

Indian Creek Local School District Newsletter

May 2025

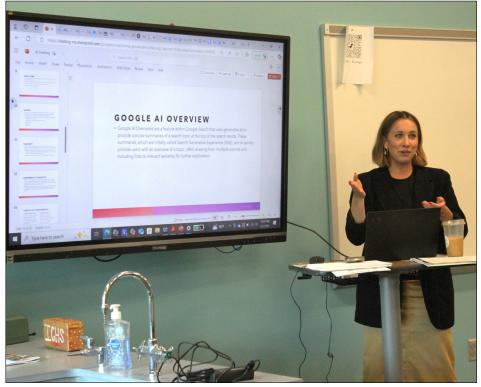
Indian Creek Incorporates AI into Student Lessons

The innovation of artificial intelligence has made its way into the educational realm and is already in use within the Indian Creek Local School District.

Indian Creek High School was the site of the 2025 Southeast Ohio AI Summit on May 7 and about 150 educators from throughout Jefferson, Harrison and Belmont counties were in attendance. The event was provided by the East Central Ohio Educational Service Center along with aiEDU, Innovate Ohio, the Ohio Department of Education and the Workforce (DEW) and Ohio Educational Service Center Association. Indian Creek was one of five designated sites for the summit and invited Ohio ESC employees, district leaders, building leaders and K-12 educators to share expertise and ideas about AI literacy and education. Keynote speakers included Rebecca Bultsma, an AI ethicist and K-12 educational strategist, and Eric Curts, an EdTech coach, speaker and consultant while topics throughout the day ranged from using AI multitools for education to academic integrity and career development. Several ICHS career-tech education (CTE) teachers were among the lecturers during the breakout sessions and said they have already utilized the technology in their classrooms.

Johnna Provenzano, who instructs the business pathway, led a discussion on "Using AI for the Process" and described how teachers could leverage AI as a tool to enhance or optimize projects and maintain the human touch with the final product. She described using tools such as Canva AI, Magic Design, Magic Switch, Dream Lab, ChatGPT, Grammarly, Turnitin and Google AI Overview in her work and said the goal was to help others gain an understanding of how they could use the tools to refine ideas, solve problems or create projects.

"I have used a lot more AI this year because I am doing a lot more," she noted, adding that it has helped create logos and map out school plans. "It comes down to our honesty, our integrity. It's a starting obviously more now," Provenzano said. "I



Indian Creek High School hosted an Ohio AI Summit on May 7 with experts and educators sharing their knowledge about how to implement artificial intelligence into learning. Johnna Provenzano, business pathways teacher at ICHS, led a discussion on using AI for the process and the school has already implemented the tech tools into planning and class

point to get your mind going and started to think next year I would like to educate my think creatively. These are things that defiover again.'

She showed how Canva could help develop lesson plans by implementing a prompt, which then generates ideas, materials and more, plus programs like Grammarly enable users to correct their text while Turnitin helps identify potential plagiarism. Provenzano added that it was important to make sure students were responsible with AI and she encouraged teachers to give reflective essays and similar assignments to make pupils think and do the work.

"I have been using it for three years and

students. I would like to get a better snapnitely save time on tasks you do over and shot of how they are using it and teach them to use it more responsibly.'

CTE Department Head David Moffat and intervention specialist Amber Scott shared how they implemented the technology with their session, "Microsoft Teams as Learning Accelerators: Transforming Digital Education."

Moffat and Scott focused on the effective use of Microsoft Teams learning accelerators to enhance student improvement. They highlighted features and demonstrated how to create reading and math assignments as well as challenges to help improve student

(Continued on Page 5 as AI)

Indian Creek Honors Scholars at Annual Banquet

Students who made the grade at Indian Creek High School were recognized during the 44th Annual Scholars Banquet on May

Nearly 50 juniors and seniors and their family joined school officials at St. Florian Hall for dinner and honors during the event, which recognized students who earned a 3.5 GPA or better for one to seven consecutive semesters. ICHS Principal Louie Retton welcomed the crowd and Superintendent Dr. T.C. Chappelear introduced the guest speaker, Jefferson County Engineer Eric Hilty.

Hilty, an Indian Creek alumnus, discussed his path from graduating in 2007 to his recent election as county engineer, saying it took a lot of hard work and choices to get to this point in his life. He recalled attending the banquet as a gold key scholar and wondering what he would do in his future.

