

WV DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INSIDE EDUCATION

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Surprise, Surprise!

In February, East Hardy High's Michelle Wolfe (left) and McNinch Primary School first-grade teacher Heather Haught (right) were honored as Milken Educators in separate assemblies. The Milken Family Foundation kicked off its national tour in West Virginia, surprising these two very special teachers with \$25,000 each. **READ MORE ABOUT OUR MILKEN WINNERS ON PAGE 3.**

HIGHLIGHTS

The Final Showdown

WV high school teams will converge on Charleston for final competition event.

Discovering the Potential

WVDE launches revamped TeachWV website to help address state's teacher shortage.

HR Touchpoints

Reminders and updates about office environment, cubicle etiquette, and badges.

A Taste of Competition

Culinary students compete for top prize at the 2022 Hospitality Cup in Lewisburg.

After the Fire

After an early-morning fire ravaged the historic Administration Building on the campus of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind in Romney, West Virginia, the tight-knit school community gathered to show support for one another. The incredible resilience of the faculty and staff led to the group singing the school song in front of the charred husk of the building. The beautiful and inspirational lyrics filled the air with joy, strength, and courage. Watch this moment on the WVSDB Facebook page: [facebook.com/WestVirginiaSchoolsForTheDeafAndTheBlind](https://www.facebook.com/WestVirginiaSchoolsForTheDeafAndTheBlind).

— READ MORE ON PAGE 6

GREETINGS from Superintendent Burch



When the Administration Building at the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (WVSDB) was destroyed by fire recently, we were able to experience a sterling moment of true community pride. This community is not defined by a pinpoint on the map, but instead by those who rushed to the scene to fight the flames, and by those who extended thoughts, prayers, and a willingness to help from across the country.

The story has been well documented in media reports. A fire at the WVSDB Administration Building, one of the oldest structures on the campus, was reported shortly after 6 a.m. on Saturday, February 26, 2022. Twelve fire stations from Romney and surrounding towns and counties, as well as police officers, sheriff's office, and other emergency personnel, responded quickly. Their efforts were swift, but the building was a total loss. Fortunately, the building was vacant, and no one was injured in the fire.

Immediately, we began to receive emails, phone calls, texts, and other correspondences from people wanting to help. "What can I do?" was the most asked question

during those days following the tragedy. While these inquiries were sent from locations near and far, they exemplified what Mountaineers and West Virginians do all the time...they care, and they step up to help.

The Administration Building housed servers that powered phone service, the Internet, and camera surveillance on campus. Within hours of the fire, thanks to involvement of Gov. Justice, Frontier Communications Chief Operations Officer Tim Tipton and his team were on the scene to lay fibers. Frontier returned to campus later in the week to set up two landlines.

The building is gone, but the recovery may take a while. Student well-being has been the focus of our efforts, and with support from the Technical Assistance Center (TAC), increased social-emotional supports are in place for students, faculty, and staff. Children were not on campus at the time of the fire because they were on their weekend break. They moved to remote learning the week after the fire, but thanks to the hard work of all involved, they were able to return to campus and transition back to their full slate of activities. The outpouring of concern from around the country is a reminder of what it means to be a part of a community regardless of where you reside.

MESSAGE from the Board



Nancy White

As winter makes way for spring and flowers once again sprout from the ground to bloom beautifully in the sun, so too are all of us growing and blooming following this past season. Though it has been cold and grey, warmer days are ahead. I want to encourage each of you to remain steadfast in your responsibilities and always look to the joy in your work. You will always be able to find it with an open mind and an appreciation of your duty to West Virginia.

We recognize that education is more than just COVID-19 protocols and mask mandates, though it has felt that way for a long time. Because of you, students,

teachers, and staff members are experiencing a more normal year. Events are being planned and attended, classrooms are vibrant and enthusiastic, and communities are working together to ensure members are cared for as much as possible. Today, we are reaping the benefits of your toil.

Thank you for your commitment to West Virginia public education. Without your steady, cultivating hands planting seeds of resourcefulness, compassion and expertise, our schools could not bloom into nurturing institutes of knowledge and innovation. Each of you shine brightly in your own way, contributing greatly to garden of public education. Shine on and be well.

