helps overcome those struggles. ... The hand on the bottom is the one that is struggling with their illness and they are drowning in their problems, and the hand on the top is reaching out to the other hand, trying to help them overcome their struggles and help them reach happiness.”

“Jaanai’s drawing captures the challenges many students are facing, but also the self-awareness, problem-solving and confidence we all want for our children: the ability to cope with life challenges and succeed academically, socially and professionally,” Superintendent Ybarra said.

The winning artwork will be displayed at State Department of Education headquarters in Boise and on [the SDE’s website](#). The annual contest is open to all Idaho public school students in grades 7 through 12.

###

Attached: The winning artwork