"Eighteen years ago, I was a student sitting in this very room. It's an exciting award and it feels good to be a scholar," he said. "I had a really good experience at Creek and the people were really helpful provides great opportunities and having the and guided me along the way."

He described playing soccer and football, playing emcee for basketball games and ultimately followed his siblings' footsteps in life." into engineering, studying civil engineering at the University of Akron and eventually earning his master's degree in structural engineering, but he briefly diverted from his path and spoke of working for his uncle's restaurant business in between.

"I found I really liked [engineering] and interned at the county engineer's office, but I still wondered what I wanted to do ah Crane, Emma Doerr, Kyleigh Haines, Gregg, William Hamilton, Raygen Opic and manage his relative's restaurant chain son McGraw, Allison Rawson, Kyle Gump, Riley Hildreth, Nathaniel Klinebecause it gave him more experience Shultz, Briggs Taylor, Caleb Zifzal and smith, Faith Marinacci, Kaylee Montgomworking with people, management and Marlee Zook. marketing.

field and began working as a construction ters, included seniors Maxwell Constan- row, Maggie Blackburn, Dalana Bove, engineer for the county, receiving his professional engineer's and surveyor's licensure along the way. Hilty was now qualified to become a county engineer and was elected this past year. Now, he is focusing Dallman, Gabriella Boyuk, Anna Bradley, Cullen, Alexander Fabian, Benjamin Fox, on serving the area and updating his office Jaymes Chandler, Chelsea Channels, Abi- Hailey Francis, Kade Haines, Parker with a website and digitized records, some gail Dennis, Emily Dennis, Ava Dowdle, Heath, Yarentzi Hernandez, Gracie Higof which date back to the late 1700s.

vice. One thing I learned is to be proud and leton, Jackson Pitts, Trevor Reese, Gavin Knox, Kaylin Lee, Harper Long, Caleb enjoy your journey. Be proud of earning a Rheinhardt, Riley Sadler, Colin Schrumpf, 3.5 or higher because you can do anything. Shayne Scott, Trista Simeral, Marek



Jefferson County Engineer Eric Hilty addressed students, families and educators at the Indian Creek Scholars' Banquet on May 4. Photos of recipients are on the back page.

You don't have to know what you want to do in life, but you have to pursue something, whether it's college or a trade," he concluded. "Your career will find you."

He also mentioned that good company support of parents, teachers and friends is beneficial.

"Keep these people in your life and also becoming "entrepreneurial" with his ground yourself with great people. Good deejay and landscaping businesses. He people will bring you great opportunities

> Officials then recognized juniors and sophomores also earned honors and were Grasyn Danielson,

Speece, Ian Starkey, Brayden Stewart, Cooper Sweeny, Gabriella Taylor, Cara Vandeborne, Xavier Vines, Logan Wedlake, Katie Wells and Emma Westfall.

Bronze key recipients with three consecutive semesters of a 3.5 GPA or better included seniors Cambryl Caprita, Mattie Carroll, Camryn Ketron, Sophia Maxon, Hannah Sherbondy, Ivory Spencer, Alayna Starr and Selena Walker. Juniors included Mailin Espitia, Madison Geary, Maddox Simmons, Madison Tolman, Joshua Wells and Kennedie Wells. Among the sophomores were Blake Archer, Landon Bonar, Aleah Bowers, James Brothers, Damien Bruno, Becca Burch, Tatum Campbell, Adrian Cornish, Hannah Creech, Kylie Dray, Preslie Ewing, Dakota Forster, Nicholas Franklin, Korey Frey, Natalia Gombar, Brayden Hamilton, Dakota Hamilton, Hailee Hixenbaugh, Nina Householder, Ruby Howell, Madelyn Keener, Gabriel Kuruc, Bruce Mazar, Morgan McCumbers, Lukas McVicker, Lei'Azjah Moore, Donovan Morris, Megan Paoloemilio, Bradley Paulman, Keira Phelan, Vincent Prolago, Eli Purviance, McKenna Puskarich, Payton Rath, Caden Saffle, Jocelyn Saltsman, Alexis See, Jessa Skeen, Ethan Starr, Evan Stoddart, Emilia Taylor, Gabriel Thomas, Paisley Tolman, Skielor Truax, Kaydence Walker, Gracie Wiley and Ilsa Zinsmeister.