HONORING OUR MILKEN EDUCATORS



The West Virginia Board of Education and Department of Education joined the Milken Family Foundation to surprise the state's newest Milken educators. English Language Arts educator Michelle Wolfe of East Hardy High School and first-grade teacher Heather Hought of McNinch Primary School (Marshall County) were honored during surprise assemblies at their schools. Each educator won \$25,000 to use at their discretion and will travel (all expenses paid) to Las Vegas, Nevada, to participate in a Milken conference later this year. West Virginia was the first stop on Milken's national tour which includes 60 educator awards over the next several months.

Hailed as the "Oscars of Teaching," Milken Educator Awards inspire and uplift with the unique stories of educators making a profound difference for students, colleagues, and communities. The awards are not designated for lifetime achievement. Recipients are heralded while early to mid-career for what they have achieved — and for the promise of what they will accomplish given the resources and opportunities inherent in the award.

Visit www.milkeneducatorawards.org/newsroom/press-releases/archive/2022 to learn more about these stellar educators.





MARCH MATCHUPS

Teams advance to final Academic Showdown event

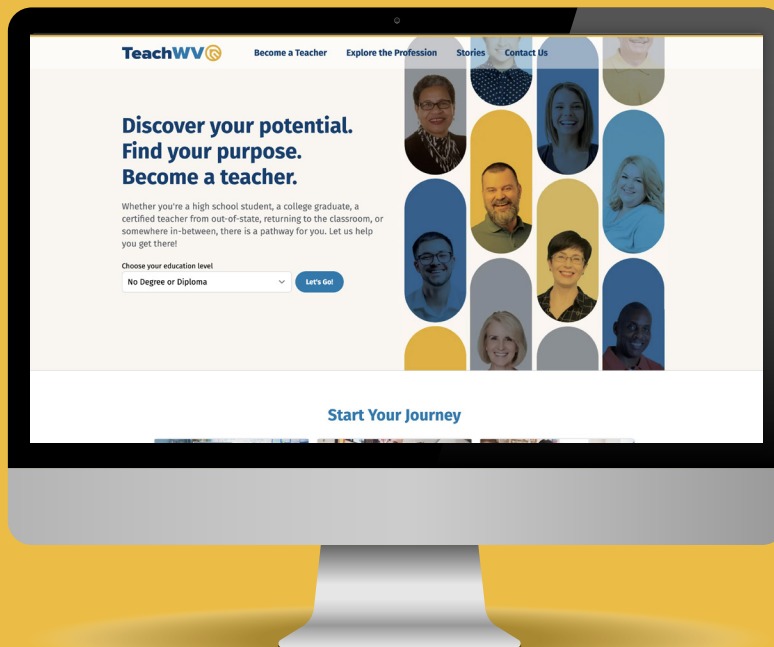
The West Virginia Academic Showdown is a new competition for high school students from across the state to test their scholastic knowledge on topics such as literature, math, history, science, current events, pop culture, and more. Schools create teams of four from grades 9–12 and go head-to-head answering increasingly difficult questions.

Championed by West Virginia Senate President Craig Blair, the Academic Showdown is a partnership between the West Virginia Department of Education, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, West Virginia Public Broadcasting, and the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture, and History.

Regional competitions took place at Marshall University, Shepherd University, Concord University,

and West Virginia State University. The final event will take place **Friday, March 25**, at the West Virginia Culture Center, where a team will be crowned champion. Competing in the championship will be the winners of regional contests: Tug Valley High School, Ripley High School, Berkeley Springs High School, Spring Mills High School, Greenbrier East High School, PikeView High School, George Washington High School, and Sherman High School.

The WVDE and its partners are proud to celebrate academic achievement in a fun, competitive manner. These young scholars have committed themselves to academic excellence and are representing their school communities proudly. Twenty-nine teams participated in the inaugural year with many more planning to participate next year.



TEACHWV: ADDRESSING THE TEACHER SHORTAGE

The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) launched its TeachWV campaign to help address the teacher shortage. The launch includes the newly revised [TeachWV.com](https://www.teachwv.com) that will be a resource for those interested in earning a teaching certificate and naming counties participating in the Grow Your Own teacher preparation program.

The [TeachWV.com](https://www.teachwv.com) website has been redesigned to provide more information about options to earn a teaching certificate. The site's navigation allows individuals to plot their pathway based on a variety of variables. It also highlights testimonials from current college students pursuing their teaching degrees as well as those from educators, and information from teacher preparation programs around the state.

