Wilson County Retired Teachers' Association
Scholarship Committee
Ellen W. James, Chairperson

The Wilson County Retired Teachers' Association (WCRTA) was organized on January 3, 1969. Plans for the WCRTA Scholarship, which included the establishment of a Scholarship Savings Fund, were adopted in 1985-86.

Plans included donations to the scholarship fund at Christmas, instead of WCRTA members exchanging gifts. Additionally, memorials for deceased WCRTA members would be added to this fund. The first scholarship would be provided from the interest earned on the WCRTA Scholarship Savings Fund when the balance reached $5,000. The scholarship would be awarded to a junior or a senior Education major at Cumberland University.

The goal was reached in 1988, and the first $500 scholarship was awarded in 1988-89. WCRTA membership voted to change the award to two $1,000 scholarships in 2009. In 2019, the WCRTA membership voted to change to award to one $1,500 scholarship. In April 2026, the WCRTA membership voted to award two $1,500 scholarships to two Wilson Central High School students whose essays earned tied scores.

During the 2026-27 planning meeting, the WCRTA Executive Committee voted to change the award from one $1,500 scholarship to **one $2,000 scholarship.**

The scholarship recipient must

- have a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA);
- be a graduating senior currently enrolled in one of Wilson County's public high schools: Greenhill High School, Lebanon High School, Mount Juliet High School, Watertown High School, or Wilson Central High School;
- enroll in a post-secondary public college or university in the state of Tennessee; and
- pursue a teaching career in elementary or secondary education through a teacher preparation program.

The **2026 WCRTA $2,000 Scholarship** Application is attached.

WCRTA members encourage all eligible students to apply and take advantage of this opportunity. Please feel free to contact the WCRTA Scholarship Committee chairperson, Ellen W. James (ellenwjames@hotmail.com) for additional information or with any questions.

Wilson County Retired Teachers Association $2,000 Scholarship

Application Academic Year 2026-27

Mission Statement: As the Wilson County Retired Teachers' Association (WCRTA), we are aware of the need and expense of proper training to become a career teacher. Therefore, we are pleased to make a scholarship available to support an eligible student's efforts toward this goal.

The recipient of this scholarship must have a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) and must be a graduating senior currently enrolled in one of Wilson County's public high schools: Greenhill High School, Lebanon High School, Mount Juliet High School, Watertown High School, or Wilson Central High School. The scholarship recipient must (1) enroll in a post-secondary **public college or university in the state of Tennessee** and (2) pursue a teaching career in elementary or secondary education through a teacher preparation program.

A. Applicant Information:

Name: _____

Permanent Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

B. Current Educational Information/Enrollment Status:

Name of high school: _____

Date of Graduation: _____

Names of post-secondary **public colleges and universities** to which you have applied:

_____

_____

C. Essay Component:

Please type an **original** essay (250-500 words) in response to the Essay Prompt on the following page. Be sure that you provide specific, relevant details that respond to the information requested in the Essay Prompt. Carefully proofread your essay to correct any grammatical errors (e.g. misspellings, sentence fragments, run-on sentences). The WCRTA Scholarship Committee ("Committee") will read and score each applicant's essay using the rubric that follows the Essay Prompt.

Essay Prompt
• Describe your passion for teaching and how you plan to make a positive impact in the field. Additionally, explain how receiving this scholarship will help you achieve your goals and further your education in becoming a teacher. • Please provide a detailed description of your leadership activities and roles, including any positions held in school clubs, organizations, or community groups. Additionally, please describe any service projects or volunteer opportunities you have been involved in and the impact they have had on your community. • Lastly, please provide information about any part-time employment you have had, including the responsibilities and skills gained from these experiences.

Scholarship Essay Scoring Rubric

Objective	Advanced Command	Adequate Command	Partial Command	Inadequate Command
Score	4	3	2	1
Writing supported by logical reasoning	• Purpose is specifically stated. • Key ideas are consistently and logically developed with vivid and relevant details. • Focus is strongly maintained throughout the essay.	• Purpose is generally stated. • Key ideas are developed with a combination of general and vivid details. • Focus is adequately maintained, although an occasional shift may be present.	• Purpose is implied rather than directly stated. • Key ideas are developed with imprecise and/or repetitive details. • Focus is insufficiently maintained due to frequent shifts.	• Purpose is confusing and/or ambiguous. • Key ideas are not developed, are irrelevant, and/or illogical. • Focus is insufficiently maintained due to major shifts.
Clearly organized essay	• Organizational structure is clear. • Introduction and conclusion are effective for purpose. • Progression of ideas is logical from beginning to end. • A variety of smooth transitional devices create strong coherence among key ideas.	• Organizational structure is evident. • Introduction and conclusion are adequate for purpose. • Progression of ideas is generally logical from beginning to end. • Basic transitional words and/or phrases create adequate coherence among key ideas.	• Organizational structure is inconsistent. • Introduction is weak, and the conclusion may be absent. • Progression of ideas is uneven from beginning to end. • Inconsistent use of transitional words and/or phrases creates weak coherence among ideas.	• Organizational structure is limited or indiscernible. • Introduction and conclusion are absent. • Progression of ideas is random and/or illogical. • Absence of transitional words and/or phrases creates a lack of coherence among ideas.
Rhetorical Sophistication	• Clearly and effectively expresses ideas using precise language appropriate for the audience and purpose. • Uses a variety of sophisticated sentence structures.	• Adequately expresses ideas, employing a mix of precise and more general language appropriate for the audience and purpose. • Uses a mix of sophisticated and simple sentence structures.	• Unevenly expresses ideas, using simplistic language which, at times, may not be appropriate for the audience and purpose. • Uses simple sentence structures.	• Vaguely expresses ideas using language that is often confusing, demonstrating little sense of audience and purpose. • Uses simple sentence structures.
Grammatical Competence	• Few, if any, errors in usage and sentence formation. • Effective and consistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.	• Some errors in usage and sentence formation may be present, but no systematic pattern of errors is displayed. • Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.	• Frequent errors in usage and sentence formation occasionally obscure meaning. • Inconsistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.	• Severe errors often obscure meaning.

D. Attach the following to this application:

1. A sheet listing the names and contact information of three references. These references **must not be** related to the applicant.

    - Two references **must be** teachers of the applicant.
    - One reference **must be** the applicant's employer or the applicant's supervisor for his/her volunteer/service activities.
    - An email address **or** the mailing address **and** a phone number **must be** provided for each reference.

2. A letter from the guidance counselor, verifying that the applicant has a 3.0 GPA.

3. Essay

E. Interview:

Three applicants who write the best essays (as determined with the application of the scoring rubric) may be contacted for an interview with the Committee. The time and location will be established at the mutual convenience of the Committee and the applicants.

F. Declaration: (MUST BE SIGNED TO BE CONSIDERED)

I declare the information provided above and attached is both accurate and truthful. Any use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been in accordance with the published policy of the Wilson County School Board. I shall refund my scholarship if the information provided is determined not to be both accurate and truthful.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Application Deadline: March 4, 2027 (or the week prior to Spring Break, whichever date is first on the school district calendar)

Completed application should be submitted to your school's guidance counselor.

Scholarship recipient will be notified by May 6, 2027