Certificates for one consecutive semester seniors on hand with gold, silver and with a 3.5 GPA or better were awarded to bronze keys and certificates. Freshmen and seniors Logan Baker, Brendan Burns, Zane Holloway, being awarded later at school. Gold key Nandhana Ranjith, Sy'Christian Simpson, recipients who earned a 3.5 GPA or better Gianna Taliani and Riley Tongate. Juniors for seven consecutive semesters included included Maxwell Bolton, Elexia Christy, seniors Caleb Bodo, Shiloah Connell, No- Jace Clark, Za'Rea Franklin, Austin for a living," Hilty continued, saying he Emily Hanlin, Jerlyn Hirschfeld, James and Keirra Thompson. Sophomores includdid not regret his decision to step back Houser, Melia Lane, Hannah Long, Alli- ed Iyanna Buggs, James Donaldson, Layla ery, Ajay Petrosky and Carley Phillips. Silver key recipients, who earned a 3.5 Freshmen included Mikhailo Amis, Mia He eventually returned to his chosen GPA or better for five consecutive semes- Andreozzi, Maddin Bahen, Elizabeth Bartine, Katherine Grizzel, Caila Higgins, Carsyn Brown, Asher Calabrese, Mara Xander Mazik, Ava Paterra, Emma Vok, Camp, Michael Campana, Kendall Canes-Cambrie Wilson and Knowledge Wright. traro, Khila Chamberlain, Anthony Chris-Among the juniors were Delaney Bates- ty, Garrin Clark, Calista Cozart, Landon Aaliyah Duke, Brooklyn Evans, Noah Forgins, Sydney Himmelrick, Jessah Hirsch-"I am ambitious and I always like to pur- rester, Aubrie Hanlin, Brody Kurner, feld, Keeley Johnson, Caden Johnston, sue other interests," he noted. "I really love Kaleb Manion, Leah McFarland, Luke Taylor Kakascik, William Kelly, Abby my job. It's a great job and a public ser- McMillion, Kolton Norris, Abbey Pend- Kirkpatrick, Gracelyn Klinesmith, Jace

(Continued on Page 4 as BANQUET)

Haddox Prepares for National Scripps Spelling Bee

Indian Creek Middle School sixth-grader the list of words for Kaden Haddox is getting ready as he heads that event, someto the 100th Scripps National Spelling Bee thing which he is later this month.

Haddox, the son of Nick and Jessica he plans to travel to Haddox of Steubenville, earned the spot when he correctly spelled the word "abscess" during the 2025 Jefferson- hard and use a mo-Harrison Regional Spelling Bee at Buckeye North Elementary School in March. iPad to study," he He faced 29 challengers and lasted 41 said. "I was a bit rounds to win the competition, and now he nervous. I thought will travel to National Harbor, Md., for the main event on May 27-29.

A total of 243 spellers will compete from across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Department of Defense Schools in Europe. Spellers will also represent five countries outside the U.S., includ- hours per day, three days a week and ing the Bahamas, Canada, Ghana, Kuwait sometimes on weekends with some help

It marked Haddox's second time at the bi -county spell-off and he kept busy learning about his big day.

continuing to do as Washington, D.C.

"I study really bile App on my



Haddox

I'd do pretty well but didn't know I'd make it.

He said he prepared for the regionals by practicing five days a week, and he is continuing those efforts leading up to the national bee.

Haddox said he practices for two to three from his parents.

Still, he said he has a few butterflies

"I feel a little better about it now," he added.

Luckily, spelling is something he enjoys and he also counts reading and history among his favorite subjects. In his spare time, Haddox takes part in the ICMS Special Recognition Club which honors students for good behavior and attendance, plus he plays soccer for the JKYSC in Wintersville.

He earned an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., and is looking forward to taking in the sights when he travels with his family, which will also include his three younger brothers, grandparents and an aunt. He said he hopes to see the Washington Monument and Smithsonian Museum during his journey.

Meanwhile, his school gave him a little extra spending money by organizing a hat day fundraiser on May 14. Students paid \$1 to don their favorite topper and proceeds will go to Haddox in support of his achievement.

Past and Present Elementary Students Show They Care

For the past 10 years, students in the Indian Creek Local School District have opened their hearts and benefitted the Tony Teramana Cancer Center by providing hundreds of chemo care bags to patients undergoing treatment. This time, Hills Elementary and Indian Creek High School pupils joined together to pack and deliver items to show those waging a life-altering battle that they are not alone.

