

1. Gracie Adams

Gracie Adams is the daughter of Heather and Carey Adams of Dresden, Tennessee. During her time at Dresden High School, Gracie earned Student of Distinction honors in Algebra II, Chemistry, and Statistics, and maintained Honors standing in English and Mathematics her freshman through junior years. Her senior year, Gracie completed Dual Enrollment coursework in both Mathematics and English and was awarded the prestigious Volunteer Scholarship to the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. Gracie was also a member of Beta Club and Student Council, and served as Vice President of FBLA. Outside of school, Gracie volunteered at the Ned R. McWherter Weakley County Library. After high school, Gracie plans to attend the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, where she will major in Pre-Law.

2. Elizabeth Jarred

Elizabeth Jarred is the daughter of Kimberly and Daniel Jarred of Dresden, Tennessee. During her time at Dresden High School, Elizabeth was named a Student of Distinction, earned Honors recognition, and was designated both a Weakley Scholar and a Lion Scholar—a testament to her academic dedication throughout high school. She was a member of Beta Club, Student Council, and Future Business Leaders of America. After high school, Elizabeth plans to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin to major in Art Education.

3. Kendall Melton

Kendall Melton is the daughter of Mark and Alisha Melton of Dresden,

Tennessee. During her time at Dresden High School, Kendall was named a Student of Distinction, earned Honor Student recognition, and was designated as a Weakley Scholar, a Lion Scholar, and a Tennessee Scholar. Kendall was a member of the Beta Club, HOSA, Student Council, Future Business Leaders of America, and the Lady Lions Softball team. Outside of school, Kendall volunteered with youth leagues in Dresden and with WeCare. She was also awarded the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Provost Scholarship and the TN HOPE Scholarship. After high school, Kendall plans to attend the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga to major in Elementary Education.

4. Kaitlyn Ritz

Kaitlyn Marie Ritz is

the daughter of Richard Ritz of Dresden, Tennessee and Ashley Ritz of Martin, Tennessee. During her time at Dresden High School, Kaitlyn was named a Student of Distinction, was designated both a Weakley Scholar and a Lion Scholar, and will graduate with Honors. She was a member of Beta Club, Future Business Leaders of America, and Family, Career and Community Leaders of America. Outside of school, Kaitlyn is an active member of First Baptist Church in Dresden. After high school, Kaitlyn plans to attend Middle Tennessee State University, with aspirations of becoming a lawyer.

5. Olivia Breeden

Olivia Breeden is the daughter of Brandy Miller of Martin, Tennessee and Jason Breeden of Centerville, Tennessee. During

her time at Dresden High School, Olivia was a member of Beta Club, Student Council, Book Club, and the Ethics Bowl team. She earned Awards of Distinction in English II, Creative Writing, Geometry, Biology, and Dual Enrollment English. After high school, Olivia plans to attend Murray State University.

6. Landon Carter

Landon Miller Carter is the son of Anthony and Dena Carter of Dresden, Tennessee. During his time at Dresden High School, Landon was named a Lion Scholar and will graduate with Honors and Distinction. He was a member of Beta Club, FBLA, FFA, and FCA. A standout athlete on the baseball diamond, Landon earned All-District recognition his sophomore through senior years and was named to the All-Ac-

ademic Team. He was also awarded a Baseball Scholarship to Southwest Tennessee Community College, where he plans to major in Accounting with aspirations of becoming a Certified Public Accountant.

7. Briley Brown

Briley Rae Brown is the daughter of Kristin Adams and Dustin Walters of Dresden, Tennessee and James and Elayna Brown of Dyersburg, Tennessee. During her time at Dresden High School, Briley earned Distinction and Honors recognition and was designated a Weakley Scholar and a Lion Scholar. She served as Historian of FFA and was a member of Student Council. Briley was awarded the Provost Scholarship to Murray State University. After high school, Briley plans to attend Murray State University.

