

West Alexander Middle School has creative take on Awards Day

By ANGELA FARR KING

Dr. Amy Daigle, Principal at West Alexander Middle School, is not afraid to try something new, especially if she knows it will benefit her students and/or parents. At the end of the 2025-26 school year, she and her team decided to try a new approach to Awards Day for their sixth and seventh graders. Typically, parents are invited to Awards Day in the gym and they sit for a lengthy program to see certain children get awards. Some students may get several and some students don't get any. Some stand for certain recognitions and some get up several times to be recognized.

Dr. Daigle is not an "every person gets a trophy" kind of principal, but she and her team do believe that every child is unique and special in some way and their gifts should be highlighted, so instead of a formal Awards Day at the end of the year for sixth and seventh graders, students spent part of the last days of school making posters about themselves to tell about their unique interests, hobbies, and gifts. This was a great way to keep these students engaged after testing and a great way to focus on something positive about each student.

Parents were then invited to do an "Awards Walk" during the day. They could walk through the hallway and see all of the students holding their posters, which also included any awards they had been given. They could see something special about each and every child, but they could also see their outstanding achievements. They could do this in a timely manner as well so some parents were able to come on their lunch hours and not have to miss any

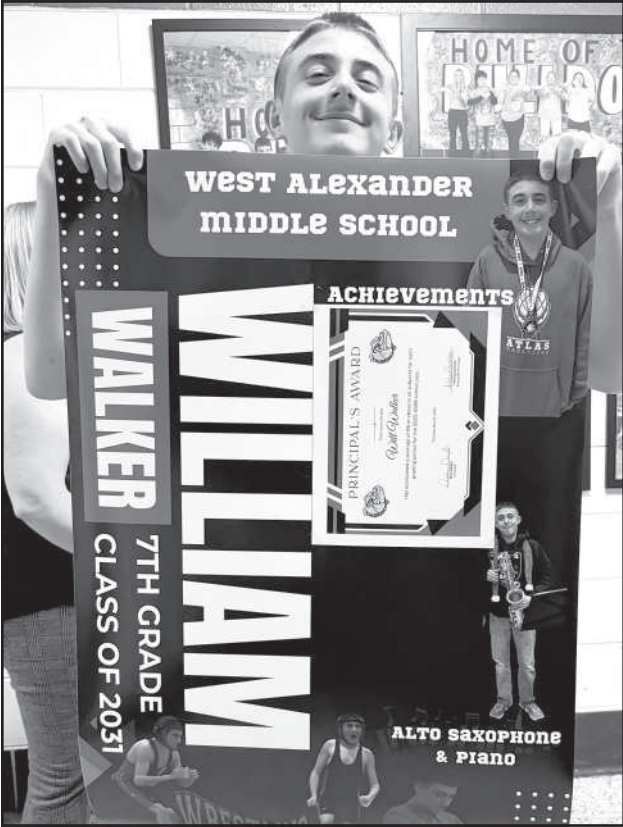
time at work.

Dr. Daigle said she surveyed parents about how they liked this change. Most of them had only positive things to say about it. As always, everyone cannot be pleased, but the response was overwhelmingly positive so it will probably be something they repeat for the 2026-27 school year. Eighth graders had a formal awards ceremony at the ACHS Auditorium and that will continue as well.

Dr. Daigle had another motive for trying this awards format. She wanted to test it out because she knows her building will be under construction this year with a new HVAC

system, new ceilings, and a new roof being installed throughout the entire building. She needs plans in place in case she doesn't have use of the gym at the end of the school year. She is a proactive principal at all times.