Eight ICHS juniors who were involved with the initial project met with a dozen fourth-graders at Hills on May 20 to pack colorful tote bags full of items such as bottled water, snacks, playing cards, journals and more. The juniors then helped deliver the bags to the facility, bringing the project full circle.

Sarah Hibbits, district Orton Gillingham specialist, began the community service project in 2016 as a way to help people undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatment at the Steubenville facility with some inspiration from her mother, a patient herself at the time who worried that others should have more support.

Hibbits, then a second-grade teacher at Wintersville Elementary School, had the idea to collect items and add personal notes from the students to give the patients a dose of encouragement. The actual collection began in January and not only included the school, but also cancer survivors and anonymous benefactors from Hibbits said a total of 202 bags were creatwithin the community.



Students from Hills Elementary and Indian Creek High School packed 202 chemo care bags, most of which were delivered to the Tony Teramana Cancer Center in Steubenville on May 20 to help patients undergoing treatment. The high schoolers were part of the initial project in 2016 and returned as juniors to help once again. Pictured with the bags are, from left, juniors Aziah Ade, Cara Vandeborne, Emma Westfall, Delanev Bates-Dallman, Luke McMillion and organizer Sarah Hibbits.

and it's just garnered so much enthusiasm grateful for the ongoing support from the from the community and school," she said.

A total of 100 bags were dispersed during the first event with 150 more given the provided 200 bags annually to the facility. "It began as a service learning project school staff members whose loved ones are here for you and you are not alone."

were undergoing treatment, while the rest were taken to the cancer center.

It has also become more personal for Hibbits, who was diagnosed last spring with Nodular Sclerosis Hodgkin's Lymphoma and has received care at the site. She said she has known the hardship of spending long days undergoing chemotherapy and sees how the project can make the dark days brighter.

"There are a lot of gray days, so we wanted to shed a little bit of love and light to help them in some way to get better," she continued. "I want to make sure these people know they are not alone and we're going to be right there to build them back

The high school juniors who participated in the initial project were nostalgic when it came to helping once again.

"It's a great service project for us to come back to," said Delaney Bates-

"I'm glad we get to come back and make people happy," added Aziah Ade. "It changes people.'

Cancer center officials were equally school community and noted the patients were very touched by the compassion.

"It's very heartfelt," said Gretchen second year. Since then, the project has Heizler, manager of oncology services. "They say it is sentimental and uplifting knowing that someone out there is pushing ed for the recent project with two given to them to be positive. [This project says] We

Educator, Parent Being Honored by State Support Team

Two representatives of the Indian Creek Local School District will be recognized for their efforts next month through Ohio State Support Team Region 12.

Indian Creek High School intervention specialist Brad Long and parent Mindy Aleksiejczyk will be honored during a banquet on June 10 at Villa Milano in Columbus. Long will receive the Franklin B. Walter Outstanding Educator Award for his commitment to help students with disabilities succeed in school while Aleksiejczyk will earn the Margaret M. Burley Outstanding Parent Award for her diligence in supporting her child and others through advocacy. The each year to have Mr. Long as their coawards are sponsored by the Ohio Coalition teacher. He is always prepared, collaborates for the Education of Children with Disabili-

John Rocchi, district special education coordinator, nominated Long for the honor, as well as Alexis Davis, preschool teacher at Cross Creek Elementary; Amy Lane, teacher at Hills Elementary; Connie Parise, intervention specialist at Indian Creek Middle School; and Dave Moffat, ICHS career-tech teacher. He cited the nominees as being a "dedicated staff who work diligently to meet the individual needs of each kid every day."

Long's award is named in honor of the late Dr. Franklin B. Walter, who served as the state superintendent of public instruction from 1977 to 1991. The honor is presented to one educator or team from each of Ohio's 16 SST regions who have made extraordinary contributions to the education of students with disabilities. For his part, Long has served with the school district for 10 years, beginning as an intervention specialist at ICMS before transitioning to the high school's Opportunity Center. The center is an adaptive program for grades 9-12 that is selfpaced and assists with credit recovery, academic needs and supplemental resources, and it currently aids 25 students.