Grow Your Own models are designed to provide innovative, low-cost pathways into the teaching profession. Grow Your Own West Virginia is one model that partners the county with an institution of higher education. Modeled after the nursing career technical education pathway, high school students begin the journey into the profession by earning credits and eventually classroom teaching experience before graduating high school.

While the teacher shortage has been a significant challenge for West Virginia and the nation, the WVDE is making every effort to address the situation. With the launch of TeachWV, we are providing more opportunities to recruit and retain more educators that will develop the minds of our students.

Reflections on Heroes

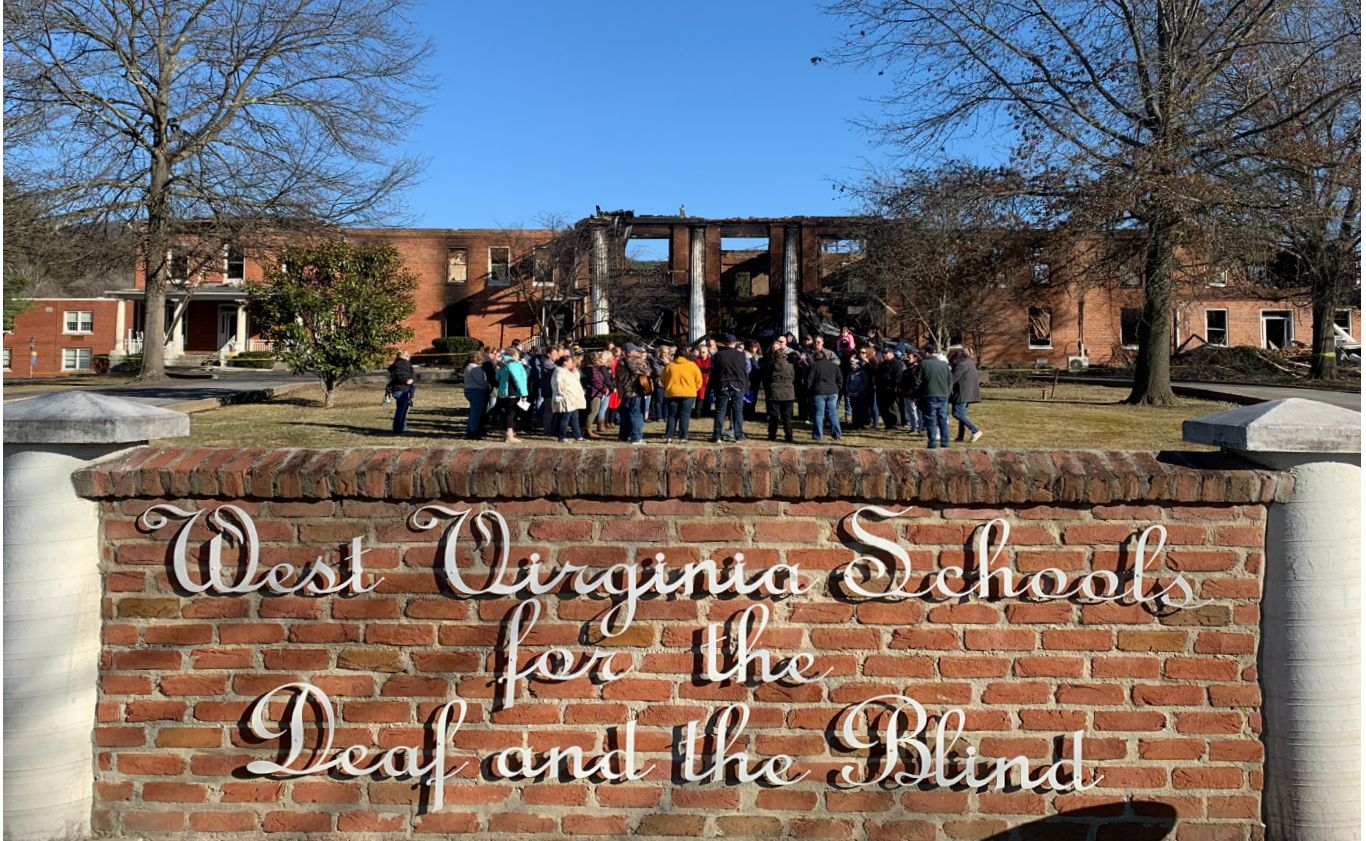
When I was very young, most of my childhood heroes wore capes, flew through the air, or picked up buildings with one arm. They were spectacular and got a lot of attention. But as I grew, my heroes changed, so that now I can honestly say that anyone who does anything to help a child is a hero to me.