8. Chloe Hayes

Chloe Isabella Hayes is the daughter of Daniel and Angela Hayes of Dresden, Tennessee. During her time at Dresden High School, Chloe was a member of FBLA, Student Council, and the Lady Lions softball team. She will graduate with Honors and Distinction and earned her Southwest Airlines Professional Communications Certification. A passionate aviator, Chloe holds her Student Pilot Certificate and was selected last summer to attend the prestigious Air Academy camp in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. She is a member of the Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 734 in McKenzie, Tennessee, the National Honor Society, and the National Society of High School Scholars. She was awarded the SIU Alumni Association Textbook Award, the SIU

University Excellence Scholarship, and the Kaci Bailey Scholarship. After high school, Chloe plans to attend Southern Illinois University at Carbondale to major in Aviation Flight, where she will obtain her Pilot Certificate and ratings.

9. Alden Fela

Alden Ruat Fela is the son of Chai Pathai and Sung Ciang of Dresden, Tennessee. During his time at Dresden High School, Alden was named a Student of Distinction, was designated both a Weakley Scholar and a Lion Scholar, and will graduate with Honors. Alden was an active member of Beta Club and Future Business Leaders of America. Outside of school, Alden works at Zaxby's in Martin, TN. He was awarded the University of Tennessee at Martin Dean's Scholarship. After high school, Alden plans to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin to earn his bachelor's degree.

10. JohnRobert Ferrell

JohnRobert Ferrell is the son of Amber and Brian Ferrell of Martin, Tennessee. During his time at Dresden High School, JohnRobert was named a Student of Distinction, designated both a Lion Scholar and a Tennessee Scholar, and will graduate with Honors. He also earned the Southwest Airlines Business Communications Certificate. Outside of school, JohnRobert contributed community service hours and was active in his church. He was awarded the University of Tennessee at Martin Dean's Scholarship. After high school, JohnRobert plans to attend the University of Tennessee at Martin to pursue a degree in Engineering.

D CLASS OF 2026 TOP TEN Dresden High School



Weakley County Schools



GRADUATES: DON'T JUST WAIT FOR THE FUTURE—LEAD IT

By JC Bowman Special to The Press

Ah, the Class of 2026. Welcome to a world of continual chaos and upheaval. You're stepping into a world where your computer now requires you to prove

you're not a robot. We're shifting faster than a teenager's taste in music. Both can be exhausting.

AI is turning industries upside down, social media is a relentless highlight reel of everyone's 'perfect' life, and traditional career paths

are shifting like a politician's promise. It's dizzying, really.

But hold your horses. That is exactly what makes you all so extraordinary. You're not inheriting a finished product; you're diving headfirst into a work in

progress, still being edited by the hands of innovation.

With tools like AI at your fingertips, you're equipped to reshape the very fabric of society. Embrace this change! Grasp it like a lifebuoy in a sea of uncertainty. Understanding AI isn't

just a nice-to-have; it's essential. Those who wield these tools with intelligence, ethics, and a dash of creativity won't just adapt to the whirlwind; they'll be the ones blowing the winds of change.

But let's get one thing

straight: technology alone won't make you a success. Purpose trumps power every time.

What's the point of achieving if you're devoid

SEE BOWMAN PAGE 8

A huge thank you to the hardworking and outstanding graduates on our team! Your dedication, drive, and passion inspire us every day. Congratulations on this milestone!

**Aubrey Chenoweth**  
Barista & Shift Lead  
Graduated with Bachelors Degree in Marketing. She graduated with Honors, Cum Laude. Aubrey has been with Vantage Coffee Roasters since 2025 and loves coffee. She was a SL and hopes to have her own coffee shop in the future. She has moved back to Colorado to be with family. We will miss her!!!

**Melinda Thornton**  
Barista & Shift Lead  
Graduated with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Health and Human Performance. She plans to study and obtain an Esthetician's License and start her own small business. Melinda has worked at Higher Ground Coffee since February 2023 and is a SL and outstanding Barista!

**Jaden Shreeve**  
Barista & Shift Lead  
Graduated with a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Music Education with an extended focus in Trumpet Performance. He will be doing student teaching this fall in Nashville. He will be moving to the Midwest and starting a Masters Degree in Trumpet Performance in the Fall of 2027. Jaden has been with Higher Ground Coffee since November 2022 and is a SL and fun hard working Barista! We wish him luck in the future!

**Congratulations to all our 2026 Graduates!**

Your Higher Ground & Vantage family is so proud of you!

CAPS OFF TO YOU, GRADUATES!

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