"I was definitely surprised and humbled that Mr. Rocchi would think of me in that light," Long said. "It is nice to be recognized. It's an honor and I've had great administrators over the years, especially Mr. Rocchi. He's a great mentor.'

His experience includes teaching social studies as well as being an intervention specialist and working with typical and special needs pupils who are mostly at risk. He spent creased for this population of students. Mr. seven years at the middle school and is in his third year at ICHS.

"I feel like more of a catalyst of change. I can see their appreciation of education at an earlier stage," ĥe added. "It's really rewarding to see their enjoyment of learning. The Opportunity Center is a unique situation and is something our district should be proud of."

Rocchi praised Long for being respected and working diligently with co-teachers at the middle school to meet the needs of every student whether identified with a disability or being at risk, typically developing or being gifted, and that admiration has continued organizations; initiatives to promote public those with special educational needs."





Long

Aleksiejczyk

during his time at ICHS.

"General education teachers would lobby on lessons and never takes the easy way out of tackling tough situations. Students gravitate toward Mr. Long because they know he cares about them and creates a safe haven for learning," Rocchi added. "When the Indian Creek Local School District created the Opportunity Center at Indian Creek High School, the administration knew the perfect candidate to oversee and run this program--Mr. Long. The Opportunity Center was created to require students who had previously been at home completing online learning a face-to-face option while still completing online courses. The ICLSD examined the graduation and dropout rates and determined

Brad Long will receive the Franklin B. Walter Outstanding Educator Award for his commitment to help students with disabilities succeed in school and Mindy Aleksiejczyk will earn the Margaret M. Burley Outstanding Parent Award for her diligence in supporting her child and others through advocacy.

that students who chose online options were less likely to graduate. Since the inception of the Opportunity Center, graduation rates have increased and dropout rates have de-Long provides a setting at ICHS which fosters learning and promotes goal setting and attainment of a high school diploma. Mr. Long provides each student with individualized attention and shows them compassion when life's struggles may be overwhelming."

Aleksiejczyk was nominated for the Margaret M. Burley Outstanding Parent Award in recognition of one Ohio parent of a child with disabilities who has demonstrated a commitment to advocacy for their child and other children to receive quality educational services; leadership in local, state or national

awareness of issues affecting children with disabilities and their family; and creating innovative programming to improve services for children with disabilities.

She was honored to be nominated and said it was a very special and important award.

"I think I started advocating as soon as I learned of my son's diagnosis. Advocating for him was natural, then it became a privilege to be able to help other individuals and their families. I was given a wonderful path into advocating and speaking for those who do not have a voice," Aleksiejczyk added. "This award means a great deal to me. It is a very special award handed out by the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, and Margaret M. Burley was a parent who has led a path to advocating for children with disabilities. To receive this award means that I show qualities of someone who is helping to support this part of our population and continues to make positive changes. It confirms that what I have been doing has been noticed and I have a responsibility to continue to speak up and support children and families."

She has also served on the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities and is currently president. She continued that advocacy was extremely important to give others a voice, and being in a position to help them and making sure they have access to the services and education they deserve will help them become the best adults they can be.

"Our communities are better for it, and the individuals are able to live the best life possible. When I started on this journey of advocating, I wanted to not only be a voice for those who do not have a voice, but to empower other parents to speak up for their child. I hope I can continue to be a positive example in our community and state to ensure individuals with disabilities have the rights they deserve and thrive."

Rocchi said Aleksiejczyk met all of the criteria through her advocacy for her son, T.J., and other children and her involvement with the community, particularly JCBDD.

"She has actively engaged with educators, administrators and policymakers to ensure that her child's individual learning needs are met, whether through tailored interventions, accommodations or specialized programs,' Rocchi noted. "Beyond advocating for her child, Mindy has worked tirelessly to improve the educational experience for all children by participating in school committees, supporting fellow parents and collaborating with advocacy organizations. She has used her voice to raise awareness about the importance of inclusive and equitable education while working with local communities to help secure necessary resources and support services. This dedication extends to ensuring that educational policies are not only effective but also fair, striving for long-lasting change that benefits all children, particularly



Stepping into the Future

Indian Creek High School's soon-to-be alumni said goodbye to future graduates during a senior walk held at Cross Creek Elementary on May 16. Commencement exercises were set for May 27 at 7 p.m. at Franciscan University. Pictured at Cross Creek are Brooke Crites and McKenna Scott leading the way as they are cheered on by the elementary students.