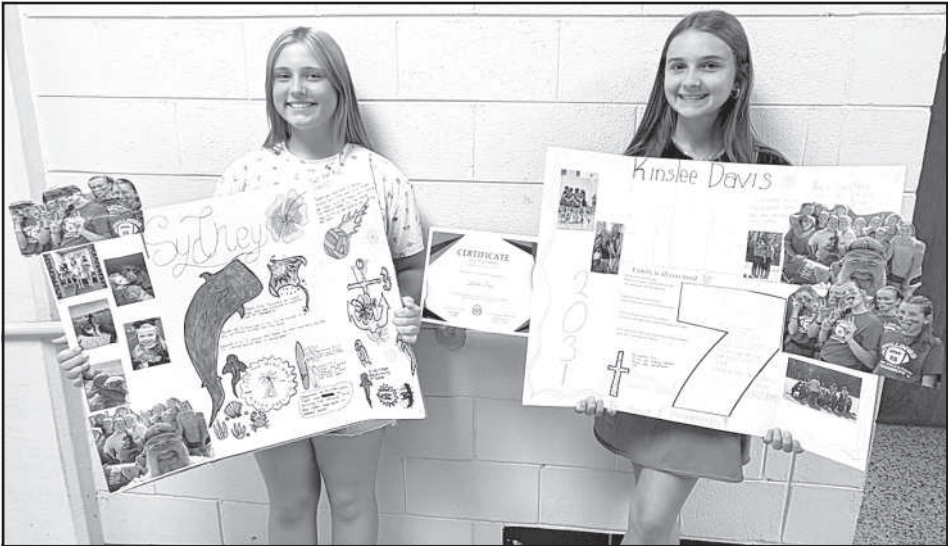
Students who compete in sports outside of the school, such as skateboarding or swimming, were able to showcase these on their posters, so Dr. Daigle felt like that was another huge plus. They got to show how they shine outside of school. Being open to new ideas that will uplift students is always a priority for the leadership at West Alexander Middle School.



SHOWING HIS POSTER — Will Walker is holding up his poster made for the "Awards Walk" for sixth and seventh grade students at the end of the 2025-26 school year at West Alexander Middle School. Will was able to highlight his interests and hobbies on his poster and his awards were attached to it. Parents could walk through the posters on display and see highlights for all of the sixth and seventh graders instead of attending a formal awards day ceremony. Most parents responded very positively to this change.



AWARDS WALK — The leadership at West Alexander Middle School tried something new for their sixth and seventh graders on Awards Day 2026. Instead of a formal awards day that can be lengthy for parents to sit through with only a few students being recognized, students created posters about themselves highlighting their interests, hobbies, and gifts. Their awards were attached to their posters and parents got to participate in an "Awards Walk" to view all of the posters during one school day.



SHOWCASING STUDENT INTERESTS, ACHIEVEMENTS — Sydney Braswell (left) and Kinslee Davis showcase the posters they made to highlight their interests, hobbies, and achievements for the 2025-26 school year. They worked on these after state testing and showcased them for a parent "Awards Walk Through" that was held at the end of the year instead of a formal awards day to showcase all students in sixth and seventh grade.

Attorney General Jeff Jackson wins Live Nation/Ticketmaster case on all claims

After a seven-week trial, a jury found in favor of Attorney General Jeff Jackson and 33 other attorneys general, holding Live Nation and Ticketmaster liable on all counts for illegally monopolizing the ticketing and large amphitheater markets for live entertainment events. Attorney General Jackson shared the following statement:

"The verdict's in. We just won our case against Live Nation and Ticketmaster on all claims, and we're closer to breaking down their illegal monopoly over the live entertain-

ment industry.

"This was one of the biggest antitrust cases in years. When the United States Department of Justice announced in March that it had cut a deal with Live Nation and Ticketmaster behind the backs of the attorneys general, I rejected their secret deal because it failed to address sky-high ticket prices for concertgoers. We wanted the jury to hear the evidence and see what consumers have known for years.

"Every fan who's watched prices pile up on a concert ticket just

got proof they were right to feel mistreated by a monopoly. That's exactly what was happening.

"Today's verdict confirms that Live Nation has been running an illegal monopoly in the ticket market, abusing concertgoers and artists. The case will now head to a second phase where the judge will decide the appropriate remedies to break Live Nation's hold on the live entertainment industry and restore competition, and our office will stay on the side of bringing prices down for consumers."



SCOUTMASTER ROBERT DUNCAN AND EAGLE SCOUT LUKE JULIAN

Julian earns Eagle Scout rank

Luke Alexander Julian, age 17, of Taylorsville, was honored with an Eagle Scout Court of Honor Ceremony on Sunday, June 7, 2026, at Saint John's Lutheran Church in Wittenburg.

Luke earned the rank of Eagle Scout on February 19, 2026, through Troop 275 in Bethlehem under Scoutmaster Robert Duncan. Achieving the rank of Eagle Scout represents years of dedication, leadership, service, and commitment to the values of Scouting, and the family is very proud of his accomplishment.

Luke is a Senior at Alexander Central High School in Alexander County. He aspires to attend Lee University in Cleveland, TN, to pursue a degree in Physical Education.