— Fred Rogers

Teachers match this definition perfectly, succinctly, and naturally. Teachers do more than simply “help” a child, but they also guide them along their pathway toward their destiny. A teacher molds future leaders of the world so that they can use their skills to address the most pressing issues. A teacher protects, supports, and tends to the social-emotional needs of children, helping them understand and handle their feelings in a constructive manner. A teacher caringly feeds and clothes children in need without embarrassing them or drawing attention. A teacher challenges the gifted child to be more than just a set of good grades, but to be a well-rounded person with compassion for others.

These are the people we must celebrate every day. These are the people to look up to and emulate. With more of us trying to be like them, the world can become a better place for all of us. We can all use more heroes in our lives.

— **W. Clayton Burch, West Virginia Superintendent of Schools**



RESILIENCE IN ROMNEY

Special thanks to everyone and every organization/agency who offered support to the WVSDB during the recent fire.

For their rapid response and constant support of the school and the surrounding community, we offer special thanks to:

- Governor Jim Justice
- Frontier Communications
- State Delegate Ruth Rowan
- The faculty and staff at the WVSDB and Technical Assistance Center
- Randall Reid-Smith, West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture & History
- G.T. Parsons and Romney Fire Department
- Fire Departments:
 - » Burlington – Company 44
 - » Augusta – Company 3
 - » Capon – Company 9
 - » District 16 – Company 7
 - » Gore – Company 14
 - » Fort Ashby – Company 37
 - » Fountain – Company 39
 - » Levels – Company 6
 - » Moorefield – Company 46
 - » New Creek – Company 38
 - » Old Town – Company 13
 - » Ridgely – Company 25
 - » Slanesville – Company 5
- » Springfield – Company 42
- Ken Tyree and the State Fire Marshal's Office
- Romney City Police
- E.A. Hawse Health Center
- Hampshire County Emergency Services
- Hampshire County Sheriff's Office
- U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)
- West Virginia Department of Transportation
- West Virginia Department of Highways

HR TOUCHPOINTS

WVDE Office Environment Protocols & Cubicle Etiquette

- » Use earbuds or headphones when listening to webinars or participating in meetings, particularly Board Meetings and other group meetings via TEAMS. Let your supervisor know if you need a headset.
- » Make sure both cell and desk phones are set at a reasonable ring volume (personal phones are strongly recommended to be kept on silent). Phones should never be answered by or placed on speaker when individually working; it is loud and disruptive. If it is beneficial for more than one employee to participate in a call together, please utilize an office space where the door can be closed.



- » Minimize hallway conversations as they can be very distracting to co-workers. Do not yell across the room; walk over to someone to have a conversation. Be mindful of what you want others to hear.
- » Knock on cubicle walls before entering; don't simply impose on someone's personal work space.
- » Remember to be stewards of the community spaces by cleaning up after yourselves anytime you have occupied one of the conference rooms or fishbowls.
- » Finally, and most importantly, simply **"Be Kind"** and respectful to those around you. Walls and doors may be at a minimum, but courtesy should be abundant.

Employees to Receive Badges, Emailed Headshots this month

Camera clicks, debonair poses, and smiling faces were abound during the West Virginia Department of Education's recent picture days. Staff gathered in the Board Room to get updated headshots for the Department's new ID badges. All staff who have been photographed will receive their new badges by Friday, March 11. Make sure to show them off! Headshots will be emailed to employees later in the month.

CULINARY DELIGHTS



**CULINARY COMPETITION FIRST PLACE:
Calhoun-Gilmer Career Center**

**MANAGEMENT COMPETITION FIRST PLACE:
Monongalia Technical Education Center**

The West Virginia Department of Education hosted the 2022 Hospitality Cup – West Virginia’s ProStart Invitational on March 1 and 2 at the Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs. ProStart students from 12 schools in the Mountain State demonstrated their creativity, knowledge, and passion for the restaurant industry through culinary and management competitions. First, second, and third place ProStart teams received scholarships from post-secondary schools. The first-place teams from the culinary and management competitions will represent West Virginia at the National ProStart Invitations competition in Washington, D.C.