AI

learning. Moffat said the Microsoft Teams application could supplement their work

and do so much. Among its features are the reading accelerator to improve reading accuracy; math accelerator to hone math skills; research coach to help students understand how to find and cite information; and speaker coach to help students improve their presentations with real-time coaching responses. He added that it creates assignments for multiple pupils or a specific few, plus it allows teachers to share information.

Scott said she has utilized it with her special education students and has seen an improvement in their skills. She shared an example with one student who was recorded reading passages and said the program provided an assessment.

"I really think you will all benefit from it," she continued.

Moffat also explained how it aids his programming and related use to enhance learning." tech pathways.

"I implement AI and my approach is in two parts: to build lessons, create assignments and teacher management and also for student work. We use it to build better presentations," he added. They can use AI as a tool to build better programs and to figure ers design lessons and support for the students," he concluded.

(Continued from Front)

out what is wrong with a code. I think I've been using it for two years and we were really early adapters here [at Indian Creek]. It's changing all the time, and next year we'll have an AI applications course for tech and other students to take."

Other district teachers said it has enabled them to work quickly and effectively.

"I've used AI to make PowerPoint presentations and tests. I want to use it more and [the AI summit] has given me more ideas," said career-based intervention (CBI) teacher Jennifer Belt. "I believe AI is really interesting."

Julie Robinson, family and consumer sciences pathway teacher, was interested in the learning accelerator and its capabilities to assist students.

"I'm interested in this," Robinson said. "AI is a tool we need to

District Superintendent Dr. T.C. Chappelear said AI was an indicator of changing times when it comes to preparing students for the future.

"For us, our mission since I've been superintendent has been to "In programming, we use it for supplementals for their code. provide time and support, and the process of AI is to help teach-

Banquet

ison Moran, Julia Nutter, Ashlyn Nuzum, chael Minor, Joseph Dunlevy, Janet Max- years, as well as district and high school Baylee Painter, David Pawelczyk, Gianna on, Julie Robinson, Ginny Pawelczyk, administrative staff Tami Haggerty and Peveich, Logan Plante, Sofia Randazzo, Robert Zinsmeister and Diane Dalesio, the Lori Orban, the latter who will succeed Benjamin Rusnak, Augustine Schloss, latter formerly with the Jefferson County McAfee next year. Danica Stellfox, Alec Stevens, Sophia Joint Vocational School. Tongate, Quinn Ujcich, Phoenyx Vines, Kacey Walenciej and Isabella Wilson.

tors chosen were Isabelle Heisler, Aimee tary Diane McAfee, who organized the Dr. Chappelear concluded.

Lyons, Blaine Maxon, Hannah Mick, Mad- Carroll, Matthew Shreve, Peggy Pyle, Mi- event and was planning to retire after 24

Seniors Hannah Long and Allison the senior class. McGraw respectively led the invocation

(Continued from Front)

He also offered some parting words to

"Our motto is 'Together We Rise,' and Meanwhile, students honored teachers and benediction and Dr. Chappelear by this senior class takes it to heart. They care who inspired them and among the educa- recognizing longtime administrative secre- about others, their school and themselves,"















Gold key recipients included seniors Emma Doerr, Jerlyn Hirschfeld, Melia Lane, Hannah Long, Allison McGraw and Marlee Zook. Back: Caleb Zifzal, Marshal Houser, Kyle Shultz, Allison Rawson and Briggs Taylor.

Silver key recipients included seniors Maxwell Constantine and Emma Vok. Junior honorees were Logan Wedlake, Ian Starkey, Gabriella Taylor, Gabriella Boyuk, Chelsea Channels, Aaliyah Duke, Brooklyn Evans, Kolton Norris, Abbey Pendleton and Trista Simeral. Back: Xavier Vines, Marek Speece, Noah Forrester, Brody Kurner, Luke McMillion, Kaleb Manion, Jackson Pitts, Colin Schrumpf and Emma Westfall.

Bronze key recipients included seniors Mattie Carroll, Sophia Maxon and Selena Walker. Junior awardees were Mailin Espitia, Maddox Simmons, Joshua Wells and Kennedie Wells.

Certificate recipients were seniors Sy'Christian Simpson, Brendan Burns and Nandhana Ranjith. Junior honorees were William Hamilton, Keirra Thompson, Elexia Christy and Jace Clark.