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Press Release

Ignite Achievers Launches Up to \$224,325 in Tuition Scholarships to Support Ambitious High School Students

Now Offering Full and Partial Scholarships: Research With Real Publication Potential to Help Students Stand Out in College Admissions and Beyond

ANN ARBOR, Michigan, Thursday, August 20, 2026. Ignite Achievers, a Michigan-based educational organization specializing in research mentorship for high school students, today announced the launch of the **2026 Ignite Excellence Scholarship Program**, building on a successful first year in 2025, in which 20 scholarship recipients worked with faculty mentors to produce six peer-reviewed publications (with seven student co-authors, including IEEE and ACM proceedings, computing's and engineering's leading professional societies) and nine additional papers now under review at academic conferences and journals. Demand was strong enough that the program grew from an originally planned 12 recipients to 20, ultimately awarding approximately \$200,000 in tuition-waiver scholarships. This year, the program offers two award tiers:

- **Full Scholarship:** a 100% tuition fee waiver, up to \$10,000 in value, with potential Paper Writing Program support. Up to 12 awarded, in the 1-on-1 or Hybrid track.
- **Partial Scholarship:** a tuition fee waiver covering at least 50% of tuition. Up to 13 awarded, in the 1-on-1 or Hybrid track.

All scholarships are applied as a direct fee waiver against program tuition (not a cash award), consistent with standard scholarship practice at U.S. universities.

The Paper Writing Program is a new 4-week add-on: right after a student's main 10-week program ends, their faculty mentor decides whether the project is ready to pursue publication and, if so, invites the student to continue for four more weeks of guided paper writing. In total, the 2026 program represents a commitment of up to \$224,325 in tuition fee waivers to help ambitious high school learners gain advanced research experience with lasting value: stronger college applications, a faculty reference letter, and research and writing skills they carry into their professional careers.

With acceptance rates at elite universities at record lows, academic achievement alone no longer guarantees admission. Admissions officers increasingly seek applicants who demonstrate critical thinking, problem-solving ability, and initiative. Top universities value students who arrive with published research. High-quality research experience under the mentorship of active professors is one of the most powerful ways for students to stand out.

Program Highlights

Scholarship recipients receive the same program as paying students:

- One-on-one or small-group mentorship from research-active professors, supported by a dedicated teaching assistant
- A personalized, 10-week research curriculum (1 hour/week) tailored to student goals
- For projects with publication potential: an invitation to the 4-week Paper Writing Program, guided by their faculty mentor toward a peer-reviewed journal or conference submission
- A recommendation letter from the faculty mentor upon successful completion
- Research, writing, and critical-thinking skills that carry well beyond the college application, into internships, undergraduate research, and future careers

This is a serious, structured commitment: the program is intended for dedicated, high-achieving students prepared to do university-level work over the 10-week term.

2026 Research Focus: AI + X

This year's cohort features a spotlighted theme: applying artificial intelligence across disciplines. Featured areas include **AI & Cybersecurity** (networking, blockchain, post-quantum cryptography, 6G security), **AI & Business** (finance, marketing, corporate governance), **AI & Health & Bioinformatics**, and the **Quantitative Foundations of AI** (statistics, mathematics, computational problem solving), alongside core AI/ML research and AI literacy in computing education. Applicants proposing AI-adjacent projects are especially encouraged, though strong proposals in any research area remain welcome, including across the social sciences and humanities, particularly **Sociocultural Anthropology**, with special priority given to proposals focused on modern North Africa and the Middle East.

Who Should Apply

The scholarship welcomes students in grades 9–12. Priority goes to **juniors**, for whom the program's December finish lines up perfectly with senior-year applications, and **seniors**, for whom it strengthens **Regular Decision** applications (the program's Dec. 8 finish is after most Early Action/Early Decision deadlines). Sophomores and exceptionally well-prepared freshmen are also encouraged to apply.

Application Timeline

Applications Open	August 20, 2026
Info Webinar #1	Week of August 31 (exact date TBA)
Info Webinar #2	Week of September 7 (exact date TBA)
Application Deadline	September 20, 2026
Interviews	September 21–25, 2026
Decisions Released	September 29, 2026
Program Start Date	October 6, 2026

Application Requirements

Interested students must submit:

- Recent academic transcripts
- Personal statement(s)
- SAT/ACT scores (if applicable)
- AP/IB exam results (if applicable)

Apply online at igniteachievers.org.

About Ignite Achievers

Founded at the University of Michigan and based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Ignite Achievers partners with professors from leading universities to mentor high-achieving high school students in producing impactful, publishable research. Its structured mentorship model has helped students strengthen their applications to top institutions through published research, conference presentations, and enhanced academic portfolios.

Collectively, before joining Ignite Achievers, its mentors had already worked with hundreds of high school researchers, including students later admitted to MIT, Stanford, UC Berkeley, Cornell, Carnegie Mellon, UIUC, Michigan, Imperial College London, Georgia Tech, Brown, NYU, Penn, Cambridge, Georgetown, Chicago,

Northwestern, UCLA, Duke, and 15+ other universities. That expertise is now applied directly to the 20 students of Ignite's first scholarship cohort in 2025.

For more information, visit igniteachievers.org or contact info@igniteachievers.org / +1 (734) 450-2134 (SMS/Text and WhatsApp).