His Eagle Scout service project was a Veterans Memorial at Saint John's Lutheran Church. In addition, Luke created a QR code and online tribute recognizing veterans who served our country, including those buried in the cemetery. The project website may be viewed at https://docs.google.com/document/d/10e1cvJW4nXSui5-s9QSKP-Im-_RmKI_KqXiVftZM8/edit?usp=sharing.

The Veterans Memorial is dedicated to the glory of God and in sacred memory of those who served, and of those who laid down their lives for our country, who rest in St. John's Lutheran Church Cemetery: Grayden Monroe Icenhour, Wade Carlton Teague, Hal Luke Warren, Lloyd Claude Teague, Jerry Ross Icenhour, Thurman Junior Jolly, Kenneth Clay Warren, Creel M. Little, S. Monroe Icenhour, David Eugene Goble, Sam Little, Levit Archie Icenhour, Clyde R. Icenhour, Chester J. Siesicki, Clyde Franklin Shook, William W. Jolly, Alton A. Maciejewski, Mack G. Little, Lonnie Woodrow Elder, Clay H. Icenhour, James Cohen Icenhour, Tolly Durant Icenhour, Henry Cyte Little, Ray Hindle Dagenhart, Wade Carlton Teague, John Boone Icenhour, Paul Timothy Icenhour, and Asa Angus Timmon.

N.C. State House Representative Blair Eddins attended the ceremony and presented Luke with a certificate in recognition of his achievement.

Alex. Co. park picnic shelter reservations available online

Are you planning an event? You can now make online reservations for the picnic shelters at Alexander County Courthouse Park and Bethlehem Park.

The shelters can be reserved for small events, such as family reunions, birthday parties, church functions, meetings, etc. The rental fee is \$10 per hour or \$50 per day, with a full deposit required in advance.

To make a reservation, visit <https://alexander.recdesk.com/Community/Facility> (or scan the QR code) and choose the desired picnic shelter.

Here are the direct links:

- Courthouse Park picnic shelter - <https://alexander.recdesk.com/Community/Facility/Detail?facilityId=48>
- Bethlehem Park picnic shelter #1 - <https://alexander.recdesk.com/Community/Facility/Detail?facilityId=18>



- Bethlehem Park picnic shelter #2 - <https://alexander.recdesk.com/Community/Facility/Detail?facilityId=49>



Hours of operation vary by season. Spring hours (March 1-31) are 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Summer hours (April 1 - September 30) are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Fall hours (October 1-31) are 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Winter hours (November 1 - February 28) are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For more information, contact the Alexander County Parks Division at (828) 632-1093.



50 YEARS AGO: COOLING OFF — Jennifer Starr, eight months old, her sunbonnet shading her head from the scorching sun, cools off in the arms of her mother, Nina Starr, at the Bethlehem Community Swimming Pool on a July day in 1976. She is the daughter of Lyneul and Nina Starr of the Bethlehem Community.

Fifty Years Ago

Among the July 1976 Bethlehem news:

Watermelon patch is fundraiser

Members of the Bethlehem Optimist Club raised a nearly two-acre field of watermelons in the Summer of 1976, an annual club fundraiser. Members included Grady Adams, Lamar Lovell, Wayne Sipe, George Hall, Ervin Lineberger, Don Dixon, Harold Hickok, Stowe Brown, and Bob Campbell.

Frye to deliver last sermon at Grace Baptist

Rev. Stanley Frye, pastor who organized Grace Baptist Church, was planning to deliver his last sermon at the church July 25, 1976. He was leaving to

complete his education at Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, FL.

Lions Club officers

New officers were installed at the June 24, 1976, meeting of the Bethlehem Lions Club: Jimmy Franklin, president; Dennis Reeves, first vice president; Naylor Blalock, second vice president; Marvin Benfield, secretary; Bobby Teague, treasurer; Rev. James Hornbuckle, third vice president; and Norman Sigmon, Lion Tamer.

Historical articles featured

The Star contained a number of Bethlehem-specific historical articles which were prepared for the special Bicentennial

edition of The Taylorsville Times early in July 1976.

Dealville Tannery recalled

Keener Bowman, who turned 86 on April 30, 1976, used to earn his living by working at the tannery in Dealville, near where Smith's Graage was located in 1976 along NC 127. Bowman was paid 80 cents a day to "lay down" leather, put tan bark on it, and tear the flesh and hair off of cowhides. He recalled the Dealville village, which included a general store with a post office. John Deal owned the tannery when Bowman worked there. Deal's sons, Carl and later, Arthur, operated the general store.