



Kentucky Board of Education Good News

Feb. 4, 2026



Taylor County's Sydney Newton honored with \$25,000 Milken National Educator Award



- Sydney Newton, an English language arts teacher at Taylor County High School, was honored Dec. 16 as the latest Kentucky educator to receive the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award.
- Newton was presented with the award, which includes a \$25,000 unrestricted cash prize, in a surprise ceremony at her school that included students, faculty, and district and community leaders.
- The prestigious award, hailed as the “Oscars of Teaching,” was presented by Kentucky Commissioner of Education Robbie Fletcher, Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman and Milken Educator Awards Senior Vice President Jane Foley.

Alternative Education Programs of Distinction 2025

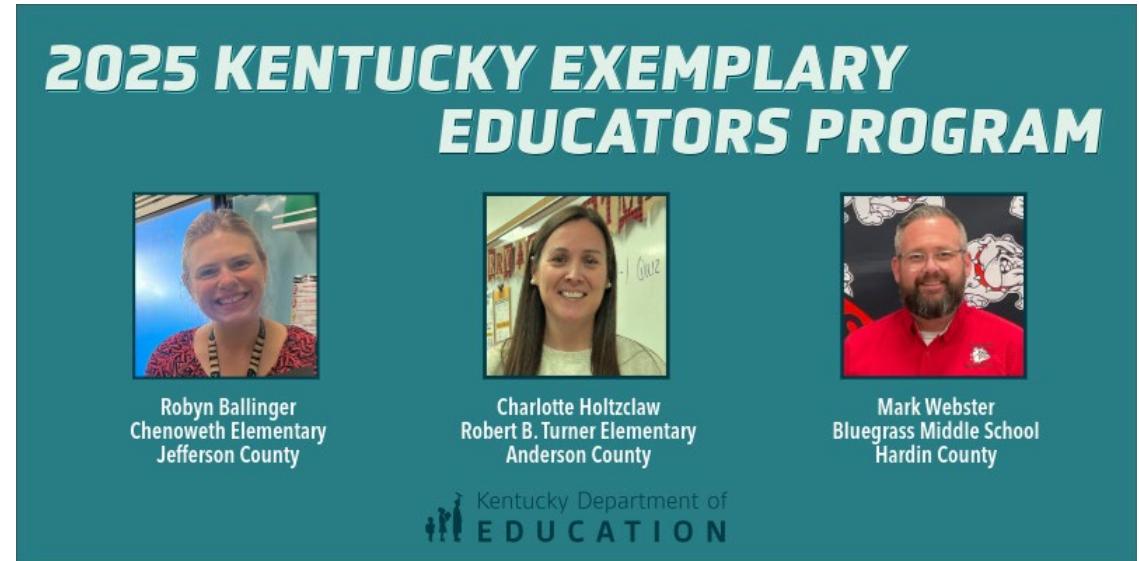
- Corbin Educational Center, Corbin Independent Schools
- Hopkins County Day Treatment, Hopkins County Schools
- Regional School Programs, Dayton Independent Schools
- Shelby Academy, Shelby County Public Schools
- The Learning Center, Fayette County Public Schools
- The Providence School, Jessamine County Schools



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Three Kentucky educators honored as part of 2025 Kentucky Exemplary Educators Program

- Three educators have been honored as 2025 Kentucky Exemplary Educators Program (KEEP) award winners by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE).
- The three KEEP recipients are
 - **Robyn Ballinger**, a special education teacher at Chenoweth Elementary School (Jefferson County);
 - **Charlotte Holtzclaw**, a science teacher at Robert B. Turner Elementary School (Anderson County); and
 - **Mark Webster**, principal of Bluegrass Middle School (Hardin County).
- Candidates for KEEP are early-to-mid-career professionals with at least five years of experience and whose contributions to education are largely unheralded yet worthy of the spotlight.



Patrick Graboviy and Ethan Morgan named 2026 U.S. Senate Youth delegates



- **Patrick Bogdan Graboviy**, a senior at North Oldham High School (Oldham County), and **Ethan Cameron Morgan**, a senior at Marshall County High School, will join Sen. Mitch McConnell and Sen. Rand Paul in representing Kentucky during the 64th annual [U.S. Senate Youth Program](#) Washington Week, to be held March 7-14.
- Graboviy and Morgan were selected from among the state's top student leaders to be part of the 104-student delegation that will attend meetings and briefings with senators, the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies and other officials throughout the week. Each delegate will also receive a \$10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate study.
- Chosen as alternates to the 2026 program were **Ayesha Zulfiqar Hamid**, who attends Paul Laurence Dunbar High School (Fayette County), and **Joel Daniel Shalom**, who attends duPont Manual High School (Jefferson County).

KYCEC, KDE name Jessica Youart the 2025 Special Education Teacher of the Year

- The Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE's) Office of Special Education and Early Learning, in collaboration with the Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children (KYCEC), has recognized Jessica Youart of Meade County as the 2025 Special Education Teacher of the Year.
- The KYCEC Teacher of the Year award celebrates special educators who go above and beyond in providing direct services to children and youth with exceptionalities, demonstrating excellence in supporting students with disabilities.
- Youart is an outstanding special educator recognized for her deep commitment to students both inside and outside the classroom.
- Congratulations!

