



Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

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Woodstock North valedictorian named Golden Apple Scholar

Woodstock North High School's valedictorian received another honor this month when he was selected as a 2025 Golden Apple Scholar, which will help him achieve his goal to become a math teacher.

Anthony Bigler said he considered his future options, including a potential career in the culinary arts, before deciding during his senior year to become an educator. Both of Bigler's parents, John and Jennifer Bigler, are educators in Algonquin and Harvard, respectively.

Woodstock North Principal Josh Segura said Bigler was an excellent choice among the more than 3,000 students who applied for the scholarships.

"AJ is a kind, articulate, and humble student — qualities that truly stand out, especially given his strong academic abilities. He sets a great example for his peers, both in and out of the classroom," Segura said.

Along with the family influence, Bigler said his future career decision was influenced by what he observed daily during his time as a student in the Woodstock Community Unit School District 200.

"Just seeing the impact that teachers had on me, I wanted to be able to do that for other students, and allow them the opportunity to grow as much as I did," Bigler said.

Bigler said he applied for the Golden Apple Scholarship in the spring. The scholarship provides up to \$23,000 in college funding assistance, along with access to training from expert educators, job placement assistance, career mentoring, and other benefits.

He learned about his selection in early June. "I was kind of surprised, but I was excited because it gives me a great experience to learn and grow."

Under the terms of the program, Golden Apple Scholars must maintain a certain GPA and other criteria, obtain a bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate from an Illinois partner university, and agree to teach for at least five years at an Illinois school of need.

Bigler will attend Bradley University in the fall and said he is looking forward to his move to Peoria.